

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

UNION



INSIDE THIS ISSUE



ZERO HOURS,
ZERO RIGHTS
PAGE 10



SAVE OUR BUSES
PAGE 12



RFA PAY BALLOT
PAGE 21



www.rmt.org.uk

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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

BRANCH NUMBER

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

Job Description*	Part Time	YES	NO

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

D. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British ☐ African ☐ Caribbean ☐ Other Black/African/Caribbean background

E. Other ethnic group ☐ Arab ☐ Other ethnic group, please specify

Sexuality ☐ Hetrosexual ☐ Homosexual ☐ Bisexual ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you identify as transgender? Yes ☐ No ☐ If you wish to be contacted with information about union activities for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender members please tick here ☐

Your Pay Number
--

Direct Debit (you must complete form below) ☐ Paybill Deduction (complete separate form) ☐ I confirm my paybill mandate has been sent to my pay office. ☐
Phone Freephone 0800 376 3706 to confirm your company offers paybill facility.

Your signature _____ Date

--	--

 /

--	--

 /

--	--	--	--



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



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

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
---	---	---	---	---	---

Reference Number

Your National Insurance Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

FOR RMT OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.
Please pay RMT 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, 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.



Moisten along edges and fold to seal

contents

Page 4

FIGHTING THE EUROSTAR SELL OFF

Page 5

RAIL REGULATOR ADMITS MAINTENANCE CUTS HAMMERING SERVICES

Page 6

RMT BACKS SHREWSBURY 24 PETITION

Page 7

MPS BACK FIGHT AGAINST TUBE JOB CUTS

Page 8

DISABLED ACCESS

Page 9

PARLIAMENTARY COLUMN

Page 10

ZERO HOURS, ZERO RIGHTS

Page 11

JARVIS WORKERS 'UNFAIRLY' DISMISSED

Page 12

SAVE OUR BUSES

Page 13

DEAL WITH TRAIN STAFF INJURIES!

Page 14

CLAPHAM 25 YEARS ON

Page 15

FIGHTING FOR ROAD FREIGHT MEMBERS

Page 16

YEAR PLANNER

Page 19

LEGAL VICTORIES

Page 20

PRESIDENTS COLUMN

Page 21

RFA SNARE DRUGS RUNNERS

Page 22

LEARN IT AT NETWORK RAIL

Page 23

POLITICAL SCHOOL SUCCESS

Page 24

LIFE FOR A BUS DRIVER WITH A BUS DRIVER AS PRESIDENT

Page 26

ISRAELI MILITARY REFUSENIK

Page 28

AWARDS/WEB HIT

Page 27

BOOKLET OFFER

Page 30

CROSSWORD/LETTERS

EDITORIAL



WINNING IN 2014

RMT has secured an inflation-beating 2014 pay increase for Network Rail staff of over three per cent from the New Year with no strings and no compulsory redundancies.

At a time when workers are being told that they need to take another hit on their standards of living, you can still achieve victories with a strong trade union on your side.

It is only through strong union organisation that the working class can get a fair deal in an environment of rocketing pay in the boardrooms.

RMT has also won an Employment Tribunal which found that dismissals by Jarvis in 2010 were unfair and members can make claims against engineering company Babcock.

It found that liability for those dismissals passed to Babcock as a result of the transfer of the works.

A further hearing in early March in Leeds will decide the value of the unfair dismissal claims.

Some sacked Jarvis workers have been forced to travel hundreds of miles to find work which is often low paid and are employed by agencies on zero-hour contracts.

These contracts are a scourge which is making casualisation, exploitation and low pay endemic in the transport sector.

Employment agencies are forcing their way into the transport industry to profiteer at the expense of decent pay and conditions.

The reality is that the European Union's Agency Work Regulations (AWR) which supposedly protects agency workers is actually institutionalising casualised labour as the norm.

Whilst the regulations claim to ensure agency workers enjoy the same basic pay and conditions as permanent workers any such rights only kick in after 12 weeks.

This means that most agency workers do not benefit from the regulations.

For those that may be covered employers can avoid the AWR by using the so-called 'Swedish derogation' to

keep down pay.

Ultimately the directive is a reflection of the EU's neo-liberal employment model which promotes labour market 'flexibility' whilst providing rock bottom 'protections' to soften the blow.

Transport for London clearly supports this approach after it unveiled plans to replace nearly a thousand tube station staff jobs with an army of unpaid volunteers.

This is a blatant admission that these safety-critical staff are to be replaced with unpaid and poorly trained volunteers in a cynical move associated with the current dispute over the job cuts plans.

On the one hand TfL is admitting that it needs more visible staff while on the other they are axing those same posts and seeking to fill them for free with so-called 'ambassadors'.

RMT is prepared to fight for jobs, services and safety with industrial action if necessary.

The union is also balloting Royal Fleet Auxiliary members in a referendum with a recommendation to reject a derisory pay offer.

A rejection of the offer will trigger a ballot for industrial action to ensure that any money available within the government's public sector pay policy is distributed equally between all grades.

A new report by the *Campaign for Better Transport* has revealed that cuts to bus services are now reaching 'critical levels'.

Savage cuts to Britain's buses are decimating life-line services across whole communities as bus companies cherry-pick profitable routes and dump the rest.

Around half of all local authorities in England and Wales have reduced their support for buses last year and things will get worse under this rotten Tory-led government.

Bob Crow

FIGHTING THE EUROSTAR SELL OFF

The Tory/Lib Dem government has announced plans to sell off its 40-per cent stake in Eurostar, the high-speed rail service connecting London with Paris and Brussels, as part of a £20 billion privatisation drive.

Right wing Lib Dem Treasury chief secretary Danny Alexander said that the government had not made a final decision but made clear that he favoured this direction.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was typical of this right wing government that they are prepared to flog off the valuable public stake in Eurostar just as this expanding and important service is moving into a new period of growth.

Eurostar has recorded

operating profits of £91 million last year - boosted by the London Olympics - compared with £20.8 million in 2011, and it saw passenger numbers rise two per cent to 9.9 million in the same period.

"This has parallels with the planned sell off of the publicly owned East Coast and proves that the Tory-led administration will do anything to dump popular, publicly owned rail services," he said.

The Eurostar project was a successful joint venture between the French and Belgian state-owned railways and the now publicly owned London and Continental Railways which was bailed out with public money in 1998.



"You can bet that the French government will hold onto their stake in Eurostar and may even now bid for a total takeover using the profits to invest in their own transport services while we flog off the last of the family silver," he said.

The train service is currently 55-per cent owned by French

rail operator SNCF with the British government holding 40 per cent and Belgian train operator SNCB the remaining five per cent.

"RMT will fight these plans and any threat to our Eurostar members' jobs and conditions," said Bob Crow.



EAST MIDLANDS CLEANERS STRIKE FOR LIVING WAGE

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

This latest phase of action has come about despite attempts by RMT to negotiate a settlement to the long-running dispute.

The company has refused to budge and even tried to impose a freeze that would leave staff locked into poverty pay on the spurious grounds of "trading conditions".

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was a blatant attempt to enforce savage economic hardship on some of the most exploited groups of staff anywhere on the rail

network, all in the name of private profit and greed.

"Initial Rentokil is a wealthy company that can afford to pay cleaners on East Midlands trains a living wage.

"East Midlands Trains will not be allowed to duck this issue either and their excuses for not getting involved are frankly pathetic.

"They have a duty to ensure that their contractors aren't exploiting staff and they should be intervening now to help force a solution.

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



WEST ANGLIA BALLOT JOBS

RMT is balloting staff on Greater Anglia's West Anglia route for both strike action and action short of a strike in a dispute over the ripping up of agreed procedures as the company try to bulldoze through the removal of station cleaners posts.

Greater Anglia has been endeavouring to scrap cleaners on the West Anglia stations and has been attempting to rush through these proposals, consequently bypassing procedures agreed with the union.

As a result of their actions they have forced RMT into a dispute situation and the union is conducting a ballot of all platform and station members on the West Anglia Route for strike action and industrial

action short of a strike.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that RMT would not tolerate a situation where Greater Anglia tries to bulldoze through changes that have serious implications for members and the quality of service offered to the travelling public.

"Greater Anglia has been informed that RMT remains available for talks and we hope that management will see sense and take the necessary steps to resolve this dispute.

"We are urging our members to vote 'YES' for industrial action in this ballot to send out the clearest message to the company that we will not tolerate them riding roughshod over their own procedures," he said.



RAIL REGULATOR ADMITS MAINTENANCE CUTS HAMMERING SERVICES

RMT has called for a halt to planned cuts to Network Rail budgets and staffing levels after the regulator, the Office of Rail Regulation, backed RMT's case that the cuts are hitting passenger services.

The ORR, which also sets the Network Rail budget, said that "underspends" [ie cuts] on maintenance work, deferred plans to renew infrastructure, and other factors including engineering works overruns are leading to severe delays for both passenger and freight services.

The union said that a programme of investment and recruitment was clearly required in maintenance and renewals.

ORR's analysis of rail performance highlights that

more than half of delays on the network are caused by problems attributed to Network Rail cuts that the ORR themselves have imposed.

The ORR report revealed that "between April and October this year, there were more than nearly 16,000 infrastructure incidents across the network, nearly five per cent more than over the same period last year, despite benign weather conditions, causing almost 1.7 million minutes of delay to trains nationally".

This extraordinary report not only supports everything RMT has been saying about the impact on rail services of cuts to maintenance and renewals but which also blows the lid off the role that the ORR

themselves play in imposing cuts, on behalf of the government, on Network Rail.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the report made it clear that major delays to services were bound up with Network Rail's deferral of works for parts of the rail network such as tracks, level crossings and electrification.

"That is a shocking indictment on the state of Britain's railways while the private train operators are creaming off a fortune, but worse is to come.

"Only last month the ORR demanded a further £1.7 billion of cuts from Network Rail from 2014, cuts which would hack back skeleton staffing levels and drag back maintenance and

renewals even further than the dire conditions identified in today's report.

"ORR has got a nerve complaining about the impact of the cuts on one hand and then doling out another bunch with the other and this shambles has got to stop.

"That means ending the profiteering of privatisation and reinvesting that hard cash siphoned off by the private companies back into capacity, staffing and infrastructure.

"It also means ending the fragmentation and waste of "outsourcing" and sub-contracting and bringing all the works on our railways directly under the control of Network Rail," he said.



RMT BACKS SHREWSBURY 24 PETITION



A petition calling for justice for the Shrewsbury pickets signed by more than 100,000 people was handed into Downing Street last month.

The Downing Street delegation included former building worker and actor Ricky Tomlinson, Eileen Turnbull from the Shrewsbury 24 campaign, Bob Crow, UNITE general secretary Len McLuskey, PCS general secretary Mark Sewotka and UCATT general secretary Steve Murphy.

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign petition calls for the release of government documents relating to the 1972 builders' strike and subsequent show trials and convictions.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow said that it was clear that there was a conspiracy at the highest level in 1972 to blacklist and fit-up trade union activists.

"It is time for all the papers to be released and for those that were wrongly imprisoned to be given justice at last.

"RMT is proud to be supporting the campaign for justice for the Shrewsbury Pickets and with more than 100,000 signed up to the petition it is time for David Cameron and his government to take this shocking miscarriage of justice seriously and to make amends to all those denied their liberty and whose lives have been blighted in the following decades," he said.



STOP TRAIN COMPANIES DUMPING RAW SEWAGE

RMT has written to Transport Minister Baroness Kramer calling for immediate action to stop private train companies from dumping human sewage on the railway tracks.

The minister was recently forced to admit in the House of Lords that the practice is "utterly disgusting" although her government refuse point blank to do anything about it.

RMT is also demanding that the Minister and her department disclose what tonnage of human excrement is currently being dumped on Britain's railways every year so that staff and public alike can see the true scale of the scandal.

Track workers have repeatedly pointed out that some sections of the rail infrastructure are like an open sewer and that the

human waste sprays out when trains are travelling at speed posing a serious health risk.

Other staff in the train depots are forced to scrape the excrement from the bottom of carriages. The whole disgusting practice continues simply because the train companies are not prepared to invest a slice of their excessive profits in installing tanks and employing

the staff to empty them.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was a shocking indictment 20 years after rail privatisation.

"This rotten practice should be stopped and the profiteering train companies should be the forced to pay the price for upgrading the trains and employing staff to empty the tanks," he said.

RMT DEMANDS PUBLIC ENQUIRY OVER BOND HELICOPTERS

RMT has demanded a full public inquiry into helicopter safety both inshore and offshore to establish whether there is any connection with the spate of ditching's and fatalities in the North Sea and on land.

Bond Air Services, operator of 22 Eurocopter 135 helicopters, including the Police Scotland aircraft that fell into Glasgow's Clutha Bar, grounded its entire fleet of 135s for a short while following a fault in

the fuel indicator of an air ambulance EC 135 in operation in the North West.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that following the recent incidents in the North Sea, and the tragedy at the Clutha Bar, there was now a widespread and deep-seated concern over the whole issue of helicopter safety and that can only be addressed by a full and open public inquiry.

"RMT, as the union representing offshore staff,

wants to know if there is any connection between the spate of incidents and that can only be established through a public inquiry.

"All of those workers using the helicopters, whether they be offshore, police, ambulance, coastguard or any other industry, have a right to know that their place of work is safe and that means establishing the full facts as an absolute matter of urgency.

"That means a full public

inquiry into helicopter safety," he said.

Engineering giant Babcock is in talks to buy the owner of Bond Helicopters, the largest operator of aircraft in the North Sea oil and gas industry. Avincis, which is owned by private equity firm Kohlberg Kravis Roberts and Italian group Investindustrial, bought Bond Air Service and Bond Offshore Helicopters from brothers Peter and Stephen Bond in 2011 for a £300 million. ■

MPS BACK FIGHT AGAINST TUBE JOB CUTS

MPs from RMT's parliamentary group have backed the fight against proposals to close ticket offices by tabling questions in the House of Commons, putting down early day motions and pressing for an urgent parliamentary debate.

An RMT survey of tube users has also demonstrated overwhelming public opposition to the ticket office closures.

RMT group member Diane Abbott MP raised the issue in heated exchanges at Prime

Ministers Questions.

Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn tabled an early day motion 787 calling on the London Mayor to reconsider his proposals and keep the ticket offices open.

The EDM raised concerns about proposals to close all London Underground ticket offices and massively increase reliance on ticket machines.

"This will not only result in the loss of almost a thousand front-line station staff but will also impact on the service provided to passengers.



"Ticket machines are not able to provide passengers with full advice and assistance which may result in passengers enduring more expensive and difficult journeys.

"Disabled and older people could be disadvantaged when trying to use ticket machines and there will be an increased

threat to the safety and security of vulnerable groups such as women travelling at night," it said.

Members are urged to contact their MP and ask them to sign the motion by going to the RMT campaign web page. ■

DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY/TFL BALLOTS

RMT is balloting members on the SERCO Docklands Light Railway for both strike action and action short of a strike following a total breakdown in industrial relations between the union and the employer.

The issues at the heart of the dispute include stalling on pay talks, abuse of disciplinary and attendance procedures and the

use of agency and contract staff to undermine jobs and conditions.

DLR cleaners working on the Carlisle contract are also being balloted as the company is refusing to honour its promised timetable for incremental pay increases to the London Living Wage.

The union is also balloting Transport for London members

over plans to make future pay rises dependant on 'performance' and freezing pensionable pay at current levels.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union had no option but to ballot over attacks on pay and pensions

"RMT will not tolerate the cavalier abuse of procedures, agreements, pensions and pay,"

he said.

RMT is also balloting all LUL members over plans to shut down all ticket offices and scraping nearly 1,000 jobs including the removal station supervisors at some stations.

The union is urging a Yes vote in all ballots and the results will be announced later this month. ■

RMT SLAMS PLANS TO REPLACE TUBE STAFF WITH VOLUNTEERS

RMT has slammed a plan unveiled by Transport for London which would replace nearly a thousand safety-critical tube station staff jobs with an army of unpaid volunteers.

A company circular said: "To help us serve customers across our entire transport network, we need as many TfL ambassadors as possible to enable us to provide support when it is needed".

This is a blatant admission that the thousand threatened permanent staff jobs, held by skilled and experienced personnel, are to be replaced with unpaid and poorly trained

volunteers in a deeply cynical move directly associated with the current dispute over the job cuts plans.

The volunteers would not be subject to anything like the training, safety-briefing and direct management control of the permanent tube staff and as a non-contracted, scab workforce would be able to come and go as they please, plunging the system into total chaos.

The volunteer plan has clearly been cooked up as part of plans to bulldoze through the cuts programme which has sparked anger across the entire

tube workforce as they are balloted for strike action over the job and ticket office cuts and closures.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that it was clear that London Underground had been working behind the scenes on a secret plan to replace nearly a thousand skilled, experienced and safety-critical tube staff with a scab army of unpaid and under-trained volunteers who would gradually be introduced into every possible corner of the tube network.

"It is outrageous that on the one hand TfL is admitting in their circular that they need

more visible, station staff while on the other they are axing those same posts and seeking to fill them for free with volunteer "ambassadors".

"Union members across the tube system will be appalled to find that those volunteers are now being bracketed as "staff" when they are nothing of the kind.

"RMT is prepared to fight for jobs, services and safety and we demand that these outrageous proposals be withdrawn immediately and the recruitment stand at LU HQ be shut down," he said. ■

DISABLED ACCESS?

MPs warn access to transport for disabled people still unacceptably poor



The House of Commons transport select committee has warned that the government must work harder to improve accessibility for disabled people across the nation's transport networks.

RMT submitted evidence during the committee's investigation into post Paralympic travel both in writing and by oral evidence from the general secretary Bob Crow.

Recognising that some 11.5 million people already live with a recognised disability and more than a fifth of them experience some difficulty when using transport networks, the committee has concluded that it is essential that the Department for Transport delivers an ambitious Accessibility Action Plan.

It was noted that the changes made ahead of the 2012 Paralympic Games delivered access for disabled people to significantly more parts of the public transport network for the first time and highlighted the immense value for all.

Yet, a year later, the momentum from London 2012 is being lost because further key accessibility improvements

planned by the Department for Transport have been watered-down or abandoned.

The committee made several wide ranging recommendations which concluded:

BUSES

The government's decision not to require all drivers to have basic training in disability awareness is unacceptable. There should also be a national public awareness campaign to ensure all bus users respect space intended for wheelchair users and financial incentives for bus and coach companies to bring forward the capital investment required to deliver a fully accessible vehicle fleet. Penalties should also be imposed on operators who claim to offer accessible routes but then fail to provide accessible buses.

RAIL NETWORK

Disabled travellers should not have to book organised assistance in advance, so over time this requirement should be phased out by every train operator. Including disabled people in developing new rail infrastructure should be another key ambition: The DfT must ensure their needs are central to

prioritising and developing schemes for the next wave of 'Access for All' railway improvements.

TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

MPs call for financial incentives to encourage investment in fully accessible vehicles by operators, with a target to deliver a fully accessible taxi and private hire fleet within ten years. The committee also recommends the DfT works with licensing authorities and the taxi trade to develop and implement without delay a nationwide programme of disability awareness training for taxis and private hire vehicle drivers.

The transport committee also called for the cabinet to convene a working group of ministers and officials to improve cross-government working on accessibility in order to secure the full benefits to be gained from widening disabled people's access to employment and training, healthcare and wider participation in all parts of society.

RMT welcomed this report which rammed the message home to the government that disabled access to transport

services is already poor and will get worse if they do not pull back from plans to axe 14,000 guards, station and ticket office staff under their McNulty rail review. Bus services, often the local transport lifeline, also face decimation under this government.

The report sends a specific warning to London Mayor Boris Johnson that his personal plans to axe station staff and close ticket offices will turn poor access for disabled passengers on London Underground into no access at all.

Both the government and the London Mayor are embarking on transport cuts that will create no-go zones for disabled people by adopting plans that are blatantly discriminatory.

Bob Crow said that the core point of the report was the importance of having staffed stations to help all travellers make safe and secure journeys.

"RMT will work with disability groups to ensure that this report is used to the full as a campaigning tool as we fight the cuts plans which will leave people with disabilities effectively barred from transport services," he said.



RMT SHAMES EMPLOYERS INTO PAYING THE RATE

Skytrac catering workers on First Trans-Pennine Express have won a major victory after RMT shamed the employers into reversing a mean-spirited sleight-of-hand that would have turned a pay rise into a pay cut.

FTPE, newly accredited as a Living Wage employer, pledged that its contractors would also conform to the voluntary standard of £7.45 an hour - but told Skytrac to claw back 22p an hour from catering staff to cover their uniforms, staff travel and other 'benefits'.

After being told by regional organiser Andy Warnock-Smith that their hypocrisy would find them out, TPE relented, meaning that the full living wage would be paid from December, and the new rate of £7.65 from April 2014.

"For TPE to bask in the glory of being a Living-Wage employer while also demanding 22p an hour back from low-paid catering staff for the supposed benefit of wearing a uniform was simply mean and hypocritical, and I told them so.

"There is a danger that employers will seek the positive publicity of accreditation by the Living Wage Foundation while also picking at every available loophole to avoid actually paying it.

"If nearly four decades as a trade-union activist have taught me anything, it is that there is no substitute for solid union organisation backed by the determination to win justice," said Andy.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the RMT executive had rightly congratulated Andy on forcing this dramatic U-turn from FTPE and Skytrac.

"It is testament to Andy's record as a totally committed organiser for 27 years that he won this remarkable victory for a group of vulnerable workers on the eve of his retirement," he said. ■

Parliamentary column



FOR RENATIONALISATION

Over the summer I launched a local petition against high fares and poor services affecting passengers on the Brighton to London line and arranged meetings to listen to their concerns.

The level of support we got was testament to the frustration people feel at having to pay through the nose to travel on packed trains that frequently run late. As a regular passenger on the Brighton to London line I know how they feel.

The Rebuilding Rail report, published last year by Transport for Quality of Life and commissioned by the rail unions, offers a superb analysis of the mess Britain's railways are in.

It finds that the private sector has not delivered the innovation and investment that were once promised, that the costs of back-room staff have massively increased, and that the costs of train travel rose by 17 per cent between 1997 and 2010 (while the costs of travelling by car fell). It conservatively estimates that £1.2 billion is being lost each year as a result of fragmentation and privatisation.

The irony is that some of the biggest profiteers are the state-owned rail companies of our neighbours: Deutsche Bahn, for example, owns three UK franchises.

The solution the Green Party advance is unequivocal. We want our railways to be

brought back into public hands, with passengers and workers having a greater say in the development of the system. The enormous savings generated could and should then be reinvested in rail infrastructure and to reduce the soaring cost of fares.

I have published a Private Member's Bill sets out the process to make this happen, and I'm grateful to the RMT for all its support in that process. Currently the Greens are the only party that supports this policy, but I'd love Labour to get behind it.

Polling by YouGov has shown that two thirds of the public want the railways to be run in the public sector. Even 52 per cent of Conservatives are pro-nationalisation of the rail companies as are 72 per cent of UKIP supporters.

Finally solidarity to RMT London Underground and Transport for London members fighting Boris Johnson's job cuts. It is an absolute scandal that the Government (who cut TFL's budget) and the Mayor are proposing to scrap a thousand decent jobs that provide a service that passengers greatly value.

You have widespread public support and together it is important that we win this fight otherwise we know there will be more cuts to come.

Caroline Lucas MP is the Green Party Member for Brighton Pavilion, and a member of the RMT Progressive Cross Party Group

STRIKING AGAINST ZERO HOURS: Baker's union BFAWU members on strike at Hovis (Premier Foods) Wigan over the introduction of agency staff on Zero Hours contracts, redundancies and a reduction in hours from 52 to 40 per week.



ZERO HOURS ZERO RIGHTS

Zero hours contracts are making casualisation, exploitation and low pay endemic in the transport sector

Employment agencies are forcing their way into the transport industry with the express intent of profiteering at the expense of jobs, security and decent pay and conditions.

On rail infrastructure, RMT has exposed how the use of agencies is directly associated with fatigue, breaches of safety, bogus self-employment, casualisation and poverty pay.

The union is also mounting campaigns at train operating companies and London Underground that use agencies, calling on them to bring work

back in-house on decent pay and conditions.

RMT members working as cleaners for sub-contractors Mitie on First Great Western have been taking strike action since October in a dispute over low pay and against zero hour contracts.

Well over a million workers are working on zero hours and it is so widely used that in some sectors it is now the dominant form of employment.

Workers on these contracts have no guaranteed earnings providing certainty for the

future as, for example, you can't get a mortgage.

The need to respond to calls to attend work, frequently at short notice, places a particular strain on families and those who have to arrange care for dependents.

Even regular patterns of work can be reduced to zero at a moment's notice with no right to redeployment or redundancy pay as workers are denied employment rights.

So why hasn't the much-lauded European Union Agency Work Regulations (AWR)

defended these vulnerable workers?

The reality is that despite the fact that AWR supposedly protects agency workers, the overwhelming effect has been to normalise and institutionalise casualised labour.

Moreover whilst the regulations claim to ensure agency workers enjoy the same basic pay and conditions as permanent workers any such rights only kicks in after 12 weeks.

This means that most agency workers do not benefit.

And as if that is not enough there is a 'flat-pack' solution for employers to avoid AWR altogether, the so-called 'Swedish derogation' which is being used aggressively to keep down pay.

Under this derogation, if the agency worker signs a permanent contract with an agency then there is no obligation for them to receive basic pay and conditions comparable to a permanent worker.

The EU directive even demands that member states end 'unjustified' or 'disproportionate' restrictions on agency work such as the ban on agency workers in the public sector in France and Spain.

This extension of agency labour at the heart of the directive explains why Norwegian workers organised a strike against it last year.

Backing the action, outgoing

International Transport Workers Federation general secretary David Cockcroft said that Norway's legislation on contract labour was some of the best there is.

"The directive doesn't just risk taking a good law and making it mediocre - it could also strip the rights currently enjoyed by workers and open the floodgates to their replacement by precariously employed temporary and agency staff that will themselves get inferior employment protection," he warned.

As with the 12-week requirement, the Swedish derogation was a compromise conceded to the CBI by the TUC.

But the directive is a reflection of the EU's neo-liberal employment model which promotes labour market "flexibility" whilst providing

minimum protections to soften the blow, "flexicurity" being the made-up word with which this model is sold.

The EU's much-derided Lisbon Agenda with its promise of 'flexicurity' was followed by 'Europe 2020'.

These agendas openly call for wages to reflect productivity, which means cutting wages even further.

This has sparked unprecedented levels of unemployment under the guise of "restoring competitiveness" particularly in countries such as Ireland, Greece, Portugal and the Baltic states.

The wholesale suspension of trade union collective bargaining as a condition of EU 'bail outs' in these countries also demonstrates that trade union rights are an obstacle to EU plans to restructure labour markets.

The European Commission,

IMF and the European Central Bank now directly intervenes in national wage negotiations in Ireland, Greece and Romania in order to weaken collective bargaining.

Destroying the concept of a permanent job with rights and replacing it with precarious employment and exploiting a reserve army of cheap labour is the core strategy of so-called 'globalisation' and its regional arm the EU.

The Bakers' union BFAWU and RMT agree that the battle against zero hours is part of a wider fight against casualisation through bogus self-employment, agency, temporary and part-time work.

As BFAWU regional official Geoff Atkinson told *Labour Research*: "We need to stand up against these practices otherwise, at the end of the day, they will eradicate everyone's terms and conditions". ■

JARVIS WORKERS 'UNFAIRLY' DISMISSED

An Employment Tribunal in Leeds has found that dismissals by Jarvis Rail Ltd in 2010 were unfair and that claimants represented by RMT had sufficient continuity of employment to make claims against engineering company Babcock.

It found that liability for those dismissals and for shortfalls in the Insolvency Service payments passed to Babcock as a result of the transfer of the works.

The union said that it was an important milestone victory on behalf of workers sacked after the collapse of rail infrastructure company Jarvis, formally headed up by top Tory Steven Norris.

There will now be a further hearing in early March in Leeds to decide the value of the unfair dismissal claims.

RMT's Parliamentary group

also tabled an amendment to the Pension Bill last October which calls on the government to fully protect pension benefits. The Con Dem opposed this amendment and, despite a lengthy debate in Parliament, it was not voted on due to time constraints.

However it will now be debated by the House of Lords this month and the union will continue to push for this amendment to become law.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that in 2010 over a thousand workers were dumped out of work when Jarvis collapsed into administration as a result of shocking mismanagement that had nothing to do with the workforce.

"Subsequently, when the work was taken over by Babcock's, those same workers were hit again in a double-



whammy that shows how the dice are loaded against the workforce and in favour of the management who walked away from these skilled rail workers without any penalty at all.

"Those managers, including Steven Norris, have been free to set up shop and start again while their workers have been plunged into poverty. It is a shocking indictment on the whole capitalist system.

"It is only through the guts

and determination of RMT members and our lawyers at the Employment Tribunal that we have now recorded this milestone and the campaign for justice for the Jarvis workforce goes on," he said.

Some of the sacked Jarvis workers have been forced to travel hundreds of miles to find work which is often low paid and are employed by agencies on zero-hour contracts.

■



SAVE OUR BUSES

Cuts to bus services are now reaching 'critical levels' says new report

Around 50 per cent of local authorities in England and Wales have reduced their support for buses for 2013, while the 2014/15 financial year is likely to be a difficult one for bus services, according to a report by the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT).

Three councils have stopped supporting services and others might follow, warned the CBT, whose report is entitled *Buses In Crisis* and is based on responses to Freedom of Information Act requests made to all local transport authorities regarding supported buses.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that savage cuts to Britain's buses are part of an all-out attack which was decimating life-line services across whole communities as the bus companies wheel out a pack of excuses to justify cherry-picking the profitable routes and dumping the rest.

"With local authorities looking at axing entire routes we can expect to see many more people plunged into

transport poverty and effectively left as prisoners in their own homes.

"For many elderly and low paid people, particularly in rural areas, the bus is their only connection with the wider world and provides an absolutely essential service.

"It is truly shocking that the notion of buses as a public service is being ripped apart and this latest report only fuels the argument for public ownership of transport to protect those who rely on our buses to get about," he said.

Key findings in the report include:

- In the last year there have been £17 million of cuts in the budget for support buses in England. Plans for cuts of £48 million have already been announced for future years, with the likelihood of more to come;
- Counties making year-on-year cuts of more than 10 per cent to support for buses include Shropshire, Hertfordshire,

Cambridgeshire, West Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, West Sussex, Wiltshire, Dorset and Gloucestershire;

- 47 per cent of local authorities have reduced their spending on supported bus provision this year;
- Southend, Darlington and Hartlepool have become the first three local authorities no longer to support any bus services.

In addition, county counties considering cuts include Worcestershire, Cumbria, Oxfordshire, North Yorkshire, Dorset, Essex and Nottinghamshire.

Cuts could also be made by Transport for London, West Midlands transport authority Centro and the Welsh government, the report said.

CBT public transport campaigner Martin Abrams said that cuts to bus services were now reaching critical levels.

"We have seen services lost year on year and with further deep cuts planned next year,

some authorities may stop supporting buses altogether.

"This is a watershed moment, if government doesn't take action to help support buses, we will see whole networks disappear.

"Politicians, both locally and in Westminster, need to understand how important buses are.

"They may not be as politically sexy as big transport projects but they make a significant difference to the economy, the environment and to wider society.

"It would be a disaster if whole networks were allowed to disappear," he said.

Chairman of the Local Government Association economy and transport board Peter Box said that councils were contending with 43 per cent budget cuts, reductions to bus-related grants and the spiralling cost of the concessionary travel scheme which government has never properly funded. ■

DEAL WITH TRAIN STAFF INJURIES!

Wayne Moore of Bletchley and Northampton branch calls for action against on-board train injuries

Last year's RMT Health and Safety conference passed a motion regarding injuries caused to on-board train staff, including hip, knee, and ankle and back injuries.

The motion was proposed by the Portsmouth branch and seconded by myself from the Northampton and Bletchley branch.

I have noticed from my own members the same recurring issues. However TOC's and Network Rail fail to recognise these injuries as work related. I don't see how this can be the case, any injury caused in the workplace either by equipment that you are using or the area in which you are being asked to work, is surely a work related injury.

The motion was specific to the Desiro units worked by our brothers and sisters operated by Southwest Trains, my members on the London Midland franchise are working the same style of Desiro units.

It has been noted that the suspension on this type of unit

causes swaying and lurching.

During the debate I asked for the internal layout of this unit to be looked in to, our mark one stock was designed with a two-by-two seating plan, giving my members the ability to walk in a straight line through the train.

However our mark two stock has three by two seating, meaning constant twisting while walking through the train carrying our revenue equipment, this is putting added strain on our knees, hips, ankles and back, as well as the jolting and vibrating from the train itself.

The Desiro units that we are referring to has a conductor operating panel at every passenger door, meaning we can work the train from any location within it.

Therefore TOCs are encouraging conductors to spend more time in the passenger saloon performing customer service and revenue duties. This obviously exposes the conductor to a greater risk of the injuries mentioned due to the increased time spent in the



passenger saloon and being on their feet.

This I'm sure is not just an issue on the two TOC's mentioned but others nationwide, I would ask other safety reps from across the country to look in to this issue and report back to your lead officer so we can gather valuable information.

We need to be asking if these injuries caused by the rolling stock being used, if so how does it vary on different types of rolling stock, are the modern trains the cause?

Has there been an increase in injuries, as in my member's case, since a change in the rolling stock to more modern trains?

Have the injuries been caused as a result of members

being asked to spend more time walking through trains performing their duties? Or is it a result in the track we are operating on?

With the slashing by Network Rail of its maintenance staff are the tracks being maintained to a good standard?

One thing is clear the injuries are being caused by either the rolling stock we are working on, the increase in time being spent in passenger saloons or the state of the tracks we are operating on.

As all of this is taking place while we are on duty and in our workplace, there is no doubt in my mind that these are work-related injuries and need to be recognised as such, just as a slip, trip or fall on a platform or train would be. ■

RMT 2014 Health and Safety advisory conference

'Tackling Workplace Stress'
Wednesday February 26 2014
Doncaster Trades Club

This year's conference is focussing on stress in the workplace. Health and safety training will take also place on Tuesday February 25 and Thursday February 27. Book your place now to avoid disappointment. Contact Stephanie Mackay at s.macKay@rmt.org.uk

CLAPHAM 25 YEARS ON

RMT warns over safety 25 years after Clapham rail disaster

December 12 2013 marked 25 years since the Clapham Junction rail crash that left 35 people dead and hundreds injured.

The accident happened when a crowded train from Poole to London Waterloo crashed into the back of a stationary Basingstoke service, which had stopped at a red signal.

A third train, travelling empty in the opposite direction, hit the wreckage only minutes later.

RMT Company Council representatives Rickey Goodman and Geoff Kite laid a wreath on behalf of the union at a service memorial garden at Clapham

Junction at the spot where the crash happened.

The resulting inquiry into the crash, chaired by Anthony Hidden, found that the primary cause to be wiring errors made by a rail worker who'd had only one day off in 13 weeks, and that a culture of excessive hours was to blame.

The inquiry made 93 recommendations for safety improvements including a limit on working hours.

However Hidden recommended that the maximum staff working period should be 12 hours, a recommendation that has now been sidelined and replaced by a 14 hour door-to-door limit, including unpaid hours, a period which RMT believes piles on stress and fatigue.

On the anniversary RMT gave a blunt warning that cuts to rail staffing, the drive towards casualisation and zero hours contracts amongst rail agencies supplying engineering staff, risks dragging the rail network backwards to a culture of fatigue and overwork.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the anniversary was a time to remember those who lost those lives and those who survived thanks to the work of the emergency services and staff from within our own industry.

"The tragedy is an eternal warning of what happens when staff are suffering fatigue and are operating within a culture of excessive hours and impossible demands.

"25 years on from Clapham, RMT is issuing a renewed call for an end to the casualisation

and zero hours contracts culture which is being rolled out across the railways by stealth and where fatigue and lack of clear management control is once again a major issue for our members.

"RMT expects immediate action to be taken to bring Network Rail works back in-house within an environment where safety is paramount, staff are on decent pay and conditions and where working hours are properly managed and controlled," he said.



FIGHTING FOR ROAD FREIGHT MEMBERS

Trevor Howard encourages members to attend the union's road freight conference in Great Yarmouth on March 22

The road freight sector is an integral part of this fighting trade union and has been the case for many years.

Rail-freight played a very big part in the rail industry until successive governments decided to destroy Britain's manufacturing and heavy industries.

My first job on leaving school was as a Telegraph Lad in Wakefield East signal box at Kirkgate Station in 1971, this box was just a few miles down the line from Healey Mills which was the biggest marshalling yard in Europe when it was built.

Freight trains far outnumbered passenger trains in those days and no sooner had you signalled one train out of your sector then another was offered right behind it, this was constant all day and night which transported Steel, Coal and more to the many Goods Yards that existed in many Railway Stations in those days.

Road freight covers other grades of workers and not just drivers, we have Loaders, forklift drivers, fitters, clerical and all other workers that are involved within distribution.

We also have the dockworkers as well which was part of the old Docks & Railways Company including crane drivers and tug drivers. To be included as a member of the Road Freight sector, you do not

have to be a 'driver'. It appears to confuse many people when they go out recruiting at various locations with the misconception that you have to be a driver to be in RMT.

RMT has recognition for negotiating rights with many companies some dating back to the old BR Sundries Division, such as: DHL, UPS, Freightliner, City-Link, Wincanton, Inland Ports, DB Schenker etc.

There are many more road freight workers out there just waiting to be organised and recruited in to the union and we have had meetings with the organising unit to formulate a strategy to recruit these workers.

The industry has a high percentage of agency drivers who are on zero hours contracts and many companies are happy to utilise these drivers and warehouse staff on an 'as needed' basis which seems to be the growing trend at the moment and needs to be addressed.

A conference liaison meeting was held at Unity House recently and it is the intention of RMT to set up a strategy along with the org unit to try and break in to 'green field' sites with the intention of organising these workers within the road freight sector.

Road Freight branches are now few and far between but we have activists available to assist in recruiting in most



regions. Members from Leeds Goods and Cartage Branch would be available to cover the North regions and I can be contacted on 07880864480.

In the South West we have an experienced activist in Jimmy Rafferty who is available on 07903208123. The assistant general secretary Steve Hedley has been given responsibility for the sector and can be contacted at Unity House. We need to have activists who understand the problems that Road Freight members are experiencing within the industry and experienced drivers are the best ones to talk to Road Freight workers.

I am a Class 1 driver and have been for over 30 years now and have seen many changes over these years. We have had so much Legislation rammed down our throats from the likes of the EU and UK governing bodies that it has now led to a shortage of qualified Class 1 drivers in the UK.

This is simply because of all the rules and regulations that have been imposed over the years that have forced many

drivers to just simply leave the industry.

From October 1 2014, all HGV drivers will have to hold a Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) which is forcing more drivers to say "that's it, I have had enough" and will also be leaving the industry.

Many of you will remember what happened to the train drivers when BR was privatised, this is the same scenario and will ultimately lead to the best bargaining position that an HGV driver has ever had.

Road freight companies are going to have to wake up to the fact that if they do not increase the rates of pay and conditions for the present drivers, then with the dramatic shortage that will take place after October they will find drivers moving on to employers who actually had the foresight to increase their terms and conditions.

This year's RMT Road Freight conference will be in Great Yarmouth on March 22 and as conference president I am looking forward to a good attendance from as many road freight workers as possible. ■

To join call FREE on **0800 376 3706**

RMT Freephone Helpline (England and Wales) - **0800 376 3706**

Lines are open 8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 9.30 am-4pm Saturday.

Or email info@rmt.org.uk

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	
TUE				1	
WED	1 ●			2	
THU	2			3	1
FRI	3			4	2
SAT	4	1	1 CATERING & HOTEL GRADES CONFERENCE - BIRMINGHAM	5	3
SUN	5	2	2 RMT BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS CONFERENCE BIRMINGHAM	6	4
MON	6	3	3	7	5
TUE	7	4	4	8	6
WED	8	5	5	9	7
THU	9	6	6	10	8
FRI	10	7	7 RMT NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE GLASGOW	11	9
SAT	11	8	8	12	10
SUN	12	9	9	13	11
MON	13	10	10	14	12
TUE	14	11	11	15	13
WED	15	12	12	16	14
THU	16	13	13	17	15
FRI	17	14	14	18	16
SAT	18	15	15 SUPERVISORY GRADES CONFERENCE SOUTHAMPTON	19	17
SUN	19	16	16	20	18
MON	20	17	17	21	19
TUE	21	18	18	22	20
WED	22	19	19	23	21
THU	23	20	20	24	22
FRI	24	21	21	25	23
SAT	25	22	22 ROAD FREIGHT/TRANSPORT GRADES - GREAT YARMOUTH	26	24
SUN	26	23	23	27	25
MON	27	24	24	28	26
TUE	28	25	25 RMT NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE - DONCASTER	29	27
WED	29	26	26	30	28
THU	30	27	27		29
FRI	31	28	28		30
SAT			29		31
SUN			30		
MON			31		
TUE					
WED					



UK BANK HOLIDAYS



CONFERENCE SEASON

* Conference delegates are elected by branches and regional councils. If you are interested in attending conferences go to your branch.

General criminal queries can be dealt with on the following numbers.

Criminal Helpline - 07659 118181

Criminal Helpline (Scotland) - 0800 328 1014

Lines are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

RMT Legal Helpline (Scotland) - 0800 328 1014

Lines are open 8am-8pm Monday-Friday, 9am-8pm Saturday.



www.rmt.org.uk :: www.RMTv.org

MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	
		1						TUE
		2			1			WED
		3			2			THU
		4	1		3			FRI
		5	2		4	1		SAT
	1 RMT NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BRANCH & REGIONAL COUNCIL SECRETARIES - FORT WILLIAM	6	3		5	2		SUN
●	2	7	4	1	6	3	1	MON
	3	8	5	2	7	4	2	TUE
	4	9	6	3	8	5	3	WED
	5	10	7	4	9	6	4	THU
NAL LGBT CONFERENCE	6	11	8	5	10	7	5	FRI
	7	12	9	6	11	8	6	SAT
	8	13	10	7	12	9	7	SUN
OFFSHORE)	9	14	11	8	13	10	8	MON
	10	15	12	9	14	11	9	TUE
& DOCKS)	11	16	13	10	15	12	10	WED
	12	17	14	11	16	13	11	THU
	13	18	15	12	17	14	12	FRI
	14	19	16	13	18	15	13	SAT
	15	20	17	14	19	16	14	SUN
	16	21	18	15	20	17	15	MON
	17	22	19	16	21	18	16	TUE
	18	23	20	17	22	19	17	WED
	19	24	21	18	23	20	18	THU
	20	25	22	19	24	21	19	FRI
	21	26	23	20	25	22	20	SAT
	22 RMT	27	24	21	26	23	21	SUN
●	23 ANNUAL	28	25 ●	22	27	24	22	MON
	24 GENERAL	29	26	23	28	25 ●	23	TUE
	25 MEETING	30	27	24	29	26 ●	24	WED
	26 BRISTOL	31	28	25	30	27	25	THU
	27		29	26	31	28	26	FRI
	28		30	27		29	27	SAT
	29		31	28		30	28	SUN
	30			29			29	MON
				30			30	TUE
							31	WED

Branch meetings

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 VICTORIES

RMT RECOVERS EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL FEES



Last July the Tory/Lib Dem government introduced changes to the Employment Tribunal (ET) System which requires employees to now pay both an issue fee and a hearing fee in order to progress with a case.

This change presents a major deterrent to access to justice for all workers.

In response, RMT agreed legal arrangements which ensured members' fees are paid and that solicitors can recover those fees from the employer if a settlement can be negotiated.

RMT solicitors Thompsons recently pursued a claim on behalf of a member in relation to a breach of contract and the employer decided to defend the claim in full even though the member had a clear entitlement.

This resulted in fees both for lodging the case and for the hearing requested. However Thompsons was also able to negotiate a full reimbursement of the fees from the employers, in addition to recovering the member's contractual entitlement.

This case is important for the union because it is the first case concluded since the introduction of ET fees.

RMT's legal assistance scheme meant that despite the latest attacks on access to justice, the member was able to bring the case and win it with the employers paying the fees.

As employers lobbied their friends in the government for ET fees to be brought in they may now be wondering whether that was a good idea.

CITY LINK VICTORY

A member working for City Link as a delivery driver injured himself while leaving his van.

The member fell and landed on his back causing head injuries.

RMT solicitors argued that handles should have been fitted in order to exit the van safely.

The other side refused to negotiate but when a trial date was listed a settlement was reached and the member received £1,500.

GAS LEAK

A train guard member returned to the conductor's cab after dispatching a train and noticed an unusual smell. It appeared that the smell was poisonous gas coming from the batteries situated below the cab. As a result of this exposure the member suffered profound loss of concentration, dizziness, nausea and migraines. The other side agreed to pay £1,025 in compensation.

DEFECTIVE EQUIPMENT

A bus driver member received nearly £21,500 after sustaining an injury in the course of her employment. The member noticed that the accelerator pedal was extremely stiff and she had to exert a considerable amount of pressure to get the bus to move. She requested a replacement bus but was told none were available and she was told to continue to drive the defective bus. She sustained an injury in her right knee and was diagnosed with a lateral ligament strain. It is hoped that this result will assist health and safety reps at the workplace and prevent similar accidents in the future.

A shipping member was resting in his cabin when a fan cover fell from the ceiling hitting him on the head causing a serious eye injury adversely affecting his vision. Following detailed negotiations it was possible to negotiate a £4,000 settlement for damages.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

A member was injured during the course of his employment when he was knocked off his motorbike after a third party pulled out of a road into his path. The member suffered a broken foot, tendon damage and a great deal of stress. The other side refused to negotiate and it was necessary to start court proceedings.

Another member was injured when a lorry hit the back of his car and the union negotiated a satisfactory settlement of nearly £10,000.

A bus driver received nearly £3,500 after sustaining an injury while on duty. Whilst driving the bus through a narrowed road after ensuring it was safe to move forward a van appeared at speed forcing the member to brake. As a result of the accident the member suffered whiplash and neck and shoulder injuries.

ASSAULT

A member was verbally abused and attacked by a passenger who had failed to produce a ticket.

Following detailed negotiations as final payment for nearly £6,000 was sent to the member.

All these cases show the value of the union's legal service. It also shows that the union is prepared to take cases that claim companies and no win/no fee solicitors will not. ■



STOP ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS

A new year and we face the same old problems.

Pay talks, attacks on pensions, redundancies, legal challenges and savage cuts on London Underground but we will be trying to do the best for our members.

That means fighting for a shorter week, trying to get free travel for all workers and generally improving working conditions. We will also have the added interest of the European elections and the Scottish independence referendum.

However, one of the biggest challenges we face is the increased use of zero hours contracts.

There are many firms who are now using this method of employment. It is estimated that there could be as many as twenty per cent of workers in the UK 'employed' on these contracts.

Zero hours contracts are a disgrace, and can be likened

to the old method that used to be used on the docks. Then a group of workers would turn up at the docks and the foreman would pick the 'best' workers for that day.

Obviously this method was open to lots of abuse, not least the foreman getting various perks for picking people. Brown envelopes were no doubt handed round with some regularity! I am not suggesting that is what is happening with zero hour contracts, but it could certainly be open to similar abuses.

Workers who are on these contracts have no guaranteed hours of work. This means that do not know, from one week to the next, whether they have any work or not. For instance, they could be sat at home, and receive a phone call telling them to be at place x at such and such a time.

This could have serious consequences in the transport industry pertaining to such

problems as fatigue. There is no way people can plan their lives under this system.

If they do not go then the bosses will just get someone else. Workers with families will suffer nightmares. Do they turn down much needed income, and neglect such things as childcare? Do they put children first, and lose out on a wage? Would the government and right wing press then class them as being 'workshy'?

The arguments by employers are that it gives them more flexibility. This may well be true, but it also gives them total control to pick and choose who they want. Anyone who raises issues such as safety or conditions will not be employed.

The only way that that can redress the situation is by hoping that unions could be recognised, and therefore offer them some protection, but employers are unlikely to accept this.

There are ways to fight this practice. We can name and shame them, call for industrial action, and use our parliamentary group to raise concerns. John McDonnell MP has already raised concerns in parliament. He pointed out these issues and raised the possibility of a form of blacklisting that these firms could use.

We should not think that zero hours contracts are limited to transport and the building industries. Universities and schools are increasingly using this practice. We need to support our fellow trade unionists and fight this despicable attack on workers. Firms like Network Rail, and the TOCS, should be told to stop using contractors who use zero hours contracts.

This is an issue that affects us all and we should do everything we can to stop it now!

Peter Pinkney ■

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

fitnessfirst.co.uk

Fitness First

RFA SNARE DRUGS RUNNERS

Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker Wave Knight has intercepted drug runners' with a cargo £9 million of cannabis.

The smugglers from Guyana were sailing a known trafficking route in the Caribbean in the fishing vessel.

There were found guilty of two counts of violating the US Maritime Drug Law Enforcement Act.

The RFA tanker – on a 16-month deployment to the region – came across the small boat

when smugglers began tossing bales over the side.

Some 55 of those bales were recovered by sailors in one of Wave Knight's sea boats and brought aboard the auxiliary.

A US Coast Guard Law Enforcement detachment used the tanker's other boat to board the boat and detained the crew.

RFA Wave Knight has been away from the UK since last January on the Atlantic Patrol North mission and will return to port in the Spring. ■



RFA PAY BALLOT

RMT is balloting Royal Fleet Auxiliary members in a referendum with a recommendation to reject a pay offer which includes an unfair distribution of bonuses between ratings and officers.

A rejection of the offer by January 15 will trigger a ballot for industrial action to ensure that any money available within the government's public sector pay policy is distributed equally between all grades.

National secretary Steve Todd slammed the way the company had seen fit to once again ignore members and the union in the way that they deal with bonus payments.

"Not only have we once again been restricted by the government restraints on pay increases for a third year, but they have again made performance awards which see higher grade ranks receive substantially more in

terms of money than the lower grades.

"If a bonus is paid on the basis of the performance of RFA surely that performance is achieved as a result of the efforts of all concerned, not the favoured few," he said.

RMT RFA convenor Ian Boyle said that the only way fairness and equity could be achieved was by making the bonus payments a cash value and paying everyone the same amount.

"There is already there is a massive gulf in pay between the higher ranks and the lower ranks and that gulf will only get wider.

"This is a classic divide and conquer tactic by the management, raising some bonuses for CPO PO and Leading Hands whilst the Ratings do not receive an increase at all and that is something we cannot accept," he said. ■

LEARN IT AT NETWORK RAIL



Union learning rep (ULR) Gary Abbott explains how a new learning agreement has been reached with Network Rail

I was elected as a union learning rep about three years ago by my branch and I realised that there were going to be huge challenges coming for members due to re-training.

I had been made aware of Network Rail's operating strategy for signallers roles and the potential implications for track recognition programmes.

I started to search the internal vacancy pages and found lots of them in other roles within the company and the only thing stopping my work colleagues from applying was the lack of modern education qualifications.

I discovered at this time that there was no learning agreement between Network Rail and RMT.

Surely it would benefit the company to train experienced staff for these roles rather than get someone with no railway experience? The first stage is to show that training would benefit

everyone.

Emily King had been recently appointed as RMT development worker with responsibility for NR, and her hard work in getting us to the threshold of a national agreement cannot be underestimated. She talked Network Rail into allowing some basic Skills for Life Courses to be run in workers own time and convinced them to fund a success bonus for all involved in the trials. These were run in Bristol, Doncaster and Liverpool and were a resounding success, and proved to Network Rail that there was a thirst within its workforce to learn. From these early successes, the Learn IT programme was created.

It had been noted that there was a huge desire within the workforce for an ITC based course. There was an argument that by training staff to better levels of IT competence, it would not only benefit staff

development, but also improve efficiency and safety. If members were better trained on all equipment and expected to know how to operate them, such as smart phones and computers, then it will reduce accidents and incidents.

Emily produced a document that the board of Network Rail could understand, that it will ultimately save money.

Network Rail agreed to investigate the opportunities we had presented them and came back with an agreement to appoint a national provider and run some trials to prove the concept. The Skills Partnership was appointed and it was agreed to run trials. These trials have been such a success that before they had even finished Network Rail decided to roll out the programme nationally from January 2014.

The programme is based around normal everyday IT,

including smartphones and iPads, with an element of functional skills. Towards the end of the basic course, there is an opportunity to choose options that better suit your circumstances. These include more intensive IT training, or The Career Toolkit. The toolkit teaches members how to write a CV, fill out online application forms and survive in the modern world.

I would encourage anyone within NR interested in receiving some excellent free education to contact their Union Learning Rep for further details. These courses are open to everyone and NR has agreed to arrange reasonable release for these courses.

Finally, I would like to say thanks to Emily and my fellow ULRs Dave Edwards and Mark Eastwood for their fantastic hard work and excellent achievements. ■



Members of the political school at the House of Commons

POLITICAL SCHOOL SUCCESS

The RMT political school is not a place where members are told which party to vote or which policies we should believe in.

The political school brings politics down to earth and relates it to what goes on in our everyday lives. It demonstrates that it is not some abstract thing that happens far away, it's happening all around us everyday, in our homes, workplaces, and our streets.

Our first speaker was the inspirational Geoff Revell: as a member of this union for 50 years he is in a great position to give us a brief history of the union. He said there was a need for unions to not only deal with employers but also politicians with the power to govern.

"We want justice in society, we want equality, we want to change the world," he said.

RMT Parliamentary group member Ian Davidson MP was happy to answer questions and gave some insight into the work of his parliamentary committee. Since the scandalous revelation that companies in the construction trade were colluding to "black list" health

and safety reps, the Scottish Affairs Committee - which he chairs - has been investigating this issue and attempting to hold these business to account.

RMT Political Officer James Croy made sure that things were going in the right direction and delivered some parts of the course. He was able to give us insight into the union's political fund and national policy and got us all to think about the future. We practiced founding our political opinion on basic principles (like fairness and equality), combined with an evidence based argument, to develop our own solutions and approach to politics. After this, we split into groups and were challenged to develop our own manifesto.

Councillor Darren Rodwell give us a real life example of strategies used to defeat the BNP in Barking and Dagenham. Trade unions were a part of this fight and it's a great example of RMT supporting the fight for justice in society.

RMT also fights for justice abroad as well as at home. Union activists and leaders are frequently victims of character

assassinations in this country but Victor Figuerou from the Justice for Colombia campaign explained how trade unionists are literally assassinated in Colombia.

Columbia is a rich country, but inequality is a major problem. 80 per cent of useful land is owned by just three per cent of the population and about 45 per cent are living below the national poverty line. It is "the most dangerous place to be a trade unionist". One organisation Patriotic March campaigns for political reform in favour of the poor, 12 of its leaders have been assassinated. There are shocking but enlightening videos available on the Justice for Colombia youtube channel.

The No2EU campaign, www.no2eu.com, is an electoral platform for 2014 European Parliament elections. The campaign wants Britain to leave the EU. It makes this argument without a hint of xenophobia -- we stand united with workers all over the world. The EU is about centralising corporate power and has little benefit for working people but major benefits for big business.

One of the most memorable experiences was the tour of Parliament and meeting some MPs from the Parliamentary Trade Union Co-ordinating group and the RMT Parliamentary group who we work with to achieve shared goals. They told us about the types of work they do as part of the group and were happy to discuss topics such as Labour Party policy, socialism, nationalisation and any other topic that we raised.

Another memorable part of the course was the eminently thought-provoking Professor Roger Seifert. He was able to give us an intellectual basis for our politics, teaching us about the fundamentals of economics and the labour market. He was also good at challenging us in debate, preparing us for any political adversary.

This course was rich with information and all the speakers were of a high quality. If you are interested at all in the field of politics and how it can affect the changes on behalf of our members and the working class, contact your branch secretary to find out how you can apply. ■

LIFE FOR A BUS DRIVER WITH A BUS DRIVER AS PRESIDENT

Oscar Gómez, bus driver for the 'La Bombilla' transport collective and member of the National Assembly of Socialist Transport Workers, in San José Petare, Caracas.

Sean Hawkey reports on a visit to Venezuela on how the government is constructing a socialist alternative that benefits workers

Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro began his career as a bus driver for Caracas Metro.

He was a union organiser when the unions were brutally persecuted and some of his colleagues were killed for union activity.

Surviving years of clandestine activity, organising workers and supporting Hugo Chávez's movement he went on to become an elected politician, minister for foreign affairs, vice president and, after the death of Chávez in April, he became president.

What's it like to live in a country with a bus driver as head of state? I spent a week with some of the 14,000 members of the National Assembly of Socialist Transport Workers in Venezuela to find out.

Oscar Gómez drives a bus in Petare, a suburb of the capital Caracas where housing clings to impossibly steep hillsides. He lives here with his wife and two children and works with the 'La Bombilla' transport collective.

Oscar is also the administrator for his collective of buses and for three other transport cooperatives, he did a degree in administration with a free adult education programme provided by the socialist government.

"It was five years of hard slog" says Oscar, "driving during the day and studying at night, but if you put the effort in, you can make progress".

Another colleague took a degree in law. Today, as well as driving, they provide professional services in administration and law to

transport workers.

"Before now it was really only wealthy people who could afford to take a degree, it is still hard to do it, but it is possible," he says.

Oscar's children go to a good new school with a catchment area designed to cover wealthy and poor areas together. And, across his neighbourhood there are broad educational programmes to eradicate illiteracy and educate young adults who were failed by the education policies of previous governments.

The government has increased spending on education by a massive 800 per cent.

The government programme to transform housing in the country is one of the most ambitious anywhere in the world.

The government has delivered 250,000 new homes recently, all new builds, most of them fully furnished, including a fridge and cooker and a flat-screen TV. Houses are given to the poorest.

Over 400,000 new builds are under way now and the programme will deliver two million new apartments in the next three years. In one project alone in Fuerte Tiuna an area of Caracas, 6,300 new apartments in 42 housing blocks have been built in a matter of months. Oscar and his colleagues may live in housing that is less attractive than the new builds, but he insists that the new houses are for people poorer than himself, people who've been unable to provide adequate housing for themselves.

Oscar's elderly father didn't



Oscar Gúmez, bus driver for the 'La Bombilla' transport collective and member of the National Assembly of Socialist Transport Workers, in San José Petare, Caracas.

get a pension until the socialist government got in. From under half a million pensioners there are now nearly two million pensioners. Old age pensions are pegged at the minimum wage.

Oscar and his family live nearby a large Medical Diagnostic Centre, one of nearly 500 well-equipped large medical centres that have been built by the socialist government, as well as 6500 smaller clinics and 450 optical centres.

The centre is staffed with Venezuelan and Cuban medical staff. Infant mortality has dropped and life expectancy has increased under the socialist government. Venezuelan medical progress has been praised by the World Health Organisation.

This year, the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation recognised Venezuela for its exceptional progress in reducing malnutrition, meeting both the Millennium Development Goals well ahead of schedule and the World Food Summit Goal, which is more demanding.

Transport has also been transformed by the socialist government. Oscar fills his tank with petrol for three Bolívars. That's about 30p. The

government is building a new state of the art rail network, from East to West, investing £5 billion in the first 475 km of a planned 13,000 km network. All major transport services are gradually being nationalised.

As far as food goes, there is such an abundance of good food the Venezuelan people are in the same danger as the UK and the US, of obesity. And all the basic foodstuffs are subsidised by the government through its own distribution chain.

A big run on a particular product can result in a temporary shortage at the government-subsidised stores, but it doesn't mean there isn't any of the product available anywhere. You'll be able to find it, but at commercial prices. The widely reported lack of toilet paper really didn't mean that Venezuelans had nothing to wipe their bums with, it wasn't that tragic.

Of course, if some hoarding racketeers have bought up all the cheap loo-roll you have a right to a good whinge, but let's keep it in perspective, the socialist government of Venezuela has made impressive progress on its social priorities. ■



Workers tie steel reinforcing together during the building of the East-West railway system in Venezuela. Venezuela has invested some \$7.5 billion in the first 475 km of the new rail network, which is planned to extend over 13,000 km

ISRAELI MILITARY REFUSENIK

Israeli woman jailed for refusing to serve in the Israeli army of occupation visits Britain

A young woman jailed by the government of Israel for refusing to serve in its army of occupation paid a visit to RMT headquarters recently.

Noam Gur is a 19 year old anti-militarist activist from Jerusalem. In April 2012 she was jailed for refusing to serve in the Israeli Defence Force as part of compulsory national service.

Noam said that she refused to join an army that has been engaged in dominating another nation, in plundering and terrorising a civilian population that is under its control.

"The systematic destruction and dispossession that form part of a long-established policy of population-transfer, murder of non-violent demonstrators, the

Apartheid wall, the massacre 'operations' that the Israeli army chooses to carry out, and the rest of the daily violations of the human rights of the Palestinians have led to a long but preventable cycle of bloodshed.

"For years I have been told that this control is supposed to protect me, but information about the suffering caused due to terrorizing the Palestinian population is omitted from the story.

"The road to achieving true and just peace is long and hard, but as I see it, these actions by the Israeli army only push it further away.

"Over this past decade, the Palestinian people have been increasingly choosing the path



SOLIDARITY: RMT executive committee member Janine Booth, Bob Crow and Noam Gur

of non-violent resistance, and I chose to join this path and to turn to a popular, nonviolent struggle in Palestine - this, rather than to serve in the Israeli army and continue the violence," she said.

Noam is an activist with organisations including Ta'ayush, a joint Jewish-Arab campaign which takes direct action in defence of the Palestinians.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow welcomed Noam to Unity House and expressed solidarity with the refusenik movement inside Israel.

"As workers we all want the same things, we want a home, dignity and respect and where workers are struggling we give all the support we can," he said.

Noam also spoke at a meeting hosted by RMT's Central Line East branch in London.



SOLIDARITY FOR KOREAN RAIL WORKERS

Unions around the world expressed solidarity with South Korean rail workers on strike last month against privatisation by staging protest actions at Korean diplomatic missions.

The strike by the Korean Railway Workers Union (KRWU) has been declared illegal, despite the fact that the union is complying with the minimum services requirement prescribed

by national legislation.

The union reports that the workers taking part in the strike have met with severe repression and the rail company Korail has pressed charges against nearly

200 KRWU officials.

Mass rallies have been held across the country last month to demand that rail privatisation is stopped and hundreds of ITF-affiliated union around the world have sent e messages to the Korean government urging them to respect the right to strike.

On the ninth day of the strike last month police raided the offices of the Korail union in Seoul, confiscating computers and internal documents.

An 84-year-old passenger was also killed when a subway car dragged her along after a scab, untrained worker closed the train doors prematurely.



GETTING MORE

FROM THE RMT PREPAID PLUS MASTERCARD® CARD ...

We all love a good bargain, especially in these tough economic times. With the RMT Prepaid Plus card you earn **3% to 6% cashback**. All you have to do is use it at over 40 big brand stores (in-store or online) - including **Sainsbury's, Argos, Boots, Asda, B&Q, M&S, Pizza Express, Debenhams** and more.*

You can still **receive loyalty points with your Nectar or Boots Advantage card** when you use the RMT Prepaid Plus card. In fact, you can take advantage of any in-store deals and discounts, and still earn cashback when you use your card (as long as it's not a retailer exclusion). And the best part is **there is no maximum and no minimum spend limit** to earn cashback.

What is a prepaid card?

This card is different to a credit or debit card. You load it with money before you spend, rather than paying for it afterwards, so there

is less chance of getting carried away. Plus there are **no credit checks**, no application fee - all this for only £1.95 a month.**

How to earn cashback?

Use your card at any partner big brand stores and earn 3% to 6% cashback (online or in-store). The cashback you have earned will be added to your prepaid card the next time you load it. It's that easy!

For more information call 0844 846 8063 or apply online **www.RMTprepaid.com**



RMT PREPAID PLUS TIPS & TRICKS

The RMT Prepaid Plus card is **all about rewarding you** with 3% to 6% cashback for on your everyday shopping. You won't have to alter your shopping patterns to take advantage of the cashback partners, as there are over 40 big brand stores. Unlike many prepaid cards, there is no application fee (a £1.95 a month administration fee applies).

Using your card in the UK

Using your card **in-store or online is free** in the UK, so make the most of your card and use it at partner retailers to enjoy cashback savings. Where possible, avoid withdrawing cash from ATMs, there is a £0.95 withdrawal fee and you will be missing out on cashback savings that you could have earned.

Using your card overseas

You can use the RMT Prepaid Plus card to pay wherever you see the MasterCard Acceptance Mark - that's over **32 million**

outlets worldwide. However, as with many cards there is a foreign transaction fee (3.0% of transaction amount). Avoiding using your prepaid card at overseas ATMs will save you an additional fee of £2.00. Unlike many debit or credit cards this card is not linked directly to your bank account and is a safe alternative to carrying money abroad.

Loading your card

You can load your card **free of charge by direct debit** (direct debits are collected on the first working day of the month). There's also no top-up fee for debit card loads over £200. There are fees for instant debit card loads (£2.50 fee), debit card loads under £200 (£1.00 fee), paypoint loads and post office loads (both 3.0% of the value loaded).

Why not see how much you could earn by using our handy savings calculator on **www.RMTprepaid.com**

To view the **full list of fees see section 12** of the Terms & Conditions on **www.rmtprepaid.com**

*From the 1 January 2014 cashback at ASDA will change from 3% to 2.5% cashback. Range of retail partners and cashback rates are subject to change. Some retailer exclusions apply. **The RMT Prepaid Plus card is free to apply for. There is a monthly fee of £1.95, which is charged within 30 days of successful application. You must be an RMT member to apply, some identity checks will be made, but there are no credit checks.

This card is issued by Clydesdale Bank PLC pursuant to license by MasterCard International Incorporated. This card is an electronic money product. The electronic money associated with this card is provided by PrePay Technologies Ltd, a company authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for the issuance of electronic money (FRN 900010). PrePay Technologies Ltd is a registered service provider of Clydesdale Bank PLC. MasterCard is a registered trademark of MasterCard International Incorporated. The RMT Prepaid Plus card has been arranged for you by RMT and RMT Prepaid Plus. RMT Prepaid Plus is a trading name of Union Income Limited ('UI'). UI is registered in England and Wales. No. 06595562. Registered office: 4th Floor, 7/10 Chandos Street, London W1G 9DQ.

Get the RMT Prepaid
Plus MasterCard® card
before 28 February 2014
and you could

WIN £500

loaded to your prepaid
card **FREE!**

Plus, here's what you
get with the RMT
Prepaid Plus card:

1. Earn up to 6% cashback
at over 40 big brand
stores.

2. No credit checks.
No application fee.

3. Exclusive benefit to
RMT member.

Apply today at
www.RMTprepaid.com

Full prize draw rules at **www.RMTprepaid.com/prizedrawrules**. To be entered into the prize draw you must successfully apply for a RMT Prepaid Plus card or be a RMT Prepaid Plus cardholder before 28 February 2014 (no cash alternative).

DONCASTER AWARD



Doncaster branch presents Mark Hirst with his 25 year award at its annual general meeting

CD OFFER TO RMT MEMBERS

***We're All In It Together* is a stunning, overtly political 33 track double CD featuring some of Britain's most renowned and respected artists, including Eddi Reader, Thea Gilmore, Paul Heaton (Beautiful South) and Show of Hands, who have come together to 'protest and survive'.**

This benefit album for the Morning Star newspaper – named after the spurious term uttered at the 2010 Tory Party conference by David Cameron – explodes the myth that culture is no longer political.

With an introduction by veteran campaigner Tony Benn, these songs support peace and democracy, oppose corporate power, support freedom of speech, expose the harm caused by greedy banks and highlight their effects on ordinary people. All artists donated their tracks.

We're All In It Together is available to RMT members for just £12. Send cheques made payable to Red Planet Records to c/o Unity House, 39 Chalton Street London NW1 1JD.



BIRMINGHAM TAXI BRANCH WIN RECOGNITION RIGHTS



RMT general secretary Bob Crow dropped in on Birmingham taxi branch members following a recent breakthrough which gives the branch negotiating rights with Birmingham City council. It is also the fastest growing branch in the union with 800 members.

WEB HIT

Since RMT launched the totally redesigned and retooled website a few months ago the number of hits has rocketed from around 100,000 per month on the old site to an amazing 1.5 million per month.

Visitors also now stay on the site for an average of 60 per cent longer than before. Furthermore, improved search engine optimisation means that Google referrals to the new website have quadrupled that of the old site.

Fully optimised for both desktop and mobile use, and

supporting a wealth of new functionality, the new site prioritises the campaigning focus of the union and delivers instant news and information to members whilst allowing users to customise their preferences with subscription-based email updates and campaign newsletters.

Additional developments such as E-petitions, online polls and a range of targeted template letters that can be sent via email or post allows RMT to harness the full range of digital campaigning tools that were previously the preserve of specialist websites such as Labour Start. This new function enables the user to simply enter their postcode into the site, whereupon the relevant details of their local MP are automatically found and then populated into the template letter or email, ready for

sending.

Specific campaigns can now be customised so that template e-mails can be sent directly to targeted individuals so that we can instantly get the ear of the people who have the power to influence, or alter, strategy. Chief Executives, company directors, councillors and politicians can all be held personally to account. A perfect example of this tool can be found in the current campaign against job cuts on London Underground where we encourage members and visitors alike to email London mayor Boris Johnson and let him know why job cuts are unacceptable. To add your voice to the

thousands that have already done so simply visit www.rmt.org.uk/everyjobmatters/

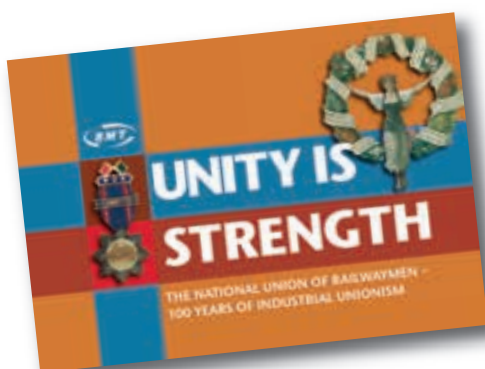
With news items updated daily, a fully integrated members' area and with easy access to all the unions' event details and reps resources the new website puts the user firmly in control of this comprehensive range of online tools.

With the undoubted success of the new website in mind the Communications Department is now fully focussed on designing and developing an app for members' smartphone and tablet devices to further enhance RMT's considerable online presence. ■



UNITY IS STRENGTH: 100 YEARS OF INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

These RMT publications celebrate the centenary of the founding of the National Union of Railwaymen and a new type of trade unionism in Britain - industrial unionism.



UNITY IS STRENGTH

This booklet tells the rail workers' story. The story of how the 1901 Taff Vale judgement led to the beginnings of Labour Representation and the 1906 Trades Disputes Act. It tells of the great hopes and the betrayal by 'Lib-Labs' of the 1907 All-Grades Movement. The fight for independent working class education is also told and of how the first national rail strike in 1911 spread political class-consciousness into the workplaces of the most industrialised nation on earth.

The demand for amalgamation of railway unions was the militant

echo of the 1911 strike. In 35 years from the NUR's foundation in 1913, railworkers had won national collective bargaining, improvements to pay and conditions and showed the political importance that industrial organisation gives to workers, culminating in railway nationalisation from 1948 under the post-war Labour government.

Unity is Strength is available to RMT members for just £3 postage. Also available is *Pulling Together: A Popular History of RMT* for just £2 postage.



PULLING TOGETHER: A POPULAR HISTORY OF RMT

Pulling Together gives an insight into the struggles, defeats and victories of members over 150 years. *Pulling Together* gives members an engaging and colourfully illustrated window on the history of the union up to the present day.

It tells the story of how the union developed under very difficult circumstances against very powerful opponents and maintained itself as a democratic, fighting organisation that today represents members in all sectors and grades of the transport industry.

- ☐ I want a copy of *Unity is Strength* for £3
☐ I want a copy of *Pulling Together: A Popular History of RMT* for £2
☐ I would like both publications for £5

Name

Address

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

Make cheques payable to RMT. Also available from the RMT webshop

IRISH SOLIDARITY AND INDEPENDENCE

Dear editor,

On behalf of the Connolly Association I express appreciation to the recent RMT Annual General Meeting on deciding to affiliate, and thanks to those branches that have already done likewise and would urge further branch affiliations.

The Irish working class has a long history of solidarity and particularly the union that was then (NUR) recognised the national right of Irish rail workers to run their own affairs and decided to withdraw and facilitate the setting of the transport union NATE in the 1950's, and the solidarity still continues following that union's merger with SIPTU which is the largest trade union in Ireland.

The Connolly Association was founded 75 years ago; the aim being to work as an integral part of the British trade union and labour movement, to urge Irish workers to join the appropriate trade union in their workplace to work within it for better pay and conditions for all, and that policy still remains. Additionally, the Association urges the workers of Britain to press politically for a united Ireland through peaceful means, and was influential during the 1960's and 1970's when the trade unions in Belfast set up the Civil Rights Movement, and worked for the support of the trade union movement on the British mainland which eventually led to the peaceful road of the Good Friday Agreement and hopefully the way to a united Ireland with the agreement of all Irish people on that island and ongoing peace and solidarity with all countries.

We still need that solidarity and support from the British trade unions to achieve that aim.

The Connolly Association in 1961 was one of the first organisations in Britain to warn of the dangers of the then Common Market;(now the EU) in that it would lead to a European superstate, erode the rights of workers in Europe to organise and control by subverting national democracy, sadly that is still the case, and this Association's policy is again to work within the movement here to withdraw from the EU, we are proud to be part of the RMT's policy, and would urge RMT branches to affiliate. For more information go to www.irishdemocrat.co.uk

In Solidarity,

Tony Donaghey, Connolly Association PO BOX 753, BOREHAMWOOD WD6 9JA

Correction

In the last issue of RMT News the accounts for the General Fund and Orphan Fund should have read 2012 and 2011 not 2010 and 2009 as published. The figures included were correct. RMT News apologises for this error.

DISGUSTED AT SEWAGE

Dear editor,

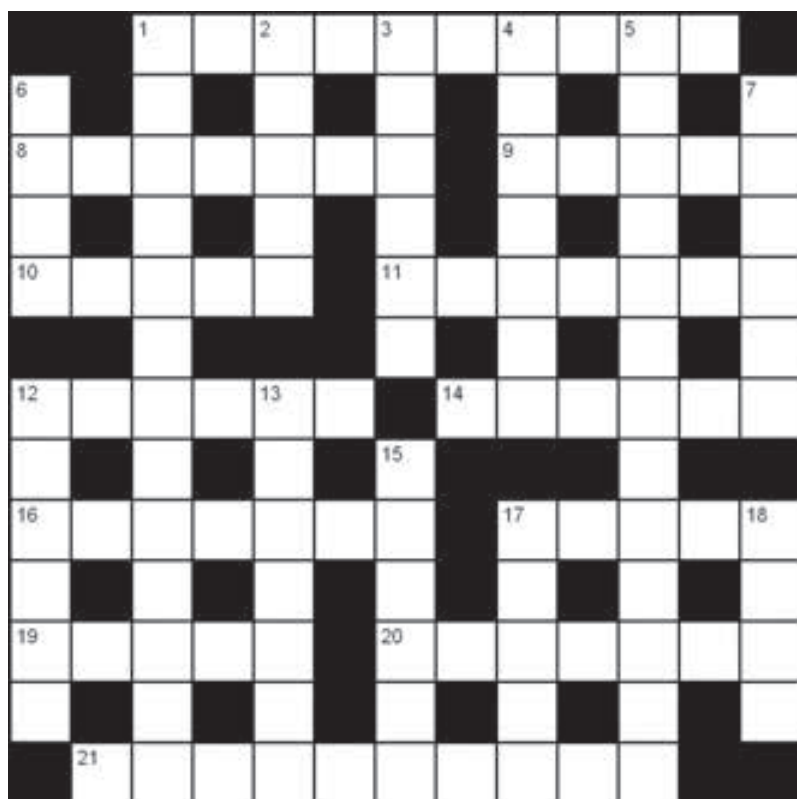
Regarding your article last month on sewage on the tracks, I have been a victim of working in these conditions. I am a welder and after a night shift I was violently ill and my partner phoned an ambulance that took me to hospital.

I was overcome by virile meningitis and I lost two stone in weight. I was off work for two weeks yet it took me months to fully recover yet only recently we were sent to work at a station with disgusting human waste all over the track. None of us should have to work in conditions like this and I wouldn't want anyone to go through what I went through.

Regards

Name withheld

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is R Stone from Andover.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by January 24 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Look back upon (10)
- 8 Go back over again (7)
- 9 Tedium (5)
- 10 Run away secretly (5)
- 11 Look at (6)
- 12 Hurlled (6)
- 14 Provide evidence (6)
- 16 Surround (7)
- 17 Implicit (5)
- 19 Implicit (5)
- 20 Understanding (7)
- 21 Contrition (10)

DOWN

- 1 From better to worse (13)
- 2 Exchange (5)
- 3 Egg dish (5)
- 4 Excuse (7)
- 5 Rest (13)
- 6 Encourage (4)
- 7 Hand tool (6)
- 12 Pill (6)
- 13 Struggle (7)
- 15 Imperfection (6)
- 17 Giant (5)
- 18 At that time (4)



RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

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

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

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

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

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

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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

5 Membership Status

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

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

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

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....
.....

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

Your signature

Date

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

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

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



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



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

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



JOIN RMT BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION



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

0800 376 3706

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

Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

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

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

