

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

YOUR UNION YOUR VOICE



For The
Political Fund



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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

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Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions from some types of account. This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



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EDITORIAL



A FIGHTING UNION!

Our fighting trade union is firing on all cylinders at every level to defend our members' jobs and conditions in every sector, to secure improvements and to build our organisation for the future.

Firstly, the significance of the 'Not Guilty' verdict in the case brought against Mark Harding by the British Transport Police as a result of allegations made during strike action over the threat to jobs and services on London Underground should not be underestimated.

This was a test case with ramifications for the entire trade union movement. If Mark had been found guilty it would have tightened the noose of the anti-union laws around the neck of every worker prepared to stand up and fight back. This was a victory not just for Mark and RMT but for every trade unionist in Britain.

A fine success has also been chalked up by our negotiators in securing a deal on Scotrail for the Commonwealth Games that sees all staff being rewarded with payments that range up to £275.

Elsewhere on that franchise we have learnt that SERCO, a company under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office, has been awarded the contract for the sleeper services, opening up a new fight to defend jobs and working conditions.

The rail franchise chaos is rolling on with the new threat to jobs and safety on Northern Rail and Trans Pennine Express joining the Thameslink, Southern, Great Northern operation as just the latest examples of McNulty in action. RMT is leading the fight across the country, politically and industrially, to halt these attacks and to ram home the case for public ownership.

Earlier this month myself and the president met the transport minister to

raise concerns about the rail industry and the franchising scandal. We told him that the McNulty cuts on infrastructure, through D00, station and ticket office closures would not only result in the loss of essential rail jobs but jeopardise services and safety.

I gave the same message at a meeting in parliament with MPs where we also discussed our concerns over the job cuts on London Transport and in the bus industry, and where we continued to press the case for UK seafarer's jobs and better offshore safety.

You can bet at the same time the bosses were in and out of the minister's office and parliament making exactly the opposite case, arguing for more profits on the back of more cuts.

The inquest into the shocking case of the Swanland, a Russian-crewed British ship flagged out to Cook Islands, has also shone the spotlight on these ships of shame and fuelled RMT's fight against social dumping, zero hour contracts and the exploitation that blights the shipping industry.

As well as fighting the bosses industrially we need to be able to campaign politically. Through meetings, the press, research, protests and lobbying, campaigning does have an effect. It does make a difference.

But under the law we cannot campaign politically unless we have a political fund.

So it is vital that this September all RMT members vote yes to keep the political fund. It's your union and the political fund gives you a voice.

Regards, Mick Cash

Acting RMT general secretary



German state railways launch 'open access' attack on publicly owned East Coast mainline to cherry pick services

German state railway company Deutsche Bahn is seeking to benefit from a "back door privatisation" of the East Coast mainline which could threaten services and cost the taxpayer money.

Deutsche Bahn, through its Arriva subsidiary, has set up a company called Alliance Rail Holdings which has applied to be an 'open access' operator

under the name of 'Great North Eastern Railway Open Access'.

Under EU rules an 'open access' rail operator is not part of a franchise agreement and simply needs the permission of the rail regulator to run services. Deutsche Bahn already owns another open access operator on the East Coast route, Grand Central Open Access.

East Coast has warned that the proposals would damage passenger services and hit the taxpayer. In a letter to Alliance Rail holdings East Coast has said the plans "would undermine the overall integrity of the ECML timetable, reducing connectivity, extending journey times to other destinations and further reducing the value of this franchise to the government".

East Coast has also said that the proposals could result in the "cherry picking of services".

RMT research has revealed that if Deutsche Bahn is successful it would mean that 70 per cent of UK rail services will be run by overseas rail companies.

RMT acting general secretary

Mick Cash said that it was an indication of the nonsense of rail privatisation that while the German state rail company was being given the opportunity to cherry pick on the East Coast our own publicly-owned rail operator on the same line was threatened with being kicked off by this government.

"This is despite the fact that the public sector has transformed the service and delivered hundreds of millions of pounds back to the British taxpayer.

"It is clear that the ConDem administration is happy for rail services in Britain to be used to subsidise state-run services in Germany and other parts of Europe," he warned.



FRENCH HANDED THAMESLINK FRANCHISE

RMT has slammed the government for handing the Southern/Thameslink franchise over to a consortium involving the French state operator SNCF.

The union warned that fares in London would go up to subsidise fares in Paris.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that

once again the logical and popular option of bringing the franchise into public ownership had been ignored.

"This government is quite happy to have state ownership of our railways as long as it isn't the British state.

"Regardless of who won this latest round of the great

rail franchise lottery the bottom line is that those taking charge will have the green light to axe nearly five hundred safety-critical guards and move the entire service to driver only operation, all in the name of greed and profit.

"Commuters forking out up to £5000 a year will end

up paying through the nose to travel on de-staffed, unreliable, overcrowded and unsafe trains.

"The only safe and sensible option is to bring the whole lot under public ownership but this rotten government would rather carry on with the great rail privatisation rip off," he said. ■

NOT GUILTY!

Trumped up charges against RMT member Mark Harding thrown out of court

London Underground worker Mark Harding has been found not guilty of charges brought against him after an incident on a picket line.

He was accused of trying to intimidate a supervisor into not crossing the picket line at Hammersmith during industrial action in February over Tube ticket office closures.

British Transport Police brought a case under the 1992 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act, as amended by the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005.

Over 20 MPs and trade union leaders had issued a joint statement of support for Mark in a case that would have intensified UK anti-trade union laws and effectively made picketing illegal.

A joint letter said that they were "dismayed that the arrest appears to have political connotations in that Mr Harding was arrested by the use of trade union legislation and held in

custody for 13 hours".

Speaking outside the court following the verdict, Mr Harding said that it was "clearly a politically motivated case."

"It is scandalous that so

much public money has been wasted as I did nothing wrong - all I did was ask someone not to cross a picket line.

"This is an important victory, not just for RMT but for the whole trade union movement, and has significant implications for every single trade unionist taking action and seeking to picket effectively at the workplace," he said.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that the union welcomed the broader support from across the labour and trade

union movement.

"Mark was on a picket line, carrying out his normal trade union duties in support of RMT's campaign to stop job cuts and ticket office closures on London Underground but as a result of the highly-politicised anti-union laws has been threatened with the loss of his liberty.

"His case, and his fight for justice, has severe implications for every single trade unionist in this country," he said. (See page 21) ■



RMT CABBIES FIGHT UBER

London RMT taxi members joined global protests earlier this month against plans to allow the big-business-backed Uber app to operate in the capital.

The mobile app – backed by multi-million pound companies like Google and Goldman Sachs – breaks the law by acting as a meter, which only black cabs are legally entitled to use in the capital.

Thousands of taxis blocked traffic around Trafalgar Square against the decision by London mayor Boris Johnson to allow Uber to operate despite the fact that it breaks the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act.

Police moved in immediately and threatened over 4,000 drivers involved in the protest with arrest.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that it was shocking that taxi drivers



protesting in defence of their trade should be threatened with blanket arrest.

“This protest is about the ripping up of established metering and hire regulations in

the name of greed and private profit,” he said.

However pro-big business EU commissioner Neelie Kroes attacked the protests which began in San Francisco and

have spread around the world.

“The disruptive force of technology is a good thing overall, it eliminates some jobs and it changes others,” she claimed. ■

INITIAL CLEANERS BALLOTTED FOR STRIKE ACTION

Cleaners working for contractors Initial at St Pancras International are being balloted for industrial action over an all-out attack on jobs, pay and conditions.

The union has been in discussions with Initial

Facilities over proposals that would not only lead to redundancies but a major deterioration in terms and conditions.

The plans include a reduction in staff by 30 per cent, a reduction in grades with

no protection of earnings and changes to working hours.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that it was shameful that cleaning staff at the prestigious St Pancras International station were facing a brutal package of

cuts.

“This is nothing short of an attempt by Initial to reduce the number of staff solely in the interests of maximising profits

“We have no intention of letting them get away with it,” he said. ■

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON PAY AND PENSIONS FIGHT

Transport for London staff took a further 24 hours of joint strike action earlier this month in a dispute over an all-out attack on pay and pensions that would condemn to staff to a life of poverty in retirement.

The RMT, TSSA and Unite action is in protest at TfL's plans to impose their “Pay for

Performance” proposals which amount to a performance-related pay freeze and savage cuts to pension rights.

The cash-led cuts will become worse over the forthcoming years as there are further reductions in TfL's grant and the expectation that further assaults on jobs, pay and

pensions are being lined up for the future.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that the current proposals were nothing less than a concerted attack on terms and conditions and would have a major effect on the future of the entire TfL Pension Fund.

“TfL should be in no doubt of about our determination to defend pay and pensions after the rock solid support for action and they should withdraw the plans and talk seriously about protecting and enhancing the living standards of TfL staff members,” he said. ■

HEX STRIKE ON

Further strike action is planned across Heathrow Express against a package of multi-million pound cuts which amount to an all-out assault on pay, jobs and safety.

RMT members are furious that HEX plans to remove over 200 jobs, representing around half of the current workforce, in an attempt to save £6 million over the next five years.

The attack on jobs and working conditions comes as a direct result of the decision of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to cut £600 million from the Heathrow Airport budget over the same period.

The union has warned that the cuts would leave vital Heathrow services vulnerable to terrorist attack with staff thrown onto the scrapheap to protect company profits.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that previous phases of strike action were solidly supported by staff and the HEX service was reduced down to a skeleton operated by scab managers, with limited training, while Heathrow Connect was closed entirely.

"These services are dealing with growing demand as the airport expands and the idea that safety and service is going to be sacrificed should shame London and leave these high-profile services extremely vulnerable.

"The CAA has warned that staffing cuts are a false economy which will hit revenues as service quality drops through the floor.

"The removal of on-board staff and the imposing DOO would render services inherently unsafe and make evacuation in an emergency incident or terrorist alert an absolute nightmare.

"Staff have stood up and been counted and it is down to company to halt the cuts plans and start talking seriously about a safe and secure future for this vital London transport link," he said. ■

INAUGURAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The union's first delegate-based education conference took place at the Doncaster Trades Club recently.

Over thirty delegates from around the country attended the event organised by the education officer Andy Gilchrist.

Delegates elected a liaison committee and Ivor Riddell was voted into the chair. A number of motions were discussed on some lively debates and some were sent forward to the annual general meeting.

Delegate Mike Sargent said that it had been a worthwhile conference that had laid to rest a number of misconceptions around education and learning.

Conference was followed by an RMT Learning ULR development day involving over fifty learning representatives.

A number of workshops took place aimed at giving reps new skills, ideas and practical help in assisting our members back into learning and aiding their personal development.

"It was the first time ULRs from Scotland attended and it was good to see them at the education conference as well.

"It was good to see so many new faces as many ULRs have gone on to take up other positions within our union.

"It has taken many attempts and two AGMs to see the education conference come into being which just proves that the machinery of our organisation is robust but fair," Mike Sargent said. ■

RMT TO FIGHT LONDON MIDLAND JOB CUTS

RMT has launched a campaign to halt savage job cuts at London Midland which would axe 150 key posts and decimate gateline staff.

RMT has exposed the false economy of job cuts with the companies own figures suggesting one in five people in the region were travelling without a ticket with many more expected to dodge their fares if ticket inspectors were wiped out.

One inspector on the Cannock line collected more than £200,000 in one year in fines – money that would pay for the post many times over and money that would be lost if London Midland's plans are implemented.

The union has concluded that the cuts are solely about

implementation of the government's McNulty Rail Review, including hacking back staff, quality of service and safety in the interests of private profit.

London Midland is expecting the government and the tax payer to bail them out and plug any gaps caused by the loss of revenue.

However any further taxpayer bailouts would come on top of nearly £1 billion in corporate welfare sucked in by London Midland in the past six years – over £450 million in subsidies on its operations and a further £550 million in track access grants in the past four years alone, while paying a pittance in corporation tax.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that the sheer stupidity of the cuts was borne out by the fact that one London Midland ticket inspector alone saved nearly a quarter of a million pounds in lost revenue by being there and doing the job.

"This is the most ludicrous false economy as these workers pay for themselves many times over.

"We can only assume that London Midland want to save the cash, boost their profits and then expect the taxpayer to plug the revenue gaps yet again while they already have the best part of a billion pounds in corporate welfare sloshing around the boardroom," he said. ■

ABOLISH ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS

Zero hours contracts severely criticised by House of Commons report

The impact on rail safety and employment rights of zero hours contracts in the rail industry and offshore has been severely criticised by a House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee report.

Committee chairman Ian Davidson MP said that the “overwhelming majority of zero hours contracts are abusive and exploitative and should be abolished”.

He called on both Westminster and Holyrood to use “every lever at their disposal to affect a cultural change” against exploitative contracts.

In his evidence to the select committee acting RMT general secretary Mick Cash left MPs in no doubt as to the threat to workers’ safety, pay rates and employment rights posed by zero hours, especially in industries like rail.

“Zero hours only help the employer to cut costs – they offer no real benefits to workers, especially in safety critical industries in the transport sector,” he said.

In a number of hard hitting recommendations the committee welcomed Network Rail’s acknowledgement of the risks of using zero hour contracts in safety-critical roles.

“Zero hours contracts have been shown to be incompatible with running a safe railway and Network Rail must demonstrably reduce their dependence on them,

both in its role as a direct employer and indirectly through its use of contractors,” the committee found.

Office for Rail Regulation Safety Director Ian Prosser stated in a letter in May 2013, responding to RMT’s concerns over zero hours, that these hyper-exploitative contracts ‘are not conducive to the development of a safe railway’.

This has strengthened RMT arguments that a five-year budget negates the need for short term flexibility.

The committee’s recommendation makes clear: “we believe that the stability of work and funding offered by a five-year control period means that Network Rail does not have a business need for the flexibility that zero hours contracts provide.

“Its only justification in using them must therefore be to reduce costs.

“This is not sufficient reason to put the safety of workers in jeopardy and to deny them the opportunity to be an employee and receive the employment rights that go with that status. Network Rail should take more work in-house and make greater use of fixed-term and part-time contracts,” it said.

RMT offshore regional organiser Jake Molloy also gave evidence to the committee describing how the offshore industry recently “came very, very close to a

major, major incident West of Shetland”.

The incident had the potential to capsize a link putting 150 people at risk.

“The workforce tried to stop the job but management pushed on.

“Where you have a culture of fear and concern, especially among a group of agency or zero hours people, they are more likely to go ahead and do the job under that instruction whereas permanent, well-trained staff are more likely to try to stop a job,” he said.

In a major victory for the union the committee found “zero hours workers have a right to work in a safe environment and must be able to raise concerns without fear of losing their job.

“Despite a number of reports detailing the risks of zero hours contracts in safety-critical industries, the government’s consultation on zero hours proposes nothing to protect workers who speak out.

“In response to this report, the government must set out the steps it will take to ensure that individuals who question the conditions in which they are expected to work and the quality of service they are able to provide, are protected from the actions of unscrupulous employers,” it said.

In a final hard hitting conclusion it states: “The problems with zero hours

contracts, as well as other forms of casual labour, are clear, yet it does not have to be this way.

“Many organisations are able to manage without using zero hours contracts: local authorities have moved away from using them directly and most major supermarkets are able to respond to fluctuations in their sectors without them.

“The use of zero hours contracts is out of all proportion to what is required and is creating a two-tier workforce.

“Employers should make much greater use of permanent, part-time, fixed-term or variable hours contracts which guarantee minimum hours and provide workers with a degree of certainty.

“Zero hours contracts must only be used where the employer can objectively justify their use,” it said.

Commenting on the report Mick Cash re-iterated that with over one million people enduring the misery of zero hour work, these contracts put workers in a vulnerable position and many feel unable even to assert their rights to the meagre benefits the contracts offer.

“They are also used to massively undermine terms and conditions of other workers and the RMT won’t give up on fighting them in every way we can,” he said.



Parliamentary column

**NOTIFICATION OF POLITICAL FUND REVIEW BALLOT**

Members should note that in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended) the RMT is required to hold a review ballot at least every ten years, in order that the union can retain its political fund.

Your union is strongly recommending your vote yes.

The ballot will give members the opportunity to vote on whether the union should be able to spend money for political purposes. The law says that the union must have a political fund to do this.

RMT will therefore be balloting members on whether or not to maintain the union's political fund. The ballot will take place between 1st September and 3rd November 2014. The ballot will be a postal ballot and voting papers will be sent directly to members' homes or to another address which the member has requested the union in writing to treat as their postal address.

Electoral Reform Services will be acting as the Independent Scrutineer and will oversee the conduct of the ballot. Their address is the Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London, N8 0NW.

Any member who has changed their home address or wishes their ballot paper to be sent to a different address and has not yet notified the union, should contact the RMT Helpline on 0800 376 3706, or email info@rmt.org.uk

VOTE TO KEEP YOUR POLITICAL FUND

From the earliest days of the trade union movement, unions have been involved in political debate. No matter how many victories could be won with employers at local or national level, it was always clear that real progress would also require taking part in the political process. It is an absolute fact the unions have had to campaign politically in pursuit of their aims.

Just a few examples of where unions using their political funds have won huge victories for members and their families include health and safety protection at work, basic employment rights, holidays and equality legislation. These are all things that are often taken for granted but would not be in place if it was not for union campaigning using the Political Fund. Even free education and the National Health Service would not exist if the Unions had not fought for them.

And in the industries our members work in your political fund is used to good effect.

Campaigning to protect pensions, jobs and conditions. Fighting McNulty. Fighting the London Mayor's job cuts. For more seafarers jobs, better offshore and road safety, against bus cuts and against taxi deregulation.

That's why the forthcoming political fund ballot is so important. Remember the ballot is not about what your political views are or what you think the union should be doing politically. It's about the basic right to have a political fund so that your union can fight for better workplaces and communities.

Remember, there is no legal obligation for the bosses to hold such a fund. They can lobby politicians as much as they like for changes in the law to assist them increasing their profits. The train and bus companies spend millions wining and dining and lobbying ministers to introduce policies that cut jobs and protect profits. The shipping companies pour money into lobbying to allow

them to get tax concessions and get away with minimum employment standards. Right wing campaigns spend a fortune arguing for the banning of industrial action on the underground and elsewhere. MPs are frequently on the end of multi million pound lobbying campaigns to protect the interests of offshore energy bosses.

Your political fund allows your union to fight back against the employers campaigning. Your political fund gives your union a political voice. If you lose your political fund your Union will be seriously weakened.

You will be receiving your ballot form soon, so remember to vote Yes in order to keep the political fund. And vote yes in large numbers to send a clear message to the bosses and politicians that you will be standing up for your rights.

John McDonnell MP is chair of the RMT parliamentary group of MPs

BUS EDM

Members of RMT's parliamentary group have put down early day motion 21 in support of municipal bus companies on the 100th anniversary of publically owned bus companies.

The EDM notes that 2014 is the 100th anniversary of the entry into service of the first publicly-owned buses.

On March 30 1914 six open-topped double deckers started work on routes in Coventry, launching a success story which has been providing an excellent ever since.

The UK's remaining municipally-owned bus companies provide cheaper fares for passengers in cities and towns, including Newport, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Blackpool and Reading.

MPs are alarmed by the onslaught against local authority-supported bus services which has seen thousands of services cut or reduced since May 2010.

Labour MP and RMT group member Paul Flynn raised concerns that the government does not record service cuts in the deregulated bus market which provides 78 per cent of bus services across the UK.

"RMT research has found that since 2003 UK bus fares have increased by over 60 per cent," he said.

The union is backing Campaign for Better Transport's call for an examination of all cases for reform of the bus industry, including municipal ownership and not-for-profit services and calls on the government to enact an urgent review of bus services.

Around 14 MPs have signed up to the EDM including Katy Clark, Jeremy Corbyn, David Crausby, Jim Cunningham, Jonathan Edwards, Paul Flynn, Kelvin Hopkins, Gerald Kaufman, Ian Lavery, John McDonnell, Grahame M Morris, Joan Ruddock, Dennis Skinner and Chris Williamson. Get you MP to sign EDM 21.



NO TO SOCIAL DUMPING

Offshore grades conference call
for campaign against social
dumping and for more training in
the energy sector

The union must launch a high profile campaign to tackle the growing problem of social dumping, RMT's offshore and energy grades bi-annual conference meeting in Glasgow agreed.

Delegate Michael Bainbridge raised concerns about the threat to sustained employment in the oil and gas sector and the decommissioning work sectors, all of which have the potential to employ further generations of UK workers.

"This type of social dumping is becoming more and more prevalent and it is not hard to see these people are on far lower wages than the UK workforce.

"It is another form of divide and rule employed by the bosses.

"We see continual examples of industry utilising and exploiting foreign nationals and disturbingly, this is being sanctioned by 'partner organisations' in the form of other TUC-affiliated trade unions," he said.

The Conoco-Phillips Jasmine platform installation and commissioning was an example of the 'partnership' approach to agreeing the use of 'V-ships' employing foreign workers in the existing oil and gas sector.

On decommissioning, the work about to begin on the UK's biggest oil field, the Brent Field, demonstrates how the industry will use renowned 'rogue employers' in the form of 'All-Seas' to further exploit these workers.

This company was recently the subject of an ITF campaign around the company's failure to comply with the Maritime Labour Convention.

Delegate Ian Finch, working as a diver, said that if a crane driver could not speak English no diver would get in the water as it is just too dangerous.

Conference chair Ronnie MacDonald said that language barriers caused by social dumping was a major cause of health and safety concerns.

Regional organiser Jake Molloy said that he had to argue within the Scottish TUC against the removal tier one and tier two immigration categories.

"This is not about racism this is about protecting our members' jobs.

"We hear complaints from companies about alleged 'skills shortages' as an excuse to bring in cheap labour.

"We need real training and real jobs for our members," he said.

National officer Steve Todd said that the shipping industry had suffered from social dumping for many years due to the liberalisation of the industry.

"We need a political campaign to prevent social dumping in the offshore

industry because even if they were paid the minimum wage it would be undercutting the wages of our members," he said.

Conference was also concerned about the lowering of competency standards of personnel working with drilling companies and called on the union to take the matter up with Oil & Gas UK and the industry training standard authority OPITO.

Michael Bainbridge said that lowering training standards, taken in tandem with social dumping, was leading to a more dangerous working environment.

"Skills need to be handed down to a new generation not simply abandoned," he said.

Delegates heard reports that due to the continued drain of experienced personnel moving to better paid work overseas, shorter time frames were being applied in promotion and training programmes through the drilling ranks and competency standards were not assured.

Jake Molloy also reported that the union had obtained video film of a potentially fatal incident on one rig which occurred because workers had been 'fast-tracked' into the job with little training.

"This could have had serious consequences for workers safety in a high hazard sector of the industry," he said.

Conference called for specific standards to be adopted by the drilling industry and timeframes for development and assessment of each grade in the drilling industry, where promotion and increased responsibility was being considered.

A verifiable competency standard should be implemented which can be regularly audited by HSE and should be seen as best practice for training and development purposes.

Delegate Jimmy Rippey warned that dangerous 'fast-track' training was becoming the norm across the industry not just in the drilling sector.

Conference also called on the union to inform employers that a return to inferior accommodation standards would not be tolerated and that RMT would resist any proposal by any operator to adopt these practices.

Delegates were alarmed by recent reports about certain Oil & Gas UK companies lobbying the government for a relaxation of the Health and Safety Executive accommodation standards regarding two-man maximum

occupancy.

Delegate Jimmy MacDonald said that a return to three-man occupancy in offshore cabins during high levels of activity was contrary to the industry-stated goal of "continuous improvement" in occupational health and safety standards.

"Just a few days ago I was involved in discussions about introducing three-man occupancy in order to save money, this is a retrograde step.

"Our colleagues in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea have for several decades enjoyed statutory protections restricting cabin occupancy to single occupancy on one-day shift and one-night shift' operation.

"These are the self-same operators which are seeking to turn the clock back with UK sector workers," he said.

Delegates agreed that health and safety for UK sector workers should be of equal importance to operators who claim they will always adopt 'best practice'.

"If that is the case then UK sector workers should enjoy the 'best practice' standards of their Norwegian counterparts," he said.

Jake Molloy said that the regulations covering occupancy were not being interpreted correctly and a campaign was required to highlight any drift towards three-man sharing of cabins as a norm.

National officer Steve Todd said that any routine use of three or even four-man occupancy should be reported to the union in order for RMT to take action.

"We need the data to take this matter up," he said.

- Conference called on the union to ensure that only RMT representatives with an adequate grasp of offshore issues were able to brief any legal, political and media bodies which requires evidence on offshore matters.
- Conference agreed to propose to the 2014 RMT annual general meeting to move from a biennial offshore conference to an annual conference for all offshore grades and to lift restrictions on delegate numbers to help to build a more vibrant and democratic union for the offshore industry.
- Conference called on the union to implement an immediate review of the workload covering the offshore sector.

NO TO ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS

Shipping grades conference calls for end to zero hour contracts and for a union recruitment drive in the maritime sector



The biennial general meeting of shipping grades in Glasgow called on the union to launch a campaign to eliminate the use of zero hour contracts at sea.

Conference noted a recent report from the Office of the Rail Regulator concluding that these types of contracts should not be used in safety critical workplace roles.

Lee Davidson, Dover Shipping recognised that seafarers were engaged in safety critical positions and this argument should be advanced to eradicate the use of these employment practices whose sole aim is to undermine the terms and conditions of core crew roles.

“Zero Hour contracts pay an hourly rate less than the Living Wage (currently £7.65 outside London) and we must target employers imposing these contracts by means of industrial negotiation and media campaigns.

“When we have approached the MCA they have claimed it is nothing to do with them, this has to change,” he said.

RMT president Peter Pinkney said that there were now over 1.4 million people working on zero-hour contracts.

“We have to fight these disgraceful contracts with every weapon we have,” he said.

Acting general secretary Mick Cash agreed that it was an issue that had to be tackled.

“If zero-hours contracts are not conducive to safety-critical work on the railways there are not in the maritime sector.

“We need to expand these arguments and take them to the employers,” he said.

Graham Wallace, Glasgow Shipping said that zero-hours were a growing blight on the industry that had to be dealt with.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Conference called on the union to formulate a comprehensive recruitment strategy in an effort to turn around the diminishing membership levels within shipping grades.

Lee Davidson, said recruitment and retention should be at the top of the agenda for all shipping branches.

“All branches should appoint an officer with responsibility and a leavers and joiners report should be raised at each meeting and local initiatives should be undertaken to establish reasons for members leaving the union,” he said.

Mick Stubbs, Southampton shipping said that getting members in the union was great but keeping them in was even better.

“We need to get this area of work more formalised within the union,” he said.

Kevin Charles, North East shipping said that it was important to get on the ships and recruit workers into the union.

“It is not easy to recruit and it can be tough but it has to be done to build the union from the bottom up,” he said.

Delegates agreed that the new £5 per month rate for those earning under £20,000 per annum should be an essential part of recruitment initiatives and there should be more emphasis on local recruitment propaganda.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Conference noted the recent maritime apprenticeships won by the union through the hard work and negotiations of the Western Isles Port Committee and RMT Learning project with Caledonian MacBrayne.

Dan Henderson, Glasgow Shipping called on the union to highlight the benefits of taking on apprentices and to circulate information on the government funding that is available to employ apprentices.

“This goes some way to replenishing jobs at sea for British seafarers in the maritime industry and should be negotiated at all port committee meetings and wage negotiations as mandatory,” he said.

Conference called on the union to negotiate a medical severance package with all shipping companies at wage negotiations where collective bargaining negotiations exist.

Graham Wallace said that seafarers who are deemed unfit for work at sea through ill health should receive at a level no less than has been recently negotiated with Caledonian MacBrayne.

Delegates heard a specially-recorded report, now uploaded onto Youtube, from RMT Parliamentary group chair John MacDonnell MP outlining the work carried out over the past year for seafarers.

The group has been campaigning on many fronts including on ratings jobs, training, zero-hour contracts, safety and pensions.

Martin Little, Humber Shipping said that the work carried out in the House of Commons was crucial to defending the interests of seafarers.

National officer Steve Todd said that the union should not underestimate the work carried out by John MacDonnell in particular.

Conference also noted that current working time regulations meant that

people who work shifts longer than six hours and less than 12 hours only get one 20 minute break.

David Armitage, Lancaster district said that this was unacceptable because the longest anyone should work without a legally-entitled break is four hours.

“Anyone exceeding 4-8 hours should get one 20 minute break and anyone working over eight hours should have two breaks no less than 20 minutes,” he said.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

Conference called on the union to ensure that no RMT committee of any employer recommends proposals that created permanent differentials in pay between members, particularly with regard to new starter and new entrant rates of pay.

Liverpool Shipping said that pay differentials between people doing the same job creates permanent conflict between workers and makes the union look weak and makes recruitment of new members almost impossible.

“Any agreements with pay differentials only play into the hands of the employers and create a divided work force,” the delegate said.

Conference called on the union to work towards increasing rates of pay up to the highest rate, over and above any other annual pay awards.

MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION

Conference called on the union to create an education course on the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 for all those involved with representing the membership.

Mick Stubbs said that were many areas of the convention that members need to familiarise themselves with, including information and education on Seafarer Employment Agreements.

Delegates also agreed that the union also needs to consider why different employers have different approaches to what is termed paid annual leave as at Northlink Serco, four weeks paid annual leave means the members only work 22 weeks each year and at Stena the members work 24 weeks each year and in many other companies members have to work 26 weeks each year.

Dan Henderson, said that there should be a consistent method of calculating paid annual leave.

“We need clarification on MCA’s interpretation and implementation of paid annual leave,” he said.





DONNY DEMONSTRATES AGAINST MCNULTY

Hundreds brave the Doncaster weather to protest against the McNulty Report

Trade unionists and campaigners from across Britain converged on Doncaster last month to march and rally against rail cuts demanded by the now infamous McNulty report.

The proposed cuts, adopted as policy by the government, - represent the biggest threat to the rail industry in 50 years.

The Report calls for the break-up of Network Rail, longer franchises, attacking staff conditions and paves the way for an attack on regional railways. Over a third of the total savings are expected to come by cutting staff, including

those working on maintenance.

Trains will also be expected to be 'Driver Only Operation', with no other staff on board. Also proposed is a review of station staffing and the scrapping of regulations that protect ticket offices.

The decimation of essential staff flies in the face of research by Passenger Focus and others organisations that show that station and train staff are important to passengers for safety assurances, ticket sales, journey advice and general reassurance.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that without

vital station platform staff, ticket office staff and train guards, disabled and vulnerable passengers would be hardest hit.

"Guards that are trained to lead passengers to safety in the event of any incident or accident and safety critical maintenance staff will be gone forever," he said.

Members from across the union bring out their branch and regional council banners to parade around the town centre, led by the RMT brass band.

They were joined by trade unionists from Aslef, Unison, National Shop Stewards Network, the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign, Barnsley Retiree's Action Group - currently 75 per cent of the way to defeating and overturning savage cuts to free travel to South Yorkshire disabled and pensioners - and Doncaster Care UK workers, who are fighting vicious cuts to their terms and conditions and others from across the labour movement.

The rally was addressed by RMT president Peter Pinkney, RMT relief regional organiser north Sean McGowan, ASLEF vice president Tosh McDonald and National Pensioners Convention president Ron Douglas among others.

Sean McGowan said that the spirits of those in attendance never dampened and the resolve of strengthened along the route.

"The pride you feel when fighting your corner, marching behind a big and loud brass band makes you forget about the weather.

"Curious shoppers in their hundreds enquired as to why so many people had decided to parade around Doncaster in the pouring Yorkshire rain.

"They signed free-post postcards calling on their MPs to support the halting of the McNulty Report recommendations via the signing of an Early Day Motion," he said.



END THE FRANCHISE MADNESS

Rail franchise fiasco rolls on as government hands Scottish sleeper services to Serco and launches all-out attack on jobs

RMT has launched a campaign to save jobs after the government handed Serco the franchise for Scottish sleeper services and launched plans to that would rip two other franchises to shreds in the name of maximising private profit.

Government plans for the Northern Rail and Trans Pennine Express franchises would destroy jobs, services and safety.

Plans include Driver Only Operation to be introduced on the Northern franchise and D00 to be left at the discretion of the franchisee on the TPE. They also include increasing fares, reducing ticket office opening times, cuts to "back room and

support functions" staff, possible "alliancing" between franchisees and Network Rail.

The union is promoting a petition over the future of the services that has been launched by campaign group 38 Degrees on their website. Over 2000 people have already signed up.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that it was clear that the full force of the McNulty cuts programme was being unleashed on Northern and Trans Pennine Express in an exercise that would slash jobs, destroy safety and axe ticket offices and other passenger services while allowing fares and profits to

soar through the roof.

"RMT is gearing up for a political, industrial and public campaign to stop this act of savage vandalism to rail services across the north and into Scotland dead in its tracks," he said.

He warned that rolling stock and investment was being shipped south to maximise profits on other lucrative franchises that are closer to the homes of the political elite driving this rail-austerity programme.

"Meanwhile the north is being systematically robbed of capacity despite surging demand.

"The message to the public is clear – 'pay more to travel on overcrowded, understaffed trains where your safety is reduced to a lottery,' he said.

This scandal was compounded by the news that the Scottish sleeper service had been handed to SERCO on a 15 year franchise worth £800 million.

The union warned that SERCO had a shocking track record in the delivery of public services with a reputation for promising the earth and

delivering quite the opposite as they seek to maximise profits and sweat their assets for every single penny piece.

RMT will be meeting with the other rail unions to ensure that any threat to the jobs and conditions of the staff transferring across from First to SERCO would be met with fierce resistance including the use of industrial action if required.

SNP Scottish Transport Minister Keith Brown admitted that the Scottish government had no choice in the matter as, under EU rules, the tender had to go with who wins the bid and "the best bid came from Serco.

"We don't like the franchise process, not least because you have the absurd anomaly whereby state-owned companies from the rest of Europe can bid but you can't have a public sector bid from the UK.

"It just doesn't make sense and it disadvantages UK industry.

"French, Dutch or German state-owned companies like Arriva can have a large part of the UK network but UK state-owned companies can't," he said. ■

DERBY RALLIES FOR UK TRAIN MANUFACTURING

Rail workers rallied in support of the on-going fight to secure the future of train building in Derby last month and to reinforce the case for public ownership.

After a high-profile and sustained campaign, the Bombardier train manufacturing

plant at Derby has been awarded the contract to build the new fleet for the Crossrail trans-London line.

This was an important victory both in terms of securing work for large numbers of skilled jobs. At least 10,000 jobs rely on the continuation of

train-building in Derby, both directly at the Bombardier plant and in the wider supply chain.

The rally was part of the campaign to defend all rail jobs and for a publicly owned railway. Speakers included RMT president Peter Pinkney and local MP Chris Williamson, an

RMT Parliamentary group member.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that that the fight must continue to secure a future for the long and proud tradition of manufacturing trains in this country. ■

COMMONWEALTH GAMES SCOTRAIL VICTORY

RMT has secured an Agreement for recognition and reward payments across First Scotrail that will see staff receiving additional payments of up to £275 each.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that after long

negotiations the union had secured an agreement which will properly reward all staff involved in delivering services throughout the Games.

"It is only right that those carrying the pressure of operating services against a

backdrop of intense demand are recognised and the deal that we have now signed off does just that.

"We also have an agreement in place that no staff will be dismissed from their posts throughout the duration of the

Games.

"I want to pay tribute to the RMT negotiating team who have put long hours into reaching this agreement which recognises the key role that staff will play in delivering a successful Commonwealth Games," he said.

YOUR UNION YOUR VOICE

VOTE YES TO KEEP YOUR POLITICAL FUND

Under the law this year RMT members must vote on whether they wish to continue to enjoy the benefits of their political fund.

RMT answers your questions about your political fund and explains why the union will be urging all members to Vote Yes in the ballot.

HOW DOES THE POLITICAL FUND BENEFIT ME?

The Political Fund is not about affiliation or support for any political party. The Political Fund is used to allow the union to run political campaigns and lobby politicians on the bread and butter issues that affect you at the workplace.

The following are just some of the campaigns that require political actions.

Decent Pensions for Everyone
Pensions are under threat with employers constantly attacking pension schemes. your Political Fund allows the union to lobby MPs and Ministers to change the law so pensions are protected and available to all employees.

DECENT EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Every aspect of employment law that protects members at the workplace has been won by union political campaigns, whether it is the right to have union representation or protections against unfair dismissal. But employment law is still weighed heavily in favour of the employer. Your Political Fund means we can campaign for changes in

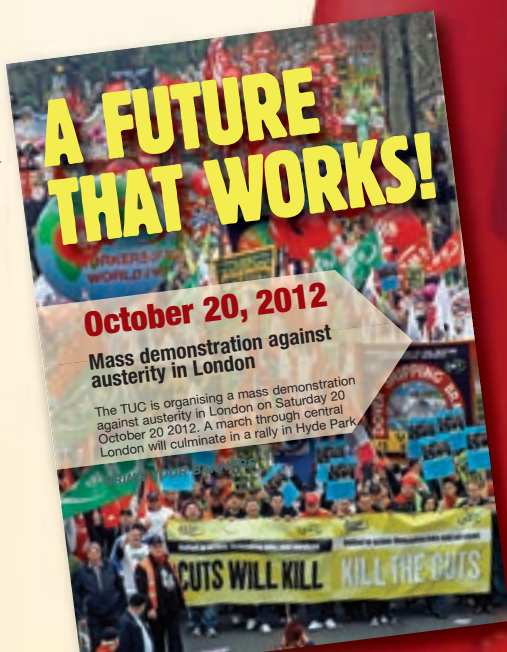
employment legislation to give you more rights at the workplace.

SAFETY AT THE WORK PLACE

Whatever industry you work in we all need a safe workplace, be it protection from dangerous equipment, control on excessive hours or protection from assaults. Health and Safety legislation won by your Political Fund helps provide protection. But we all know we need better safety protection that is why your union's political fund will continue to be used to campaign for better health and safety legislation.

EQUALITY AT THE WORKPLACE

Your political fund has been used to campaign to ensure that it is illegal to discriminate on grounds of race, sex, disability or sexual orientation. That means everyone should be entitled to equal treatment. But the law



For The
Political Fund



stills needs to be improved and your Political Fund can help achieve that.

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

Laws that have introduced to benefit parents didn't happen by accident, your political fund helped to win them. Maternity and Paternity benefits, parental leave and flexible working have all been won through changes in the law. Yet a number of European countries have far better benefits and your Political Fund can be used to campaign so that UK workers have improved parental benefits.

Your Political Fund is also used to campaign for policies that effect particular areas of work.

- Against McNulty and for Public Ownership of The Railways
- Opposition to job losses in London Transport
- Support for jobs for UK ratings
- Improved offshore safety
- Public ownership of the Bus Industry
- Safer Hours for road transport workers
- Against deregulation of the taxi trade

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE LOSE OUR POLITICAL FUND?

If members don't vote yes for a political fund we will lose it, that means the employers and those who are against workers' rights will have a huge advantage over the union. The employers don't have to have a political fund which means they can spend millions of pounds lobbying for policies that benefit them not the workforce. If you lose your political fund the union will be powerless to fight back against the employers campaigning.

HOW MUCH DOES THE POLITICAL FUND COST ME?

The political fund is made up by deducting money from your overall union subscriptions. The amount that goes to the political fund from your subs is only £3.12 pence a year, or 26p a

month – less than the price of a stamp.

WHY DO WE HAVE A BALLOT?

The 1992 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act require unions to finance political activity from a separate fund. The unions have to have a ballot all their members every ten years to establish on whether members wish to keep their Political Fund. RMT last held its ballot in 2004 when the vote was 87 per cent in favour of retaining the political fund.

WHEN WILL THE BALLOT TAKE PLACE?

Your union will shortly decide the timetable for the ballot, but it the ballot must be concluded by November this year.

THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS TODAY

The need for the union to lobby and influence politicians is even more central to protecting you at work than ever before.

And remember the employers are not required to have a political fund and can spend millions of pounds lobbying for policies that benefit them. If we lose the political fund the union will be less able to fight back against the employers political campaigning.

Over the coming months the union will be providing you with more information about the political fund ballot. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your Branch Secretary or the political officer James Croy at head Office (0207 529 8822) j.croy@rmt.org.uk



A delegation of RMT members joined the demonstration in Paris last month, pointing out that if French workers wanted to see effect of EU rail directives look at the dysfunctional rail industry in Britain.



'ABSURD' EU RULES CAUSE RAIL CHAOS IN FRANCE

Market-driven EU rail directives demanding separation of track and operations costs French government dear

French rail operator SNCF is facing a bill of around £100 million after discovering that hundreds of platforms will need to be adjusted or partially rebuilt because new trains for its regional network are too wide.

The blunder has been followed by criticism of European Union rules demanding the separation of track and train, which French transport minister Frederic Cuvillier has described as 'absurd'.

"When you separate the rail operator from the user, it doesn't work," he said.

British Rail was split up and

privatised in 1994 under the same rules demanded within EU directive 91/440.

The French has slowly been implementing the same market-driven dogma for years and rail infrastructure is now the responsibility of a separate company, RFF, which is the equivalent of Network Rail in Britain.

RFF is accused of giving the wrong platform dimensions to SNCF when new Régiolis Regional Express Trains from Alstom were being designed, and an RFF spokesman admitted that it had 'discovered the problem a bit late'.

The trains, known as Trains Express Régionaux or TERs, were first unveiled in Bordeaux in the summer of 2013 and then in Paris last month, but news of the clash of dimensions has only emerged in the past 24 hours. Alstom said in July last year that 182 of the 'next generation' TER trainsets had been ordered by 12 French regions.

However when asked for data about platform clearances it appears that RFF measured only relatively new platforms built since the 1980s, overlooking the fact that most stations are older and their platform profiles are tighter.

Work on adjusting the platforms has begun, but it is reported that around 1,000 will need their profiles corrected and that the final bill could reach 100 million Euros. An SNCF spokesman attempted to minimise the problem, agreeing that there were some issues but that they were "not as bad as some sources are claiming".

The error has also sparked new criticism of the wisdom of separating infrastructure operators such as RFF from train companies like SNCF, which has been the policy of the European Commission for more than 20 years.



FIGHTING ZERO HOURS

The annual general meeting is upon us again and obviously this year is going to be very difficult.

No doubt there will be an air of sadness but the business on behalf of the membership has to go ahead. We all know this is what Bob would want.

Everything is prepared and ready for business as usual and I would like to give a big thank you to all head office staff for the effort and hard work that they have put in to make this possible.

We are still facing the same problems and attacks as last year and, as a union, we need to be united and strong in the face of increasing attacks on our members and working class people in general.

The increasing use of workers on zero hours contracts is a major concern to this union. This affects all parts of the industries that we have members in.

The latest figures show that

there are over 1.4 million of workers on these contracts. The government is taking us back to Victorian times. These are workers with no holiday rights, no pensions, sick pay benefits, or indeed, any sort of job security whatsoever.

The way to tackle this is to recruit them into the union and force, by whatever means possible, these companies to offer them proper employment contracts. Labour says that they will do away with it if they are elected, that remains to be seen. They also promised to renationalise the railways before Blair was elected.

The continuation of "downsizing" is going on right across our industries too. Not only does this affect workers now but it takes away job opportunities for future generations.

The biggest scandal that we are facing is the lack of a future and hope for the young people, not just in this country, but across the globe. We are not in danger

of passing on worse conditions to the young, we are doing so, and for this we should hang our heads in shame.

They will face a longer wait to get pensions when we should be looking for earlier retirement schemes with a decent pension. Even with the best education, they can only get jobs in the service industry, usually on the minimum wage. It is no wonder that we have so many young people living on the streets and turning to drugs, they see no future. It is our duty to fight to preserve jobs and future opportunities for work, as our TFL members did, to give the young hope.

I believe that because of the way this union is structured, we can meet these battles full on and help to win the war against the unjust system that is capitalism. To do this we need to build alliances, not just with like-minded people in this country, but with fellow workers across the world.

That is why it is good to see



that we will be carrying on the tradition of having overseas guest speakers at this year's AGM. Some will be new visitors and some will be old friends, but we welcome them all equally as they stand shoulder to shoulder with us in our struggles.

Finally, I know there will be sadness and a sense of loss this year, but I am also sure that there will be the usual heated debates and the good humoured socialising. We can be proud of our achievements and look to the future starting with a successful and productive AGM. To all delegates, enjoy yourselves!

Regards
Peter Pinkney

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LEGAL

WE FOUGHT THE LAW... *WE WON*



Liam Welch explains how the union defended RMT member Mark Harding against a 'politically motivated' legal case

Earlier this month RMT branch secretary Mark Harding was found not guilty of an offence brought under section 241 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

His arrest was brought following allegations from a former Transport for London supervisor trainee, that Mr Harding had intimidated him and called him a 'scab' on the picket line during the February strike action. Mr Harding denied these allegations.

In order to win the case the prosecution would have had to prove that Mr. Harding behaved in a way that amounted to intimidation and that his intent was to compel (ie to force or oblige) the supervisor not to attend work.

The trial judge Ms Justice Baine preferred the evidence of the prosecution when it came to matters of findings of fact. However she ultimately decided that Mr Harding had not committed a criminal offence as, although she believed that by his actions he had intended to intimidate the supervisor, he had not compelled him not to enter

his place of work.

The supervisor had accepted that there was no attempt made to prevent him physically from entering the station – the CCTV available confirmed that he was not pursued into the station and no effort was made to stop him from going into the Station Supervisor's room following the alleged comments. Ultimately, there was clear evidence that Mr Harding did not use force or pressure to stop him crossing the picket line and that if Mr Harding had intended to compel him, there would have been more persistent aggressive behaviour shown.

It is believed by many that this case has been a political one from the outset. British Transport Police pursued this prosecution robustly. Initially they arrested Mark under s.5 Public Order Act which they subsequently changed to a charge under section 241 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 as amended by Schedules 7 and 17 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005; an offence usually reserved for anti-abortion and

anti-fracking protestors.

Furthermore following Mr. Harding's arrest, he was given bail conditions so onerous that they effectively barred him from participating in any trade union activity, or associating with any other known trade unionists: potentially a breach of his human rights under Article 11 of the European Convention, which is the right to freedom of assembly and association. The bail conditions were ultimately overturned, but only after considerable negotiation.

Following charge, no attempt was made by the prosecution to address representations made by the defence team, which were directly in line with the ultimate judgement given by the Deputy District Judge (ie that for the prosecution case to succeed they would need to establish that Mr Harding had compelled Mr Scott not to enter his work place, and that there was clearly no evidence of this). This could have saved the public purse thousands, and is particularly shameful at a time when extensive Legal Aid cuts are underway.

Whilst this was an important

victory for the trade union movement, should the union decide to strike again in the future, the practical implications for pickets are that the police may be inclined to practice extra vigilance in order to secure a conviction to overcome any loss of face in this instance. Please be aware that they may aim to charge picketers with the more common s.5 Public Order Offence, which is easier to successfully convict. I have included the definition of the offence below:

"The offence is created by section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986. Section 5(1) provides:

A PERSON IS GUILTY OF AN OFFENCE IF HE:

- (a) uses threatening [or abusive] words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour, or
- (b) displays any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening [or abusive],

within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress thereby."



ACT ON SWANLAND 'MISADVENTURE'

RMT called for ship owners to be brought to account after a jury returned a verdict of misadventure on six Russian sailors who died when the cargo ship MV Swanland sank off the Welsh coast.

Just two of the eight-man Russian crew survived when the Swanland, a flag of convenience vessel, sank in November 2011 as it carried quarry stone from Llanddulas, near Colwyn Bay.

The inquest in Caernarfon heard that only one body was recovered and a post-mortem examination showed he had drowned.

Tony Brown from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) told the jury that an abandon ship drill was not conducted regularly.

RMT called for those

responsible to be prosecuted and for the government to take action to prevent any repetition.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that the MAIB report into the avoidable sinking of the Swanland in the Irish Sea should have shamed the government and the international maritime industry into urgent action but the practices that led to the events back in 2011 still continue to this day.

"This rusting death trap of a vessel had been flagged out to the Cook Islands and allowed to dodge the most basic of safety and maintenance regimes.

"RMT continues to call for corporate manslaughter charges to be laid against those who sent these lads to their deaths, an end to flagging out and the



dodging of safety regulations and action by the UK government to end the scandal of the ships of shame sailing out of British ports and in British waters," he said.

RMT national secretary Steve

Todd said that a repeat of the disaster was just waiting to happen and warm words and lip service would achieve nothing.

"The only answer is decisive and hard line action," he said.



STENA STEPS BACK



VICTORY: Stena reps meet with RMT national secretary Steve Todd

RMT has forced Stena to drop plans for pay cuts and extended working hours as part of its plans to reduce overall costs in the Irish Sea by 10 per cent.

Earlier this year Stena launched plans for pay cuts, a return to working 26 weeks as opposed to the present 24 weeks, cuts in the sick pay and a cheaper crewing model.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that the union refused to enter negotiations and warned that any such draconian measures would be met with a ballot for industrial action.

Following extensive negotiations Stena withdrew plans to cut pay and increase working hours.

"Our aim is to protect the current terms and conditions of the current workforce and that includes time off and no pay

cuts.

"We also want jobs for future generation British and Irish seafarers on Stena vessels in the Irish Sea," he said.

Steve Todd warned that decent jobs are under threat due to cheap undercutting by unscrupulous employers in the Irish Sea, such as Irish Ferries and Sea Truck.

"The lack of willingness by both the Irish and British governments to implement the national minimum wage is also very unhelpful.

"The union is lobbying for the enforcement of the minimum wage and the equality act.

"This is long overdue and is painstaking, but we are getting somewhere with the government telling us that there will be targeted enforcement now," he said. ■



RMT Scottish political advisor Phil McGarry reports on a successful STUC congress in Dundee

The RMT delegation to the Scottish TUC Congress in Dundee earlier this year was joined by president Peter Pinkney and acting general secretary Mick Cash.

RMT regional organiser Mick Hogg spoke for a motion on collective bargaining calling for the repeal of the anti-trade union laws and the need to expand the coal industry in Scotland. Graham Wallace of Glasgow Shipping Branch seconded a motion calling for a decent minimum wage and for full employment rights for seafarers.

Andrew Elliot of North Clyde

branch spoke on transport and EC member Denis Connor moved an amendment calling for rail renationalisation. ASLEF opposed the amendment and the motion was withdrawn. The General Council though made a statement saying that the STUC support for Scotland's railways to be brought back into public ownership.

RMT regional organiser Jake Molloy moved a motion on the need for a public enquiry into the offshore industry which was carried unanimously. Jake was elected onto the STUC's General Council unopposed, replacing Ian Macintyre who stood down

due to his retirement.

Ann Joss of Aberdeen Rail Branch moved a motion calling for a referendum on European Union membership saying that in the event of a vote in favour of Scottish Independence that the STUC supported a referendum on Scotland's EU membership.

Ann also addressed Congress as chair of the STUC women's committee highlighting issues including childcare provision, casualisation and zero hours contracts and the equal pay gap.

Richie Veitch, Edinburgh and Portobello branch also spoke in the debate over zero hours

contracts.

RMT president Peter Pinkney spoke at the Scottish Campaign against Euro-Federalism fringe meeting and as RMT political advisor I chaired a packed fringe meeting on austerity, worker's rights and the need for more *Morning Star* readers and supporter groups being established.

The absence of our general secretary Bob Crow was truly felt by all the delegates.

A tremendous vote of thanks needs to be extended to all the RMT delegates and officers for their activity and prominence, job well done. ■



INSPECTING FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE

Glasgow Shipping branch secretary Graham Wallace reports on a recent shipping inspection exercise in Aberdeen

RMT recently took part in a joint ship inspection exercise with the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) on board North Sea supply vessels working out of Aberdeen, concentrating mainly on vessels who were sailing under flags of convenience (FoC).

RMT participants included myself, regional organisers Jake Molloy and Gordon Martin and Donald Graham from the organising unit. We were joined by six ITF inspectors Ken Fleming, Tom Molloy; Paul Keenan; Gerry Flanagan; Liam Wilson and Darren Procter.

Once we all had security clearance for access to the harbour to board the vessels ITF

held a briefing about our roles, responsibilities, powers and functions.

I visited a number of FoC vessels with foreign crews. On inspection we found that many had no ITF agreement in place but after negotiations with the owners of the vessel all relevant agreements were signed off.

Although the exercise was set up primarily to target North Sea Supply Vessels, I was eager to inspect a British-flagged freight vessel that was sailing between Aberdeen and Lerwick and rumoured to be carrying Latvian crew that were being paid much lower than the minimum wage and on inferior conditions to other vessels in the same

company.

Next day a group headed to Montrose and we targeted a Dive Support Vessel m/v Bibby Chey in Aberdeen, part of the Bibbys fleet, where we were welcomed by the captain who afforded us the chance to engage with the diving crew who were RMT members.

All ships visited on this exercise were accommodating and hospitable apart from one Captain who did not want us on his ship and his attitude was bordering on belligerent.

Ultimately jobs in the Merchant Navy have declined dramatically since 1980 when there was 30,000 British Ratings working on ships all over the world. Today ratings jobs in the British Merchant Navy is around 8,500, this is another drop of 30 per cent since 2011 and this is why Bob Crow asked for this exercise with the ITF to take place.

He realised that if we do not do something now for shipping it will be too late to reverse the trend of social dumping in the maritime industry.

The North Sea offshore Industry is awash with vessels that are FoC which is unacceptable, but even more unacceptable is the ships that sail our waters under the Red Ensign and yet do not employ British seafarers.

Even the ferry industry is under attack as we discovered a Freight Ferry sailing from Aberdeen to Lerwick, two Scottish Ports, crewed by Estonians earning £3.46 an hour for the time they are on the vessel only, and this concerns me deeply as this disease of social dumping is on the doorstep of our Scottish Passenger Lifeline Ferry Service, cancerous in the aspect of eating away at our island communities and endangering the future of employment within the Highlands and Islands.

We need a strategy to reclaim these jobs and influence MPs and government to change legislation that allows the unscrupulous ship owners to use loopholes in law that lets them use and abuse cheap foreign labour and avoid paying tax. ■

MIND THE PAY GAP

Janine Booth asks why women are still paid less than men and what to do about it

For around forty years, it has been illegal in the UK for employers to pay men and women different rates of pay for doing work of 'equal value'.

It is illegal in many other countries too. This has been an important step forward, and put a stop to some blatantly discriminatory pay rates, including in the transport industries.

But four decades later, women are still paid significantly less than men are. Why?

The Gender Pay Gap

The difference between men's and women's earnings is called the gender pay gap. It can be measured in various ways: for example, hourly, monthly or annual pay; gross or net; including or excluding bonuses, overtime and other extra payments.

Across European Union countries, the gap between men's and women's average gross hourly earnings was 16.2

per cent in 2011. This is slightly narrower than the 17.6 per cent gap in 2007, but it should be shocking that such inequality still exists.

The gender pay gap is gradually getting narrower, but not nearly fast enough. And part of the reason it is getting narrower is because men's wages are going down due to the economic crisis. We want the pay gap to close through women's wages (and everyone's wages) rising, not men's wages falling: levelling up not levelling down.

What Causes the Gap?

Around 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the gender pay gap is caused by straightforward discrimination. The rest is caused by:

- unequal balance of work and family and lack of flexible working arrangements
- the higher number of women in temporary, casual, part-time and low-paid work, with a lower number of women in

higher-paid jobs

- boys and girls being raised to expect to go into different types of jobs, with those stereotypically considered 'women's jobs' generally paid less than those stereotypically considered 'men's jobs'
- the legal minimum wage not being high enough – the higher it is, the narrower the gap between men's and women's pay
- the degree of overall pay inequality in society – the wider the gap between high-paid and low-paid, the wider the pay gap between men and women also tends to be.

What the union can do?

Where there is a recognised trade union – particularly a strong and effective one – there tends to be less difference between men's and women's wages.

Many trade unions across Europe have adopted strategies to fight for greater pay equality between women and men. RMT's Executive has looked at these strategies and decided to adopt those which might prove effective. They include:

- making sure that the union's pay claims address inequality,

and assessing offers from employers to check their impact on the gender pay gap

- opposing performance-related pay and reliance on overtime – statistics show that these widen the gender pay gap, and they also create division and disunity between workers
- highlighting our demand for flat-rate pay increases (rather than a straightforward percentage rise which gives bigger monetary rises to people who are already better-paid)
- campaigning for improved childcare provision and for shorter and less anti-social working hours

Action outside the negotiations usually brings about greater progress inside them! Active campaigns and industrial action to win pay rises for low-paid, female-dominated work eg. contract cleaners, will not only benefit those workers but will also narrow the overall gender pay gap.

Our union believes in better pay and in equality between the sexes. Raising our game in tackling the gender pay gap is an important way to pursue these goals.



CALLING WOMEN IN THE SOUTH EAST

South East Regional Council is organising a networking and education event for women members in the region

It will take place at Maritime House in Clapham on September 2 2014 from 1pm. The day will consist of workshops, guest speakers and networking opportunities with the aim of building contacts for women members in the region, supporting women that hold rep and women's officer roles and planning future organising of women members in the region. A BBQ and refreshments will be provided.

For more information, please contact Emily King, SERC women's officer on 07876 441 690 or E.King@rmt.org.uk

HIV IS NOT A DIRTY WORD

LBGT RMT
advisory
committee
member Lorna
Tooley explodes
myths about HIV

"WHY CAN'T GAY MEN GIVE BLOOD?"

This was the question my 18-year-old self asked the nurse as she was pricking my finger and preparing me for my first blood donation,

"THEY'RE MORE PROMISCUOUS, SO THEY GET AIDS,"

I was shocked and angered by her response. She was a medical professional - an expert - and her ignorant comment did nothing but cement in my mind how little people still knew about HIV and AIDS.

Blood had always been an important part of my life. My dad died from leukaemia in 2003 and I'd always promised to become a blood donor, so I could help people like him and everyone else I'd met over the years on the haematology ward. Lots of them had HIV or AIDS and some of them were gay. Most of them were not.

In the 1980s, AIDS was seen as a death sentence and people were scared. Often when people are scared, they look for

someone to blame and in this case, it was gay men who were blamed. Growing up in the 90s when people were meant to be more educated on the causes of HIV and when treatments were becoming more effective, many of the adults around me still thought that HIV and homosexuality went hand-in-hand.

Today there are almost 100,000 people in the UK living with HIV and it is estimated that up to a quarter of those do not know that they have the virus. About 40,000 of the people living today with HIV are men who have sex with men. Most of the remaining people have become infected through heterosexual sex. Through fear or lack of knowledge many people think 'it won't happen to me,' but it could. HIV can affect anybody.

Thanks to advancements in HIV drugs, if you are diagnosed with the virus, your chances of living a normal life are greatly improved. But it is fundamental that you receive your diagnosis

MYTHS ABOUT HIV

"ONLY GAY MEN GET HIV"

Anyone from any sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender and age can contract HIV and pass it on too

"I CAN GET HIV BY SHARING A TOILET SEAT"

HIV is passed between blood or bodily fluids only. You cannot catch HIV from touching, kissing, hugging, holding hands, sharing cutlery, gym equipment or a toilet with someone with HIV. It cannot be passed by spitting or biting either

"I DON'T FEEL ILL, SO I CAN'T HAVE HIV"

People can go for years without experiencing HIV symptoms. The initial symptoms are very similar to the flu and then you can go for years without displaying any symptoms. That's why prevention and early detection are so important

as soon as possible to ensure you get the most effective care. If you have had any type of sex with a new partner or someone whose HIV status you are unsure of, go for a test. Having HIV is not something to feel ashamed about.

HIV is not something that should be seen as taboo and people who have HIV do not deserve to be stigmatised, especially if they happen to be a gay man. It is likely that you know someone with HIV, at

work, in your social life, in the RMT. Having HIV should be seen as no different from having any other medical condition.

The only way that we can beat the stigma, is to talk about HIV, to educate ourselves and others and to no longer be afraid. And as for gay men donating blood, the rules have changed and are moving in the right direction. So my homophobic nurse is now pricking the fingers of gay men too.



Over 150 delegates from across the country assembled at Congress House in London for this year's TUC black workers conference, reports RMT delegate Jeffrey Blackman.

Conference began with a one minute silence in respect of the late RMT general secretary Bob Crow and other leaders who

were advocates for workers' right.

First timers to the conference met and chat with other delegates from various unions and expressed their feelings, whilst speaking for the first time on the rostrum for motions on items that they personally felt should be moved.

Conference workshops were

of immense value to the delegation, but due to time constraints, the RMT delegation was split into groups to attend workshops of their choice and would return to share the experience with a group who were unable to attend that event.

The RMT delegation which filled the conference with unity

and strength were as follows: Ama Badu, Rafai Dabrowski, Mohammed Llyas, Mansur Khan, Peter Lewis, Thandi Mabodoko, Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Mujahid, Frank Murray, Patrick Raeburn, Jason St John, Glenroy Watson, Clinton Woodburn, Mohammed Younis.



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LETTERS

SCOTLAND

In response to Ian Bentley's letter Better Together (April/May issue), the Scottish Referendum offers Scots an opportunity not to sever their links with England, we are not separatists in that sense, but we do wish to separate from Westminster, a crucial difference.

British state propaganda, as it has always done throughout its colonial history, has sought to create division in order to take the focus away from the real issues.

We will not create a frontier or a border as Ian asserts, we will continue to work closely with other parts of the UK. Why would that change? The only difference is we will be independent of and not dependent on Westminster.

It's about democracy. Scots don't vote for the neo-liberal priorities of successive Westminster governments. We have watched Scotland's heavy industry disappear, its mines close, its steelworks demolished when it could have been mothballed. We have seen well paid jobs replaced by service and call centre jobs on minimum wage.

Industrial jobs will never return, since higher fuel prices increased transport costs, Scotland and

manufacturing have been disadvantaged.

Why invest in Scotland when being close to the market means that a Midlands location is more attractive and profitable. We have no power to use incentives to encourage inward investment and reverse this trend.

We now see zero hour contracts, food banks, increased child poverty and inequality. We also continued to see our talented young people having to move abroad to achieve their personal goals.

Scottish Independence provides an opportunity to pursue a different path. The Scottish Socialists, the Scottish Greens and the SNP all support Scottish Independence, as indeed did Bob Crow.

Ian Bentley peddles the fear and insecurity spread by the forces behind NO.

Scotland can show England the way to a fairer society with shared wealth and shared well-being, a society that delivers hope over fear.

*David Allan
Kilmaurs, Scotland*

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Dear editor,

I am disappointed by the report of RMT's women's conference in the last issue of RMT News.

Unlike the reports from several other conferences, which were double-page spreads, women's conference was tucked away near the back with just half a page.

Unlike the other conference reports, this one did not mention any of the women delegates who spoke in the debates, any of the reports we received and discussed or any of the excellent guest speakers who addressed the conference. Sadly, it failed to capture the friendliness, spirit, camaraderie and enthusiasm of the event.

The report also misrepresented one of the resolutions that the conference passed, stating that it challenged "sexualised images" whereas it in fact objected to sexist images.

A conference report is an opportunity to tell RMT News readers - ie. union members - what happens at our events, with a lively, personal touch that might attract them to attend in future. This report was an opportunity missed.

Janine Booth

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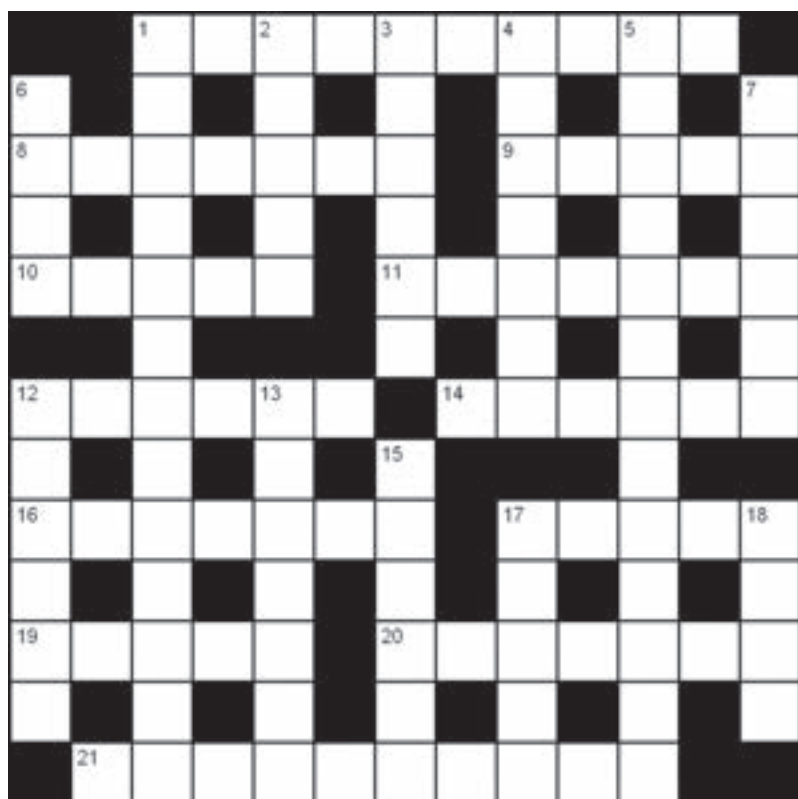
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£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Peter Arnett, Selby.

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

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Revision (10)
- 8 Go back over (7)
- 9 Make an effort (5)
- 10 Passageway (5)
- 11 Implement (7)
- 12 District (6)
- 14 Cured in brine (6)
- 16 Conscript (7)
- 17 Operate a vehicle (5)
- 19 Striver (5)
- 20 Christian recluse (5)
- 21 Extremely pleasing (10)

DOWN

- 1 Defence against underwater craft (13)
- 2 Exchange (5)
- 3 Regretful (6)
- 4 To that (5,2)
- 5 Touchy (14)
- 6 Region (4)
- 7 Impassive (7)
- 12 Tranquillize (6)
- 13 Pensioner (7)
- 15 Return to normal (6)
- 17 Studious person (5)
- 18 Pitcher (4)



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LISTEN TO LONDON

The future of London Underground

Date: July 26 2014 Start time: 10:00 End time: 14:00

Venue: TUC Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS

The Mayor of London proposes: Cuts to station staff • Closure of all ticket offices • Driverless trains
Slashing safety critical maintenance • 24 per cent fare hike over next five years • Minimal action on overcrowding

Speakers: John McDonnell MP, Jenny Jones London Assembly Member, Mick Cash acting RMT general secretary

More details and a place at the event, email g.barton@rmt.org.uk

*This campaign is supported by the RMT Political Fund. More information about your Political Fund is at <http://www.rmt.org.uk/yourunion.yourvoice/>

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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 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.