

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

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www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP – please complete your application along with either the attached Direct Debit or a separate paybill mandate form.

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

BRANCH NUMBER

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

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

3 Sex. Male Female

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

A. White	English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	Irish	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	Any other White background	
B. Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	White and Black Caribbean	White and Black African	White and Asian	Other mixed/multiple ethnic background	
C. Asian/Asian British	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other Asian background
D. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	African	Caribbean	Other Black/African/Caribbean background		
E. Other ethnic group	Arab	Other ethnic group, please specify			

5 Sexual orientation (This information will be used for monitoring purposes as part of our equal opportunities policy)

Sexuality	Heterosexual	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	

6 How do you wish to pay.	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.	

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

Your signature	Date
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Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



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

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Branch Sort Code

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

Originator's Identification Number

9	7	1	7	4	5
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Reference Number

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Your National Insurance Number

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.
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EDITORIAL



BOMBARDIER WIN

The future of train-building in this country has been secured with the news that the £1.6 billion contract to build 600 trains for Crossrail has gone to train manufacturer Bombardier.

The government's collusion in awarding the huge Thameslink train contract to German giant Siemens instead of Bombardier in 2011 had threatened to destroy train manufacturing in Britain.

The shame of that episode and the long-running campaign led by RMT and the local community in Derby where Bombardier has its plant has clearly focussed their minds.

Congratulations also to tube staff that took solid industrial action earlier this month which has forced Transport for London to think again about axing all London Underground ticket offices.

It was a magnificent show of solidarity and unity that held in the face of the lies and half-truths pedalled by LUL management and the anti-trade union media.

In spite of this pressure it is widely accepted that the 48-hour strike action won widespread support among Londoners who clearly want to travel on a safe and secure tube network.

As a result of this action London Underground has halted the implementation of these suicidal job cuts.

There is also a clear understanding that our action is suspended but any further attempt to impose change from above will provoke further action.

Congratulations to RMT members working on Docklands Light Railways for winning a three per cent pay rise and an extra day's leave after voting in favour of taking industrial action.

DLR cleaners working for Carlisle also won a commitment to be paid the London living wage from the start of the new franchise coming up soon.

Congratulations also to newly-appointed ITF inspector Darren Procter and Ken Fleming for winning around £100,000 unpaid wages on behalf of the crew of a vessel moored at Tilbury, Essex.

The U-turn by the company came

after the ITF threatened to arrest the ship and sent a written warning to the owners over its negligence and evasion of its responsibilities.

On a far more sober note this month marks the tenth anniversary of the Tebay tragedy which killed four RMT members and injured six others.

Tebay was not an accident. It was the direct result of the privatisation and fragmentation of our railway which has spawned a host of contractors, subcontractors and labour-only agencies.

That means there are no consistent application of safety standards and no central line of command and communication.

But RMT is pleased to note that real secondary protection is at last being introduced for track workers in similar situations. That is the best way to remember those who have lost their lives while working in an unsafe environment.

It is unacceptable that track workers that are being hailed as heroes today while coping with the many challenges of widespread flooding are threatened with the dole queue tomorrow.

The government must recognise that this magnificent effort across our railways is hampered by cuts that have axed over a thousand track workers jobs and slashed investment in maintenance and equipment with far worse to come under the McNulty agenda.

RMT has also renewed its call for a full public inquiry into helicopter safety into the North Sea helicopter disaster five years ago. As long as there is a question mark over safety in the North Sea this union will be demanding action.

As the days get lighter we are moving into our conference season, with health and safety, young members and signalling grades all meeting this month.

Train crew, road freight and bus workers grades are to follow so why not ask your branch secretary for details if you want to attend?

Bob Crow

BOMBARDIER VICTORY

RMT has welcomed the news that Derby-based train manufacturer Bombardier has won the £1.6 billion contract to build 600 trains for Crossrail.

The order will create hundreds of jobs and save the 175 year-old works in Derby which was under threat after the Tory/Lib Dem government handed the £1.6 billion Thameslink train-making contract to German giant Siemens in 2011.

RMT general secretary Bob

Crow said that it was a fantastic and deserved result and congratulated the Daily Mirror for supporting the campaign for British jobs.

"This comes after a long running campaign led by RMT and the local community in Derby in the wake of the Thameslink fleet shambles, which will go a long way to saving the future of train building in the nation that gave the railways to the world.

"RMT will fight to defend

British workers' jobs in every corner of the country from Bombardier in Derby to London Underground and this announcement is just more evidence that when we stand and fight together we can win," he said.

The union has consistently pointed out that successive governments have rolled over and failed to protect industry in this country against EU public procurement and competition rules which demand that

contracts must be tendered across Europe.

In contrast France and Germany load contracts to take into account the economic and social impact locally.

Tory transport minister Theresa May admitted in 2011 that her government could have built the wider economic impact of awarding contracts overseas but failed to do so. ■



SAVE PENRITH TICKET OFFICE

RMT is demanding an end to unscheduled ticket office closures at Penrith station by Virgin Trains.

The union has even won the backing of local Tory MP Rory Stewart over the closures which RMT believes is down to a lack of cover due to job

losses in particular at Carlisle.

Virgin has refused to attend a meeting with the union over the issue convened by the MP.

Instead the company put posters up saying it was now asking the Department of Transport for permission to

reduce the opening hours of the ticket office by over three hours a day.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union would resist the running down of services and staffing levels.

"This kind of salami slicing

of a public service in the name of profit is part of the nationwide agenda set by the McNulty report.

"As the reality of this process hits home even Tory MPs are backing our campaign," he said. ■

DOCKLANDS VICTORY

RMT members working on Docklands Light Railways have won a three per cent pay rise and an extra day's leave after voting in favour of industrial action.

RMT cleaning members on the DLR, working for Carlisle contractors, have also won a commitment for pay rates to be raised above the London Living wage from the start of the new franchise.

After a formal offer was finally made, RMT called off all planned action by both sets of workers due to take place earlier this month.

The deal includes a three per cent increase to basic pay,

including shift premiums where applicable and overtime rates or a minimum increase in basic pay of £1,200 whichever is higher.

The deal involves another day of annual leave in addition to the 30 days that employees already enjoy. This is a gesture of goodwill as the franchise comes into its final year.

RMT regional organiser John Leach congratulated the members for their resolve, which has forced the company into addressing demands for improved pay levels and London Living Wage.

STRIKE AT GREATER ANGLIA

RMT members on Greater Anglia's West Anglia route took industrial action earlier this month in a dispute over the removal of cleaners on the route.

The company had tried to bulldoze through the removal of station cleaners posts and enforce "flexible working" on remaining staff.

Greater Anglia has been endeavouring to scrap cleaners on the West Anglia stations and attempted to bypass procedures agreed with the union in order to rush through proposals that would force other staff to undertake the duties. ■

Greater Anglia dressed up the whole package as "flexible working".

An earlier phase of industrial action had been suspended but despite the best efforts of union negotiators the company has refused to address staff concerns.

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

UNION DEMANDS NORTH SEA HELICOPTER ENQUIRY

RMT renewed call for a full public inquiry into helicopter safety as the Fatal Accident Investigation into the North Sea helicopter disaster five years ago that cost 16 lives opened in Aberdeen last month.

The first day of the FAI enquiry heard how the Super Puma helicopter crashed "like a torpedo", killing 16 men on April 1 2009.

Normand Aurora crewman Lidvar Olav Hildre said that he heard the helicopter fly over his ship followed by a sudden silence and the rotor blades came down several seconds after the fuselage.

The ship then launched a fast rescue boat immediately to the scene.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that while the Fatal Accident Investigation had a role to play it could not enforce justice or hold anyone to account and was no alternative to the full public inquiry into helicopter safety that RMT has been calling for with the support of the TUC.

"We hope that the FAI can answer some of the many questions that the relatives, friends and work colleagues of those who lost their lives have been asking. That is why the union is supporting the families at the investigation today.



"The FAI process has been proven to be far too slow and since the 2009 disaster that is under investigation there have been three further incidents, one of them fatal, and the families and colleagues of all those whose lives have been impacted by the helicopter safety issue have waited far too long for justice.

"Unfortunately, the FAI

cannot deliver that justice and once again we call on the First Minister Alex Salmond to throw his weight behind the trade union campaign for a full public inquiry into the whole subject of helicopter safety and the broader issue of working conditions in the offshore industry," he said.

The inquiry, which is being held in Aberdeen Town House,

is expected to last six weeks.

An Air Accidents Investigation Branch report blamed a catastrophic gear box failure for the crash, which happened 12 miles off Peterhead.

A police investigation ended with the Crown Office deciding there was insufficient evidence for any prosecutions.



MITIE PICKET



RMT members working for sub-contractors Mitie on First Great Western picketed Paddington Station last month on the last day of a solid three-day strike in their fight for the London Living Wage and workplace justice.

Mitie is a wealthy company that can easily afford to lift its staff out of poverty pay and the appalling working conditions that they are being told to put up with.

The most recent company accounts show that Mitie Group PLC made pre-tax profits of £58.8 million last year, increased dividends to shareholders by 12 per cent increase to £20.6 million with the highest paid director pocketing £1,374 million which represents a 7.4 per cent increase.

Despite top bosses and shareholders enjoying soaring pay and dividends, the staff who make those profits are expected to endure a regime of poverty pay without proper sick pay and other decent working conditions like properly applied enhancements for overtime, weekend, bank holiday and shift working.

The London Living Wage is the very least that they can match to recognise the contribution and hard work of the FGW cleaners.

First Group, who have secured a two year extension on the Great Western franchise worth tens of millions in taxpayer-supported profits, has attempted to wash their hands of the cleaners that their approved contractors, Mitie, expect to work in appalling

conditions for a pittance.

RMT will continue to expose the activities of both First and Mitie who have joint responsibility for the blatant exploitation taking place on the prestigious and lucrative Great Western services.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that Mitie cleaners on the Great Western franchise had again shown that the issue of poverty pay will not simply go away.

"Our members are determined to be paid properly and will continue their fight until they are given the London Living Wage.

"With each successful action Mitie RMT members on First Great Western are pulling further support from across the labour movement. The London Living Wage is the very least

these staff deserve.

"Mitie are key players in the driving down on wages and working conditions for some of the lowest paid workers in Britain and it is a tribute to our members on FGW that they have had the courage to take them on and expose them, and their supporters in the government and the rail companies, for just what they are – greedy opportunists making a fast buck out of public contracts at their workers' expense.

"Justice says that these cleaners out there day and night deserve to get their fair share through a Living Wage, decent sick pay and benefits and an end to the evil of zero hours contracts," he said.



TUBE VICTORY

Tube strike halts closure of London Underground ticket offices

RMT suspended a further round of 48-hour strike action earlier this month after London Underground dramatically agreed not to implement ticket offices closures as planned.

Following talks at ACAS, LUL agreed not to implement its Fit for the Future – Stations proposals, as set out in the HR1 and Section 188 Notice.

It also agreed to hold meaningful and detailed discussions with the trade unions beginning immediately until week ending April 4 2014.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that after two days of intensive and detailed discussions it was agreed to halt the implementation of the proposed job cuts.

"We now have a golden

opportunity to look again in detail at all of the concerns we have raised about the impact of the cuts on our members and the services that they provide to Londoners.

"That is exactly what we have been calling for throughout this dispute.

"RMT is happy to discuss any issues with LU through the machinery of negotiation and we are glad that we have now got back to where we should have been right at the start of this process.

"It is unfortunate that we were forced into a dispute that we never wanted and we are now in a position to move on with the clear understanding that our action is suspended but if there is any further attempt to

impose change from above the action will go back on," he said.

Under the proposals the Change Assurance Plan and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) would be part of the discussions, which would take place at Company Council level, agreeing its own terms of reference.

During the dispute RMT insisted that women and ethnic minority workers would be disproportionately hit by plans to close ticket offices with the loss of hundreds of jobs.

Women would be forced into lone working, while other minority staff would be left vulnerable to abuse.

London Underground's own assessments show that their plans to axe nearly 1,000 jobs, re-organise what is left and to close key services like ticket offices were relentlessly discriminatory and would throw into total reverse gains secured to push the tube forwards as an employer where equality of opportunity was taken seriously.

The deal between LUL and RMT and TSSA also agreed that during the period of consultation London Underground would put on hold all Voluntary Severance applications received and not request any new applications.

LU will also remove 'all learning material associated with its Fit for the Future – Stations proposals.

RMT London regional organiser John Leach said that the first round of 48-hour strike action had been 'rock solid' and this has meant the London Underground network has effectively been closed down.

"This isn't a boast but a fact which can leave LUL in no doubt of the determination of RMT members to put a stop to their disastrous plans to cut nearly 1,000 jobs and close ticket offices.

"RMT members have spoken with their feet and I thank you for your support for your union throughout this dispute," he said. ■



HAPPY NEW FARE?

Campaigners reveal that privatised rail services in Britain charge some of the highest fares in Europe

Rail campaigners gave a new-year message warning that British commuters could be spending over three times more of their salary on rail travel than passengers on publicly-owned railways in Europe.

The TUC's and rail union Action for Rail (AfR) campaign has compared average earnings with season tickets covering similar commuter routes across Europe.

Taking into account fare increases, the analysis gives the example of a worker on an average salary who is now spending nearly 14 per cent of their monthly wages on a £299 monthly season ticket from St Albans to London St Pancras.

However, over workers making similar journeys in Germany and France spend around four per cent of their salary on train fares, in Spain

three per cent and in Italy just one per cent.

The AfR analysis comes at a time when rail campaigners and MPs are calling for a rethink over how Britain's railways are run.

More than 50 Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green and SNP MPs have now signed a parliamentary motion calling for the re-nationalisation of the UK's railways, tabled earlier this year.

Yet the European Union has unveiled proposals for a fourth rail package demanding the further break-up of national rail networks and hand the entire industry over to the private sector along the lines already carried out in Britain.

Research by campaign group Transport for Quality of Life (TFQL) revealed that extra costs of over £1 billion per year are

being incurred through a combination of debt write-offs, dividend payments to private investors and various administrative and legal costs.

It estimates that fare cuts of up to 18 per cent could be achieved if these costs were eliminated by bringing services back within a nationally-integrated railway under public ownership.

While the Chancellor's Autumn Statement said that the government was sympathetic to calls for an end to inflation-busting fare rises, campaigners believe UK rail fares will continue to exceed ticket prices of state-run European services as long as privatisation remains in place.

Regulated rail fares will rise between 3.1 and 5.1 per cent – more than four times faster than average wage increases – adding extra misery to the squeeze on living standards, says AfR.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that 2014 was set to

be another year of racketeering and greed on Britain's privatised railways.

"Passengers will continue to pay the highest fares in Europe to travel on creaking, overcrowded trains where raw sewage is dumped on the tracks because the private operators will not stump up for tanks and the staff to empty them.

"That is a sickening indictment on our privatised railways as we head into the New Year.

"The only solution – and one that's opposed by all our main political parties – is total renationalisation and the return of our railways to public ownership and control," he said.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said that rail passengers and taxpayers were being poorly served by a privatised rail service that had failed to deliver any of the efficiency, investment and cost savings that privatisation cheerleaders promised.



MERSEYRAIL CLEANERS STRIKE

RMT members working for Merseyrail contractors' Lorne Stewart took strike action earlier this month after talks to avert the industrial action broke down.

Lorne Stewart workers carry out essential station cleaning and maintenance that helps keep Merseyrail moving.

After eight months of trying to negotiate, low paid Lorne Stewart workers have rejected the profitable company's derisory below-inflation pay 'offer' and are making a stand for a just pay settlement without strings.

With a pay anniversary date of April 1 2013 Lorne Stewarts' offer of two per cent works out at around 0.2 per cent for the year.

Even with a "sweetener" of an offer of a £150 lump sum, this is effectively a pay cut for the workers at the company which in the last two years has paid out more than £10 million in dividends to its shareholders.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that workers whose hard graft made Lorne Stewart's profits had been offered what amounts to a pay cut – and even that comes with strings attached.

"As a result, in our ballot not a single vote was cast against taking action.

"Lorne Stewart workers have suffered low pay for too long and it's time for the company to share the fruits of its success with its staff.

"The company says it can't afford to pay more and hides behind its contract with Merseyrail, yet its latest profit figure is £15 million – that's £5,000 for every one of its workers.

"Rather than using an army of scabs (from Impact Agency) Lorne Stewart should sit down and negotiate an offer our members deserve," he said. ■

Parliamentary column

SUPPORT LONDON UNDERGROUND WORKERS

One thousand station and ticket office staff being sacked will put passengers at risk, undermine the quality of our tube service and put workers on the dole.

The cuts would be wrong at anytime. But when we consider the amount of passengers that are and will be travelling on London Underground they are a dangerous folly.

Since 1996 there has been a 60 per cent increase in passenger numbers and Transport for London's Business plan predicts passenger journeys on London Underground will rise by 13.75 per cent from 1,273 million in 2013/14 to 1,448 million by 2020/21. Whilst the same plan predicts that more than 10 million people will live in London by 2030.

These figures alone suggest that the tube will need more staff not less. Yet for all the talk of "more visible staff" the reality is London Underground's plans mean 17 per cent fewer staff available to help passengers with travel advice.

And all the assistance that often goes unnoticed such as helping people with disabilities or finding a lost child to giving directions to local will all be at risk.

And as tube staff point out the job of keeping the Underground moving needs enough staff working together at all times. If you cut station staff, the train service will suffer as for example fewer station staff and supervisors will have an impact on service recovery during disruption and spreading supervisors over a number of stations will weaken the response to safety issues and disruption.

And it will be more difficult to resolve errors or problems with tickets because there will be no ticket office. We should remember 52 per cent of tube users have found themselves unable to buy tickets from machines in the past due to the machines being broken.

Not surprisingly the cuts have been opposed by a broad range of groups including the TUC, Disabled People Against The Cuts, the National Pensioners Convention and the voice of disabled passengers Transport for All who have said "cuts to staff on the Underground will have a direct impact our ability to travel freely, and safely".

The proposals are also opposed by over 70 per cent of tube users with the majority saying the cuts would make them less likely



to vote for the Mayor. MPs are supporting a motion tabled by my fellow RMT Parliamentary group member Jeremy Corbyn which states cuts will impact on the service provided to passengers, both regular commuters and tourists in particular ticket machines are not able to provide passengers with full advice and assistance which may result in passengers enduring more expensive and difficult journeys; is also concerned that disabled and older people could be disadvantaged when trying to use ticket machines and that there will be an increased threat to the safety and security of vulnerable groups such as women travelling at night;

There has also been opposition from the Labour Party to the cuts and indeed at a well-attended parliamentary debate I secured to highlight the concerns of tube workers it was hard to find any MP who supported the Mayor's plans.

The fact is passengers want more staff not less. In outer London many stations are already neglected and not well staffed. Transport for London have told the Greater London Assembly members that on average stations have to be closed on 120 occasions a year due to a shortage of staff. And as we know Underground management do not have a good track record of anticipating passenger need. In 2010 they were forced to recruit 300 station staff after axing 800 jobs the previous year.

So with all this evidence why does the Mayor want these cuts? The savings will be peanuts compared to the billions of other cuts he and the government are planning.

The fact is these cuts are a highly politically motivated attack on tube workers and their union. The Mayor hopes that if he can defeat the unions on this one, he can get away with even more draconian cuts in the future. Tube workers should be assured that they have huge public support and the RMT Parliamentary group will be doing all we can to help you win this struggle.

John McDonnell is MP for Hayes and Harlington and convenor of the RMT Parliamentary group of MPs

EDUCATING RMT MEMBERS

RMT education officer Andy Gilchrist explains how union education is being developed

Education continues to develop within the union to ensure all representatives, officers and officials have the best possible support in terms of trade union training.

With two fully equipped teaching rooms, dedicated staff and a programme of courses designed specifically for the RMT membership, the union can be proud of its achievements in the centre's development over the last seven years.

The education centre (right) is situated in the centre of Doncaster and has accommodation and facilities for those attending that consistently received positive feedback from those leaving each Friday.

Courses are developed specifically for the members and

the working environments they operate in. Our goal is to have fully equipped and trained workplace reps in every workplace to ensure the best possible support and advice for our membership.

Regular feedback about the education programme has led to many courses being designed to fit the requirements of our reps. RMT courses are now fully accredited through our 'partnership' agreement with Northern College, which means all those attending a course at Doncaster will receive proper academic accreditation for their work there.

All courses can be delivered with some simple organisation more locally if this suits the members, in particular the Council of Executives encourage

all regions to run a number of the workplace representatives Introductory three-day course across their region.

It is disappointing that in some areas these are not as yet being requested. Alongside this the union is now ensuring all RMT tutors have the appropriate tutor-training with the provision of an accredited teaching course.

Further educational developments were set out in the Head Office Circular on "RMT Membership Database – Education Module" (MF/141/13). This gives members access to the education programme and information 24 hours a day through the RMT website and the opportunity to apply to attend a course.

Each and every application is then notified to the appropriate branch secretary by email or letter. Importantly the new system also collates the courses attended and so enables the union to see the number of trained reps we have, and the

level of training they have participated in.

It also gives us the opportunity, in time, to record the attendance at the centre over the last two to three years so providing us with a picture of who has attended what and what they can reasonably be asked to do for their union.

I hope all RMT members will be proud of the developments at Doncaster and the Council of Executives continuing commitment to trade union education and if you haven't been on a course to enable you to get active in the branch or region then take a look at what's available and apply.

Of course if there are any issues, subject or any area that you feel needs addressing then please let your regional council or branch know and they will pass that on to me.

Andy Gilchrist can be contacted at a.gilchrist@rmt.org.uk or telephone 020 7387 4771.



A LEARNING LEGACY FOR TUBE WORKERS

RMT opens three learning centres across the London Underground network

Union Learning Representative (ULR) Lee Maybin was one of the speakers at the recent launch of the Arnos Grove Learning Centre based in Ash House late last year.

Lee, who was only elected as a ULR last year and is a train operator on the Piccadilly Line, was one of a number of speakers at the launch.

The Learning Centre, which will provide a quiet place and PCs for members to engage in learning, is the culmination of two years activity and the result of many hours of negotiation.

"We are rightly proud of this achievement, but I must give credit to my predecessor Dean

O'Hanlon who conceived the idea of a Learning Centre at Arnos when he was doing his Stage 2 ULR training. I hope that it will encourage more of our members to get active online and build on their skills base," Lee said.

Arnos Grove was actually the third Learning Centre that the union has launched on London Underground.

In February of last year ULRs Des Rice and Tracy Fitzpatrick launched the Brixton Learning Centre based above Brixton tube station. Brixton is a larger Learning Centre and again was the result of a real push by RMT activists to get the room



adequately equipped and fit for purpose. There has already been an open day and other events put on in the room.

In 2012, ULR Stephen Brennan, launched the Knowledge Action Point (KAP) at Griffith House which is specifically equipped for engineering workers to access information to build on their skills. Stephen has also held a number of training events within the department where the KAP is based, after interest was shown by his colleagues.

Across the Underground eagle-eyed ULRs are looking out for potential venues for Learning Centres and one has been spotted by former LU Lead ULR, Bjorn Bradshaw-Murray, at Seven Sisters which thanks to his efforts and the efforts of ULR Susan Egbulefu, is due to be finalised shortly.

For more information about Union Learning in London contact RMT ULR development worker Sharon Allen by phoning 07533 125166 or email: s.allen@rmt.org.uk

WHAT IS UNION LEARNING?

The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was set up in 1998 to promote activity by trade unions to promote a learning society.

In the late nineties, the government commissioned reports to see if the UK workforce is on track to compete with other countries in skills and the business needs of the future.

It found out that the UK is 17th out of 30 industrialised countries for adults without the skills needed for a modern economy.

RMT has been bidding

successfully for ULF fund since 2004 as a part of Rail Union Learning and RMT Learning has been successful in securing further funding for 201/14.

The project will continue to support Union Learning reps elected by the branches, ensuring they are an integral part of RMT.

RMT Learning has development workers for London, the South East, the South West, the North, Midlands, Network Rail and Shipping. There is also a project worker for Scotland at

Caledonian Macbrayne and Northlink Ferries.

The aim is to ensure that the building blocks needed to make union learning sustainable are in place, talking to employers about the benefits of the union learning agenda and learning agreements and supporting regional officers in getting the very best learning agreements possible.

For more information contact RMT Union Learning project manager Teresa Williams email: t.williams@rmt.org.uk



PREVENTING SUICIDES

RMT backs training scheme at Network Rail to give workers the tools to deal with and prevent suicides on the railways

Suicide on the rail network is a traumatising and costly problem.

On average, one person per day attempts to take their life on the railway. Not all of them succeed but an average of 210 per year do.

Suicide is a tragedy for family members and friends but it can have a traumatic effect on staff members who are called to the scene or who witness the event.

This coalition's attacks on workers' rights means that those psychologically injured by witnessing such harrowing events are no longer able to claim compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.

Some delays exceed 2,000 minutes per incident and can cause massive disruption however the rail industry is becoming faster at getting services running again.

Why people choose the railway to end their life is not clear. It isn't always a certain way of ending life as the numerous failed attempts show. Whatever the reasons for suicide attempts, the rail industry knew that the problem needed to be addressed.

Network Rail engaged with The Samaritans for a five-year suicide prevention programme

in 2010 and part of this programme was to introduce training for front-line staff in recognising and dealing with potentially suicidal people. Station staff, Mobile Operations Managers, security guards and BTP officers are just some of the roles that are encouraged to join the training course that was specifically designed with the railway industry in mind.

RMT was recently represented on a course and nearly 5,000 railway staff have attended so far.

The one-day course, Managing Suicidal Contacts, gives staff the tools to help them recognise suicidal behaviour as well as teaches how to approach vulnerable people using questioning techniques that will encourage them to open up and start talking.

Once contact is made with a suicidal person it becomes easier to engage them and move them to a place of safety where further contact can be made with The Samaritans. The main point of the course is teaching people how to give 'emotional first aid' and help to break a suicide plan.

Staff members are not expected to be a counsellor, but be a first point of contact and direct the vulnerable person



towards someone who can further help them. That could be the British Transport Police or The Samaritans. Both the BTP and Samaritans can refer onto the appropriate agencies.

Feedback from the course has been unanimously positive with some staff members going on to use their newly acquired skills in interventions. RMT members Sharon Willett and Ben Rudkin have both been involved in interventions that saved vulnerable peoples' lives. They both said that had they not previously attended the course, that they may not have had the confidence to approach the people they saved.

RMT fully supports this course and the work that Network Rail is doing with The Samaritans. Your union is represented on the National

Suicide Prevention Steering Group (NSPSG) which discusses and steers the prevention programme.

There will shortly be a booklet produced by the NSPSG that gives advice to staff members who have been involved in a suicide. As soon as it is published it will be available on the RMT website.

For any further details or for booking a course, please contact: railcompanies@samaritans.org You can also visit the Samaritans/Railways microsite at: www.samaritans.org/your-community/reducing-railway-deaths

Please also contact RMT Health & Safety Officer Stephanie Mackay on s.mackay@rmt.org.uk for further details. ■

FIGHTING AUSTERITY

People's Assembly against austerity launched in Scotland

A packed meeting in Glasgow welcomed the launch of the People's Assembly in Scotland.

Scottish People's Assembly chairman Phil McGarry (above) called for a mass movement uniting trade unions and campaigning organisations in opposition to the Tory/Lib Dem government's austerity agenda.

The former RMT regional organiser outlined what austerity meant for the people of Scotland as "a class war on the sick, disabled and infirm which targeted and demonised the poor".

"It means the privatisation of public services, drastic reductions in benefits, the Bedroom Tax and an average reduction of wages in Scotland by around £1,300.

"The consequences could be seen in the 34,000 Scots now

dependent on Food Banks and families forced to choose between heating their homes and eating.

"At the same time bankers were doubling up their earnings including Ross McEwen of the taxpayer-rescued Royal Bank of Scotland had secured an annual pay cheque of just under £3 million.

"But there is an alternative and it was clearly stated in the Six Points of the People's Charter: a fairer economy, more and better jobs, decent homes, improved public services and a better future for all," said.

Scottish Trades Union Congress general secretary Grahame Smith totally rejected the necessity for austerity, for mass unemployment and the destruction of the welfare state.

"The STUC would also not be satisfied with policies that just offered 'a little bit less of the same austerity'," he said.

Actor Ricky Tomlinson represented the Shrewsbury 24 campaign and reminded the meeting that the imprisonment for conspiracy of 24 striking building workers in 1972 represented an attempt to intimidate the whole trade union movement.

He said that the campaign was now seeking the disclosure of documents, withheld by the government for 42 years, and had recently won a Commons vote of 120 to three on the issue after collecting 100,000 signatures

The meeting called for an end to child poverty and zero hour contracts, scrapping Trident and illegal wars, restoring trade union rights, an

end to EU directives that privatised our railways, postal services and utilities and a decent living wage and pensions for all.

This programme has been endorsed by the TUC and the Scottish TUC and all major unions.

"It is a programme which could be achieved with the necessary political will, a mass movement and unity.

"In Scotland, ahead of the referendum in September, there would inevitably be differences over the preferred constitutional settlement.

"We must respect these differences but not allow them to divide our movement, we need to build a movement that can end austerity and demand a better way," said Phil as he closed the conference.



FIGHTING FOR SHIPPING JOBS

RMT Parliamentary group chair Hayes and Harlington Labour MP John McDonnell raised the lack of action on implementing a national minimum wage in the maritime sector in a recent House of Commons debate.

He said that a working party established under the last government between RMT, Nautilus and government departments had produced a redefinition of national minimum wage qualifications for seafarers based on the individual's connection with the country but it is not being enforced.

"The most notable exception that we found involved the lifeline passenger freight ferry routes from Portsmouth, Poole and Weymouth to the Channel Islands operated by Condor Ferries, which employs seafarers from outside the European economic area who are paid £2.35 an hour.

"Despite frequent protests, the HMRC enforcement team has taken no action, and is not enforcing the government's own policy," he said.

RMT's Parliamentary group of MPs also secured a meeting with the Shipping Minister Stephen Hammond to discuss this lack of application of the

government's own rules on the payment the national minimum wage to seafarers working on ships between UK ports.

The group also raised the issue of the Tonnage Tax and ratings training. The Chamber of Shipping had met separately with the minister to discuss the proposed reform of the Tonnage Tax training commitment in favour of training new ratings.

Stephen Hammond asked that RMT consider submitting a joint proposal with the Chamber for increasing UK ratings training from the Tonnage Tax.

The union held a meeting with the Chamber and Bob Crow slammed employers for cutting crewing costs by employing non-EEA ratings and said that the industry and government had done nothing on ratings jobs and training whilst companies coined it in through the tonnage tax.

"We have got to make some progress or we'll lose the country's seafaring capacity and history," he said.

Equality Act 2010

The current government has also reversed an extension of the Race Relations Act 1976 to cover seafarers, in order to stop shipping companies employing non-EEA seafarers in order to pay them less than UK seafarers

for the same job.

The delegation spelled out to Stephen Hammond the damaging impact that this reversal is having on jobs for UK seafarers, as shipping companies exploit this loophole to recruit seafarers from countries outside the European Economic Area and pay them less.

The Minister was reminded of the recommendation of the Carter Review, commissioned by the last government, to abolish this form pay discrimination which is illegal in every other industry.

The Minister agreed to set up a Working Party to review the impact of the regulations introduced by his predecessor, Mike Penning, which restricted the Equality Act to protect only EU seafarers from pay discrimination. RMT, Nautilus, the Chamber of Shipping and Government officials will be on the Working Party which will convene in the spring.

Tonnage Tax

MPs and RMT officials explained in detail to the Minister just how bad the deal from the Tonnage Tax is for UK ratings. Whilst the number of ships registered under the Red Ensign has increased six-fold since the introduction of the

Tonnage Tax in 2000-01, the number of UK ratings and officers has declined to 23 per cent of the total workforce on these vessels.

In the case of ratings, despite a near doubling in the total number of ratings working on qualifying vessels between 2003-04 and 2012-13, the proportion of UK ratings fell from 27.9 per cent to 17 per cent. The number of UK ratings working on Tonnage Tax vessels has remained static whilst the total number of ratings jobs on qualifying ships nearly doubled, from 6,357 in 2003-04 to 11,396 in 2012-13.

In August, the UK Chamber of Shipping president Ken McLeod, a former rating, wrote to Stephen Hammond asking that the training commitments for Tonnage Tax companies are reformed to include training for UK ratings.

Agreement was reached with the Chamber on seeking reform of training commitments to support ratings training through the Tonnage Tax. The union is currently working on the joint position with Nautilus and the Chamber. If successful this should increase the number of UK ratings employed in the industry.



SHIPPING UNITY

Ratings union RMT and shipping officers' union Nautilus International have agreed to work together more closely in companies where both unions have members.

The agreement comes following discussions between RMT general secretary Bob Crow and Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson and the announcement of RMT's offshore campaign and Nautilus International's ferry campaign.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd and Nautilus International ferry organiser Micky Smyth (pictured) have worked with each other on various occasions over the past 20 years. Both were keen to link up again to tackle the problems members face in the ferry industry.

"Both unions face similar if not the same problems and working together can only benefit the members of both unions," said Steve Todd. ■



MERCHANT NAVY PENSION VICTORY

RMT shipping members that have served in the Merchant fleet may be entitled to hundreds of pounds in pension payments

RMT has revealed that members of the Merchant Navy Rating Pension Fund (MNRPF) are missing the opportunity to increase their pension entitlement due to the fact that pre 1978 Service Credits were being incorrectly calculated.

RMT's Liverpool shipping branch asked the union write to the MNRPF trustee board requesting that they inform members of their possible entitlement to these credits.

These credits were established as a result of a surplus in the MNRPF in the mid 1980's with the aim to provide scheme

members with some form of pension provision for Merchant Navy service before the MNRPF commenced in 1978.

These benefits are in the form of fixed pension additions for each year of pre 1978 service, increased while a member remains in service to help protect their real value from inflation.

Service also counts for those individuals who were on the Merchant Navy Establishment Register (the Pool) during their working life but remained a member of the MNRPF.

Pre 1978 Service Credits are

awarded in the form of an annual pension with the possible option to exchange for a tax free lump sum payment subject to the usual limits. Members can receive in the region of £400 annual pension pro-rata for each year of pre-1978 Service Credits.

The union also submitted an appeal on behalf of an RMT member through the MNRPF Informal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP) requesting that the trustees reconsider his award of five years Pre 1978 Service Credits and increase this award to the maximum eight years.

The appeal was based on the fact that the trustee and fund administrator had not counted all employment service as continuous. Although the member had a break of more than 12 months his sea career

had started in 1965 and therefore his total service was in excess of the eight years maximum credit award.

There were also some inconsistencies with the MNRPF rules as a result of changes that appear to have been made in the 1990s.

As a result, over the coming months, fund administrators will be checking members' details to ensure that they receive their full service credits. Some members may be contacted as the administrators may need more data.

If concerned members have not heard anything by June they should contact the administrator, Ensign Pensions Administration through the members' website at www.mnrpf.co.uk ■

ITF INSPECTORS WIN UNPAID WAGES

The International Federation of Transport Workers (ITF) won around £100,000 unpaid wages on behalf of the crew of the Marshall Islands-flagged merchant ship *Isis*, moored at Tilbury, Essex.

The U-turn by the company came after the ITF threatened to arrest the ship and sent a

written warning to Athens-based company Derna Carriers over its negligence and evasion of its responsibilities.

ITF UK and Ireland coordinator Ken Fleming explained that a visit to the *Isis* with newly-appointed ITF inspector Darren Procter to the ship revealed that crew members

had been unpaid for months.

As a result of their actions Derna Carriers has paid the outstanding wages as well as repatriation costs.

"The ship's flag state, the Marshall Islands register, has been supportive of the efforts to see the crew receive what is owed to them, and deserve

recognition for it.

"I would also like to applaud the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC) for its clear and frank position that this is not the kind of behaviour it expects from a shipowner and that seafarers should not have to go without pay," said Ken Fleming. ■



Christopher Waters



Colin Buckley



Gary Tindall



Darren Burgess



The 140 Vortok Rear Guard

TEBAY *NEVER AGAIN*

Ten years after four RMT members were killed at Tebay secondary protection for track workers finally given approval

Saturday February 15 2014 marked the 10th anniversary the Tebay tragedy which killed four RMT members Garry Tindall, Colin Buckley, Darren Burgess and Chris Walters and injured six more members of the same work gang.

The underlying causes of the tragedy were the chaos of fragmentation that followed rail privatisation and the lack of compulsory secondary protection at Tebay on the West Coast main line in Cumbria that morning.

Since the tragedy the union, particularly the local RMT Lancaster branch, has been relentless campaigning for Network Rail to introduce secondary protection, a campaign that has finally come to fruition.

However it is ten years too late for the four men who died at Tebay.

At just after 06.00 hours on February 15 2004 an overloaded faulty trailer with 14 tons of scrap rail careered down a 1 in 74 gradient at over 45 mph and hit the men employed by Carillion who were carrying out various maintenance activities.

There were also a number of different contractors and sub-contractors involved in the work at another engineering possession up the track at nearby Scout Green.

The RRV operator was employed by Mac Machinery who also supplied the vehicles. The crane controller was supplied by McGinley Recruitment Services. The PICOP was employed by MDA and the

engineering supervisor by Carillion.

The engineering supervisor was also acting as the Controller of Site Safety (COSS) for a group of workers from a labour supply company called Renown, and electrical work was being undertaken by another company called Torrent.

A call was made to control that the trolley had been lost and it was then reported as going through the detonators at the end of the Scout Green possession. No-one on site at Scout Green had any knowledge of men working at Tebay.

It was later found that the hydraulic brakes on the trailer had been disconnected and the vehicle was only 'secured' by a pieces of wood (see picture) jammed under the leading wheel which disintegrated during the unloading operation.

Sub-contractor Mark Connolly was convicted of manslaughter after a jury found that he had dismantled the faulty brakes for 'financial gain' because it was cheaper than repairing the wagons.

The jury also convicted his employee Roy Kennett for breaching health and safety laws.

In 2008 a group set up by the company, which included RMT representatives, concluded that up to 20 per cent of the runaway incidents examined could have been prevented by some type of secondary protection.

The group also concluded that current forms of secondary protection all carried with them unacceptable levels of risk and a

new piece of equipment was required to provide added safety to track workers.

Network Rail agreed to look into the design and manufacture of an item of equipment based on easy to use principles that would provide additional secondary protection to workers.

A number of trials of a prototype, known as the 140 Vortok Rearguard, took place around the country, including in Cumbria, and a risk assessment of the device concluded that there would be a net gain in safety levels for track workers using this system.

The units will be targeted to the higher areas of risk across the network based on factors such as gradient and sighting distance. Where those factors exist then use of the equipment will be mandated.

This new tool enhancing and protecting worker safety will soon become common place and should prevent the senseless deaths of other rail workers in the future.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow welcomed the news that this new secondary protection was on the way.

But he pointed out that those responsible for Tebay were charged as individuals, not with corporate manslaughter.

"We are still seeing too many corporate killers let off the hook, and we still need to change the law so that profit-hungry bosses responsible for workers' deaths end up behind bars where they belong," he said.

He also reiterated the union's view that privatisation had

created a dangerous environment for track workers.

"Tebay was not an accident. It was the direct result of the privatisation and fragmentation of our railways.

"Ten years after Tebay, we still have a confusion of contractors, subcontractors and a host of labour-only agencies.

"That means there are no consistent application of safety standards and no central line of command and communication," he said.

He said that Network Rail had brought rail maintenance back in-house for reasons of safety and efficiency and it should finish that job and bring renewals work back in-house

too.

"We should remember those who were killed and injured at Tebay but we should also pledge to end the ludicrous set-up that caused the disaster," he said.

He pointed out that the death of a track worker at Saxilby in 2012 whilst working for contractor Sky Blue had shone a spotlight on the dangers inherent in the current working environment of track workers on Britain's railways.

"Those ever present dangers are compounded by the use of contractors and agencies and the growth of zero-hour contacts and casualisation in this safety critical environment," he said. ■

IT'S STILL HAPPENING

Since Tebay there have been a number of other incidents of runaways of one type or another that came very near to killing and maiming more track workers. Included in this list are the following incidents:

- The runaway of a locomotive at Blake Street in August 2005
- The runaway of a trolley at Larkhall in November 2005
- The runaway of an RRV in Copenhagen Tunnel in November 2006
- The runaway of an RRV at Brentwood in

November 2007

- Runaway of an excavator at Raigmore in July 2010
- Runaway of a track maintenance trolley at Haselmere in September 2011
- Runaway and collision with buffer stops at Bradford in March 2012

Around 100 events have also been recorded in Safety Management Information System (SMIS) incidents were recorded between 2004-2011 which an average of around 12 per year.



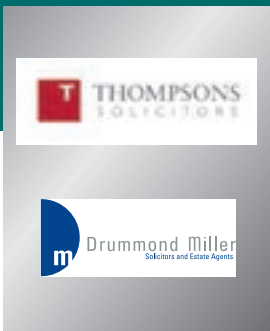
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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



LEGAL VICTORIES

NO JUSTICE

The Tory/Lib Dem attacks on legal aid is the latest assault on our rights says solicitor Liam Welch



The latest attack on the welfare state is the government's continued assault on legal aid.

It should be noted that, shamefully, it was the previous Labour government that got the ball rolling on these cuts; although of course the Con Dems picked it up and ran with it.

Since its introduction in 1949, legal aid has been a crucial constituent of the British justice system: an institution which is respected worldwide.

As an RMT member you are fortunate in that you may be eligible for help with your legal funding if criminal proceedings are brought against you. However the cuts to legal aid will have a far-reaching effect on society as a whole.

Legal aid costs taxpayers around about £2 billion every year - around half goes on criminal defence and the remainder is distributed on civil cases in other crucial areas including mental health, asylum and family law cases which involve domestic violence, forced marriage or child abduction.

The coalition has already taken £320 million out of the annual £2 billion legal aid budget and from the remaining budget plans to remove a further £220 million each year until 2018. Combine that with the widespread closure of law centres and what you have is a wholesale affront to access to justice.

Essentially, what we have witnessed so far in the ongoing

destruction of the legal aid system is an attack on the most marginal in society: the poor, the unemployed and the immigrant.

The government's proposals include cutting fees in complex, high cost cases by 30 per cent and in other crown court work by up to 18 per cent. Across the board, the proposed cuts would see lawyers' fees cut by 30 per cent.

This is compounded by the fact that the fees that solicitors and barristers are paid to handle cases under criminal legal aid have already been reduced by around 40 per cent since 1997. But it is not the fees that are the most important issue, it is justice. If you hollow out resources injustice surely follows.

The Treasury Counsel commented that the "entirely obvious and predictable outcomes will be lost quality and reduced supply of criminal advocates".

It is not just lawyers who are losing out in all this. There is further apprehension within the profession over the tightened restrictions on legal aid in criminal cases. This includes tougher requirements, such as those who do not face time in prison being highly unlikely to qualify, and the stringent means test of roughly £21,000 P/A income, above which you are unlikely to qualify for legal aid in the Magistrates' Court. It is thought that this will lead to an increase in people being forced to represent themselves in court. It isn't hard to see how this creates a false economy, where court time is wasted, verdicts based on

poorly made legal arguments are appealed and ultimately cases are moved to higher courts, where court time is even more expensive.

Add to this the human cost of the frightened, stressed, frustrated individuals who will be caught up in this process.

Furthermore, the proposed reforms to Legal Aid will see the guilty plea financially incentivised, meaning that the pressure will be on to accept guilty pleas rather than dedicate the time and effort necessary in fully preparing a case and ensuring justice.

The government's proposals on legal aid go much further than the criminal legal aid sphere and will affect everyone and the effect on both civil cases and criminal cases is far reaching and catastrophic.

The legal aid system is not expensive, it is less than one per cent of government spending, but it is strategically important because it is a vehicle for maintaining justice, and to challenge poor decision making and reprehensible behavior by the state.

Moreover, for the most part, it works well, we should be proud of it and, like that other great legacy of the post-war government, the National Health Service, we should fight to defend it.

You can find out more about the legal aid cuts and how to get involved in opposing them at <http://www.savelegalaid.co.uk>

So far this year I have had the great pleasure of attending two events which, in different ways, signify the strength of the socialist movement.

The first was to celebrate 140th anniversary of Bridgend and Llantrisant branch. Attendance was high and with me were Bob Crow, assistant general secretary Mick Cash and national secretary Steve Todd. It is always a pleasure to visit Wales, one of the major birthplaces of socialism.

The occasion was marked by speeches from the leadership and, more importantly, the rank and file. There was also the unveiling of the new branch banner and the original branch minute book from 1874 was on display.

I do not want to say too much more about the night as it is being covered elsewhere in the magazine. However the occasion did get me thinking about the future role of branches in the union. This is particularly apt at the time when we are looking at the whole structure of the union. I, for one, would be totally against any alteration of the branches.

Yes technology has moved on

and people will say that the role of the branch has diminished. Nothing, however, can replace human interaction and debate that takes place in branches.

The resolutions and foundations of every major socialist party and trade union started in debates taking place in local branches. We can look back and see great socialist figures taking their first tentative steps at these meetings. People such as Nye Bevan, Lenin, Jack Jones, Jim Larkin and even Bob Crow!

Branches will always be the birthplace of ideas that will push us forward to a more equal society. I would like to salute all past and present members of Bridgend and Llantrisant branch and thanks especially to Peter and Steven Skelly for putting on a wonderful night.

The second event that I attended was in Liberty Hall in Dublin to launch a new book about one of my heroes, James Connolly, written by Doctor John Callow, a good friend of the union.

Over 150 guests attended including members of the Connolly family, and I would like to thank them all, especially

Tommy Crimes, for the usual warm and friendly welcome.

The book is sponsored by us, GMB, SIPTU, Jim Connell Society and The Marx Memorial Library. There are already two very good books by Desmond Greaves and Donal Nevin already, but this a welcome addition. It has many unseen photographs and is beautifully illustrated by Sean O'Brogain. John was working in the Marx library when he came across unseen manuscripts and decided to publish them. Try to get hold of a copy if you can, but also try to read works by James Connolly, you won't be disappointed.

I came to socialism, like many others, through the writings of James Connolly. I was 17 and working in a shipyard when a friend gave me some Connolly pamphlets. They changed my life and were a lot easier to read than Marx! It could do the same for you, if you have not read anything by him. You could also get your branches to affiliate to the James Connolly Society you won't regret it, a great socialist organisation.

Walking through the streets of Dublin, I was saddened but not surprised by the homeless on



streets. This is a common sight on the streets of our towns and cities. They were mainly young people and it is not them who are the criminals, but the leaders of our governments.

They are the ones who are responsible for our young having no future and no hope. We must act, and act now, to create a fairer more equal society. Something James Connolly and the early socialists tried to do.

I would like to finish with a quote from Connolly which is food for thought in today's society: "For, as we have said elsewhere, socialism is neither Protestant nor Catholic, Christian or Freethinker, Buddhist, Mahometan, nor Jew; it is only HUMAN"

Peter Pinkney ■

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CELEBRATING 140 FIGHTING YEARS

Bridgend and Llantrisant branch secretary Steve Skelly reports on a special meeting to unveil a new banner and celebrate 140 years of representing working people on the railways

To celebrate the 140th anniversary of the founding of our branch it was the unanimous view to commission a new banner and hold a special event to mark the occasion last month.

The meeting was attended by RMT president Peter Pinkney, general secretary Bob Crow, assistant general secretary Mick Cash and national secretary Steve Todd. With over 60 in attendance it was a great success with the new branch banner unveiled for the first time.

Special thanks must go to the banner maker Ed Hall for

making a lovely job of it and the branch has produced special postcards carrying the new design.

Many people may associate the year 1874 with the birth of Winston Churchill, Benjamin Disraeli replacing William Gladstone as Prime Minister or even the formation of Aston Villa Football Club. But for the rail workers of Llantrisant it will proudly be remembered for the formation of the Llantrisant branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.

The reason we know so much about the early years of the branch is owing to the fact that

the original minute book from 1874 still exists and is a fantastic insight into the formation years of the union.

The minute book is now stored at the Glamorgan Archives in Cardiff, along with a number of other historical documents of the union, but it was released to be present on the evening.

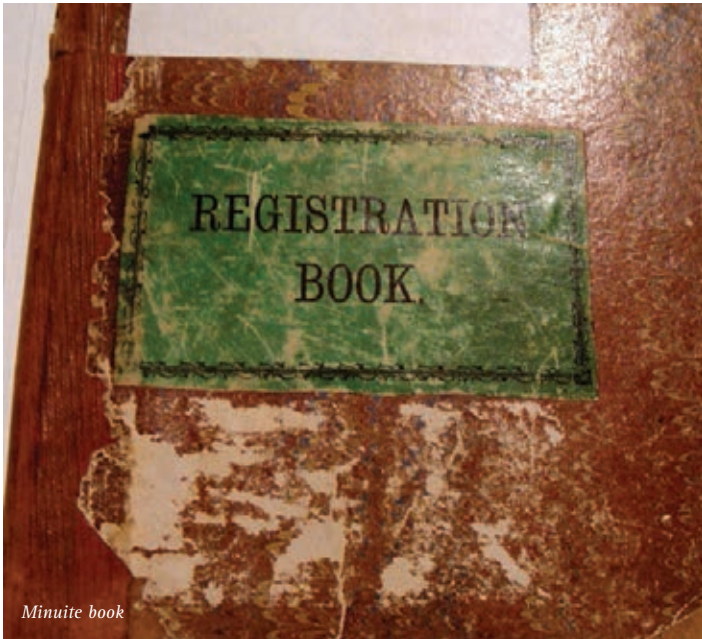
Llantrisant itself is an historic market town dating back to the 6th century and although the railway adopted its name the line itself is actually situated in the nearby village of Pontyclun.

The village literally would

not have existed had the railway not come to South Wales in the 1850s with the opening of the Chepstow to Swansea Railway and with Llantrisant becoming a major junction to allow the transport of 'black gold' from the Rhondda Valleys.

Exploitation and poor working conditions were all too prevalent in those early years and the workers of the age knew only too well that the only means by which to improve their pay and conditions was to organise in a fighting trade union.

The inaugural meeting of the



Minute book

Llantrisant branch was held on Saturday January 10 1874 at the Talbot Inn, Talbot Road. Llantrisant the pub still survives albeit now as the Talbot Arms.

The first officers elected at the meeting overseen by P Wyatt district secretary were W Attewell as chairman and George A Skilling as secretary.

The latter Skilling a 27-year old Fireman is well known to the history of the union for being a delegate at the first annual general meeting of the union in 1872 representing Cardiff.

The branch surprisingly has a number of idiosyncrasies which still survive to this day having been handed down through the generations. All minutes of the branch read 'the minutes of an ordinary branch meeting'.

I only write this because the previous secretary, one Peter Skelly, told me to do so and because his predecessor gave him that very same instruction and this term appears in the very first minute book.

One rule however has not survived the wheels of time from 1874 which people may have differing views on and that is to prohibit the drinking of alcohol in meetings!

It was perhaps a sign of better times when branch treasurer John Watkins decided to "proceed to America" when he was given a letter of recommendation signed by both

the chair and secretary to enable Brother Watkins to obtain employment.

I doubt such a recommendation from branch officers would carry such weight with employers today but it is important to note the respect a trade union branch carried in those days and something we must all strive to achieve again.

Tragedy struck the branch in July 1875 when branch member Frances William Skilling a brakeman was killed in a landslip following heavy flooding in the area. Skilling, who was possibly a relation of the branch secretary, was just 27 years old a stark reminder of the dangers faced by members throughout the history of the union.

What is surprising is that when undertaking research for the anniversary I found a newspaper report of the time confirming the death of two people in the accident not one. The minute book makes no mention of the other victim William David and it can only be assumed that he was not a member of the ASRS.

To celebrate its first anniversary the branch held a dinner in 1875 with the minute book detailing the preparations for the event. So it was only right to organise a similar event to mark 140 years.

I am not sure all those years ago that the founding members



RMT regional organiser Peter Skelly presents president Peter Pinkney with a miners lamp



of the branch would have thought 140 years later that future generations would meet to celebrate that very evening.

I am confident that they would be very proud of the

strong traditions of industrial trade unionism that the branch has maintained and long may that continue for future generations.

IN DUBLIN CITY IN 1913

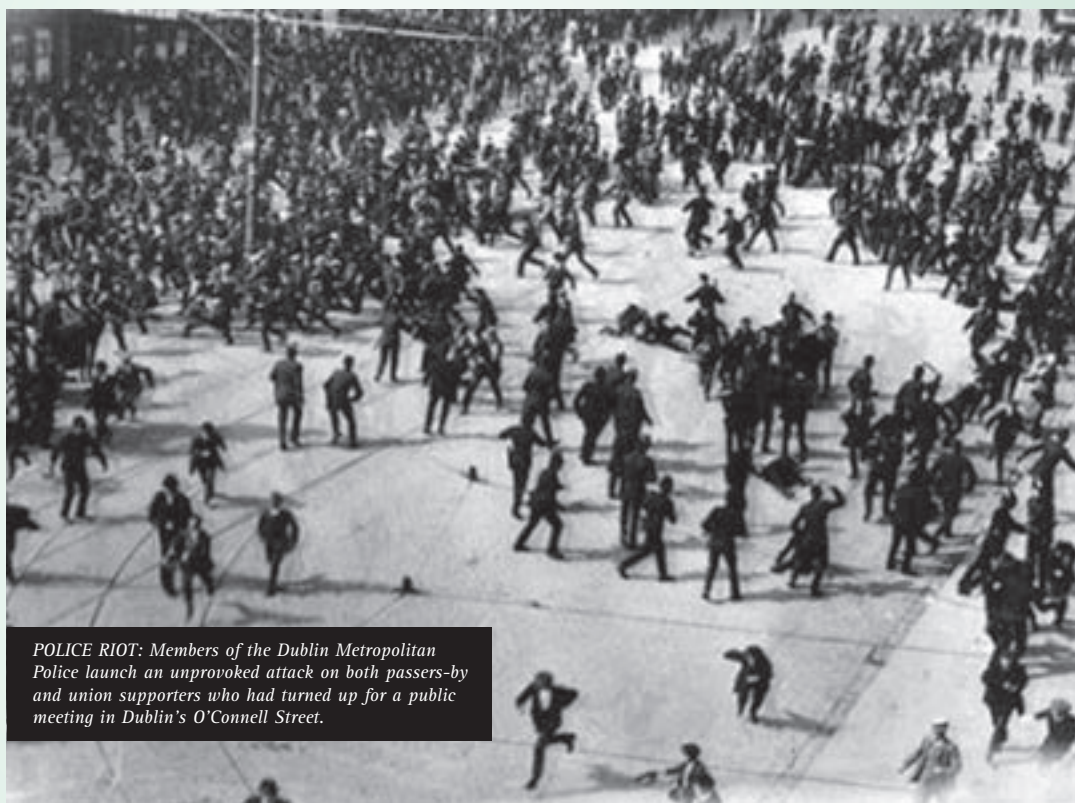
At this year's RMT Charles Watkins memorial lecture Francis Devine told the story of the Dublin lock-out and its lessons for today

In 1913 Dublin lacked a real industrial base and work was generally of a casual nature with poor union organisation and slave wages. A third of the city's teeming population inhabited the centre city tenement slums. The overcrowding, squalor and inadequate sanitation combined with poor diet to give Dublin one of the highest infant death rates in Europe.

High levels of violence and prostitution offered further evidence of the demoralised state of many of the population. It was in many ways an unlikely seed-bed for trade unionism. The social system was typified by insecurity of employment, personal daily struggles for survival and the frequent indifference of the longer established - but conservative - craft trade unions.

The New Unionism, marked by its organisation of the unskilled and socialist zeal, had briefly flourished in Dublin in the 1890s. But the odds were heavily stacked against permanent success: many union organisations had become moribund. With James Larkin's arrival in Ireland as organiser for the National Union of Dock Labourers (NUDL), the waterfront workers rose again, firstly in Belfast in 1907 and subsequently in other Irish ports.

Disagreement with the



POLICE RIOT: Members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police launch an unprovoked attack on both passers-by and union supporters who had turned up for a public meeting in Dublin's O'Connell Street.

NUDL's Liverpool Executive led to Larkin's suspension and the launch in 1909 of a Dublin-based union for unskilled workers - the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. From the beginning the new union enunciated in its rule book a wide programme of industrial and political agitation to change society in the interests of the Irish working class. But the employers would not be silent observers.

The Bosses Organise
Under the calculating

leadership of William Martin Murphy, owner of the Irish Independent and controller of the Dublin Tramways Company, over 400 employers combined in the Dublin Employers' Federation to deny the same rights of combination to the city's underprivileged. Their aim was to remove the threat of the ITGWU and its message of discontent articulated by Larkin's street oratory.

The crunch came on August 15 1913 when Murphy offered the workers in the Independent's

dispatch department the choice of Union or job. When their loyalty to the union resulted in dismissal, prompt solidarity action saw the dispute escalate with further dismissals in Eason's and on the trams.

The now confident employers issued the infamous 'document', locking out any worker that refused to sign a pledge to disown the ITGWU. By the end of September over 20,000 were locked out.

Bloody Sunday
On Sunday, 31 August, the

police attacked a crowd gathered to hear Larkin address them in O'Connell Street. The meeting had been banned by the authorities. Scores were injured and three died in the baton charge and British public opinion was shocked at the scenes. Questions were raised in the House of Commons and the issue was debated at the British Trades Union Congress.

Support soon came on foot of the distress but Larkin's 'Fiery Cross' crusade in Britain, where he preached the 'Divine Mission of Discontent,' generated rank-and-file rather than official reaction. James Connolly, now co-ordinating industrial matters, drew the port of Dublin shut as 'tight as a drum' and both sides settled for a long war through the winter with the bosses relying on starvation and the workers on the simple message of 'each for all and all for each.'

The TUC Dublin Food Fund and other support marshalled by the Dublin Trades Council

sustained the workers and there can have been few occasions as emotive as the landing of the food ships on the quays. The workers also began to defend themselves through the formation of the Irish Citizen Army. Intellectuals and sympathisers rallied to the workers' side shocked at the awful conditions and horrified at the pig-headedness of the employers. The Church was less sympathetic and positively hostile to the notion of Dublin's starved youngsters going to the 'godless' homes of English sympathisers for the duration. Connolly wondered why souls were of greater concern than bellies. In the face of uneven odds the Lock-Out began to crumble in January 1914 as the Building Labourers' Union returned – as many others were to do – without signing the offending document.

Some stuck it out until May, but in the end the employers could and did claim victory as resistance collapsed. But they

lacked the strength to enforce their victory, as the ITGWU survived.

In defeat, the ITGWU had gained many adherents and had laid the foundations that led Connolly to conclude: "From the effects of this drawn battle both sides are still bearing heavy scars. How deep those scars are, none will ever reveal. But the working class has lost none of its aggressiveness, none of its confidence, none of the hope in the ultimate triumph. No traitor amongst the ranks of that class has permanently gained, even materially, by his or her treachery. The flag of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union still flies proudly in the van of the Irish working class, and that working class still marches proudly and defiantly at the head of the gathering hosts who stand for a regenerated nation, resting upon a people industrially free".

The Lessons of 1913

We must learn from 1913's solidarity between different

trade unions, national and international. The trade union movement fought for the whole of the working class not just the organised sectors.

Larkin's newspaper the Irish Worker through its mass readership countered the employers' message from the bosses' servant press. The trade unions provided social and cultural activities for its members as well as industrial and political leadership.

The Lock-Out tried to outlaw a culture counter to capitalism. It failed partly because it was so crude and ham-fisted. Today's attack is more subtle and all the more dangerous.

To honour the memory of 1913 we must commit ourselves to trade union activity not just trade union membership. We must once again set out the task of regenerating a nation on "the shoulders of a people industrially free".

Francis Devine is a Labour historian

'JOKE JUSTICE' FOR KOREAN UNION LEADERS

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) slammed the arrest of 13 Korean Railway Workers Union (KRWU) trade union leaders for leading a legitimate and lawful industrial action.

The ITF blasted the political vendetta behind their arrest as they made a dignified surrender to police.

KRWU president Myoung hwan Kim said that the rail strike last year had been a completely legitimate and legal struggle.

"The past precedents of denouncing workers' legitimate strikes as illegal, repressing them and enacting disciplinary measures must not be repeated, this will be proven in court in due course," he said.

ITF president Paddy Crumlin slammed the arrests as joke justice.

"The dignified action by these trade unionists should not obscure the ludicrous nature of what they're charged with and the police's behaviour.

"KRWU members voted, openly and democratically, to strike to protect Korean Railways against potentially disastrous privatisation.

"They were charged with obstructing business, their offices were raided, their members are at threat of dismissal and the union is being targeted for damages.

"The charges are politically motivated, unfounded and discriminatory, and cannot be allowed to go unchallenged.

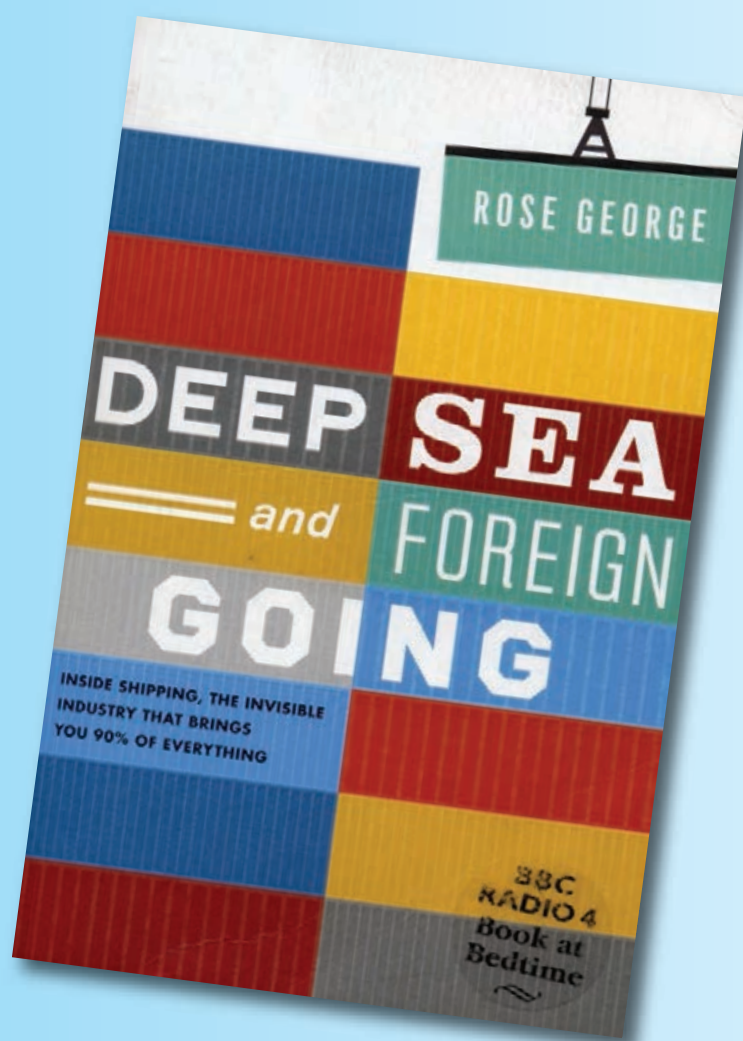


They must be dropped immediately if the government is to retain any credibility," he said.

For more details of the strikes and the international support go to www.itfglobal.org/campaigns

DEEP SEA AND FOREIGN GOING

Author Rosa George exposes the secret world of deep sea shipping



Once a major part of our national identity, the seafaring world is now obscure, badly regulated and yet, with more than 100,000 freighters on the seas carrying 90 per cent of world trade, far more influential to our daily lives than at any time in history.

In *Deep Sea and Foreign Going: Inside Shipping, the Invisible Industry That Brings You 90% of Everything* Rosa George pursues the dark truths behind the industry that brings us almost everything we eat, wear and work with takes her across the globe, from Felixstowe to Singapore.

She follows the vast routes travelled by mercantile and naval fleets, pirate gangs and illegal floating factories, meeting seafarers, dockworkers, tycoons, missionaries, stevedores, ship-spotters, beachcombers, environmentalists and even whales along the way.

She reports on those who spend their working lives on ships and investigates the poor regulation endemic in the shipping industry which leaves crews with little protection and allows companies to deny their responsibilities. With stories of pirates, pollution, wreckage, rescue, mapping, navigation and invisibility, this is essential reading for anyone curious about the complex systems behind our

convenient modern world.

According to Rosa George, even the men who work on container ships don't show much interest in the boxes they transport.

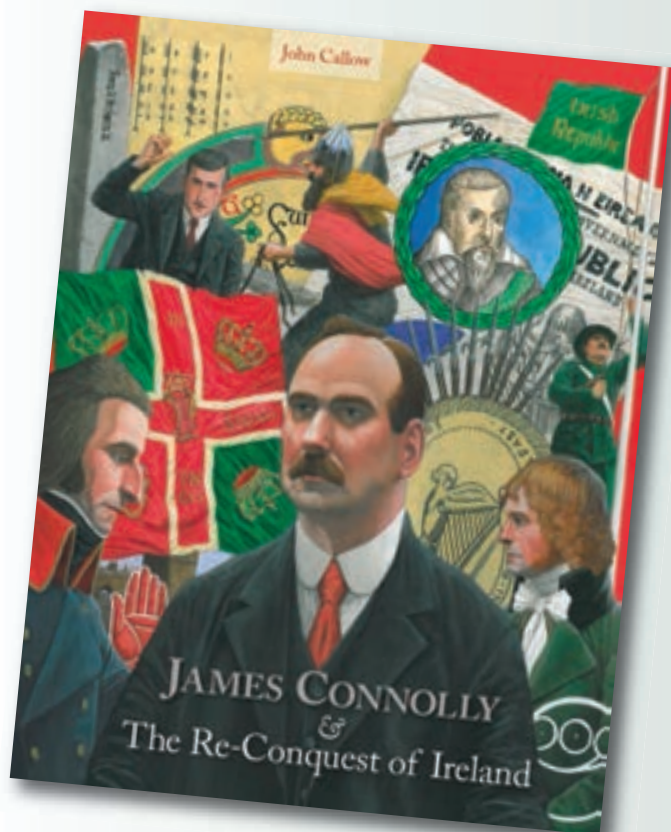
On board an English train she looks at the headphones, uniforms and trolley food in front of her and explains that almost all of them have been brought here by ship. The reason is economics: shipping has become so cheap, she explains, that it's less costly for Scottish cod to be sent 10,000 miles to China to be filleted and then exported back to restaurants here than it is to pay the (already small) salaries of Scottish filleters.

Modern sailors are people from India, Bangladesh, Ukraine and Russia. Most populous of all are Filipinos, who are lured not only by the wages but by aggressive advertising that casts mariners as heroes whose remittances – amounting to many billions of dollars annually – support the nation. Many work more than 85 hours a week and are given meagre provisions. It is not uncommon for them to be abandoned on ships for months without pay.

Deep Sea and Foreign Going: Inside Shipping, the Invisible Industry That Brings You 90% of Everything by Rosa George, Portobello books £14.99p

REMEMBERING CONNOLLY

John Callow introduces his new book about the socialist James Connolly who led the Irish Easter rising in Dublin against British rule in 1916



A remarkable collection of family papers relating to James Connolly, Ireland's greatest modern revolutionary, entrusted to the Marx Library, fell out of view for many and have only now been published thanks to a partnership between RMT and GMB unions.

RMT understands the nature of history – not as some dry museum piece, to be picked apart or locked away for a select band of academics – but as a dynamic force that enables the vast majority of women and men to better understand the forces that shape their lives and to effect radical change, in the present, for the good of the many rather than the few.

Born in an Edinburgh slum, James Connolly – a lifelong Marxist and trade unionist – would perish, in Easter 1916, as the vice president of the provisional government and as commandant general of the armed forces of an Irish Republic that lasted little more than a week, and collapsed under the

weight of artillery fire.

This new illustrated book, James Connolly and the Re-Conquest of Ireland, explores Connolly's conception of nationhood, its loss, and the continuing quest for social justice. It reproduces the manuscript of his last major work, together with a range of other documents that shed fresh light upon his re-envisioning of Irish history and culture, the struggle for women's rights, and the fight to achieve an independent and avowedly Socialist Ireland.

Through the building of the trade union movement in Ireland; to the Dublin Lock-Out of 1913; the outbreak of the Great War; and the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, James Connolly emerges as a leader of enormous integrity, whose instincts lay with the poor and the dispossessed, whose every energy championed the working class, and whose business – first and foremost – was always revolution.

CONNOLLY COMPETITION

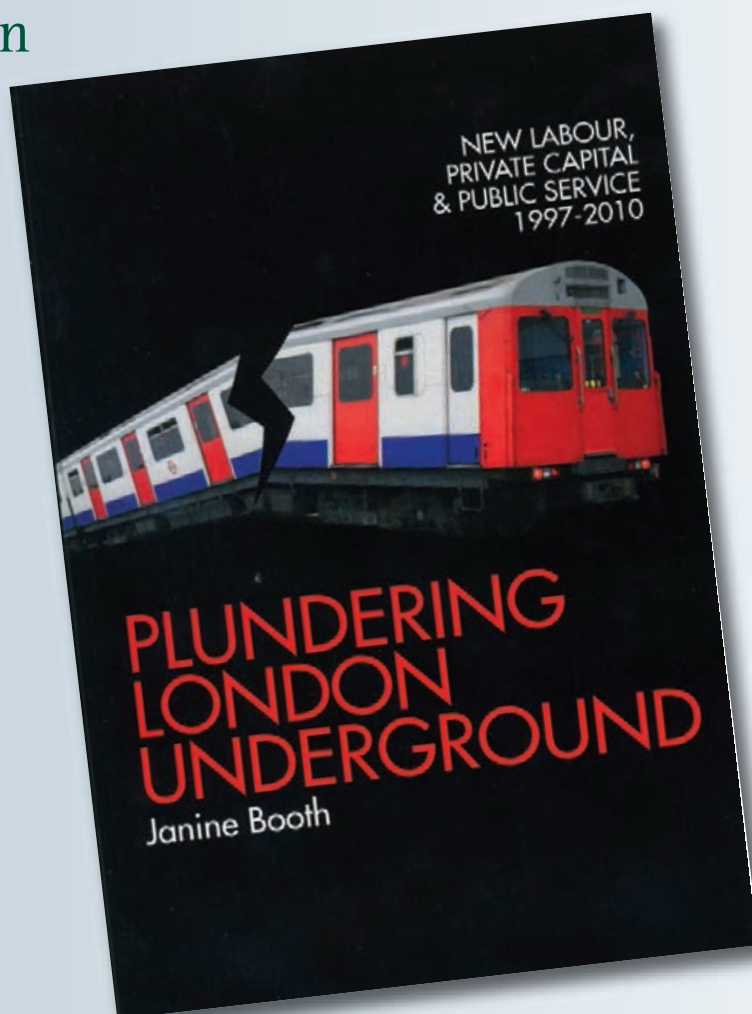
Win a copy of, *James Connolly and the Re-Conquest of Ireland* by answering the following question.

Which union did James Connolly lead before the Easter rising?

Please send answers to bdenny@rmt.org.uk

PLUNDERING LONDON UNDERGROUND

Oliver New reviews a new book by Janine Booth *Plundering London Underground: New Labour, private capital and public service 1997-2010* which tells the story of the disaster of Tube privatisation



This is an excellent and readable book about the Public Private Partnership on London Underground, the PPP. Its author Janine Booth is a well-known RMT activist who was actually there and has got the t-shirt!

The PPP was a diabolical rip off and a disaster. One of the reasons that it collapsed after only a few years was that RMT members and others fought against it, exposing it for what it was from start to finish.

As well as being a good read, it will doubtless be referred to by transport experts and trade unionists for years to come.

The PPP was introduced by the Labour government of the late 90s; it was a further development of Tory rail nationalisation. By privatising the Tube infrastructure, the Labour government was effectively spitting in the face of unions and rail workers discarding all their previous claims to be against rail privatisation.

Most Londoners opposed PPP but Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, John Prescott and the rest of the New Labour leadership didn't give a hoot. They even blatantly rigged the selection process for Labour's candidate to be Mayor of London to carve out anti-PPP Ken Livingstone.

Livingstone stood as an independent with opposition to the PPP as his main policy, comfortably beating Labour, Tories and Lib Dems, only for

the Labour government to force through PPP in defiance of democracy. Later Livingstone re-joined Labour and accepted the PPP as a fait accompli.

Tube workers thought that the PPP wasn't just wrong – it was bonkers. By splitting infrastructure from operations, then the infrastructure into three parts, each run by a private consortium the PPP created an immense jungle of crazy contracts.

One set of contracts alone filled ten single drawer filing cabinets and everything had to be defined and calculated. For example litter was defined and the amount of chewing gum on station was deliberated upon. If anything went wrong, it had to be reported, evaluated and attributed to one of the parties.

RMT took strike action, campaigned and demonstrated before and during the PPP and obtained support from other unions, activists and disability organisations. We set up the Campaign Against Tube Privatisation and then we took more strike action.

Nevertheless the government finally forced the PPP onto the Underground after paying millions of pounds over several years to consultants, lawyers and planners.

Things started to go wrong pretty soon. Targets became everything but were often not met. There were derailments. Metronet started giving contracts to the companies which were its own shareholders – paying them upfront before the work was done. In three years the three consortia made £158 million profit. *Plundering London Underground* looks at the whole sordid story, quoting senior LUL managers and workers.

Predictably, not only was the PPP an organisational disaster, with lower safety standards, but it cost more. The taxpayer paid out much more than if everything had stayed in-house. Various

claims that only the private sector could finance investment turned out to be so much boloney. The government could easily have raised the money itself. The same thing is true today for the NHS, where PFIs have cost our NHS billions of pounds.

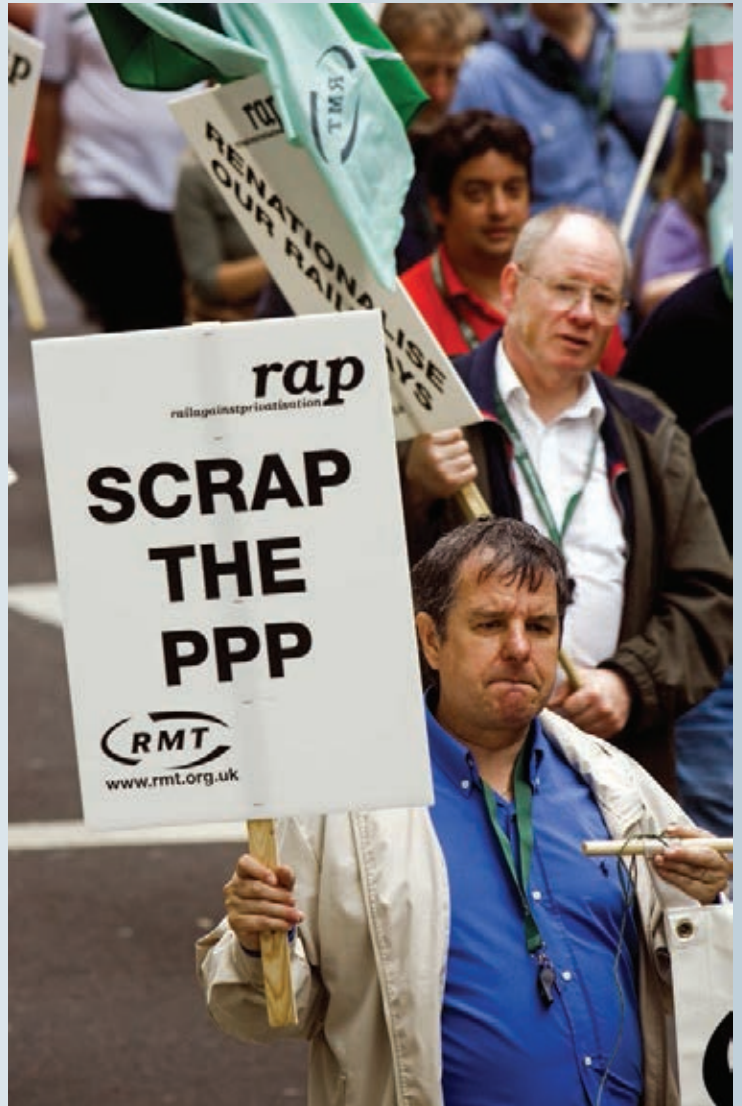
In May 2008 Metronet, which owned two thirds of the infrastructure, went into administration. After only five years it was the death knell of the PPP, about the time spent planning it at such a massive cost.

A couple of years later Transport for London, bought out Tube Lines which meant that all parts of the infrastructure were once again publicly owned. RMT continues to demand that all our Tube Lines members be integrated into LUL and can join the pension scheme and receive staff passes. It also continues to campaign for all other staff on the Underground to come in house – contractors working on the track, cleaners and many others.

This book records the story of the PPP authoritatively, a story which is important to the union. For example it is part of the reason RMT redefined its relationship to the Labour Party so that it only supports MPs who support union policy.

Like me, you probably won't share all the views in this book, but you won't regret reading *Plundering London Underground*. It covers the story for real people, it exposes the economic facts behind the rip offs as well as looking at a socialist and democratic policy for London Underground. Buy it, borrow it, or ask your branch to order it.

Today London Underground workers are again going into battle, with huge numbers of jobs under threat. The defeat of the PPP – which cynics at the time said was impossible, shows what can be achieved with unity and determination.



BETTER TOGETHER

Dear editor,

I disagree with John Milligan's article 'For an independent Scotland' (RMT News November/December) as I feel all the countries within the UK are better together.

You have only to look at two situation's that are better as a whole than split up and both affect our members.

Firstly, privatisation of the railways, I don't need to explain how splitting the railways in Britain have been a total mess only benefitting the privateer.

Secondly our union represents all grades as unity is strength. If our union split up or only represented certain groups it wouldn't have the strength it has now.

It would be like other federations and associations on the railway and would be the worse for it.

These are just two examples of why being together is better.

We are only a group of relatively small islands and I feel it would be foolish to split us up. We really do work better together.

Yours sincerely, Ian Bentley

CALLING BUS WORKERS

We hear a lot about rail and Tube workers and the high profile given to the problems faced by British seafarers.

There are also campaigns in the taxi sector and at City Link and, let's be honest, it rankles with some in the bus industry. Some feel that ours is the forgotten sector within our union.

There are those that recognise the disparity in pay, terms and conditions across the big five bus employers, but assume that the union is either unaware or reluctant to organise more robustly to close the gap.

Others remain wary of the increased responsibility imposed on bus drivers with regard to vehicle roadworthiness and compliance with the minefield that is the Driving Hours and Tachograph Regulations and feel that the union doesn't offer enough guidance.

Well bus workers, if this is the case, sadly we only have ourselves to blame and let me explain why.

Rail and Tube workers are highly motivated and very well organised. They communicate, they gather information and support; share and advice and pool ideas but most importantly they stick together.

If they think they're being badly treated they don't back-down easily. They are able to do this because they understand and

recognise that they are the union – they hold the power. They do all this because they attend meetings, they go on courses, they get involved and they help run their own union.

It took my branch secretary almost two years to persuade me to join RMT and I only agreed on the proviso that I would not be prepared to remain a passive member.

My relatively short membership of nearly three years he has sent me to the Isle of Wight, Doncaster, Northern College and Poole College encompassing eight courses.

I have also attended bus workers' conference three times as a delegate and now sit on the conference committee.

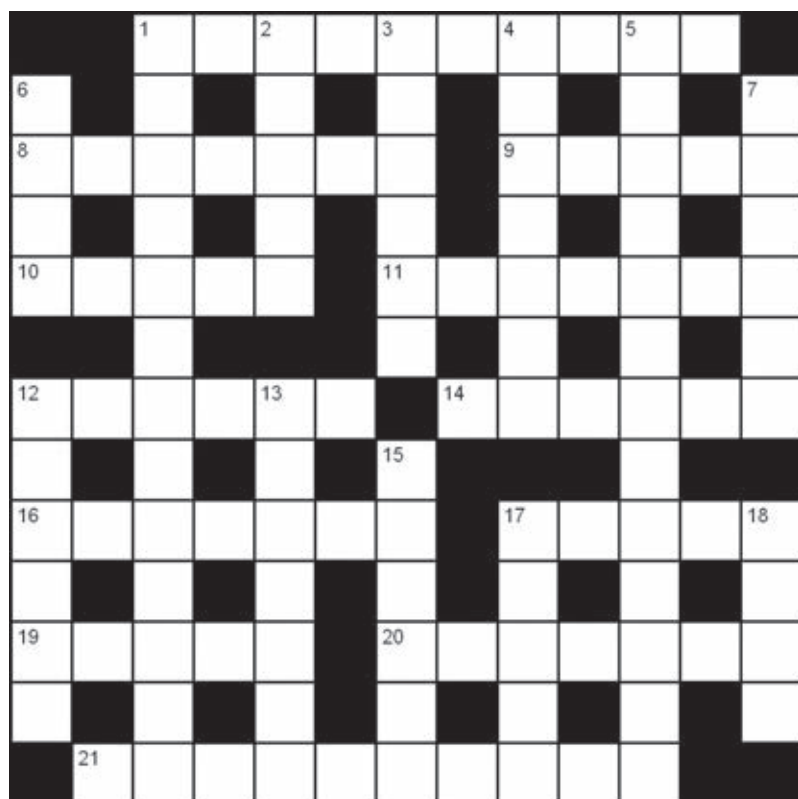
I also attend my regional council and sit on the committee as well as holding branch positions. It has been a busy few years, but it illustrates how much you can do if you get involved and it demonstrates that, because of the RMT's democratic constitution and inclusive procedures, you are not just a member – you are an activist.

So don't sit in your canteen bemoaning what the union does or doesn't do for bus workers – stand up and do it.

Regards

James Ide, Poole and District Bus branch

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Geraldo Calambro from Stockport.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by March 3 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Semiconductor device (10)
- 8 Oozing (7)
- 9 Occurrence (5)
- 10 Result (5)
- 11,6 down, Eire (7,4)
- 12 Exit (6)
- 14 Treacly (6)
- 16 Art lover (7)
- 17 Narrow hill (5)
- 19 Hawaiian hello (5)
- 20 Intoxicating liquid (7)
- 21 Easily seen (10)

DOWN

- 1 Hidden store (8,5)
- 2 Spiny plant (5)
- 3 Long pin (6)
- 4 Stage set (7)
- 5 An excess (14)
- 7 Indigestible (6)
- 12 At the same time (4,2)
- 13 Transvestite (slang) (7)
- 15 Return to normal (6)
- 17 Undergone rehabilitation (5)
- 18 Girl's name (4)

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

2 Marital Status

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

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch												
Job Description														

4 Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐

5 Membership Status

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

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Date

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To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
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Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

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Branch Sort Code

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Problems at work? Call the helpline
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Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

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

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

