

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

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NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**. * Information that must be provided.

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Surname*		Address*	
Forename(s)*			
Home phone			
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Date of Birth*		National Insurance Number*	

2 Your Employment.	Employer*	Location	
Job Description*		Part Time	YES ☐ NO ☐

3 Sex. Male ☐ Female ☐

4 Ethnic Group. (Please specify. This information is used as part of our equal opportunities policy)

A. White	English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British ☐	Irish ☐	Gypsy or Irish Traveller ☐	Any other White background		
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C. Asian/Asian British	Indian ☐	Pakistani ☐	Bangladeshi ☐	Chinese ☐	Other Asian background	
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Do you identify as transgender?	Yes ☐	No ☐	If you wish to be contacted with information about union activities for lesbian/gay/transgender members please tick here	☐

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Direct Debit (you must complete form below) ☐	Paybill Deduction (complete separate form) ☐	I confirm my paybill mandate has been sent to my pay office. ☐
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7 I undertake to abide by the rules now in force or those that are adopted.

Your signature	Date



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Please fill in the whole form including official use box using a ball point pen and Send to: RMT, 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)

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Bank/Building Society account number

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Branch Sort Code

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Normally your payments are made once a month to RMT.
If you prefer to pay 4 weekly instead please tick ☐

Originator's Identification Number

9	7	1	7	4	5
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Reference Number

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Your National Insurance Number

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This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

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- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
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EDITORIAL



BEECHING ROLLS ON

I will be shedding no tears over Mrs Thatcher's recent demise but it is a time to remember the communities and industries her policies tore apart and the lives she destroyed.

Her successive governments oversaw the destruction of the manufacturing base of this country, along with the steel and mining industries, and our energy sector is now controlled by rapacious capitalist monopolies.

Thatcher was also instrumental in promoting the European Union and its treaties which are spreading her malicious ideology which has done so much damage across the continent.

Unfortunately these policies are not only alive and well in the EU but also in the Labour Party, the Lib Dems, the Tories and UKIP. All of them support the endless privatisation of public services including transport, health care, education and energy industries.

Its 50 years since Beeching took his axe to the rail network and 20 years since the Major government embarked on the privatisation programme that is still bleeding the network dry in the name of profit.

Now McNulty wants to continue in this Tory tradition and smash up the railways further through slashing funding, jobs and services.

Beeching and privatisation are linked – both cooked up by Tory governments hostile to the concept of public services and both retained by incoming Labour governments ducking the opportunity to reverse what was both wrong and fundamentally unpopular.

The shambles over the West Coast franchise was just another example of everything that is rotten at the heart of transport policy.

However figures show that in the public sector the East Coast Main Line turnover amounted to £665.8 million, leaving a profit to the Department for Transport of £195.7 million.

The net subsidy per passenger mile for East Coast is substantially less than that provided to the West Coast Main Line. In fact the taxpayer subsidy given to Virgin is seven times higher than that awarded to the East Coast Mainline.

So what is this rotten government doing against this backdrop – it's fast-

tracking the retendering on the East Coast to try and get a new bunch of racketeers in before the next election on an extended, gold plated deal designed to wreck the option of public ownership.

It's no wonder that over 70 per cent of the British people now support renationalisation. They are paying through the nose to travel on overcrowded services on creaking infrastructure while the train operators are laughing all the way to the bank.

Another mechanism being used by the TOCs is to bring in agency labour on lower rates of pay to undercut wages. RMT members on Northern Rail have had enough of this practice and they are being balloted for industrial action to ensure that properly paid full time staff are being employed.

We have seen the devastating effects of such social dumping in the shipping industry and this month we mark the 25th anniversary of the NUS strike which sought to defend jobs against greedy privateers.

This slash and burn mentality of the private sector has devastated the bus industry as a new report reveals that thousands of older people are "trapped" in their homes because of a lack of suitable transport.

Our bus members meeting Skegness later this month will be re-affirming union demands to renationalise the bus sector instead of leaving it to the mercy of the market.

I welcome Kelvin Hopkins call for this country to leave the EU. EU transport rules demanding the 'liberalisation' of bus, rail and ferry services and compulsory tendering make EU membership incompatible with rebuilding the entire transport network.

It is true that all the major parties currently support these policies of privatisation, imperialism and globalisation.

But the difference with the EU is that you can't vote them out of office and you can't alter the treaties demanding mass privatisation so, as Kelvin points out, it's time to leave.

Bob Crow

RMT SECURES TOP PAY DEAL ON LONDON OVERGROUND

After constructive talks with London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL) and the union an industry-leading 3.85 per cent pay deal has been agreed for staff in 2013 as part of a four year pay award.

The following years pay deal includes inflation (RPI) plus 0.5 per cent - protecting and enhancing staff living standards into the future at a

time when there is an unprecedented attack on wages and conditions.

The deal, covering over 500 RMT members across the company, will reach pay packets next month and recognises the role staff have played in record levels of customer satisfaction.

Last month WHICH? Magazine rated London Overground with the highest

levels of commuter customer satisfaction and the last national passenger survey rated London Overground at 93 per cent overall satisfaction.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the deal recognised the value placed on transport workers in delivering essential services and sets a benchmark for the rest of the industry.

"At a time when we are told that workers have to accept cuts to their living standards we have proven once again that effective union organisation, backing up meaningful negotiations can secure a fair deal that protects and enhances pay and conditions and which benefits everyone involved," he said.

JUBILEE DRIVERS WIN

Tube drivers on the Jubilee line suspended industrial action last month after London Underground agreed to address long-running concerns involving safety and hygiene.

Management agreed that areas should be regularly patrolled and kept clean and that LU work jointly with the British Transport Police regarding safety and security of the car park area.

London region RMT regional organiser John Leach said that a programme of improvement work had been negotiated and depots would be deep-cleaned and arrangements had been put in place to maintain standards.



BAKERLOO VICTORY

After months of industrial action by Bakerloo line train drivers to protect passenger safety, Tube bosses have agreed that each train being taken out of service has to be checked along its full length by either station staff or a train operator.

Since January Bakerloo Tube

drivers had been physically checking that trains are empty of passengers before moving into sidings, after LUL stopped station staff checking carriages.

LUL's reckless move had resulted in more than 3,000 'overcarries' into Bakerloo sidings in the last year, including one involving a 12-

year-old boy who could have jumped onto live rails but for the action of an alert driver.

The drivers' safety action eliminated the problem but resulted in substantial delays to the service, which LUL had tried to hide including by suppressing routine internal reports that revealed the true level of

cancellations and delays.

Following meetings with the conciliation service ACAS London Underground agreed that the trains should be checked. However the union still has concerns and is insisting that uniformed and licensed staff check trains.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES EAST COAST REPRIVATISATION

The Tory/Lib Dem government marked the 50th anniversary of the Beeching report that devastated rail by launching the reprivatisation of the East Coast mainline.

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin launched the bidding competition for the East Coast franchise to be put it back into the private sector by February 2015.

The government set out a timetable for the re-privatisation of the route, currently run in the public sector after two catastrophic private failures, and extending the raft of franchises suspended due to the shambles on the West Coast mainline.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow said that instead of learning the lessons of the privatisation disasters on the East and West Coast mainlines the government was wasting hundreds of millions of pounds of taxpayers money on the franchising circus.

"This rotten government has given the green light to a whole new wave of profiteering that will have the train companies laughing all the way to the bank.

"The public need to know that while fares are going up and safety is being compromised the Government's priority remains the profits of the greedy train operating companies.

"No wonder 70 per cent of

people now support RMT's call for full renationalisation.

"The proposed reprivatisation of the East Coast, after the public sector rescued the service following two private failures, proves conclusively that the political class have learnt absolutely nothing when it comes to our railways.

"This is a politically inspired wrecking move designed to flog off this publicly owned intercity route before the next election regardless of the consequences.

"With this news coming just a day before the fiftieth anniversary of the Beeching Report that ripped Britain's railways to pieces, the ConDem administration is setting up yet

another sell-off of state assets in a further act of grotesque rail vandalism," he said.

TUC general secretary and Action for Rail chair Frances O'Grady said that the decision defied all logic.

"Since returning to public ownership the East Coast Mainline has flourished with passenger numbers and customer satisfaction increasing and all profits re-invested back into improving the service.

"The government, however, is not interested in evidence-based policy and is once again putting the interests of private companies and shareholders before those of commuters and taxpayers," she said. ■

EAST COAST MAINLINE CLEANERS STRIKE FOR PAY JUSTICE

Cheap-skate contractors ISS on the East Coast Mainline took a further wave of strike action as RMT steps up the fight for justice for staff working on transport cleaning contracts.

The cleaners took 48 hours strike action last month to demand a living wage and major improvements in pensions and working

conditions.

Previous action has forced ISS to make an offer but the latest proposals, do not offer back pay and do nothing to improve sick pay or to meet any other of RMT's claims in areas such as free travel.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union had launched an unprecedented, co-ordinated national campaign for pay justice for

cleaners and security staff and the action on the East Coast ISS contract was a central part of that battle.

"This action, brought about by the intransigent and divisive attitude of the company, is part and parcel of building the pressure behind that national fight for justice – pressure that will secure victory for cleaners and security staff.

"The rock-solid solidarity shown by RMT cleaners sends out a message that the union is geared up for an all-out fight for pay justice across the transport network.

"The train operators and public bodies who give a green light to exploitation by these parasites should be using their clout to force them back to the negotiating table," he said. ■



DOCKLANDS CLEANERS STRIKE

RMT members working for Carlisle Cleaning and Security on the Docklands Light Railway contract took strike action last month as part of their campaign to secure a decent pay rise.

RMT has also been campaigning against zero hour contracts for DLR cleaners and for the cleaning contract to be brought in-house.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow has written to Transport for London pointing out that the contractor had not made a serious pay offer and it does not even pay the London living wage which this year is £8.30 an hour.

"The DLR is a service funded by Transport for London and under its control so it is unacceptable that staff working for DLR to be on zero hours contracts and paid less than the London living wage.

The union has also made representations to Serco Docklands which runs the trains and the London Mayor and the Greater London Assembly.

RMT SLAMS TWO-TIER WORKFORCE PLANS AT LONDON UNDERGROUND/TFL

RMT has slammed plans to transfer some Tube Lines clerical and project staff back in-house to London Underground/Transport for London without pension or travel facilities and has threatened industrial action to defend the terms and conditions

of its members.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that while proposals to re-integrate some staff into LUL may sound positive after the long-running PPP Tube privatisation fiasco, the 700 or so staff involved would not be allowed to join the TfL pension

fund.

"Combined with the refusal to match travel facilities with existing staff this erosion of conditions would create a two-tier workforce and undermine the entire pension fund.

"This is a direct attack on the TfL pension fund as it cuts off

new funding and will allow management to further attack existing terms and conditions.

"RMT has grave concerns about this and any further staffing reductions and these attacks will be resisted using industrial action if necessary," he said. ■

ARRIVA TRAINS WALES CLEANERS BREAKTHROUGH

Strike action by cleaners working on the Churchill's contract on Arriva Trains Wales has been suspended after the company finally agreed to make a pay offer.

The company had previously refused any form of pay increase, failed to attend meetings with the union to discuss the matter and offered to fund any pay award with

redundancies.

Following a massive nine to one vote for action RMT members, some of the worst paid staff in the whole transport industry, were instructed to prepare for strike action.

However the company came forward with an improved offer which is being put out to the members to

referendum with a recommendation to accept.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow congratulated members and RMT negotiators for standing firm.

"Churchill's, working for Arriva Trains Wales with the train operators approval, has doubled its profits in the past five years and has extracted nearly £7 million from the

exploitation of essential cleaning staff on the most basic pay and conditions.

"This battle on Arriva Trains Wales has shown that the campaign against low pay and exploitation can produce results and RMT will continue to ratchet up the pressure for fairness as part of our national cleaners' campaign," he said. ■

RMT SLAMS SEA RESCUE PRIVATISATION

The government has ended 70 years of search and rescue by the RAF and Royal Navy by handing the £1.6 billion 10-year contract to the private Texas-based Bristow Group from 2015.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union was deeply concerned that the privatisation of search and rescue, tied in with a programme of cuts including the loss of helicopter and coastguard capacity, would have a seriously detrimental impact on these life or death services in British waters.

"The government has not

produced a shred of evidence that safety is paramount and this looks to RMT like another privatisation policy driven by both ideology and the central demand to cut budgets.

"As a union that as represents both seafarers and workers in the offshore industry, the bottom line for us is that those cuts could cost lives and put our members directly at risk," he said.

Under the private contract, 22 helicopters will operate from 10 locations around the UK.

Ten S-92s will be based, two per site, at Stornoway and

Sumburgh, and at new bases at Newquay, Caernarfon and Humberside airports.

Ten AW189s will operate, two per site, from Lee-on-the-Solent and a new hangar at Prestwick airport, and new bases which will be established at St Athan, Inverness and Manston airports.

The new deal will also see Bristow take over some of the civilian search and rescue (SAR) bases currently run by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Military analyst Howard Wheeldon said that the RAF and Navy had provided a

fantastic service over so many years and most search and rescue services around the world remain in the hands of government or military.

"Going to a PFI, which this essentially is, brings a lot of dangers.

"Callouts have gone up 40 per cent since 2005, this is a big operation, a lot of people's lives are at risk here.

"Will the private sector operation take on the same sort of risks that the RAF, the Royal Navy and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency do, on the same scale? I rather doubt that they will," he said. ■

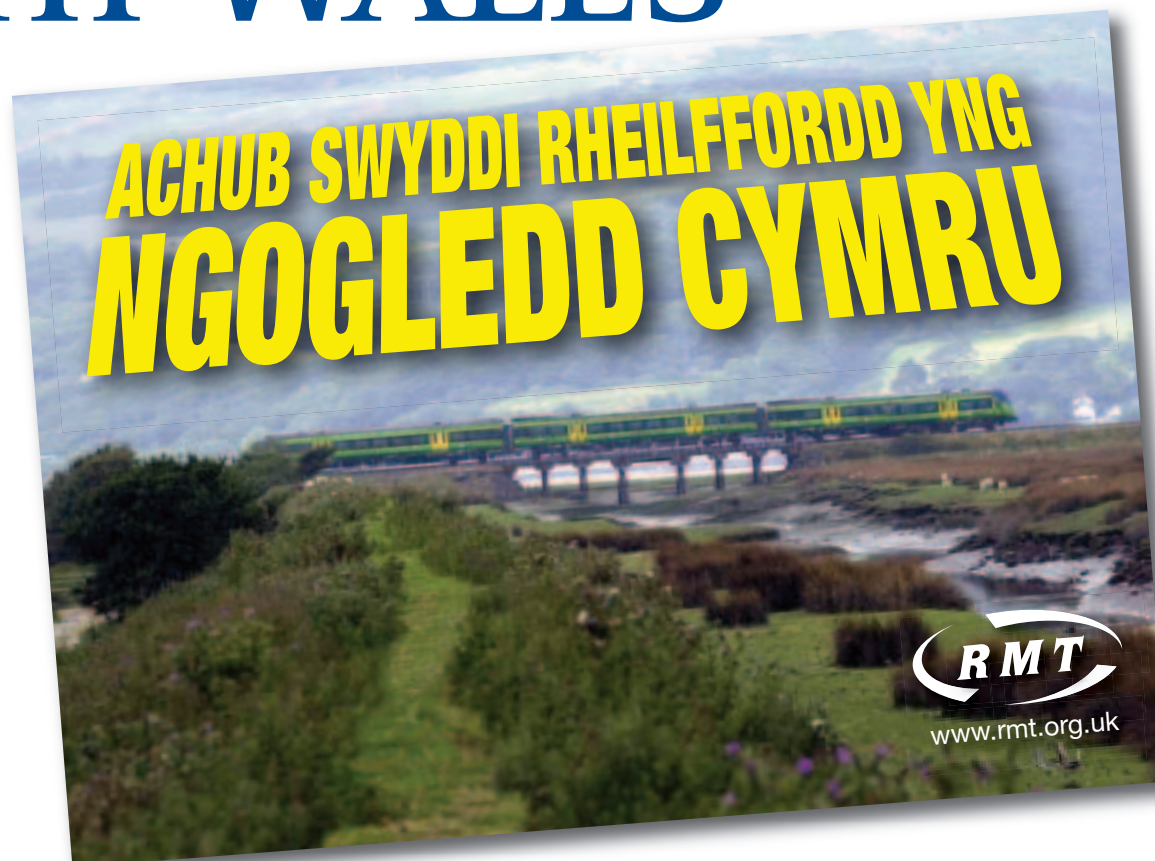
SAVE RAIL JOBS IN NORTH WALES

RMT has produced bi-lingual postcards in English and Welsh for residents to send to their Wales assembly members to oppose Network Rail cutting signalling operations in Wales and moving what is left of the work to Cardiff.

The union is warning that there will be a loss of rail jobs throughout Wales with a disproportionate impact on jobs in North Wales.

RMT regional organiser and former signaller John Tilley said that Network Rail should relocate control of North Wales railways not into a centre in Cardiff, but into a small new centre in North Wales, thereby retaining some jobs and the crucial local knowledge.

"Network Rail as a publicly funded company should ensure its decisions do not adversely impact on local jobs and communities in Wales," he said. ■



CAMPAIGN FOR **TRADE UNION FREEDOM**

www.tradeunionfreedom.co.uk

FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

Unions launch united campaign to demand the repeal of anti- trade laws

The Campaign for Trade Union Freedom (CTUF), launched last month with the support of 25 national trade unions, began a fight to roll back the anti-union laws that have attempted to shackle working people in Britain since the 1980s.

RMT general secretary and CTUF president Bob Crow said that after 30 years of Labour, Tory and Liberal governments taking the axe to trade union rights, and using mass unemployment as a weapon to shackle working people, the CTUF must put the right to take solidarity action back on the agenda.

"The CTUF, already supported by over 200 local trade union organisations, will take our movement onto the front foot against those right-wing politicians agitating for more anti-union laws and will drive the fight to restore the workplace rights already snatched away," he said.

Actor and jailed Shrewsbury picket Ricky Tomlinson also addressed the

launch in London calling on the Labour movement to come together now to campaign for trade union rights.

"We need to protect trade union members when they take industrial action, to prevent them from being criminalised by the state.

"Without rights at work they will continue to imprison trade unionists, just as they did the Shrewsbury Pickets forty years ago," he said.

UNITE general secretary Len McCluskey warned that for more than three decades trade union rights had been cut away by successive governments determined to silence the voice of ordinary workers.

"The result has been a growing gap between rich and poor and a dramatic decline in the wealth that goes into the pockets of working people.

"The right to organise, strike and take solidarity action are fundamental tools needed for working people to attain a fair portion of the

wealth they create.

"Only by winning back our freedoms can we win a fair settlement for working people. We support this important and timely campaign," he said.

John Hendy QC said that as the government slashed and burned everything that made Britain a civilised country the trade unions had a vital role to play in Britain's resistance but legislation has tied them in red tape.

"The founding of the CTUF marks the next phase in the struggle to restore trade union rights and their freedom to lead the fight for working class people," he said.

Institute of Employment Rights director Carolyn Jones said without free trade unions, employment rights were almost useless - difficult to protect and increasingly expensive to enforce.

"Free unions protect and promote fair rights at work," she said.

For more information go to www.tradeunionfreedom.co.uk

DOM

freedom.co.uk

TRANSPORT POVERTY

Thousands of older people are "trapped" in their homes because of a lack of suitable transport, a new report has claimed.

The charity WRVS revealed that as many as a third of a million over-75s are being unnecessarily socially excluded.

Cuts in public transport services have made the position worse and are having a "devastating" impact on older people's sense of happiness, said the charity.

A survey of 900 people in Britain over the age of 75 found that almost a fifth do not use public transport because it is not suitable for their disabilities, even though they are eligible for free travel.

One in 10 of those questioned said they had lost their independence because they could not get out and about. WRVS chief executive David McCullough said that older people shouldn't be confined to their own homes simply because they can't access to transport.

"Helping older people to stay active is vital for their good health and ensuring they remain connected is a really important factor in an inclusive society," he said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that cuts to station and train staff being bulldozed through by the private train operators and the government would worsen the situation.

"RMT will work with pensioners' groups to fight for access to transport services for all," he said.

Parliamentary column

TIME TO LEAVE THE EU

The European Union (EU) is anti-democratic, anti-socialist, and from its 1957 origins as the European Common Market, has been driven by a free market capitalist ideology. It has worked by stealth, racheting towards its objective by degrees over decades but its direction has been obvious. The Euro is now in deep trouble, the Cyprus crisis is not the last, and the EU economy is failing.

The core belief of the Eurocrats is neo-liberalism, an anti-socialist ideology which holds that markets should decide our fates, not democratically elected governments managing economies for the benefit of their peoples. Neo-liberalism is fundamentally opposed to the democratic socialism/social democracy which Western European nations established after the Second World War.

The first three decades after 1945 saw full employment, rapidly rising living standards and the establishment of welfare states to provide security for all from cradle to grave. In Britain the National Health Service was founded, now threatened by privatisation, and trade union rights and immunities were secured. Vital industries across Europe were nationalised, including Britain's railways, and millions of decent homes were built for working people in Britain by local councils and by government created new town commissions. It was a world that worked.

The ideologues of the Common Market/EU wanted none of that. They set about devising a scheme for marketising, liberalising and privatising European economies, and most importantly not taking powers from national governments so they could no longer flirt with democratic socialism.

For a long time they got away with all this simply because the post-war structures built by progressive governments were so robust and so popular that they could not simply dismantle them. Millions of Europeans assumed that they were secure for the long term. Not any more.

The crisis in southern Europe in particular has seen forced fire sales of public assets with mass privatisations in a desperate attempt to buy time while their economies flounder and unemployment surges to previously unimagined levels. If unemployment in Britain was the same as that in Spain, we would have eight million on the dole not two and a half million, which is itself an appalling waste.

Britain's railways have been privatised on an EU designed model but for the time being railways are still nationalised in most of the rest of Europe. Privatisation has



indeed been an EU idea but there is fierce resistance to privatising other EU railways on the British model. It is obvious that Britain's railways need to be renationalised and soon. But the political elite both in Britain and in the EU know that this would be a major setback, a turning point indeed for the schemes of the right wing neo-liberals in Britain and the Eurocrats in Brussels.

It is clear the European economic model is coming apart at the seams, starting to collapse from the inside. The Euro is in deep trouble and there is no rescue in sight. Cyprus with its tiny population is apparently being bailed out, but with savage terms imposed on bank depositors and on ordinary Cypriots. As the people of the EU come to believe that the Euro does not have a long term future they are bound to start taking their Euros out of European banks and buy other currencies if they can and the process of collapse will have started. It may be slow at first but could rapidly gather pace.

Gordon Brown was absolutely right to keep Britain out of the Euro ten years ago, but it is now time to give up on EU membership. We must now elect a majority Labour government with a socialist programme to rebuild what has been lost in the decades of neo-liberal advance.

In 1983 I was a Labour candidate for Parliament and fought the campaign on a manifesto calling for the nationalisation of banks and financial institutions and for Britain to leave the then Common Market/EEC. That manifesto was regarded as extreme by some people but it now looks rather like common sense!

Kelvin Hopkins
Labour MP for Luton North



RMT EXPOSES RAIL

Union tells MPs that rail franchise contracts and privatisation is undermining safety, service and cost

RMT recently gave a presentation to parliamentarians at the invitation of the respected House of Commons Library on the union's view of rail franchising and what should replace the privatised system.

Senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash went up against the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), First Group and the Co-Op Party to make the union's case for a publicly-owned and run rail network.

He highlighted the extensive findings from the *Rebuilding Rail* report from June 2012, particularly the estimated £1.2 billion 'privatisation premium' that taxpayer and passengers pay for the privilege of having rail services run by profiteers.

If this massive amount of money, estimated to top £11 billion since privatisation, were kept in the industry, a publicly-owned national rail company could fund a host of policies that would be positive for the railways, society and the

government, including an 18 per cent cut in all rail fares, increased investment in the rail industry and fund cheaper fares for disadvantaged social groups.

Mick explained how, over the course of a franchise contract, the private operator qualifies for huge government subsidies, which go up when revenue from fares falls, effectively insuring the company against loss of profit.

He also reminded the audience that the privatised TOCs have, for nearly 20 years, received around three times the level of annual public subsidy than that allocated to British Rail.

The regular use of fare increases to prop up profits was highlighted in Mick's contribution, as well as the chronic lack of private investment in the rail network which prevents or delays all sorts of developments such as electrification, multi-modal tickets and decent catering



FRANCHISING CHAOS

services on inter city trains.

Whilst the RDG and First Group speakers floundered in defence of profiteering, job cuts and poor service that franchising permits, RMT pointed to the wealth of clear evidence for a publicly owned and accountable rail system which also defeated the misleading arguments of the Co-Op speaker.

It was an uncomfortable afternoon for the supporters of privatisation but RMT will not be complacent. After the West Coast Main Line fiasco, the government will announce its revised rail franchising policy in the spring.

This will also reveal their plans for the East Coast Main Line (ECML) which has been so successfully run in the public sector since 2009. Mick's parting shot to MPs was that the country needed a national rail network that workers and passengers can be truly proud of which is owned and run in the

interests of people and not profit. The campaign goes on.

FACTS ABOUT RAIL PRIVATISATION

- Privatisation has cost passengers more. Since 1995 the average ticket price has increased by 22 per cent in real terms. Britain has Europe's highest commuter fares for both day returns and season tickets.
- Privatisation has made the railway more difficult to use. 35 per cent of train users and 64 per cent of non-users don't understand the rail ticketing system.
- Privatisation has put passengers in the slow lane. Britain has significantly lower coverage of electrification and high speed rail compared to similar countries in Europe.
- Privatisation has cost the tax payer more. The cost of running the railway has more than doubled since privatisation from £2.4 billion during the five year period 1990/91 – 1994/95 to around £5.4 billion per year during 2005 – 2010. It is estimated that privatisation costs the equivalent of £1.2 billion a year compared to public ownership.
- Privatisation has created a less reliable service. Comparing the last 19 years of British Rail with the last 19 years of private train operating companies, British Rail services were nearly three per cent more punctual than privately run passenger rail services. In February 2013 the Consumer group Which found that more than half of train companies have a customer satisfaction score of 50 per cent or lower in Britain.
- Privatisation has not increased passenger numbers Passenger have increased 59

per cent since 1994. But passenger numbers on the publicly owned London Underground increased by 60 per cent in the same period. The increase in passenger growth on Britain's railways has been stimulated by the 300 per cent increase in public subsidy since privatisation

- Privatisation has not increased private investment. According to the Rebuilding Rail report by the Transport for Quality of Life think-tank less than one per cent of all the money going into the railways is genuine, at risk, private investment the rest is public sector investment.
- Privatisation has not increased innovation. The McNulty report and Rebuilding Rail agree that fragmentation mitigates against industry innovation as companies seek to operate in their own short term

CATERING FIGHT BACK



A well-attended catering grades conference met in Weston Super Mare to discuss how to defend workers

On board accidents, use of agency workers and organising catering staff were priority issues for the catering grades conference.

EC member Daren Ireland said that agency workers on the railway should be brought in-house.

"This is not a matter of putting worker against worker but bringing these vulnerable staff in-house," he said.

He said that the union had to do more to defend catering

workers pointing out that TOCs like Arriva Trains Wales treated the grade as the 'poor relatives' in the industry.

Derek England, Leeds City said that the union should be expanding union membership in the catering grades and representing them.

"We need more political action to bring catering in-house.

"MPs travel on trains and they should be told that on-board catering will be lost if

action is not taken," he said.

He said that members who were catering workers should be targeted to get involved and increase the power of the grade at the workplace.

Assistant general secretary Steve Hedley said that following a recruitment campaign in SSP the union had won recognition at Rail Gourmet.

"However we need to combat the fact that it is difficult to get meetings with the company," he said.

He said that there was no alternative to ensure such meetings took place and emphasised the need to organise workers to increase the strength of catering workers.

Phil Boston of the organising unit said that all members should become recruiters to get transport workers into RMT.

"The work needs to begin now to build the union and that includes members, reps, branch secretaries and union officials alike," he said.

Conference opposed practices being carried out by companies like Rail Gourmet such as cutting agreed overtime hours which is leaving staff out of pocket.

"Rail Gourmet staff were previously rostering staff to a 40-hour week but that is being cut to 37 hours costing staff hundreds of pounds a year," said Derek England.

Conference agreed that there were too many injuries taking place while using trolleys on-board and called on the union to demand that train operating companies supply safety shoes.

Sonya Jones, Bristol said that trolleys weigh up to 22 stone and accidents take place very often and TOCs need to take responsibility by recognising the risks involved.

"We are the only grade that does not get safety shoes," she said.

Owen Herbert, Swansea said that it was a health and safety issue that needed addressing.

Derek England, said that

trolleys needed to be operated correctly to ensure accidents were minimised.

"Any risk assessment of the use of trolleys should involve the union and any safety equipment should be fit for purpose," he said.

Conference agreed that first class hosts (FCH) within Cross Country trains should have a company council rep to represent them.

Becky McGovarin, Plymouth said that there were over 80 FCHs that needed representation.

Conference called for train operating contracts to be taken in-house following the debacle of the West Coast franchise which has cost the taxpayer over £50 million.

Steve Conway, Leeds City said that most franchises come to an end next year and could be operated under government control as East Coast is now.

"It may not be the nationalised railway that we all want but it would be better

than the franchise fiasco we have now," he said.

Conference agreed that following the implementation of the new compulsory government pension scheme decent staff pension contributions should be written into the rail operating franchises.

Steve Conway said that due to low pay staff had no reasonable prospects of a decent pension.

Daren Ireland said that the new government scheme would not provide a decent pension in itself.

Steve Hedley agreed and warned that the government was simply seeking to provide a minimum pension to make workers pay for any future benefits they may get.

Delegates agreed that next year's conference should be held in Birmingham due to its central location in order to encourage more members to attend from across the country.

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WHAT'S NEW ON RMTv

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

CHANNEL 1 – RMT IN ACTION

RMT National Cleaners' Charter: On December 11, 2012, RMT launched its National Cleaners' Charter by holding a lobby of MPs at Parliament.

Justice for the 33! On December 19, 2012, all 33 Trainpeople agency staff working from Wembley Central were informed that their contract with London Underground would be terminated on January 16, 2013 and that their applications for permanent positions would not be considered despite having worked in these roles for up to five years. RMTv caught up with the Trainpeople staff at their protest at Wembley Central station and joined in their demand to sack the agency, not the workers.

Celebrate Success - RMT Education Centre: RMT takes the education of its representatives very seriously indeed and this short film celebrates the role that the National Education Centre plays in fulfilling RMTs commitment to learning.

UK rail fare rip-off breaks lover's hearts on

Valentines' Day: It was an early start this Valentine's Day for RMT as it demonstrated at Liverpool Street station against the UK rail fare rip-off. New Research by RMT has found that French, Italian and Spanish lovers using high speed rail for a romantic city break will pay 245% less in rail fares than their UK counterparts. RMT members were joined at Liverpool Street Station at 7am on Valentines' Day by General Secretary Bob Crow whilst they hand out chocolates to commuters while two fat-cats from the train companies look on in disgust.

CHANNEL 2 – NEWS BULLETINS

Shipping Update with Steve Todd: February 2013

CHANNEL 3 – HISTORY CHANNEL

RMT 2012 Charles Watkins' Memorial Lecture: RMT's guest speaker to deliver the 2012 Charles Watkins' Memorial Lecture was labour movement academic Professor Roger Seifert, whose lecture was entitled Strikers, communists, tramps, and detectives – lessons from the 1966 seafarers' dispute.

CHANNEL 4 – RMT EXTRA

RMT Credit Union - Helping Our People: RMT Credit Union - An easy way to save, a cheap way to borrow.

RMT at March Against the Cuts Demonstration in Newcastle: On Saturday February 16, 2013 RMT joined campaigners in Newcastle to protest at the planned £90 million of cuts that threaten the cities vital public services.

Network Rail Health and Safety Reps: A film exploring the role of RMT Health and Safety Reps within Network Rail.

Also, RMT members can catch up with archived footage from this years 'Yong Members', Signalling grades, Health and Safety, Supervisory grades, Station staff, Engineering grades and Traincrew and Shunters grades conferences at www.rmt.org.uk

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THE NATIONAL NUS STRIKE 25 YEARS ON

In 1988 the National Union of Seamen launched national strike action against dangerous cost-cutting and job losses

In the 1980s the flagging out of vessels to flags of convenience and the privatisation of Sealink in 1983 led to job losses and a fall in union membership.

P&O Shipping, led by the Thatcherite Jeffrey Sterling, pursued a cost-cutting agenda in the run-up to completion of the Channel Tunnel and public confidence in the industry's safety record was rocked by the January 1987 'Herald of Free Enterprise' disaster in which 193 crew and passengers died.

In December 1987 the company told the union, that it intended to reduce the annual wage bill of £35 million by £6 million by cutting 500 out of 2,300 jobs and reducing earnings by an average of £25 a week.

Furthermore they would make seafarers work an extra one month a year and impose, in some cases, a work rota where some people would be working for 72 hours continuously.

In January 1988, the National Ferry Port Committee co-ordinated a 7,000 strong national ferry strike in support of NUS members at the Isle of Man Steam Packet in dispute

over job losses. Belfast-based members were forced off the Saga Moon in handcuffs by the RUC and replaced by cheap foreign nationals.

Over 2,300 seafarers in Dover also refused to accept the P&O ultimatum, voted to strike and stopped work in February 1988.

Some workers also asked why a company which had just announced record profits, including £51.7 million from its European Ferries Group, needed to act in such a fashion.

Mass picketing had some success and for almost two months P&O ferries lay idle. They only sailed after an elaborate operation involving the flying of scabs to the continent and the sailing of ferries with a skeleton crew.

Injunctions were granted to Sealink and P&O under the terms of the Tory 1984 Trade Union Act. In separate proceedings the High Court found the union in breach of provisions in the Employment Act 1980 prohibiting solidarity action. In all the union faced fines and costs in excess of £100,000.

The NUS called off the action but members at Dover voted to take further action. In March

P&O threatened ten-day dismissal notices and the use of non-union, overseas nationals. In response the union called a national strike ballot, a move scuppered by the company again making use of anti-trade union legislation. An injunction was granted against the ballot going ahead.

As talks with the NUS at ACAS against company redundancy proposals foundered, support flooded in for the strikers from around the world. The company de-recognised the NUS and arranged for scab crews to operate vessels out of Rotterdam.

The NUS responded by calling for all UK-flagged vessels to come out in support of the strikers at Dover. Members on the oil rig supply and standby vessels entered the dispute bringing the North Sea oil and gas industry to a virtual stand-still.

In early May the High Court sequestered the union and fined it over £150,000. Union offices around the country, including Maritime House in Clapham, were taken over by court appointed officers and all NUS assets were frozen. But members

in Scotland realised that decisions of the English courts could not be enacted on in Scotland and went into occupation in the union's Aberdeen premises before the NUS was taken into the high court in Edinburgh to remove protesters.

A further hefty fine was imposed by the courts on the union for the 'crime' of supporting so-called secondary action. By early June the remaining strikers voted to call off the action. The assault on the union had reaped a terrible price including the loss of thousands of seafaring jobs. The use of the Tory anti-trade union laws had left the NUS facing financial ruin.

One way to combat this crisis and the decline in membership was through merger. As a result the National Union of Railwaymen and the NUS began discussions with a view to amalgamation. Following a ballot in favour of merger of both unions' memberships, the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union (RMT) was launched on September 6 1990 at TUC Conference in Blackpool.



THE NUS STRIKE 25 YEARS ON

Photographer Mik Critchlow publishes a new book of pictures next month chronicling the NUS strike 25 years on

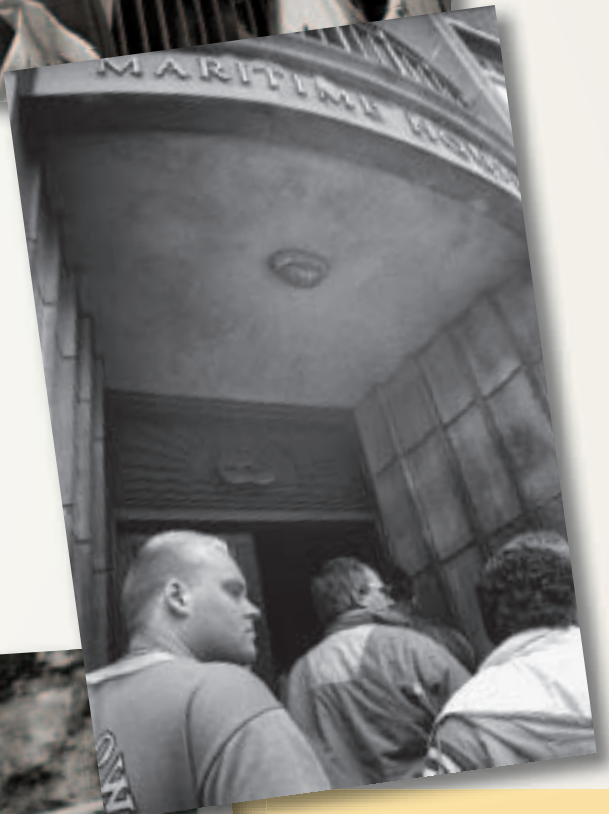




SPEECH: Tony Benn supporting the strike.



WOMEN SUPPORT: "P&O have always had a history of slave labour throughout their past, they are running these seafarers ragged for as little money as they can get away with," seafarers wife Dover.



The book will be published next month by Black Diamond Press and full details of how to obtain a copy will appear in next issue of RMT News. In the meantime pictures can be viewed at www.mikercritchlow.com/

NO TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

RMT women's advisory conference meeting in Nottingham launches model domestic violence policy for transport industry

On International Women's Day March 8 RMT launched a new model domestic violence policy framework for the transport industry at the union's annual women's conference in Nottingham.

The policy document sets out clear principles for employers to recognise domestic violence as a workplace issue and maps out procedures for reporting, delivering a safe and supportive environment and promoting the

policy amongst staff.

Recognising that many transport staff work in a public environment, the policy sets out clear procedures for ensuring safety and security and eliminating the vulnerability that any member of staff facing the stress of domestic violence is likely to feel.

The policy also sets out the steps required to support and assist a member of staff subjected to the trauma of

domestic violence.

The model policy will now be circulated to all employers in the industries where RMT organises with the expectation that the document will be enthusiastically supported and adopted as workplace policy and practice.

RMT's national women's advisory committee chair Janet Cassidy said that it was important for the policy to be launched across the transport industry, especially on International Women's Day.

"Women need to know that support is there and that violence towards women and children will not be tolerated.

"Women are inclined to keep this violence to themselves and with welfare cuts looming it is expected that violence may

escalate.

"Don't keep it to yourself speak out, help is there," she said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the policy wasn't just words on paper, it is a working document aimed at protecting and supporting those subjected to domestic violence and RMT expects it to be endorsed and fully-implemented by employers across the transport sector.

"Delivering a safe and supportive working environment has to be an over-riding priority for staff and employers alike," he said.

WOMEN'S CHARTER

Delegates approved a revised women's charter.

RMT AT WOMEN'S TUC

Five RMT women members were among the 295 delegates from 35 other unions at this year's annual Women's Trade Union Congress. RMT delegates were Janet Cassidy, Jacky Darby, Tracy Darker, Shirley Fulton and Rosanna Ward. There was a good mix with two from rail, one London Underground, one shipper

and one from the rigs. Delegate Tracy Darker said that next year the union will be looking for a RMT representative from road transport.

Tracy Darker was also elected on to the TUC women's committee. There were 44 motions dealing with women and employment rights, the impact of welfare

reform and universal credit, equal pay, maternity rights, parenting and childcare.

Abortion rights, domestic violence and harassment and violence at work and transport poverty were also discussed. RMT's motions on the attack on women's rights and the impact of McNulty rail review on women

and transport were both well supported and carried unanimously.

If any member would like any more information on matters or motions discussed you can contact RMT national women's advisory member Tracy Darker on email: tracydarker19@btinternet.com

DELEGATION: from left to right Jacqueline Darby, Rosanna Ward, Tracy Darker, Shirley Fulton and Janet Cassidy

BRING AGENCY WORKERS IN-HOUSE



RMT Black Ethnic and Minority (BEMAC) activists meeting in Glasgow called for a national campaign to defend agency workers sacked on London Underground.

33 agency workers were sacked in December last year after management got rid of the agency employing them after the workers had won equal pay under legislation.

But LU terminated the contract of job agency Trainpeople, leaving the 33 – many of whom had worked for up to five years as agency staff – without a job.

Following a major campaign by RMT under the banner of “sack the agency, not the workers,” an agreement was reached whereby the staff would be re-deployed and directly employed on London Underground.

However many of the 33 have not been re-employed by LU after interviews by the company.

Finsbury Park branch member Petrit Mihaj calling on the BEMAC to join the campaign.

“We recruited this group of workers, organised them around

new equal pay legislation for agency workers,” he said.

“The company then decided to get rid of them by sacking the agency.

“Our slogan – sack the agency not the workers is to say, we want them back in house,” he said.

Young member Leon Brumant told delegates that the “Justice for the 33” campaign was what had inspired him to become active within the union.

“LU has used these workers as a testing ground for their unsavoury policies, it’s all part of this zero hours contract culture they want to introduce.

“They would love to have these zero-hours contracts for everyone,” he said.

One of the 33 sacked agency workers Alexis Bailey received an ovation after spelling out her pride in her job and the consequences of losing it, adding that she thanked the union for its support to her.

“This is not just a job for me, it is my life and I have been evicted from where I was living,” she said.

Other policies adopted by the

conference included support for BME pensioners who originate from outside the EU and condemnation of the media for fanning Islamophobia.

General secretary Bob Crow highlighted the class-based nature of the attacks on welfare, workers rights’ and massive increases in fees for taking tribunal cases, which the union has pledged to cover.

“While there is discrimination is happening, this committee is essential to this union and essential to the trade union movement to give advice to the executive committee on how we can eradicate discrimination against black and ethnic members.

“The government want to create massive unemployment and the employer can sit back with an abundance of labour and keeping the anti-trade union laws in place which stop workers fighting back,” he said.

He praised union activists for increasing membership by two per cent and wage increases for many workers but added that there was more to do.

“The activists are the ones

that hold the union together and we want more activists to get every workplace a trade union representative,” he said.

The expanded Doncaster education centre which the union has just opened “will put 1,000 representatives through this year, providing trained reps at a time when other trade unions are shutting down education centres,” he said.

He said that unions needed to reach out to the community to form wider alliances to welfare cuts.

“Trade unions can’t be seen just as a job club, that the only thing they do is look after people at work.

“It’s no good winning a wage increase when you go home if your daughter can’t get a house if she falls pregnant or your mum can’t get into an old peoples home.”

“Where the community defend a school, an old peoples home or another part of the welfare state, RMT has got to be seen in the middle, side by side with people fighting for those services,” he said.





SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

A well-attended health and safety conference held training sessions, discussions and debates to keep workers safe at work

Over 130 delegates at RMT's annual health and safety conference called for the union to launch a campaign across all grades to tackle the issue of slips, trips and falls, one of the biggest health and safety in the industry.

AJ Yates South London Rail branch called for a cross company campaign to highlight how exposed members are whilst going about their daily duties.

"It can range from conductors crossing footbridges with their ticketing machines to S&T staff crossing the tracks with their testing gear.

"All members could face financial hardship through an

accident at work caused from a slip, trip or fall often due to poorly maintained walkways or lack of inspections," he said.

Slips and trips are the most common cause of major injuries at work and 95 per cent of major slips result in broken bones and they can also be the initial causes for a range of other accidents.

According to the Health and Safety Executive(HSE),slips and trips are, on average, 33 per cent of all reported major injuries.

A TUC survey of safety representatives revealed that slips and trips are a major problem in 84 per cent of the workplaces surveyed in just one

year

HSE revealed that 46 people died in 2005/06 and 3,351 suffered major injuries as a result of a fall from height in the workplace.

Lead RMT Network Rail health and safety rep Alan Clews said that slips and trips was a big problem so the union had proposed a grass roots campaign to deal with it called 'bottom up'.

"We are seeking to raise awareness among local reps by holding workshops and facilitate training," he said.

Long hours

Conference agreed that excessive hours were being worked in the transport industry which was having a detrimental effect on the health and family life of workers.

Steve Wallace, Fort William branch said that this was due to the savage cuts being inflicted on the industry

"Poor management of resources and the bullying culture that is evident when it comes to budgets and time restraints to get the job done

was also playing a role," he said.

Conference called on the union to put the issue of excessive hours of work on the agenda of all regional organisers when they met management to secure better staffing levels.

A campaign was required to inform members of the effects of long hours on their health

"We could have a poster campaign along the lines of the Highway Code on speed limits only in hours worked 50,60,70,80.

"This would show the effects it can have on the body and how these excessive hours can lead to shorter lives and cause accidents," he said.

Welfare for track workers

Conference was deeply concerned about the lack of welfare facilities for track workers and the lack of planning by Network Rail in temporary worksites.

Steve Wallace said that management had stated that work vans are to be used as messing facilities

"It is not possible to keep these vans clean enough to consume food due to staff going in and out of the vans with dirty PPE," he said.

Conference called on the union to raise welfare facilities with Network Rail.

"Suitable and sufficient facilities must be provided in the immediate vicinity of every toilet including a supply of hot and cold (or warm) water, soap and a means of drying," he said.

ROAD SAFETY

Conference called for a campaign on how to reduce the risk and number of work related road accidents.

Barry West Mid-Cornwall Rail branch said that over the last few years it has become quite clear that many workers have been involved in road traffic related incidents at work, sadly many of them have lost their lives or sustained serious injuries.

"Fatigue is a major factor as is the long hour's culture and

the significant distances members often have to travel and this carnage must be stopped.

"We need to get assurances from each company on how they will reduce the risk and number of accidents," he said.

Ann Joss, Aberdeen said that it was an issue for the entire transport sector to take seriously.

Portsmouth branch submitted a successful resolution calling on the union to commission research about diseases and injuries caused by repeated exposure to the regular movements and vibrations experienced by transport staff working in the rail, bus and maritime sectors.

Conference agreed the union should circulate useful information and provide support on mitigating and compensating for such injuries.

Delegates heard that train guard members on Desiro Units have been reporting increased incidence of hip and knee

injuries and problems requiring medical intervention.

In the case of Desiro Units this is due to the suspension causing swaying and lurching. These injuries are not always recognised as work related and can result in members being downgraded or dismissed from work on ill health arrangements.

DIESEL FUMES

Conference called on the union to insist that where members are exposed to Diesel fumes they should be entitled to free health checks and screenings.

Mark Jeffrey, Portsmouth said that the 2012 World Health Organisation report revealed that Diesel fumes had been classed as a Carcinogen causing lung cancer and tumours in the bladder.

"We must demand that employers risk assess all exposure to diesel fumes, and that information is publicly shared with all employees," he said.

SHIPPING

Conference agreed that the union should look into the effects of fatigue on seafarers and report back to branches and regional councils.

Jim Boyle, Southampton said that foreign nationals were now commonly working 12 hours a day, seven days a week for three months at a time in the ferry sector and the cruise industry.

"Yet a recent independent fatigue study in Dover showed that it was not healthy or safe for seafarers to work two weeks at a time.

"As shipping companies are employing cheaper labour it is important to understand the effects of fatigue," he said.

Conference called for 'zero tolerance to aggression' signs to be put up on P&O vessels following number of on-board incidents.

Conference also called on the union to produce a new RMT health and safety handbook to educate seafarers and update them on legislation. ■

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STRATEGIES FOR ROAD FREIGHT

RMT's national road freight conference meeting in Leeds looking at building membership in the grade

More support for members and a bold strategy in the road freight transport sector is the only way membership levels will be increased, RMT executive committee member Mike Sargent said.

Addressing the national road freight conference, Mr Sargent spoke candidly about the need for greater communication between the members and the union.

"we need to get in the depots and organise.

"Once we set up a strategy of going into see members in the depots, we should be going back every couple of weeks," he said.

"It is pressure from the grassroots that dictates events and what happens so you need to let us know," he said.

Assistant general secretary Mick Cash said that a robust organising strategy was key for the sector to retain members and more importantly grow from the current 1000 members it has at present.

"We've done the thinking and talking so we need to walk the walk and get it sorted.

"We shouldn't take members for granted and once in the door with recognition we have to keep it open," said Mr Cash.

Mick referred to some RMT members obtaining 3.8 per cent pay rises against the tide of bosses attacks and rising inflation through "strong organisation".

"There is no difference in farmers getting screwed over their milk than our members in logistics working for Marks and Spencer's getting a raw deal," he said.

Mick went on to highlight changes to unfair dismissal claims which will see workers charged £1,200 for taking up the case and a 20,000 bill if they are unsuccessful.

But he pointed out RMT would cover the costs, adding that this should be used a recruiting tool for non-union members.

"An ordinary non-unionised worker wouldn't be able to foot that bill and take on a big company who unfairly dismisses them," he said.

RMT president Peter Pinkey



AWARD: Assistant general secretary Mick Cash presents Tony Marsden with his 25-year badge



Delegates with Mick Cash



AWARD: Assistant general secretary Mick Cash presents Shaun Matthews with his 25-year badge

was well received by delegates as he slammed bosses in the transport sector who are set to slash 4,000 signalling jobs in favour of automation.

"This is also about job opportunities for the next generation disappearing," he said.

Peter said the political situation was bleak, criticising the TUC for not building on two successful marches, the last one in October last year against the government's austerity measures which are crippling public services.

"It is all well and good attending those two marches but it is good to have demonstrations but you need to follow them up

"My personal opinion is we need a general strike and the TUC needs to get some balls and do something about it," he said.

Looking at the wider economic situation, Peter said he did not blame the bankers for being bankers the group many blame for the financial crisis.

"I don't blame the Tory government, they are looking after their class. We need to start looking after ours and our union has a reputation as a fighting union," he said.

But remaining upbeat, Peter added that new reps were being trained up every week at the new education centre in Doncaster, to take the union message into workplaces up and down the country.

"This will release full time officers to do pay deals and organising."

"Reps who go on those courses should be confident to represent members."

"Many of these young members coming through are activists and the future is looking good," he said.

Delegates agreed a number of motions calling on the officers of the union to initiate "pay negotiations with a formula that does not widen the gap between higher and lower rates of pay in the road freight transport sector" and reduced membership rate for City Link call centre and office staff. ■

President's column



MAKING THE GRADES

The first conference that I attended this year was the young members gathering which took place in Newcastle.

This conference has special meaning to me as I attended the very first one as a Council of Executives member in 2004 in Plymouth.

This was a bold move by the union and one that has reaped dividends. It was exciting to take part in that very first conference and many of the delegates that year went on to bigger things within the union, including Nick Quirk and Steve Skelly who are currently members of the C of E. Indeed it is Nicks second term.

That first conference set the tone for what future conferences would be and what they could achieve. It is now a common sight at annual general meetings to see young members addressing conference.

This is vital because if the union is to have a secure future, then we need members from a younger generation in place to take over from the old guard. We need educated, talented, and especially dedicated, to take up the baton and take this union forward. At Newcastle I saw plenty of ability and feel confident that the future is in good hands.

There were some farewells this year because of age, and of these I would especially like to thank Jayesh Patel for all the hard work he has put in over the years and I am certain that he has a good future with us. I am equally certain that the conference will flourish with Gaz Jackson at the helm. He has a lot of capable comrades to help him such as Lorna, Amy and Rafa to name just a few.

Next up was the signallers' conference, my own grade, which took place in Weston-Super-Mare. This is a conference that is growing in numbers again and it needs to when you consider the challenges ahead for the grades involved. The conference now takes place in February and this has enabled them to send resolutions to the AGM and I have had the honour of moving some of them.

This was a very good conference and I was given a very warm welcome by my own grade. However, I found it very hard not to be able to take part in the debates!

There was a special significance to conference this year, as it was the first time it had met since the announcement by Network Rail of the mass closures of signal boxes. However, after listening to the debates, I am confident that the grade is more than equal to the challenge ahead. This will include the fight to keep jobs, ensure PTR&R is adhered to and to make sure all new signalling centres are staffed by signallers only. It will be a long hard struggle and we will need to be vigilant every step of the way.

It was good to see old friends, but also heartening to see a lot of new delegates. As long as this mixture of old and new continues we are in safe hands. The final conference that I have attended so far was the health and safety conference in Doncaster. This is a massive conference with well over 130 delegates in attendance. Although I have never been a health and safety rep, I do appreciate the large workload and huge responsibility that they have. Again, we face a challenge, as for the first time in over 100 years health and safety laws are to be overhauled. Our reps will be in the front line in the fight to keep safety ahead of the pursuit of profit. We need all their knowledge and skill to prevent more disasters happening on the rail, sea, oil rigs, buses and road transport.

Finally I would like to thank all those who help to put these conferences in place. All three conferences ran like clockwork, and this is down to the branch volunteers and in the case of the health and safety and Young Members conferences Paul, Stephanie, and Andy. Thanks also to conference chairs and secretaries for making sure the agendas went smoothly.

Peter Pinkney

RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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

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

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

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



PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS





LEGAL

GOVERNMENT ATTACKS LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Andrew Hutson of Thompsons Solicitors on how the government has changed the way personal injury claims in England and Wales are funded.

The government's devastating attack on access to justice for injured people means that from 1 April, if you're injured in an accident (at work or otherwise) or develop a work-related disease in England or Wales, only trade union members and their families will continue to benefit from a free and independent legal service that guarantees them 100% of their compensation.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act became law last year, in spite of massive opposition from the trade unions, victim support groups and civil rights organisations. The media only reported the Legal Aid cuts, but the Act also ripped up the current arrangements that enable genuinely injured people to get legal representation without the risk of having to pay from their own pocket if their claim is unsuccessful.

This is because the guilty party, usually the employer or their liability insurer, will no longer have to pay the insurance premium that the injured person takes out to cover the cost of things like medical reports and court fees should they lose.

Such costs, called disbursements in legal jargon, are usually vital in order to pursue a case and to prove who or what caused the accident that led to the injury, the exact nature of the injury and the short and long term prognosis. But they can cost thousands of pounds.

As well as removal of the losing defendant's obligation to pay the insurance premium, the successful claimant lawyer will no longer be able to claim what is known as a "success fee" from the losing

side. This fee, usually paid by the employer or their liability insurer, recognised the risk that the claimant's lawyer would not get paid anything for their work should the claim fail.

This enabled them to take the risk of no payment in unsuccessful cases, meaning that they could take on cases that might be risky, such as complex injury claims and test cases.

Success fees haven't been banned by the government, but the injury victim and not the guilty party will have to pay them. Lawyers will be allowed to take up to 25% of a claimant's compensation to cover this.

Although many lawyers may continue after 1 April to promise no deductions from compensation, they are likely to refuse to take on cases that are anything other than straightforward, which won't require lots of investigation and evidence (which is rare in work-related accident and disease cases) and which they cannot be sure will succeed.

Or they may agree to take on a complicated claim, but only if the claimant is able to pay up front for fees, investigations and medical reports.

An injured person doesn't have to accept being referred to a law firm provided by an insurance company, just because they may have legal expenses insurance added onto their household or motor policies. Injured people have a right to genuinely independent legal advice, not to be told what their claim is worth by a lawyer who has been given the case by an insurance company.

That is why RMT has been working closely with Thompsons since LASPO



became law, in order to work out ways in which claims can still be supported. As a result we have negotiated an agreement with our lawyers Thompsons which will continue to guarantee members and their family members in England and Wales 100% of their damages and the ability to instruct lawyers directly.

To benefit from this service, members who have been injured at or outside of work or have developed a work-related disease or other condition should contact the TUCH (Trade Union Call Handling Service) on 08457 125 495. Family members injured in non-work related accidents and in road traffic accidents can also benefit from the service.

Details will be taken over the phone and are sent direct to the nearest office of Thompsons.

There are no changes to arrangements for cases outside of England and Wales. Members and their families who have been injured or have developed a work-related disease or other condition in Scotland will continue to benefit from the arrangements which the RMT has with the union's Scottish solicitors, Drummond Miller LLP, who can be contacted on 0141 332 0086. ■



FIGHTING MCNULTY

The supervisory, clerical and other salaried grades conference met in Great Yarmouth and discussed opposing the use of agency staff, the McNulty report and ticket office closures

Norwich branch secretary Alan Jary welcomed the 68th supervisory, clerical and other salaried grades to Great Yarmouth, a town which once boasted three railway stations and a proud railway history.

Alan pointed out that, 50 years after the Beeching cuts, now just the one station remained and its railway heritage was hanging by a thread.

However conference was well attended with 28 delegates present and conference president Ricky Goodman spoke of how great it was to see so many new faces present.

Assistant general secretary Steve Hedley addressed the latest attacks on rail in the era of the McNulty report, widely known as Beeching 2.

He said that the effects of the report for this grade boiled down to a "wholesale attack" on the industry.

"Ticket offices will face widespread closures and cuts to opening hours for those offices at mainline stations that are spared the axe.

"All the while the train operating companies are attempting to cut members pay by 25 per cent across the industry.

"It is vital that the union has speaks out through our branches and through our reps to spread the message to members that the industry will be decimated," he said.

Steve said that if we don't defeat the McNulty Report and its recommendations within five years the industry, as we know it, will be gone forever.

"McNulty recommends a 25 per cent cut in jobs and the current policy can be described as a 'salami style attack' whereby jobs are taken out here and there and nothing is universal.

We must campaign, produce leaflets and lobby MPs and whatever else it takes in order stop the McNulty recommendations from being implemented," added Steve.

Steve highlighted the growing threat posed by the train operating companies introducing casualised, agency staff across the industry.

"This will allow train operators to cut pay and conditions and so that they do not need to pay pensions, sick pay or holiday pay.

"This was something that had started off in the cleaning and engineering grades but has now spread to station staff in ticket

offices and gate-lines and this will continue to spread wherever there are unfilled vacancies," he said.

Steve spoke of the need for a "credible campaign of industrial action" to fight against these attacks inspired by the campaigns fought in the past that secured these hard fought terms and conditions.

"Working class people have only gone forward together when they have stood together," he said.

TICKET OFFICES

Delegates called for all train operating companies to provide a witness for staff who empty ticket vending machines and not to rely solely on CCTV footage.

Richard Walker, Feltham branch said that this would deter any potential action by the public and to provide a greater sense of security. Richard also proposed that all train operating companies implement queuing systems in ticket offices that have more than one window.

He said that this would be "fair for passengers and fair for staff as well.

"I have been involved at stations where we haven't had a queuing system; you deal with the next enquiry and people

behind start getting agitated and then start verbally abusing you," he said.

AGENCY STAFF

Deborah Rios-Alonso, Waterloo branch called on all train operating companies to fill all the vacancies they have within the grades represented by the conference

Brian Wood, Feltham supported the call but warned that vacancies must not be allowed to be filled by agency staff. Andy Budds, Leeds City branch also condemned the widespread use of agency staff in filling core railway roles.

Andy presented a compelling case of the dangers concerning the increasingly widespread use of agency staff and showed a video by the Trainpeople.co.uk agency who boast of being able to fill any vacancy whilst cutting staffing costs and overheads.

The following lively debate revealed that the problem of casualisation was endemic in the railway industry. Unanimous support from the floor also showed the strength of feeling the issue evoked amongst the membership and the desire to fight casualisation and the McNulty proposals. ■

VIBRATING INJURY COMPENSATION

An RMT member who suffered permanent damage to his hands caused by excessive levels of vibration from workplace tools has received substantial sum compensation.

Kevin Thornton developed Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS), a condition which causes numbness and loss of grip, through working with vibrating tools for 22 years for Network Rail and its predecessors, including British Rail.

Employers failed to monitor and control the levels of vibration he was exposed to in order to ensure they stayed within safe limits. Instead he used vibrating tools like rock drills on a daily basis for

hours at a time.

Mr Thornton first began to suffer from symptoms of HAVS in 2009 and was diagnosed with the condition shortly afterwards. RMT instructed its lawyers Thompsons Solicitors to investigate a claim for compensation. After the claim was started Mr Thornton was moved to another job which did not involve using vibrating tools.

Network Rail admitted liability and settled the claim out of court.

Mr Thornton said: "My first 22 years working on the railway saw me using all types of vibrating tools every day for hours at a time.

"It was only relatively

recently that my exposure was reduced but I was still using a disc cutter until Thompsons informed my employer that I was claiming compensation.

"Now that I'm no longer using vibrating tools my hands are much better but I have been told that I will suffer symptoms for the rest of my life and that they could get worse with time," he said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that employers had known since 1976 that excessive exposure to vibration can cause industrial injury.

"Any employer with staff using vibrating tools must have a policy in place to ensure they are monitored and

are not exposed to excessive use.

"Network Rail is a large employer and many of its staff use vibrating tools and it is not good enough that it did not protect this worker against this condition," he said.

Jon Carlisle from Thompsons Solicitors said that Network Rail had no excuse for causing Mr Thornton to develop this painful and debilitating condition.

"Health and safety regulations are in place to protect workers from this type of industrial injury and employers who abide by those rules are protected from expensive legal action like this," he said. ■

REVERSING BEECHING

Retired RMT member and Campaign for Borders Rail activist Lorne Anton says its time to reverse Beechings rail cuts

At the time of the 50th anniversary of Beeching Plan to 'rationalise' Britain's railways it seems a good time to look at one of the main campaigns to re-open lines closed as a result of Beeching's vandalism.

The Waverley Route, through the Scottish Borders, from Edinburgh to Carlisle, was a Main Line route which was closed in 1969 by the then Labour government. The closure devastated the Border mill towns of Galashiels, Selkirk, Melrose and Hawick and left the region to increasingly become low waged with an increasingly aging population as a result of young people having to move away for employment and further education.

In 1999 the Campaign for Borders Rail (CBR) was founded and one of its first activities was the collection of 18,000 signatures for a petition to the Scottish Parliament in support of the re-opening of the line.

In 2006 the Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Waverley Bill to re-open the first 31 miles of the route from Edinburgh to Tweedbank, near Galashiels, and in late 2012 it was announced that this section would be open for traffic in late 2015. This will be the biggest rail opening in Scotland since the Fort William to Mallaig line opened at the end of the 19th Century. A major contributor to this re-opening was the huge amount of research, publicity and political work done by CBR to promote the re-opening.

Rail re-openings in Scotland have all been a huge success with, in every case, actual passenger numbers far outstripping the predicted number of passengers in the so called business case. In some

cases, Stirling to Alloa, for example, passenger numbers are double those predicted.

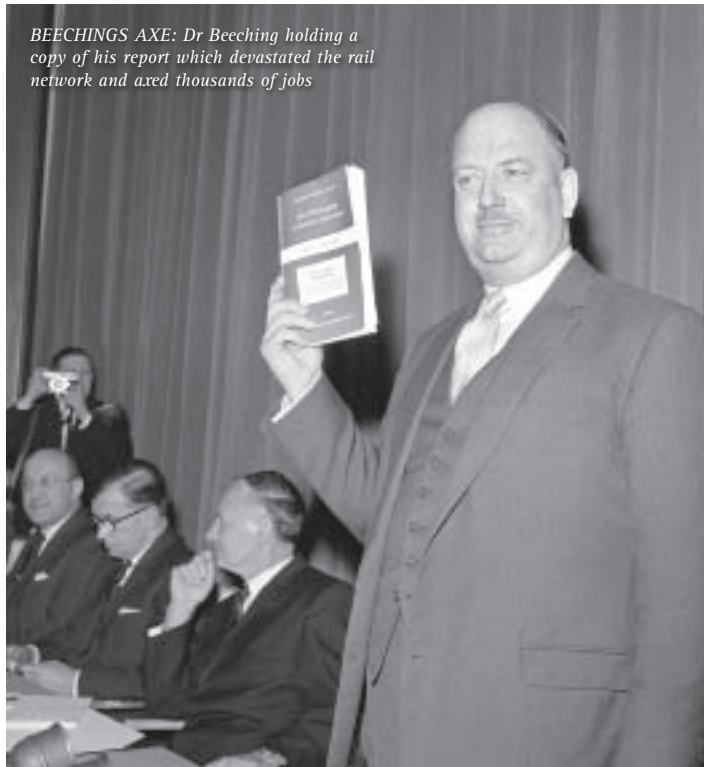
Jackie McGuire, former lead officer for the Stirling – Alloa re-opening, told a CBR AGM that the re-opening had led to "increased economic growth and inward investment, improved community pride and confidence, created social benefits in education and employment, promoted regeneration, reduced congestion and emissions and promoted social inclusion", clearly value for money.

Already ScotRail and Network Rail contractors are recruiting new Staff in Midlothian and the Borders. The line will boost employment and bring economic benefits to the South of Scotland economy and when completed the line will be operated and maintained by RMT and ASLEF Staff, including those in my own Branch, Edinburgh No1.

Your union has taken a stand by joining and supporting our campaign to re-opening the Waverley Route and that support is hugely appreciated. Across the UK there are re-opening campaigns to reverse the vandalism and damage caused by Beeching and RMT is taking a lead in the trade union movement in supporting those many campaigns. Re-openings lead to re-connected communities, and all the benefits mentioned above, and they also lead to a bigger and better network and more jobs and opportunities for those who work in our industry.

The damage, destruction and sheer vandalism of Beeching can, with the RMT's help, experience and input, be reversed. ■

BEECHINGS AXE: Dr Beeching holding a copy of his report which devastated the rail network and axed thousands of jobs



RMT DESIGNS AND IMAGES AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD

RMT activists can now download top quality images and designs from the Organising Unit's 'flickr' website.

Hundreds of photos that capture RMT's unique image have been uploaded as well as many poster designs.

Alan Pottage said: "We encourage our activists to produce their own branch or Regional Council publications so we felt it would be helpful if we created a website where activists can download excellent images and designs".

Members can order a selection posters and leaflets from the org unit base in Doncaster (org.unit@rmt.org.uk) but they can also be downloaded and printed from the flickr website www.flickr.com/photos/rmtorganisingunit/.

"We also design a new full page advert for the Rail News and Rail Staff magazines every month and these have now been uploaded.

"No other union in the country designs as much as RMT, our designs are always eye catching and powerful - we don't pull our punches. It therefore makes sense to share the designs with our activists.

"Our site is being updated all the time so we expect demand to keep increasing," he said.

Letters...

THANK YOU FROM IRAN

Dear Bob Crow,

I, Reza Shahabi Zakaria, as an imprisoned worker, treasurer and executive board member of the syndicate of workers of Tehran bus company, thank you, and RMT and the British labour movement, for your support and solidarity; I owe my temporary release to your ongoing support as well as solidarity initiatives by other workers and labour organisations in Iran and the world. I hope the day comes when no workers anywhere in the world will have to face prison for their struggles in support of the working class interests.

My dear comrades and fellow workers: on behalf of my colleagues at the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company as well as other labour activists and family members, I am grateful of your selfless efforts, and I hope the day will come when I can repay your kindness.

In Solidarity,

Reza Shahabi Zakaria

A DEBT OF GRATITUDE

Dear editor,

This letter is a debt of gratitude to a first class union that knows how to help its membership.

I would like to say a massive thank you to RMT for their very professional assistance when I had a car accident last year.

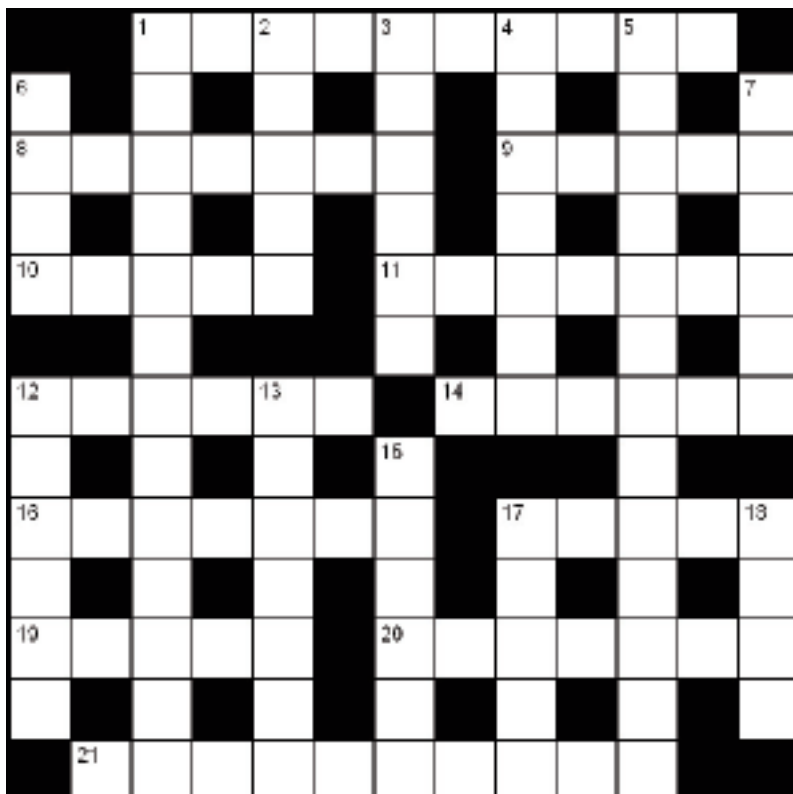
Following the crash I was immediately referred through the union to the criminal defence team at Powell, Spencer & Partners solicitors. They ably assisted me in preparing for my day in court and through my counsel Stephen Fitzpatrick I escaped a driving ban.

This was my first serious driving offence and I am convinced that had I not been a union member the fess charged would have been much higher.

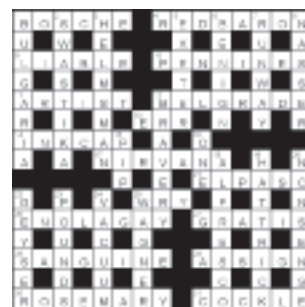
In conclusion I would like to comment both the union and the very reputable firm of solicitors for their excellent legal advice and assistance.

Yours, (name supplied)

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Barry Augood, Happisburgh.

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

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 With equal chances (5-5)
- 8 Give as part payment (5,2)
- 9 Warning signal (5)
- 10 Sprite (5)
- 11 Everlasting (7)
- 12 Candy (6)
- 14 Muscular (6)
- 16 Endurance (7)
- 17 Do business (5)
- 19 High quality porcelain (5)
- 20 Royal ruler (7)
- 21 Exact opposite (10)

DOWN

- 1 Disintegration (13)
- 2 Restored (5)
- 3 Over there (6)
- 4 Scrutinize (7)
- 5 Large carnivorous dinosaur (13)
- 6 Amaze (4)
- 7 Disconnect (6)
- 12 Cut in half (6)
- 13 Art of folding paper (7)
- 15 Friendliness (6)
- 17 Device for grabbing objects (5)
- 18 Repeat (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 APPLICATION FORM — please complete your application along with the attached Direct Debit.

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

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

[illegible]

2 Marital Status

married ☐ partner ☐ single ☐ divorced ☐ **Drivers Licence No.**

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch													
Job Description															

4 Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐

5 Membership Status

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

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

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

8 Next of Kin

Address

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

Your signature _____

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

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

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

Date

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 /

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 /

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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

9	7	4	2	8	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Reference Number

[illegible]

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date _____

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



JOIN RMT BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION



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

0800 376 3706

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

Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

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

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

