

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

20 YEARS OF RAIL PRIVATISATION LOOKS LIKE THIS



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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.

BRANCH NUMBER

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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	
B. Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	White and Black Caribbean	White and Black African	White and Asian	Other mixed/multiple ethnic background	
C. Asian/Asian British	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other Asian background
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E. Other ethnic group	Arab	Other ethnic group, please specify			

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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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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

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Branch Sort Code

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Originator's Identification Number

9	7	1	7	4	5
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Reference Number

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Date

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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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- 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.
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EDITORIAL



20 LOST YEARS

Twenty years ago the Tories privatised our railway network and handed it over to the banks and carpetbaggers.

Today we have the highest rail fares in the world, record profits for the privateers, record public subsidies, social dumping, de-industrialisation of rail manufacturing, de-staffing, growing casualisation and job cuts all due to the market being forced into what is a natural monopoly.

This model of job cuts, fare hikes, ticket office closures and casualisation is also being imposed on London Underground against the wishes of those who live and work in the capital.

A survey commissioned by RMT has revealed that over 70 per cent of tube users would be concerned if ticket offices were closed down and over half of tube users had experienced being unable to buy tickets from a machine because it was broken.

It is no surprise to see that nearly eight out of ten commuters are worried about the cost of travel when they see their fares going up while staffing and accessibility are heading in the opposite direction.

Yet the EU's so called 'Fourth Rail Package' aims to enforce the compulsory competitive tendering of rail passenger services and separation of infrastructure and operations.

This would mean that the currently publicly owned East Coast will have to be put out to tender and unleash widespread social dumping, attacks on jobs and conditions across Europe.

This disastrous EU business

model of privatisation is being applied to all our industries from postal services to health care, turning them into cash machines for big global corporations which are only interested in profit.

That is why RMT is backing the No2EU Euro election campaign next year.

The effects of unfettered capitalism is also being felt in the bus industry as services around Plymouth face the axe as the private sector pulls out because there is no more money to be squeezed out of the declining service they provide in the name of profit.

This month it will be my privilege to address a rally marking the 100th anniversary of the Bridgwater TUC and the re-launch of the Exeter TUC.

The renewal of trades council activity across the country is to be welcomed as there has never been a more important time for the trade unions to fight back against Tory and Lib Dem policies of austerity and cuts.

This renewed spirit of campaigning will have a pivotal role to play in the battles ahead on core issues like bus services, rail jobs and safety and the future of our shipping industry.

They will stand alongside groups of workers and communities in struggle defending their services.

Whether it's the fire-fighters, teachers, nurses or postal workers the watchword is solidarity and the slogan 'an injury to one is an injury to all' has never rung truer.

Bob Crow

FIRST GREAT WESTERN STRIKE BALLOT

RMT is balloting all grades at First Great Western for industrial action following the complete breakdown of industrial relations.

The ballot was launched after First Group secured a multi-million pound, two year roll-over of their Great Western franchise.

For months RMT has been in dispute on a range of issues impacting on FGW members including unfair dismissals, abuse of the disciplinary procedures, bullying, casualisation and the continued

use of agency staff.

The extended use of both agency and contractor staff such as MITIE, G4S and Rail Gourmet is becoming an ever common objective of First Great Western in its continuous pursuit of profits.

The union believes that casualisation of the workforce cannot be allowed to spread throughout all grades of the industry and the union will resist casualisation at all levels.

The reality of doing nothing would allow both First Great Western and its

agency/contractors to implement the wholesale erosion of terms and conditions, less job security and ever diminishing safety levels.

As a result of the failure to reach any sort of agreement due to management intransigence, RMT is now balloting all FGW members.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that members had had enough of being kicked from pillar to post and management should be under no illusion that unless a satisfactory agreement is

reached the union would continue with a campaign of industrial and political action.

"With First securing a highly lucrative extension to their Great Western contract there is no excuse for them to blame the failure to reach agreement on the uncertainty over the franchise.

"It is also clear that they have the money available now to employ adequate numbers of permanent staff and to treat them with dignity and respect in every workplace," he said. ■

THAMESLINK JOB FIGHT

RMT has launched a fight to defend an estimated 500 jobs threatened by the new merged Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise due to come into operation later next year.

The Invitation To Tender document produced by the government is designed to follow the McNulty Rail Review cuts recommendations and axe all guards from the new combined franchise and move the entire operation over to Driver Only Operation.

There are also unspecified cuts to ticket offices and station staffing that will only be quantified fully in the confidential tender submissions from approved

bidders and which are impossible to calculate.

However, there are 400 guard's jobs immediately at risk with scores more jobs certain to come into the firing line on the stations and platforms as the bidders seek to cut the headcount and exploit the lucrative London commuter routes for every penny that they can regardless of the implications for service quality and public safety.

The combined Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise is due to come into operation in September 2014 having been delayed following the West Coast franchising fiasco. The approved bidders, who will now be making

secret submissions to the government, are Abellio, FirstGroup, Govia, MTR and Stagecoach.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was clear that guards are to be thrown off all the services with the whole lot moved over to Driver Only Operation, threatening jobs, safety and quality of service purely in the interests of private greed.

"The services covered by this new franchise charge some of the highest fares and both trains and platforms are constantly rammed solid, reinforcing the critical safety role of the train and station staff in preventing accidents, crushing and the lethal

prospect of passengers being squeezed onto the tracks.

"Axing guards and station staff is a lethal gamble with public safety on some of the busiest commuter routes where demand continues to grow forcing more and more people into a system which is already bursting at the seams.

"The axing of these posts would not only compromise safety but would lead to more delays and disruption as passengers are left to fend for themselves and services grind to a halt.

"RMT will work with passenger groups and our sister unions to fight these outrageous proposals," he said. ■

MITIE CLEANERS FIGHT FOR LIVING WAGE



RMT cleaning members working for sub-contractors Mitie on First Great Western took strike action earlier this month demanding a living wage and an end to zero hours contract.

Pickets were out in force across the franchise in a show of support for the lowest paid groups of staff on the lucrative First Great Western service.

Following a claim for a substantial increase in rates of pay and improvements to conditions of service the company only offered a two per cent increase effective from the April 2013 anniversary date, effectively a pay cut.

Yet First Great Western (FGW) and Mitie continue to make significant profits at members' expense off the backs of these staff.

The union claim included increased sick pay in line with FGW rates, shift and weekend rates, overtime and bank holiday rates, travel facilities on FGW and an end to zero

hour contracts. These were all rejected by the company in an act of provocation which sparked the current dispute.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that members working for Mitie had shown guts and determination throughout this long fight for workplace and pay justice.

"This battle is about achieving a living wage and ending the scandal of zero hours contracts on a rail franchise which is multi-million pound money-spinner for the private companies bleeding it dry, while those doing the dirty jobs to keep the services clean are treated with pure and utter contempt.

"First recently landed a jackpot rollover with a two year contract extension on Great Western that will make them and their sub-contractors a fortune and cleaners deserve a living wage, decent sick pay and benefits and an end to the evil of zero hours contracts," he said. ■





NO2EU ELECTION CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF

No2EU kicked off its 2014 Euro election campaign at the TUC Congress in Bournemouth calling on the trade union movement to wake up to EU rules that are condemning a generation to permanent austerity.

John Hendy QC gave a powerful warning about EU plans to launch a major attack on the concept of national collective bargaining agreements between trade unions and employers.

"Under EU treaties and EU court judgements, big business rights to make money override the human rights of working people to defend themselves," he said.

He said that EU structures were undermining workers' rights particularly in member

states in the Eurozone suffering permanent austerity as part of 'bail-out' agreements such as Ireland, Portugal and Greece.

He described the moves as a 'gamechanger' as the myth of 'Social Europe' was being dropped completely in favour of the EU's 'fundamental four freedoms', the free movement of capital, goods, services and labour.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that unemployment in the euro zone was over a record 12 per cent and unending austerity was being imposed across the continent.

"25 years after European Commission president Jacques Delors promised TUC Congress full employment, better workers' rights and protection from Tory policies in return for full

support for the 'European project', it is clear we were sold a pup.

"Across the EU, health care, education, transport and every other public service face EU demands for privatisation and opening to market forces which, of course, the Con Dem coalition is only too happy to oblige.

"The neoliberal Tory-boys of UKIP should not have a monopoly for opposing a corporate, anti-democratic EU whose policies they support.

"Our movement created democracy in the 19th century with The Chartists and the demand for universal suffrage which is now being taken from us in the 21st century by the EU.

"The only rational course is to leave the EU and rebuild

Britain with socialist policies," he said.

Bill Greenshields of the People's Charter warned that all TUC motions opposing austerity and calling for public ownership were illegal under EU rules.

"Capitalism is built into all the EU treaties it is what the EU was designed to do," he said.

Former Labour MP Dave Nellist warned that the EU was using the current economic crisis to impose austerity and transfer wealth from the poor to the wealthy.

For more information on No2EU policies go to www.no2eu.com





NO2EU: Transport unions backing the European Transport Workers day of action against EU rail privatisation protesting outside European Commission Office in London and Edinburgh this month.

Visit rmtv.org.uk
for a full video

STOP EU RAIL PRIVATISATION!

Transport unions backed the European Transport Workers day of action against EU rail privatisation earlier this month with protests outside European Commission Offices in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh.

The European Union's 'Fourth Rail Package' aims to enforce the privatisation of rail services across the continent, including the compulsory competitive tendering of rail passenger services and separation of infrastructure and operations.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the latest in a long line of EU rail diktats was designed to create a 'Single European Rail Market' which would entrench privatisation in Britain and across Europe.

"It would mean that the currently publicly owned East Coast will have to be put out to tender and unleash a widespread

attack on the jobs and conditions of rail workers and social dumping which will spark a race to the bottom of rail workers conditions.

"This disastrous EU business model of privatisation is being applied to all our industries from postal services to health care, turning them into cash machines for the big global corporations which are only interested in profit," he said.

A European Transport Workers Federation statement said that competition would ramp up pressure to cut costs leading to job cuts, outsourcing and sub-contracting of services and increase the use of agency workers.

"Liberalisation and fragmentation do not bring any good to the railways and we have to stop it now," it said.



RMT *at* TUC



RMT enjoys successful TUC Congress, winning seats on the executive committee and support for union policies from fighting austerity to renationalisation

Lorna Tooley



This year's TUC Congress taking place in Bournemouth for the first time in 25 years elected RMT general secretary Bob Crow to the ruling TUC Executive and RMT member Peter Hall was re-elected as chair of the TUC's General Purposes Committee.

Bob Crow also won the day in an impassioned speech making the case for the TUC and affiliates to consider all options in fighting austerity and the attack on workers' including the need for coordinated industrial action between unions

Darren Proctor



and consideration of a general strike.

Bob also moved the union's motion calling for the TUC to support referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union and while it was not possible to win the vote on this

occasion he certainly won the argument.

It is clear it is only a matter of time before the TUC has to take a position on this vital question.

RMT President Peter Pinkney successfully supported the

motion on rail re-nationalisation with our sister rail unions with a passionate plea for the railways to be put back in the public sector where they belonged.

RMT delegate Glenroy Watson moved an emergency motion condemning the London Transport cuts and the Tory proposals for a strike ban.

RMT delegate Willie Shearer spoke eloquently on the need for the UK to have a proper maritime strategy and successfully seconded a motion on the subject while fellow seafarer.

Executive member Darren Procter successfully moved the RMT position on improved safety rights for seafarers and offshore workers and remembering the 25 years since the Piper Alpha disaster.

Bob Crow also seconded an emergency motion highlighting safety concerns following the North Sea helicopter tragedy with unity among the offshore unions to do all that was possible to prevent another tragedy.

Youth RMT delegate Lorna Tooley made an impassioned and moving speech on the motion that had been submitted by the TUC's LGBT conference highlighting the escalating attacks and threats to LGBT people that are taking place in many countries.

It was a proud moment for the union and LGBT members in particular as the motion Lorna moved had originally been submitted to the LGBT conference by the RMT.

All the other RMT delegates made contributions either in the Congress Hall, within the delegation or in a number of successful fringe meetings hosted by RMT, including Ruth Strong, Alex Gordon, Daren Ireland, Sean McGowan, Sean Hoyle, David O'Donnell, Mansur Khan, Deborah Rio Alonso, Keith Simpson and Jared Wood.

If you are interested in being a delegate to the TUC next year please contact your branch secretary.

Parliamentary column



FIGHTING RAIL PRIVATISATION

While fireworks will light up the sky on November 5 the date is also a dark day in the history of our railways. Twenty years ago this day the Railways Act passed into law leading to the break up and privatisation of British Rail.

For all its faults, British Rail was an integrated, publicly owned railway where the majority of rail workers were employed to work together for the public good. And despite being starved of investment, BR was one of the most efficient railways in Europe.

Today our railways are a patchwork of competing railway companies, with workers employed on a variety of different conditions, where the companies put profits before passengers.

All the independent research shows that privatisation has been a failure. The railways now cost three times as much to run. Passengers pay the highest fares in Europe and there has been minimal private sector investment. Passenger growth has been not been due to privatisation, it's been the result of economic growth and massive public investment.

Directly Operated Railways on the East Coast Main Line has shown that publicly owned and operated railways in the UK can deliver increased performance while receiving much lower subsidy than private operators and thus returning significantly more to the taxpayer, which can be reinvested in the service.

But just as we are making progress in making the case for public ownership new European Union regulations will impose the privatisation of rail passenger services across the European Union.

The set of proposals contained within the EU's "Fourth Railway Package" will make the tendering of rail passenger services mandatory, increase open access operation and will impose the separation of train operation and infrastructure management in every EU member state.

In short, the Fourth Railway Package will impose the model of fragmented and privatised railways that has been an abject failure in the UK. Implementing these measures across the EU would be a similar disaster for passengers and taxpayers alike.

We are now in a very important battle and it is vital that RMT members lobby both their MP and MEPs to make the case for public ownership.

The EU's proposals can be defeated if, in the UK and Europe, we mobilise enough opposition and make the case for public ownership.

That's why on November 5 I will be supporting the national day of action called by the RMT-backed Action for Rail campaign, where the unions will be leafleting as many stations as possible.

It does not take long to contact your MEP and MP. Simply go to the RMT / Action for Rail website and it will take just a few moments. It will not take long to ask your family, friends and workmates to do the same. Politicians respond to pressure. I know! Let's start applying some.

Ian Davidson is the Labour MP for Glasgow South West and a member of the RMT Parliamentary Group.



20 YEARS OF DANGEROUS DOGMA

RMT general secretary Bob Crow looks back at 20 years of rail privatisation and calls for an end to the experiment

You cannot look at any aspect of our railways in 2013 without encountering the pernicious impact of privatisation.

The highest fares in the world, record profits for the privateers, record public subsidies, de-industrialisation of rail manufacturing, de-staffing, growing casualisation and job cuts all due to the market being forced into what is a natural monopoly.

It is worth reminding ourselves that more than twenty years ago the then Tory chair of the Transport Committee warned

that selling off rail would become a 'Poll Tax on wheels'. I rarely agree with a Tory but two decades on you can't odds that logic.

The rail franchising fiasco is becoming all too clear as the real cost to the British people emerges from the secretive discussions between the current contract holders and transport officials.

I defy anyone to explain, let alone defend, the level of sheer incompetence, systemic failure and political arrogance that led to the franchising timetable

being spiked. The current contractors are now in a monopoly provider position where they can extract whatever price they want out of the government or bring the trains to a halt.

That is unregulated, unashamed industrial action, without any ballot, in defence of the corporate profiteering that would see my union dragged into the courts with our assets sequestered if we dared to adopt similar tactics. Talk about onr law for the boss class and another for the working class.

It's that same rotten culture that has led to casualisation of railway jobs in an industry where security and a sense of common pride and purpose used to be a cornerstone.

All of those positive benefits of working in the rail sector are

threatened by the creeping introduction of agencies offering zero hours contracts where safety-critical jobs are delivered on what is effectively nothing better than the lump.

The agencies, and the so-called 'payroll companies' which are nothing more than a cover for bogus self-employment, serve a political purpose – to create a reserve pool of labour, hired and fired at will and designed to undermine the pay and conditions of the permanent workforce.

Add to that the fact that the safety implications are horrific. Fatigue, competence, PPE and communications are just some of the issues repeatedly raised by RMT safety representatives.

Indeed, following the publication of RMT's report *The Great Payroll Rip-Off*, Simon Burns, the Transport Minister,



wrote to the union setting out his concerns which had been raised with ORR in light of the RMT's campaign saying that: "The regulator [ORR] welcomes Network Rail's aspiration to cease the use of zero hour contracts for any safety critical staff".

All well and good you might think accept that once again the two-handed role of the ORR, as both regulator and budget holder, raises its head with Network Rail contradicting the letter to RMT from Mr Burns with their own plans to reduce track staff by 800 in the next control period by ..."making greater use of Tier 2 contractors...". Yes, those same zero hours agencies.

So what sort of railway do we really want if the past 20 years have been a period of wasted opportunity and profiteering that has dragged our industry into the headlines for all the wrong reasons.

There's no better starting point than the policy that polls show is supported by 70 per cent of the population – public ownership. It is the right thing to do and fiddling around the edges with madcap schemes like "fair franchising" and "deep alliances" is just more of the same old same old that dragged us through the mire in the first place.

So what if we have to take on the EU over the issue of who runs and owns our railways? Why should German and French state operators be allowed to keep their fares low by buying

out UK franchises and bleeding the British passenger for every penny they can while spineless politicians from all parties stand on the side lines claiming that there's not a damn thing they can do about it?

The infamous EU directive 91/440/EEC began the process of rail privatisation across the EU when it was introduced on July 29 1991. This directive orders member states to separate train operations and rail infrastructure in order to dismantle state rail industries in favour of market competition. It stipulates:

- Operational autonomy for railway operators
- Separation of the infrastructure from operations in order to create an internal market
- Open access for international undertakings
- Introduction of track access charges

John Major's Conservative government privatised British Rail on this model after the Tories removed Margaret Thatcher who actually opposed rail privatisation.

After the Tories kicked Maggie out like a dog in the night, the Tories went ahead and The Railways Regulation 1992, was introduced under Section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 in order to comply with the directive.

There have been three EU rail packages imposed since then and a 4th rail package is being discussed to finally remove all vestiges of national government involvement from any meaningful control of their rail networks.

This is despite the fact that electorates have demonstrated time and again that they want their railways in public sector where they belong.

RMT remains committed to the investment needed to bring Britain's railways out of the slow lane, including High Speed, electrification and the increased capacity required to meet the continuing surge in passenger demand. But High Speed rail has been delayed by political

wrangling for decades while other parts of Europe have raced ahead and all the warning signs are now flashing that modernisation is going to be stalled again as the row continues.

The truth is that if the profits and dividends bled out of rail by privatisation for the last twenty years had been reinvested into modernisation and infrastructure we would

have expanded rail to keep pace with increasing passenger numbers.

The nation that gave the railways to the world is miles behind other countries through a generation of political ineptitude and profiteering with passengers crammed into overcrowded services. ■

TRANSPORT PRIVATISATION TIMELINE

1957 European Commission establishes plan for a common transport market run on the basis of "free competition" and the "principles of the market economy" as written into the Treaty of Rome.

1965 The Council of Ministers proposes a common strategy to "ensure the implementation of the principles of the market economy" in transport.

1972 Commission brings sea transport into the common strategy to operate on the "principles of the market economy".

1983 European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) lobby group www.ert.be draws up plans for Trans-European Transport Networks (TENs) strategic transport corridors complete with privatised railways.

1991 EC introduces rail directive 91/440/EEC on July 29 1991 demanding the separation of infrastructure and operations, open access for international undertakings and the introduction of track access charges.

1993 Tory government privatises British Rail along the lines of the EU directive. The Railways Regulation 1992 introduced under Section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 in order to comply with the directive.

2001 First Railway Package demands 'liberalisation' of EU rail freight, implemented in Britain in November 2005

2004 Second Railway Package demands open access for all types of rail freight services by 2006 and establishes a European Railway Agency to implement EU directives.

2007 Third Railway Package demands 'liberalisation' of passenger rail services requiring open access in all EU member states by January 1 2010.

2009 Lisbon Treaty removes the national veto in over 60 new areas including transport, transferring decisions to Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) allowing member states to be outvoted.

2012 First Railway Package 'recast' to establish a single European railway area and outlaws member states from using the "holding model" to manage rail infrastructure and train operations within the same parent company

2013 European Commission publishes a Fourth Railway Package which requires the compulsory competitive tendering of all rail services.



RMT TO FIGHT SOUTH WEST BUS SERVICE CUTS

RMT is linking up with the local community to fight bus service cuts in the South West after First Group plans to axe a series of lifeline routes this month that will cut off entire communities.

First has confirmed that it will press ahead with the plans to seriously alter a total of nine routes with six withdrawn altogether, a move that local campaigners have said will lead to isolation, cutting off some communities like Mainstone completely.

The planned cuts – which First blame on “increased competition” – will particularly hit older people, the poor and

those with disabilities and make a mockery of a Transport Select Committee report this week that said that the government and bus companies should be doing more to increase access to transport services for disabled people.

RMT is warning that the move on South West buses may be the start of a domino process that sees other services shut down or ripped to shreds as the floodgates are unleashed and bus companies dump routes and concentrate solely on the services that make them the most money.

Yet First Group is an extremely wealthy company

which made £90.7 million in operating profits from UK buses in 2012-13, contributing to £335 million in total operating profits for company as a whole.

First currently has one-fifth share of the UK’s deregulated bus market worth over £4 billion ever year. They could easily afford to continue their services in the South West and to retain staff jobs on decent pay and conditions.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the savage cuts to services would decimate lifeline services as bus companies wheel out a pack of excuses to justify cherry-picking the profitable routes.

“The notion of buses as a public service is alien to the likes of First whose only interest is money and the situation that is developing in the South West only fuels the argument for public ownership to protect those who rely on buses to get about,” he said.

The Commons Transport Committee said recently that bus companies should actively expand access for people with disabilities.

“RMT will step up our campaigning work with the communities standing up and fighting these cuts,” said RMT assistant general secretary Mick Cash. ■



BUS PAY

The UK bus industry is dominated by five large companies which emerged for the privatisation of the industry in the 1980s.

However, pay bargaining is largely carried out at workplace level which effectively means that each depot has a separate agreement,

The 'big five' bus companies, which represent around 70 per cent of the market, are all highly profitable, but drivers have had to take industrial action over pay freezes or to win pay rises.

In the year to December 2012, Arriva, which is owned by Deutsche Bahn (DB), had revenues of £1,010.9 million – up by 8.6 per cent over the 2011 figure of £930.7 million. DB described the climate in the UK bus line of business as “challenging” with higher energy prices and government bus subsidy cuts.

Stagecoach Group had revenue of £1,140.2 million in

the year to April 2012, up by 11 per cent from £1,027.2 million in 2011 and operating profit was £176.2 million up by 19.7 percent from £147.2 million in 2011. The company said that “although wages have generally increased in line with average earnings, staff costs as a whole fell as a percentage of revenue, reflecting a continued focus on cost control and reduced pension costs”.

First Group had revenues in the year to March 2012 of £1,157.2 million and operating profit of £134.4 million down 9.7 percent from £148.8 million in 2011.

The management referred to “the need to reform the operational model in UK Bus in order to achieve sustainable growth”. To achieve this they stated that they would focus on “repositioning and rebalancing our portfolio of operations; driving increased passenger revenue and patronage growth and improving operating

discipline and efficiencies”.

There have been at least two industrial disputes with First Group drivers in the last year with strikes in Devon and Cornwall in October and November 2012 over a pay dispute.

Go-Ahead Group had revenues in the year to June 2012 of £691.3 million with operating profits of £70.2 million up 4.6 per cent from £67.1 million in 2011.

The management described the performance of the bus operations as “robust”. On 30 March 2012 they bought Northumberland Park bus depot in north London from First Group for £14.3 million. Earlier this year, RMT members in the Go-Ahead subsidiary covering Wiltshire and Dorset took strike action over changes to their shift times and the imposition of unpaid meal breaks.

National Express Group had revenue of £269 million in the year to December 2012 with

operating profits of £34.1 million up by 4.3 per cent from £32.7 million in 2011.

The company said in its latest annual report that their UK Bus division had performed well in 2012 “despite a reduction in the Bus Service Operators’ Grant”. It said that their fleet of 1,660 buses is “focussed on the West Midlands and Dundee markets”.

PAY INCREASES

The median increase for manual workers in the bus industry for Unite and RMT members was two per cent on the lowest basic rate for settlements between July last year and July 2013. At the top 75th percentile the increase for RMT settlements was 2.95 per cent and 2.3 per cent for Unite settlements.

These increases are based on the latest information held on the Labour Research Department’s Payline database.



PAY FIGHT AT CITY LINK

City Link members have held protests in defence of jobs, pay and working conditions following attempts by the company to bulldoze through changes to contracts that would hammer down pay in the interests of profit.

Activists have been handing out leaflets to the public explaining how RMT members find themselves

under attack from the same kind of private equity bankers and speculators who destroyed the UK economy.

City Link was sold off earlier this year to private equity group Better Capital by Rentokil Initial and that sell off to Jon Moulton’s outfit has coincided with an all-out assault on terms and conditions, including pay cuts of up to £4000.

The assault on pay and conditions has sparked a surge in union membership and hundreds of workers are now actively engaged in the fight back at City Link depots across the country.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the company should be under no illusions that their workforce are up for the campaign and the union is calling for the

broadest possible support.

“Cuts in pay mean that our members very livelihoods are threatened and the battle at City Link is a national campaign against a high-profile company and is an important campaign for all working people against private equity companies who think they can treat their workers like dirt,” he said.

REMEMBERING THE 1913 DUBLIN LOCK-OUT



SOLIDARITY: RMT national secretary Steve Todd (front right) and assistant general secretary Steve Hedley (front left) see off the SS Hare from Liverpool

Trade unionists on both sides of the Irish Sea marked the 100th anniversary of the first food shipment from the British TUC to support striking workers and their families during the 1913 Lockout.

A re-enactment of the voyage of the first solidarity food ship SS Hare was organised as part of the anniversary which left Liverpool and was met when it arrived at Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin on October 5 by a welcoming committee.

The Lockout began in August 1913 after tramway drivers and conductors, members of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, went on strike for better pay and conditions.

In response, the Chairman of the Dublin United Tramway Company and President of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, William Martin Murphy, persuaded 400 employers to lock out members of the ITGWU, as well as any other employees who refused to disassociate



themselves from Jim Larkin's union.

Thousands of Dublin workers who were members of the ITGWU, were suspected of being members or were members of other unions and would not sign declarations disowning the ITGWU were locked out and replaced by strike breakers.

Eventually over 25,000 workers were involved in strikes and lockouts.

The effects of the Lockout

bore heavily on thousands of families in the city, who faced poverty and starvation. The food aid contributed by workers and their unions across Britain, worth £25 million in today's money, delivered vital sustenance and hope to those affected by the lockout.

The commemoration of the anniversary of the first food ship arrival to Dublin acknowledges the critical importance of the solidarity and

practical support of the British trade union movement towards supporting struggling families to survive one hundred years ago.

The organisers gratefully acknowledged the support received for the SS Hare re-enactment from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Dublin Port Company, the International Transport Workers' Federation, Ramsey Steam Ship Company, RMT, SIPTU and Unite. ■

NATIONALISE WIGHTLINK!

RMT has called on Tory MP Andrew Turner to back up his call for the public ownership of key UK ferry services to the Isle of Wight, made in the House of Commons, with real action.

The Isle of Wight Tory MP called for the 'public service' option to prevent the wholesale destruction of the Island's ferry service through a combination of greed, incompetence, asset-stripping and political and corporate in-fighting.

Earlier this year at a meeting of the Isle of Wight trades council, RMT officials challenged Andrew Turner to set aside Conservative privatisation dogma as the latest cuts to the island's ferry services were the deepest known to islanders in living memory.

Under ownership of British Rail Sealink the services were heavily invested in during the early 80s bringing vastly improved timetables and ferries before being sold by Margaret Thatcher's Government as part of Sealink UK for a meagre £66m to Sea Containers even

though, an offer in excess of £75m was available from a management/employee bid to take control of the company.

Since then there has been a break up of Sealink, the IOW services now known as Wightlink changed ownership on two further occasions for £107m in 1995 and again for £227m in 2005 to Maquarie European Investment Fund (MEIF) part of the Australian Maquarie banking group. The company has been re-mortgaged, re-financed, exploited and asset stripped with at least 4 other foreign banks now extracting payments from their stakes in Wightlink.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that as the Tories gather in Manchester this weekend at least one of their number, the Member for the Isle of Wight, has tumbled that their core ethos of privatisation and exploitation is fundamentally at odds with the provision of lifeline transport services. RMT now wants to see that dramatic conversion translated into

concrete action that can stop the systematic and willful destruction in the name of private greed of the Isle of Wight Ferries before it is too late.

"RMT is mobilising a campaign for the public ownership of the Wight ferry services to draw a line under decades of exploitation and under-investment which has left the link as nothing more than a cash-cow for foreign banks and greedy shareholders. RMT is calling for support for that campaign from right across the spectrum."

Isle of Wight Ferries – the hard facts:

- Year to 31 Mar 2012 for Wightlink Ltd: post-tax profit of £8.6m; received a £465,000 tax rebate but paid no corporation tax; eight per cent rise in turnover to just under £60m; highest paid director got £355,000.
- September 2013 - Isle of Wight Tory MP asking for Public Service Obligations to be introduced on Wightlink
- ferries.
- PSOs (Public Sector Obligations) set minimum service levels and exist on Scottish ferries to ensure that lifeline ferry services are not cut by incoming private operators.
- Public sector ferry service Sealink UK privatised in 1984. The £66m sale to Sea Containers was preceded by heavy public sector investment in a classic case of fattening up in advance of private asset stripping.
- Ferry services and jobs have steadily reduced since privatisation and more cuts announced earlier this year, including a halving of the number of daily sailings from Yarmouth.
- Wightlink currently owned by Macquarie, an Australian private equity fund that also owns Condor Ferries where RMT has been campaigning against exploitation, social dumping and poverty pay rates. ■

EU SLAMS DOOR ON SHIPPING JOBS

The European Union has dealt a body blow to jobs in the shipping industry by allowing companies to continue to exploit the tonnage tax for their own purposes while putting little or nothing back.

The European Commission is reviewing the operation of the State Aid Guidelines (SAGS) in the maritime sector in 2009 with a specific focus on the status of Tonnage Tax schemes operated by member states.

A number of EU member state, including The Netherlands, UK, Denmark, Greece and Cyprus operate Tonnage Tax schemes in order to attract ship owners to their flag registers. The Commission has now produced their

conclusions which fail to call to account the corporate beneficiaries of this state aid on the crucial issue of jobs and training.

The UK Tonnage Tax is unique in that it contains a mandatory link to provide training for UK seafarers but this only applies to officers. There is a voluntary link to provide training for UK ratings but this is ignored.

Whilst this has led to a doubling in the number of trainee UK officer cadets, it has bypassed UK ratings, whose numbers continue to decline and fell below 10,000 in 2012.

After four years the verdict from the unelected EU Commissioner for Competition is that Tonnage Tax schemes

should be left alone, exactly what the UK and European shipping industry consistently demanded.

In fact, the then President of the UK Chamber of Shipping, Helen Drabble recently expressed confidence well before the final decision was reached by declaring that "the positive dialogue the UK Chamber has had with European officials on this issue so far this year makes us optimistic".

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the Tonnage Tax was a form of state aid, designed to use tax breaks to attract ship owners to a flag register.

"Not only does the current, cut price sale of the Red Ensign bring the UK flag into

direct competition with flags of convenience, it demonstrates a total ignorance of the needs of the maritime skills base in the UK," he said.

National secretary Steve Todd said that the EU had slammed the door on enforcing a link between ratings training and state aid and that it a massive kick in the teeth for RMT members in the shipping industry."

"The union supports the ETF's efforts to highlight the narrow, employer-led conclusions that the unelected Commissioner Almunia has reached in this tawdry episode of neo-liberal collusion between the European Commission and the European shipping industry," he said. ■

EAST COAST CLEANERS PAY FIGHT



OFFICIAL PICKET

ISS Cleaners – East Coast On Strike – Why?

- No pay increase for ¹²4 years!
- No Sick Pay!
- No Pension!
- No premiums for working shifts, weekends, bank holidays!
- What we want is a Living Wage!
- ISS/East Coast – Pay up!



Cleaners working for cheapskate contractors ISS on the prestige East Coast Mainline launched 24 hours of rock solid strike action last month as part of the fight for pay justice for cleaners.

RMT demonstrations took place at London's Kings Cross and another in York which marched to the headquarters of the East Coast company demanding that it tells their contractors to secure the living wage.

RMT has been campaigning for the ISS cleaners on the East Coast to receive the living wage and for improvements to working conditions and pensions that match the important job they do maintaining the environment on the busy, high profile East

Coast Mainline.

Despite rounds of rock-solid action, the company remain entrenched and has chosen to adopt an aggressively hostile attitude that has led to the latest action.

ISS has no grounds for pleading poverty or for exploiting its own workers. In the year to 31 December 2011 ISS (UK) Limited's pre-tax profit was £7,543 million. Despite this healthy income, the company has paid only limited amounts of corporation tax. Over the last ten years the company has paid an average of just £41,400 a year in corporation tax.

Instead, the profit generated by the workers has been diverted to shareholders. For the past five reported years, ISS (UK) Ltd has paid an average of

over £5 million per year in dividends to shareholders.

Compare this to gross pay of just £267 a week for a cleaner for a forty hour week, on an hourly rate of £6.67 outside of London compared to the current designated living wage of £7.45.

Even after deducting for its liabilities, ISS had total assets of over £129 million. The directors also received £2.265 million in remuneration, up from £2.115 million the year before – a rise of over seven per cent, the highest paid director alone received £620,000.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that members were reacting to the company's campaign of stalling and provocation that has forced this latest strike.

"It is disgraceful behaviour by this global brand where the boardroom is awash with cash and millions is being siphoned off by shareholders that could easily pay the living wage to the East Coast cleaners.

"The determination and solidarity shown by RMT cleaners sends out a message that the union is well prepared to step up the fight for cleaners' pay justice at ISS on the East Coast and across the transport network.

"The train operators should be using their clout to force ISS back to the negotiating table to get this dispute resolved. In light of today's action it is now down to ISS to sit down and work out a solution with us that tackles poverty pay," he said.

CLEANERS SECURE LIVING WAGE VICTORY

Transport cleaners in the North East secure 20 per cent pay rise over four years and extra days leave after long-running battle

Cleaners working for Churchill on the Tyne and Wear Metro have secured a landmark victory in their battle for pay and workplace justice that will lift them out of the poverty trap of the minimum wage and towards a genuine living wage.

The dispute has stretched back well over a year and has involved 19 days of strike action as the Metro cleaning staff mounted a brave fight for a living wage that is a beacon for millions of low paid workers across the country.

The landmark pay deal announced by RMT comprises of a five per cent pay increase from this month incorporating the increase in the national minimum wage which presents a new hourly rate of £6:50.

And an annual five per cent increase each year to 2016, delivering a new hourly rate of £7:52.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the pay deal, which lifts cleaner members out of the shackles of the minimum wage was a breakthrough that

sends out the clearest possible signal to low paid workers throughout the land that if they fight they can win.

"RMT members have shown guts and determination through a long and hard campaign with well over a year of rock-solid strike action in the fight for workplace and pay justice, they are an example to us all.

"RMT also wants to pay tribute to our reps and regional officials who have been instrumental in securing this landmark pay agreement.



"The union focus now turns to other campaigns with companies like ISS and Initial where the fight for a living wage, decent working conditions and social justice rages on.

"Workers at these companies will take great heart from the Churchill's Metro victory," he said.

EAST MIDLANDS TRAIN CLEANERS STRIKE ACTION ROCK SOLID

Cleaners working on the Rentokil Initial contract on East Midlands Trains kicked off a rock-solid 48 hours of strike action last month in the fight for pay justice

The action was launched after the company tried to bulldoze through a freeze to any improvements to pay and conditions on the spurious grounds of 'trading conditions', enforcing poverty pay on some of the most exploited staff on the network.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the action sent out the clearest possible message that they were prepared to stand up against bullying and exploitation.

Initial Rentokil is a wealthy company but it has a track record of exploiting its cleaning

staff throughout the public services in the drive to maximise profits.

"Fellow trade unionists have been out there standing together in solidarity on the picket lines in this important dispute.

"That show of strength rams home the point to both East Midlands Trains and their contractors that the union is not prepared to tolerate the companies delaying tactics any longer in offering a fair pay offer and real improvements to our members working conditions.

"East Midlands Trains themselves will not be allowed to duck this issue and their excuses for not getting involved to sort this dispute in their back yard are frankly



pathetic.

They have a duty to ensure that their contractors are not exploiting their staff and they should be intervening now to help force a solution," he said.

RMT remains available for meaningful talks to address the basic issue of pay justice and a living wage at the core of this dispute.

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 0845 712 5495 (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 0765 911 8181 (0800 328 1014 in Scotland)



PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



LEGAL

CON DEMS ATTACK TRADE UNION RIGHTS



Governments of every hue have a reputation for burying damaging stories by releasing them late on a Friday when everyone is winding down for the weekend.

But this government has made a fine art of slipping controversial legal changes through by introducing them at the last minute or tucking them away in the small print.

They did it earlier this year with the removal of strict liability for employers on health and safety, over-turning a law that went back to 1898.

Now they are trying to do it again with the clumsily-named Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill.

Introduced just as the summer holidays were starting, the Bill was trailed by the government as being about tackling corrupt lobbying.

It fails on that score because, while it restricts charities campaigning on issues of concern to them, it leaves big companies free to do as much lobbying as they like.

But for trade unions there's a nasty sting in the tail: Part 3 gives the state alarming powers to require unions to hand-over membership records and private correspondence.

For years now, unions have had to submit annual membership returns to the government's Certification Officer (CO). It's been open and

transparent, giving union members the right to check the records and complain to the CO if something is wrong – and no one has since 2004.

Now the government wants to intrude much further by:

- Requiring unions with more than 10,000 members to appoint an Assurer from among 'qualified independent persons' as named or defined by the Government
- Requiring unions to submit an annual 'Membership Audit Certificate' (prepared, in the case of those with more than 10,000 members, by an Assurer)
- Giving the Assurer the right to access membership records and require union officers to provide information.
- Giving the CO and CO staff and CO inspectors and Assurers powers to require production of documents and to make copies of them, including individual membership records and private correspondence from 'anyone who appears...to be in possession of them' if there is 'good reason to do so'.

If the bill goes through, literally hundreds of state personnel and contractors will have the power to access the personal information of more than seven million union members.

As the TUC says: "It is not the business of the state to

know who is or who is not a trade union member and where they live."

The government is invoking article 8(2) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) to over-ride data protection laws.

But that article says the right to privacy can only be limited by 'the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.'

By implication, the government is saying trade unions are a threat to all these things – and therefore it is okay to do what they propose.

The Bill has come from business secretary Vince Cable's department, yet again displaying a shocking lack of liberalism from a Liberal Democrat minister (and complete disregard for internationally recognised privacy and trade union rights).

This is a spiteful piece of anti-union red tape from a government that's meant to be opposed to red tape. Its intrusion on privacy is chilling and has serious implications for freedom of association.

People join trade unions for all sorts of reasons, but it's a private matter. No other membership organisation is going to be required to hand-over personal information.

The government says the law

is needed because 'trade union activity' affects people's daily lives. In other words, they want to make it even harder for unions to take strike action. And that's what this is really about.

Under existing legislation, employers often challenge strike ballots, winning some and losing others. RMT won a major victory in the Court of Appeal against Serco in 2011, which reset the standard required for the union's ballot information in terms of "as accurate as reasonably practicable".

But this bill would provide employers with new evidential tools to undermine the RMT's victory and make it more difficult for members to take collective action.

At the same time, it would put membership records at risk of being misplaced or misused – something union members have good grounds to fear given evidence of widespread blacklisting in some industries.

Parliament is now debating the Bill. You can influence the outcome by writing to your MP and supporting your union in campaigning on this issue.

For more information on the Bill, see the Thompsons briefing on Thompson web site – thompsonstradeunionlaw.co.uk

Richard Arthur is the national coordinator for trade union law at Thompsons Solicitors.



The Scottish Regional Council hosted a meeting in support of the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign, also attended by members of UNITE (Scotland), UCATT and TSSA, and welcomed actor and former building worker Ricky Tomlinson and his colleagues.

Ricky said that he was exceptionally pleased to be in Scotland and outlined the history of the campaign. Ricky was a plasterer working for McAlpines the Building Contractor in North Wales in 1970 during a strike by building

workers to demand that the employers Builders Confederation improve working conditions.

Ricky was instrumental in organising flying pickets along with his colleagues, Des Warren, John McKinsie Jones and 21 of his workmates and would often be followed by between 50 to 80 police officers.

Five months after the strike ended he was approached by two detectives to say they wanted names to act as Prosecution Witnesses as they

believed a crime of conspiracy had occurred.

The evidence to justify these allegations came from the Builders Confederation, the Police citing 85 alleged incidents of intimidation.

The then Home Secretary decided that the evidence was enough to charge the 24 pickets with "Conspiracy to Intimidate" and Ricky and his colleagues were all arrested. Ricky and Des Warren later appeared at Shrewsbury Crown Court and were found guilty and sentenced

to two years imprisonment.

Ricky advised that he did his time in 14 different prisons and spent most of his time in solitary confinement. This was his special punishment for refusing to wear prison clothes. The other workers were blacklisted from the Building Industry and most were never able to work in their respective trades again.

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign firmly believes that the charges were politically motivated, coupled with government

RMT and Fitness First have teamed up to offer employees and members a corporate membership with no joining fee or start up fee

**Fit
for
business**

To join or to find out more information, please follow the steps below:

- Visit www.fitnessfirst.co.uk/rmt
- Enter your password **rmt00013**
- Choose your multiclub tier:
 - Multiclub - Blue: You can use all Blue clubs
 - Multiclub - Platinum: You can use all Platinum and Blue clubs
 - Multiclub - Black Label: You can use all Fitness First clubs throughout the UK
- Bodyfirst - To claim your immediate saving of £44.95, select **No thanks** in this section
Normal start up fees - £44.95, RMT members pay £0
- Start date - Choose your desired start date
- You're now one step closer to achieving your fitness goals!
- The next step is to confirm your payment method
- Your membership will be active with immediate effect from your chosen start date and will be available to collect from your local club.



For more information, please contact Fitness First Central Corporate Team
Email centralcorporate@fitnessfirst.com or call 0844 472 8211

interference in the prosecutions.

The campaign has continuously called for the release of all the government papers relating to the trials. The government continues to refuse to release the papers quoting Section 23 of the Freedom of Information Act.

They say that it would not be in the public interest to release them as this would not be in the interests of National Security. Ricky in his own inimitable style said: "National Security' my A...!".

Not to be deterred Ricky and the campaign decided to set up a government 'E' Petition with a view to achieving 100,000 signatures which would have guaranteed a debate in the House of Commons.

The campaign complained to Downing Street direct and they were told that some 40,000 signatures were dismissed on the excuse that the petitioners did not comply with the process.

The campaign committee have now decided that the 'E' Petition be closed and they have now embarked on the traditional Paper Petition to achieve their 100,000 target.

Ricky, who is now 74 years of age, continues to say he was innocent of these charges in 1972 and he is innocent now. All Ricky wants is to have his name cleared before he dies.

The spontaneous reaction from the audience was to give Ricky and his campaign team a standing ovation.

The Regional Council unanimously agreed to affiliate to the campaign and to urge all branches in Scotland to do the same.

Copies of the Paper Petition were sent to all our branches for circulation and it was agreed that the union should spread the message throughout all the STUC affiliates to ensure the campaign is supported and that, when the truth eventually comes out, it should be published.



For more information go to www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk

President's column



INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

There was recently some debate on Facebook regarding the executive members being on 'foreign trips' and I feel that I should explain why I think international links are important.

My view is that these relations are vital because as capital operates globally, we need to do the same. Many British companies operate abroad and, of course, many foreign companies operate here. We need to work together to deal with this situation. A prime example is when the Australian unions refused to unload ships that had been loaded by scab labour during the Liverpool dockers' strike.

Indeed, RMT runs a course called Winning in the Global Workplace that deals with these very issues. It is an excellent course which explains how a lot of companies in the UK are controlled by international conglomerates. The course brings in international guests and links by video and phone to share experiences, discuss how we can tackle mutual problems and how to help each other. I highly recommend it.

I have been abroad quite a few times this year. I went to Berlin, and Paris, with EC member member Tim Butler,

to take part in discussions with other European transport unions about the 4th Railway Package.

This EU ruling will force European countries to privatise their public transport. RMT and the Swedish unions, which also have privatised public transport, had to explain to the other unions just what it will mean and how we can combat it together.

I also attended a meeting to lobby European Commissioners in Brussels on the same issue. An EU commissioner accused me of perpetuating the myth of privatisation being bad, but they were perpetuating the myth that it is good!

Myself, the general secretary and EC member Kevin Morrison also attended the Transport Workers of America conference held in Las Vegas. I admit that this sounds glamorous, but the reality of Las Vegas is there is a lot of poverty and one of the reasons the TWU held it there was that it is relatively cheap.

RMT has established close links with them over the years and we can help each other with disputes with companies that operate on both sides of the Atlantic,

just as the Australians did with the Liverpool dockers.

Finally, I attended the SIPTU conference in Dublin to celebrate the centenary of the Dublin Lockout. It is an honour we have been invited to thank us for the support given by the NUS and the NUR to our Irish comrades during that bitter dispute. That support is something we should be proud of.

So we should remember how important international links are. I know there are demonstrations and rallies in this country and I can assure you that EC members get to a great amount of them, as well as standing on picket lines all over the UK. It should be remembered that they already spend long absences from their families, but I also accept that they volunteered to be on the EC. Obviously there is a social side to these delegations but to call them "jollies" is totally unfair. A lot of hard work is put into them as well and the social side is important to make links with comrades in common cause.

I have no problem with these points being raised, after all, we are a democratic union, and all healthy debate is welcomed. Remember unity is strength!

Peter Pinkney

DEFEND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING!



LAUNCH: John Hendy QC discussing Reconstruction After the Crisis: a Manifesto for Collective Bargaining, published by the Institute of Employment Rights, at No2EU fringe meeting at TUC last month. He warned that EU institutions had launched an all-out attack on basic trade unions rights across the continent.

Keith Ewing and John Hendy QC argue in a new booklet that collective bargaining is the solution to fix the economy and inequality



The sole justification for the policies of austerity has been that there is a structural deficit in the finances of government that must be reduced.

That the policies of austerity have, in fact, increased the deficit came as a surprise to no-one. Indeed, austerity could have had no other consequence.

The real driver for austerity is the desire to increase the share of the national economy consisting of profits and decrease the share consisting of wages. To that end austerity has been a resounding success.

The consequence of driving

down the real value of wages is not just a painful cut in the standard of living of most people, so enhancing life for the rich. It has also depressed demand causing the loss of jobs and tax revenue and making the UK one of the worst performing economies in Europe.

Britain is now as unequal as it was at the end of the nineteenth century with all the repulsive consequences: unequal life expectancies, differential physical and mental health, lack of social mobility, unemployment, drugs, crime, hopelessness – and so on.

Obviously the share of the

national cake occupied by wages must increase if any way is to be found out of the spiral of decline in Britain. It was once taken for granted that this would be achieved through the negotiation of pay and conditions between trade unions and employers – a process called collective bargaining.

In our book *Reconstruction after the crisis: a manifesto for collective bargaining*, we make the case for the restoration of sectoral collective bargaining – that is collective bargaining on an industry by industry basis.

Collective bargaining of this kind was the policy of government for 75 years until Mrs Thatcher. It was the principal mechanism adopted in Britain and abroad to increase wages, stimulate demand and reinvigorate the economy to end the depression of the 1930s. The same remedy could be applied to the current crisis.

The reversal of government policy from 1980 onwards has caused collective bargaining coverage in Britain to plummet from protecting 82 per cent of workers in 1980 to 23 per cent today and falling. Labour's statutory recognition procedure had negligible effect.

In western and northern Europe the average coverage remains at around 80 per cent. However, as we show in the book, collective bargaining is being undermined by European Union structures in the name of austerity.

The restoration of collective bargaining goes beyond stimulation of the economy. The loss of its protection has never been felt more keenly than now with a million people on zero-hours contracts, permanent full-timers being substituted by temporary and agency workers, three million being denied protection from unfair dismissal by the increase in the qualifying period, and all 29 million workers finding their way to an employment tribunal restricted by a fees hike. Collective bargaining is the only way of giving workers an effective voice and power to prevent injustice in the workplace.

But there is also a legal imperative that underpins the economic and social case to rebuild the wasteland of collective bargaining.

Whether the government likes it or not, the UK like other countries has obligations to promote collective bargaining under international treaties signed by both Labour and Tory ministers since the end of the Second World War.

The failure over the last 30 years to comply with its international legal obligations has made the UK a repeated international law breaker, as the international bodies have consistently found.

A fresh start is required and a much more ambitious collective bargaining strategy.

We propose multi-employer agreements that apply throughout each industrial sector, laying down terms and conditions that apply to every worker, whether or not their employer recognises a union. Enterprise level bargaining can still take place but on the basic floor established by the sectoral collective agreement.

The sceptics will say that it is all too difficult. But we have done it before, in the 1930s when wise minds realised that the crisis of the time could be solved only by raising wages, and that the only way to raise wages was to strengthen the collective bargaining structures first established by Parliament during the First World War to deal with the problems of reconstruction.

To achieve it will require the same commitment to the use of State resources today as it did then, most notably a commitment to create the structures within which collective bargaining takes place, to ensure that employers take part, and that the terms of collective agreements are observed. It is a big challenge. But there really is no alternative. ■

Reconstruction After the Crisis: a Manifesto for Collective Bargaining is available from the Institute of Employment Rights, Liverpool, www.ier.org.uk

BERWICK FOR BRIAN

Berwick Rail RMT branch chair Martin McCleary and Berwick station manager Sam Livesey completed a gruelling 90 mile cycle from Berwick Station to South Shields Regional RMT office in aid of Brian Munro Cancer Fighting Fund.

The route would take the pair right along the beautiful Northumberland coast via Seahouses, Alnmouth, Amble, Creswell and Whitley Bay.

"My branch wanted to donate some money to the fund for this worthwhile cause but unfortunately we were low on funds after hosting this year's Engineering grades conference so I decided to try and raise some money through a

sponsored cycle.

"My manager Sam was a keen cyclist so I persuaded him to join me and we quickly started collecting sponsors explained Martin.

The bike ride came just three days after Martin completed the BUPA Great North Run in one hour 37mins so it was a huge challenge to complete such a long distance.

"My main concern was the weather, we had two days to choose from and plumped for the Wednesday and fortunately the weather was fantastic, dry and a north westerly tail wind, it really couldn't have been better.

"The ride was hard going in places especially the 15 mile

stretch between Amble and Ashington where I really had nothing left in my legs but the thought of a nice pub lunch kept us going and we knew that once we got there we had only had 20 miles to go," said Martin.

After setting off at 05.30 the pair arrived in North Shields at 1530 and caught the ferry across the Tyne to South Shields after cycling the length of Northumberland. Along the way they were lucky enough to witness some great views.

"The sun rising over the coast as we left Berwick and the sight of Bamburgh Castle as we turned a corner were highlights but if I am honest the best view was the welcoming party in

South Shields as we finally arrived just after 4pm," Martin said.

The cycle ride has raised £335 through sponsorship and an extra £500 via RMT North East Regional Council donation and a cheque for £835 was presented at the finish line in front of RMT relief regional organiser Craig Johnston and RMT North East regional council secretary Mark Beresford. "Hopefully the money can help Brian continue to receive the best treatment possible and I would personally like to thank RMT members for their donations and the support we have received in helping making this such a success," said Martin. ■



18/SEP/2013

TAKING A LEARNING JOURNEY ONE STEP FURTHER

RMT Midlands Learning Development Worker John Dougherty explains how a learning rep travelled to the Far East to teach English

RMT member Annette Furlong, an assistant service manager for Virgin based at Liverpool Lime Street, decided to take her own personal learning journey one step further.

She travelled to Siemreap, Cambodia in April to teach in an NGO (non-government organisation) school for local children to help develop their English grammar skills. Annette, an active branch member for 16 years decided to become a Union Learning Representative about two years ago as she came from an academic background and felt that supporting members into learning would give them better opportunities in both their work and personal lives.

As a ULR and working together with her colleague RMT ULR Sarah Wilson and RMT development worker John Dougherty, Annette had earlier begun the process of mapping out her workplace and speaking with members to find out what it was they actually wanted to learn.

After hosting a successful open day with a number of local language and college providers in attendance, they decided to begin with a Spanish

language course as a lot of members were keen to take this up. Annette realised that 'soft skills courses', such as languages, are often a great springboard to help people to re-engage with lifelong learning.

Annette said that it was evident that members had the desire to learn, but often there were many barriers for adult workers to get back into that environment.

"We felt this was just one way of removing some of those barriers," she said.

As Annette helped other RMT members to start their learning journeys, she realised that working on her own personal development was the best way to represent the membership.

The chance to go overseas stemmed back to her own time at university, where she became aware of NGO teaching programmes. So after contacting them she was offered the chance to go to Cambodia.

Annette taught English grammar to grade 5 pupils ranging in ages from 12 to 18.

"I was very much thrown in at the deep end as there isn't really a curriculum to follow, so thank God for the British Council website which helped



me a lot," she explained.

The challenges she faced included the lack of resources for example available printing, internet access etc.

"I spent loads of time writing out crosswords and word searches for each person manually as there are no photocopying facilities.

"Towards the end of each lesson they loved playing games like Hangman.

"The majority of US or Australian volunteers tended to teach English grammar differently, which wasn't necessarily wrong, but had the potential to confuse the kids.

"I had to get used to the cultural dos and don'ts, the heat, and that most people lived off the land. "Saying that they were the happiest and most respectful young people I have ever met, very eager to learn and an inspiration to be around.

"I also learned a lot about myself and I can now think



quickly on my feet when faced with a classroom full of Asian teenagers.

"I feel quite brave considering I went on my own into the unknown and I realised I had a lot more inner strength than I believed and I can honestly say it was one of the best things I have ever done in my life," she said. ■

REMEMBERING BURSTON

The Longest Strike

RMT band plays to large crowds at Burston to mark 99 years since school children launched 25 years of strike action in defence of teachers

Each September over trade unionists from across the country gather in the small Norfolk village of Burston to celebrate the longest strike in British history.

Children marched out of their school when their much-loved teachers, Tom and Kitty Higdon, were sacked on trumped up charges because of their support for the farm workers' union.

Tom's election as a councillor inflamed the local landowners and the Church of England, which was then responsible for educating children in the countryside, and on April 1, 1914, after the couple had been dismissed, the children walked out on strike.

The Burston Strike School was built on the village green from Labour movement subscriptions and continued to educate children right up to

1939 until Tom Higdon died, 25 years after the strike began.

Today trade unionists march around the village, retracing the steps of those children in 1914.

The Strike School building is now a museum, visitor centre and village amenity, and since 1984 a rally has been held every year to commemorate the original Burston rally.

Bob Crow addressed over 1,000 people, reminding them that the spirit of the Higdon's lived on.

"We need to stand up as a movement just like those children did nearly 100 years ago and fight the assaults on working people by this rotten Tory/Lib Dem coalition government," he said.

The Burston rally is a great day out, one which you should put in your diary for next year, the 100th anniversary. ■





UNDERSTANDING THE 'NATIONAL QUESTION'

Connolly Association publishes works by Desmond Greaves on the centenary of the author's birth

This pamphlet has been published to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Desmond Greaves and the 75th Anniversary of the Connolly Association.

Greaves pioneered the idea of a civil rights movement in Ireland and wrote extensively and critically about the early moves towards a corporate European superstate at a time when much of the left abandoned EU-critical ideas.

With an introduction by RMT general secretary Bob Crow, this easy-to-read booklet carries two important articles on the

connection between socialism and nationalism and in defence of national sovereignty.

As editor of the Irish Democrat newspaper for many years Greaves was among the first to warn that the European Union would enable transnational corporations to dominate the economy and attack workers in Europe and beyond.

He strongly advocated that the most important political task for all democrats and the labour movement is to defend the nation-state as the only mechanism which has evolved

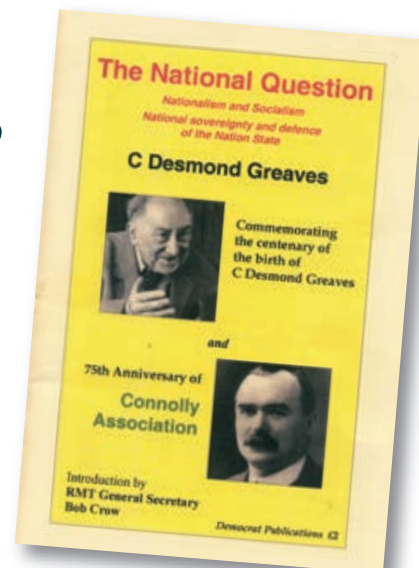
to impose controls on private capital.

Greaves points out that one definition of the EU is of six broken empires joined together in a temporary alliance.

Today these empires are embroiled in another imperialist effort to exploit the undeveloped world and revitalise capitalism in Europe.

In the introduction Bob Crow says: "EU diktats privatising our national infrastructure, destroying British manufacturing and attacking workers' rights originate in the think-tanks of monopoly corporations and are implemented through the EU institutions which are the antithesis of democracy and accountability".

As the EU centralises ever more power and abolishes democracy, workers' rights and



public services across Europe this pamphlet is a good starting point to understanding what is actually happening.

Greaves, C Desmond: *The National Question*: Democrat Publications: 36pp: £2(plus 50p postage): ISBN 978-1-904260-12-7 [Available from Democrat Press, PO Box 46295, London W5 2AG and Connolly Association, PO Box 753, Borehamwood, Herts. WD6 9JA].

TYNESIDE AWARDS



RMT president Peter Pinkney presented 40-year badges to Ray Helsdon and Peter Cooney of Newcastle and Gateshead branch and a 25-year badge to John Bell.



ABERDEEN AWARD

RMT general secretary Bob Crow presented Aberdeen RMT branch member Graeme Raitt with an award after 40 years service to the union.

Graeme started his railway career as a Cook on the dining cars during the British Rail days in 1973. After being made redundant

following privatisation, he became a steward then chief steward on the old Inter - City then GNER services.

Presently Graeme is team leader on East Coast trains. He has served as local rep for 15 years and represented staff on many occasions.



NO TO MCNULTY

Over 60 people attended a special meeting in Plymouth to discuss the union's strategy

and key demands in response to the McNulty report.

Senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash, regional organiser Phil Bialyk and executive member Nick Quirk all backed the call to step up the campaign.

Dear editor,

I would like to thank the union for the death grant it was very general of RMT.

I would just like you to know how much my family and I would like to thank RMT members, LU and Luke's colleagues at the Ruislip Garden depot for their constant and continuing support that they have shown for my son, his girlfriend and myself.

When you hear of all the bad things, more needs to be said about the good things.

I have been so touched by so many people who knew my son Luke and I even received letters from those that have heard about him. Everyone has been amazing, once again, thank you.

*Yours faithfully
Miss Mieke Charlott*

PICCADILLY AND DISTRICT WEST ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT BRIAN MUNRO FOR LRTC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	NOTT'S AND DERBY'S BUS BRANCH NOMINATE TONY BYRNE FOR MIDLANDS REGION COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	DORSET RAIL BRANCH SUPPORTS MARK GALE FOR EC ELECTION WESSEX REGION A TRUSTED AND WORTHY CANDIDATE	CAMDEN NO 3 SUPPORT JOHN REID FOR RMT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
GLASGOW SHIPPING BRANCH NOMINATE GORDON MARTIN FOR SCOTTISH REGIONAL ORGANISER	POOLE AND DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATE MARK GALE FOR WESSEX REGION COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES.	GLASGOW ENGINEERING BRANCH SUPPORTS GORDON MARTIN FOR SCOTTISH REGIONAL ORGANISER	WATERLOO BRANCH NOMINATE ANDY DUNCOMBE FOR THE WESSEX COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES SEAT
GLASGOW 5 BRANCH NOMINATE DENIS CONNOR FOR THE POSITION OF REGIONAL ORGANISER	SALISBURY NO 3 BRANCH NOMINATES MARK GALE FOR WESSEX REGION COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES.	GLASGOW 1&2 BRANCH SUPPORTS GORDON MARTIN FOR SCOTTISH REGIONAL ORGANISER VOTE FOR THIS ABLE AND COMMITTED BROTHER	BAKERLOO BRANCH BACKS BRIAN MUNRO FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES - NEGOTIATOR CAMPAIGNER ORGANISER GO FOR MUNRO!
GLASGOW 5 BRANCH NOMINATE ANN JOSS FOR THE POSITION OF RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER NORTH	NEWPORT I.O.W 2 BRANCH NOMINATES MARK GALE FOR WESSEX REGION COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	WISHAW AND MOTHERWELL BRANCH SUPPORT GORDON MARTIN FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER, REGION 1 SCOTLAND AND ASK ALL MEMBERS TO VOTE FOR THIS EXPERIENCED AND DEDICATED CANDIDATE	CENTRAL LINE WEST BRANCH BACKS BRIAN MUNRO FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES - LONDON TRANSPORT REGION GO FOR MUNRO!
NEASDEN BRANCH NOMINATES BRIAN MUNRO FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	LYMINGTON 1 BRANCH NOMINATES MARK GALE FOR WESSEX REGION COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	HULL RAIL BRANCH PROUDLY SUPPORTING PETER MARCH FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER NORTH AND SEEKS SUPPORT FOR THE MOST EXPERIENCED CANDIDATE	JUBILEE SOUTH BRANCH NOMINATES BRIAN MUNRO FOR THE LONDON TRANSPORT SEAT
TFL NO.1 BRANCH SUPPORT JOHN REID FOR THE LONDON TRANSPORT COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVE SEAT AN HONEST MAN WHO LISTENS TO MEMBERS	SOUTHAMPTON 5 BRANCH NOMINATES MARK GALE FOR WESSEX REGION COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	LEEDS GOODS AND CARTAGE BRANCH NOMINATES PETER MARCH FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER NORTH	PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NOMINATE PAUL MCDONNELL FOR WESSEX COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
WIMBLEDON BRANCH NOMINATE PAUL MCDONNELL FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVE'S WESSEX REGION 12 MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT	DORSET RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES MARK GALE FOR WESSEX REGION COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	LU ENGINEERING BRANCH SUPPORT JOHN REID FOR LONDON TRANSPORT EC POSITION EXPERIENCED AND HARD WORKING, SIMPLY THE BEST CANDIDATE	LONDON TAXI DRIVERS BRANCH SUPPORT JOHN REID FOR THE LONDON TRANSPORT COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVE SEAT

JOIN THE CREDIT UNION AND WIN A KINDLE!

Join the RMT Credit Union before Christmas and you could win a Kindle! The names of RMT members that join between now and December 20 will be entered into a prize draw to win the Kindle.

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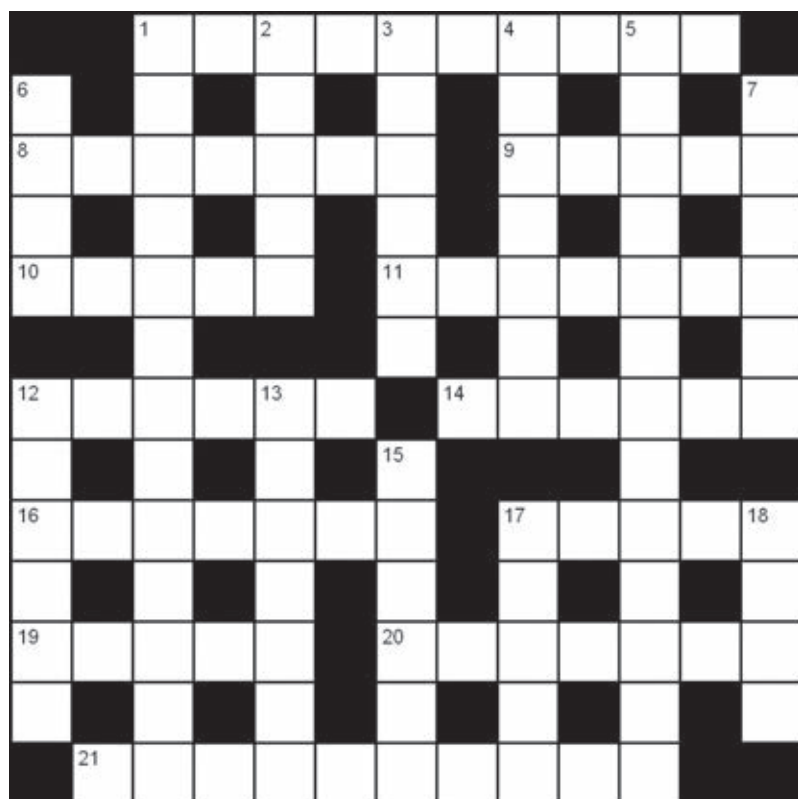
IPad prize sponsored by Uia Home Insurance

Uia is a leading insurer within the trade union movement, specialising in the provision of low cost insurance to RMT and other trade union members. As a mutual insurer, Uia reinvests any surplus in order to keep premiums low. Many RMT members, including general secretary Bob Crow, are existing policyholders and already know what excellent value and quality service Uia offers. These underlying principles mean that RMT members can be sure of a consistently fair and honest approach from a company that shares our trade union values.

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£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is James Stavert, Edinburgh.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by November 15 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Instability (10)
- 8 Conscript (7)
- 9 Boredom (5)
- 10 Result (5)
- 11 Marshal (7)
- 12 Clergyman (6)
- 14 Behind (6)
- 16 The norm (7)
- 17 Sticky (5)
- 19 Praise (5)
- 20 Despotism (7)
- 21 Pleasing (10)

DOWN

- 1 Rewrite (13)
- 2 Bind again (5)
- 3 Discomfort (6)
- 4 in Gaza, novel (6)
- 5 Rest (13)
- 6 Laze (4)
- 7 Concealed (6)
- 12 Musician (6)
- 13 Frighten (7)
- 15 Group of six (6)
- 17 Pulsate (5)
- 18 Toy (2-2)



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

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

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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

5 Membership Status

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

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

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Address
.....
.....

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

Your signature

Date

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To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
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Branch Sort Code

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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

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- 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.
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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.

