

RMT

Essential reading for today's transport worker

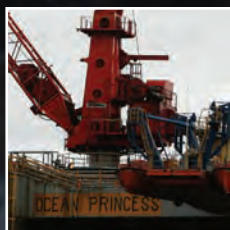
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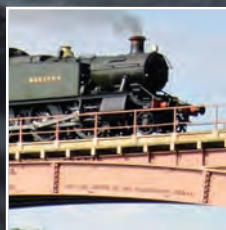
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www.rmt.org.uk

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



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



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

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number
Branch Sort Code

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

Originator's Identification Number

9	7	1	7	4	5
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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.
- 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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CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



NEW YEAR BATTLES

Christmas and New Year was a busy time for the union after RMT exposed the fact that City Link planned to sack nearly 3,000 workers on Christmas Day while handing the redundancy bill to the taxpayer.

Hundreds more 'owner-drivers, subcontracted to operate City Link vans, are unlikely to receive any compensation at all.

Officials and staff worked tirelessly to put pressure on the government, directly and through the media, to save thousands of jobs.

I spoke directly to business secretary Vince Cable but he rejected our call for direct government intervention, similar to the rescue of the banks.

He also refused to back a summit on the issue or an eleventh hour package that could have saved our member's jobs.

This whole affair shows how little protection workers have got and the power of bandit capitalism to protect itself.

The new year also sees commuters face yet more inflation-busting fare rises averaging over two per cent. While passengers face fare rises, government subsidies grow to the train operators in the universally recognised privatised railway shambles.

Private companies simply use these subsidies to make inflation busting dividend payments to shareholders. Moreover UK taxpayers' rail subsidy came to just over £4 billion in 2012/13, of which the four most cushioned companies alone received over half.

The scandal of passengers paying the highest fares in Europe to travel on clapped-out and overcrowded trains will be compounded by these increases which dwarfs average pay rises and which will hit the poorest the hardest.

Meanwhile the rolling stock companies, known as ROSCOs, have been handed licences to print money while doing nothing to alleviate the growing chronic shortage of trains.

RMT pledges to step up the fight against the privatised transport scandal that shames Britain and for a publicly-

owned railway and bus network designed to meet demand, free from the greed and exploitation of the carpet baggers.

While the industry remains in the grip of the private sector, profit will always come before people.

Such fragmentation and under investment has left our railways with a backlog of maintenance and renewals work that is simply impossible to shoehorn in during the limited window offered over the Christmas break.

These problems are compounded by yet another slab of cuts being demanded from Network Rail by the government through their agents the Office of Rail Regulation. Pile on the ludicrous proliferation of casualised contractors and agencies and it is no surprise that we ended up with the shambles played out over Christmas.

RMT is also kicking off 2015 with a major campaign to fight plans that would lead to driver-only operation, axing of buffet cars, on-board staff and maintenance workers on First Great Western and East Coast services.

The configuration of the new fleet of Hitachi trains under the Intercity Express Programme (IEP) will bring in all these problems, all funded courtesy of the taxpayer and fare-payer.

RMT's effective parliamentary group of MPs have already waded in with an early day motion demanding that the government rejects any contracts for East Coast and Great Western services which propose any such cuts to staff and services.

Finally it was great to meet the daughter of the Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara when she visited Unity House last month and met with the executive. It was even better news to find out that the Miami Five, Cubans who had been held in US prisons for many years without committing any crime, had finally been released.

This just goes to show that campaigning and fighting for working people can and does pay off. ■

Mick Cash

When you have finished with this magazine give it to a workmate who is not in your union. Even better, ask them to join RMT by filling in the application form opposite



NORTHERN AND TRANS-PENNINE FRANCHISE FIGHT GROWS

RMT hit the new year running in the continuing fight over the threat to jobs, fares and services from the new franchises on the Northern and Trans-Pennine Express routes.

The RMT campaign is taking five key messages out to the travelling public:

- Say No to Driver Only Operated Trains
- Keep Ticket Offices Open
- Keep Stations Staffed and Safe
- Stop cuts to the Transpennine Express Network
- Oppose Massive Fare Increases

Activists began the year by targeting stations across the north after the government was forced to confirm that the Invitations to Tender (ITTs) for the new Northern and TransPennine franchises will be delayed into February at the earliest.

There is also growing uncertainties at the Department of Transport about the current TPE franchise extension and problems over the electrification in the region that look like dragging on well into the year.

The influential *Rail Business Intelligence* bulletin has reported that a combination of delays to the electrification programme,

alongside a shortage of diesel units and major problems under the procurement process of securing new stock under current timescales, has thrown up a whole series of practical problems that were omitted from Chancellor George Osborne's Autumn Statement.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the government's whole franchise timetable for the Northern and TPE routes has clearly descended into chaos.

"We now know that the pledges to replace the clapped out Pacer's has been exposed as nothing but hot air as the government strategy for rail across the North unravels before their eyes and that they are also being forced to consider replacing one lash up with another by press-ganging 30 year old London Underground stock into service raising serious safety issues.

"RMT activists and our supporters in the community will continue to be out in force across the region in the New Year with a renewal of our fight against the rail franchise carve up.

"Our message is clear, the fight to stop the outrageous attack on jobs, safety and services under the Northern and TPE franchise plans continues in

2015 and the union is sending out the clearest possible signal to the government and 'Rail North' that they need to scrap this attack on transport operations and to cut the hot air about improving services when they are actually condemning the North to years of rail misery.

"Let's not forget that the core of the government's future plans for Northern and TPE is to axe

jobs, restrict services, throw the guards off the trains and jack up fares while capacity to meet surging rail demand in the area is left to stagnate.

"That attack on the fare-paying public has already begun with the abolition of a wide range of off-peak fares and only an all-out and coordinated fight can stop the savage assault on rail in the North," he said. ■



SETTLE/CARLISLE RAIL STAFF STRIKE OVER REDUNDANCIES

Staff employed by the Settle and Carlisle Railway Development Company that provide at-seat catering on Northern Rail services between Carlisle and Settle took strike action recently against compulsory redundancies.

Pickets handed out coffee and Christmas cake to passengers and leaflets explaining the dispute in solidarity with a colleague who has been unfairly declared redundant.

The union is fully aware that the company is doing well financially - so there is no economic reason for the redundancy situation.

The company has also sited organisation changes in preparation for changes to rail franchises - but these specifications have not even been announced yet let alone been awarded to an operator, making a nonsense of the company's position.

Meetings in Appleby have failed and RMT has made it clear that it is in this dispute for the long haul if the arrogant and belligerent attitude from management doesn't change.

The union's demands are clear - fairness, transparency and justice and reinstatement

for the sacked member of staff.

RMT has been extremely supportive of the trolley catering service because the union knows it enhances the passenger experience of the journey.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the last thing the union expected on the historic Settle/Carlisle rail line was a compulsory redundancy situation.

"The company's actions are

at odds with their stated objectives leading them into a regrettable and wholly avoidable dispute.

"This is a kick in the teeth for loyal and hard-working staff that have fought hard to save and develop this well-loved service.

"Astonishingly the company has sited potential rail franchise changes in 2016 as a reason for the compulsory redundancy now, when the specifications for

the rail franchises are still not known and the franchises themselves will not actually be let for some considerable time.

"Despite numerous requests to look at alternatives to compulsory redundancy the company has pressed ahead and the union had no option but to ballot our members for a strike," he said.

The union remains available for further talks. ■



CITY LINK 'COLLAPSE' SHAMES THE NATION

Union exposes links between the political elite and bandit capitalism as courier firm asset stripped

RMT held protests outside City Link depots across the country as news emerged that the taxpayer was footing the bill for over 2,700 workers sacked over Christmas.

Hundreds more 'owner-drivers, subcontracted to operate City Link vans, will receive no compensation at all.

Anger has risen after corporate records revealed that three City Link directors, including CEO David Smith and Better Capital (BC) executive Thomas Wright, lodged papers at Companies House earlier last month for a firm named 'City Link B2b'.

The union has insisted that the creation of a new company suggested that the trio could be set to buy back what's left from administrators at a knock-down price.

Questions also mounted over

the conduct of Guernsey-based venture capital firm BC, which took over the company for £1 last year with a promised £40 million cash injection.

BC founder Jon Moulton, who has donated nearly half a million pounds to the Tory Party and now bankroll's UKIP, also used the crisis to snap up another £3.8 million of BC shares.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the whole affair was a microcosm of everything that was wrong with business in Britain – it shows how little protection workers have got and the power of bandit capitalism to protect itself.

"This is an act of industrial vandalism that shames the nation while the government has offered nothing but hollow words.

"Pulling the plug on any efforts to save City Link is a

cynical betrayal that will wreck the lives of our members, many of whom are owed thousands of pounds.

"RMT does not believe that those pulling the strings had any interest in saving this business and were happy to cut and run leaving a trail of human misery in their wake.

"The City Link collapse has blown the lid off the cosy relationship between bandit capitalism and the political elite.

"RMT will continue to represent members caught in this corporate failure while those responsible will slink away with their own resources ring fenced and leaving the taxpayer to pick up the redundancy tab," he said.

Business secretary Vince Cable rejected RMT's call for direct government intervention, similar to the rescue of the banks, as a way of saving the

thousands of jobs caught in the middle of this crisis.

Cable also refused to back a summit involving the union, administrators and the government and an eleventh hour package that could have saved thousands of jobs.

Labour MP Michael Meacher said that the scandal was "a modern form of private equity asset-stripping".

He said that Jon Moulton had transferred basic redundancy rights to be funded by the taxpayers and used a secured loan as investment to ensure that he would rank ahead of staff when the proceeds from the liquidation came to be distributed.

"As a result he now expects to screw off £20 million from the liquidation while leaving nearly 3,000 workers high and dry," he said. ■



RMT SLAMS 'ALARMIST' STATEMENTS OVER SULPHUR REGULATIONS

RMT has slammed the “blatantly alarmist” noises coming out of the shipping industry which threaten to destabilise the already damaged sector and which pose a renewed threat to seafarers jobs and training.

European Union regulations restricting the sulphur content of marine fuels to 0.1% are due to come into effect in the North Sea and Channel from January. These are required under laws agreed in 2005 by the International Maritime Organisation.

The EU gave notice of the planned sulphur cap and the deadline for introduction to industry and European governments in 2008.

The Amec report commissioned by the Chamber of Shipping into the costs of new sulphur regulations is out of date.

That report was published in March 2013 and priced conversion for companies at £300 million. In the last six months oil prices have collapsed dramatically, one significant factor that escaped three-minute warning from the industry body.

As a result, seafarers and passengers face an uncertain future after the sulphur regulations are introduced and Government should commit to making the release of any public subsidy to industry to meet conversion costs conditional on the protection of seafarers jobs and passenger fare levels.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that threats of job and route cuts and fare hikes in the shipping industry made no economic sense when global seatriade is set to double over the next twenty years.

“The country cannot afford for UK seafarers and the maritime skills base to be shut out of the opportunities this presents and the government needs to re-start the stalled Shipping Strategy to find effective ways of protecting and increasing UK seafarer numbers, rather than shipping companies’ profits.

“The number of UK ratings has fallen by 3,290 since 2011 alone and the shipping industry’s approach to the sulphur regulations must be seen by the government for what it is, a cynical attempt to wrest more subsidy from the taxpayer to meet conversion costs ahead of tomorrow’s autumn statement,” he said.

RMT national secretary Steve

TONNAGE TAX FIGURES:

A Written Answer to John McDonnell MP of February 6 2014 estimated that the Tonnage Tax reduction in tax liabilities for qualifying shipping companies since the scheme was introduced in 2000-01 had reached £1.45 billion (gross).

Financial year	£ million Reduction in tax liabilities
2000-01	60
2001-02	65
2002-03	70
2003-04	80
2004-05	90
2005-06	90
2006-07	100
2007-08	170
2008-09	225
2009-10	95
2010-11	100
2011-12	90
2012-13	110
2013-14	105
Total	£1.45 billion



Todd said that seafarers, passengers and the national economy must not be forced to pay for the shipping industry’s failure to prepare for regulations introduced six years ago.

“New limits on the sulphur dioxide content of shipping fuel, required by international law, were announced by the EU in 2008 when the Chamber of Shipping welcomed them as “a major move forward’ as well as a realistic deadline.

“Some operators have taken preparatory steps and we recognise that but RMT cannot stand by and allow the shipping

industry a free run at our members’ jobs on ferries and at ports in the North Sea and Channel. Leaving these alarmist statements to the eleventh hour is a crude ploy that causes unnecessary instability in the industry.

“In addition to the £725m tonnage tax break the shipping industry has enjoyed since 2008-09, the EU gave ferry companies in the UK nearly £23.7m in July specifically to help with costs converting vessels to low sulphur fuel,” he said.

FARE RISE RIP OFF

Campaigners start New Year with protests demanding an affordable railway under public ownership

Campaigners protested across the country in the New Year against fare increases of up to 2.5 per cent and asked passengers to contact their MPs to demand an affordable railway under public ownership.

Since 2010 fares have risen over two and half times faster than wages, and the average season ticket has gone up by around 27 per cent, on average £600 in just five years. This recent rise, though 'capped' at the level of inflation, makes already skyrocketing fare prices higher still and adds to the squeeze on living standards.

Research by Action for Rail has revealed that passengers using the UK's privatised rail network spend substantially more of their wages getting to work than any other country in Europe.

The analysis gives the example of a UK worker on an average salary who is now spending 17 per cent of their monthly wages on a £391 monthly season ticket from Brighton to London.

However, over in Europe workers making similar journeys in Germany spent nine per cent of their salary on train fares, in France 12 per cent and in Spain and Italy just six per cent.

RMT has published figures which showed that UK taxpayers' subsidy to the railways, on top of fares, totalled just over £4 billion in 2012/13.

Last year the Office for Rail Regulation (ORR) revealed that despite receiving £4 billion in subsidies train operators had paid more than £200 million in dividends to their shareholders.

Three train operators –

Virgin, Northern Rail and Transpennine – handed almost £100 million to shareholders after receiving more than £1 billion in government subsidies, including their portion of the grant to Network Rail.

Northern Rail, a joint venture between Serco and Dutch state rail subsidiary Abellio, paid £36 million in dividends with subsidies totalling £713 million. Transpennine returned £21 million in dividends to owners First Group and Keolis, having received £52 million in franchise payments from the government, which also paid £145 million in track grants.

Meanwhile East Coast, the intercity service run by state-owned Directly Operated Railways, made a net payment of £16 million to the government, returning £203

million in franchise payments against a £187 million track subsidy.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that, as the travelling public gear up for the new year fares hike, the union was blowing away the myth that the extra cash was invested back into services.

"The reality is that it combines with taxpayer subsidies to fuel a £4 billion privatised rail rip-off that is a one-way ticket to the bank for the train companies.

"The scandal of the British people paying the highest fares in Europe to travel on clapped-out and overcrowded trains will be compounded by the new year average rise – an increase which dwarfs average pay increases and which will hit the poorest the hardest," he said. ■





FIVE NEW YEAR PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTIONS

As we face 2015 and a General Election in May here are five New Year Resolutions for the RMT Parliamentary Group.

First, we must build on the progress we have made in making the case for public ownership of our railways. All the polls show support for such a policy would make a real difference especially in marginal seats where passengers are fed up with paying through the nose for the highest rail fares in Europe. RMT Parliamentary group campaigning has helped ensure Labour had supported keeping East Coast in the public ownership and has committed to change the law to allow for the public sector to operate railway services but it needs to be far more specific and bolder. And there is no use supporting public ownership but also supporting austerity on our railways. Labour must commit to a properly funded rail and tube network which is properly staffed and also safer and better for passengers by putting an end to the years of casualisation and deskilling of rail workers jobs.

Second, we must renew the pressure to support UK seafarers and stop the downward spiral in the number of UK ratings. That means we need to build on the slow progress we have recently made on wider and better enforcement of the minimum wage and linking the tonnage tax to the creation of training opportunities. But most importantly we must press for a commitment to implement the independent "Carter Review" commissioned by the last Labour government and which recommended the complete outlawing of pay discrimination and the consequent undercutting in the UK maritime industry.

Ed Miliband recently said a Labour government would act to stop the undercutting of wages by overseas workers, well Ed implement the Carter Review and that will be a huge start in the shipping industry.

Third, the social dumping that is endemic in the maritime industry is also of course undermining employment in our offshore sector and we need to ensure that this is challenged at every opportunity. The government decision to rule out an

independent inquiry into North Sea Helicopter safety (despite being told to conduct such an inquiry by the House of Commons Transport Committee) shows that a step change is required for safety in the offshore sector. That means a full independent inquiry into all aspects of offshore safety, with offshore safety reps being given a massive increase in powers, including the right to call a stop to the job if there are serious safety concerns. If it can be done in Norway it can be done here.

Fourth, campaign for a commitment to new legislation in road transport.

That means recognising that buses account for two thirds of public transport journeys and that bus privatisation has been a disaster. Profits and fares have gone up while services and workers conditions have been driven down. We need our buses bought back into public ownership and we also need to drive down the hours of bus workers and road haulage workers to safe levels without loss of pay and at the very least to levels recommended by the EU.

And as part of a properly integrated transport system we need to defend the taxi trade from deregulation so that all those who want and rely on taxi's can know that they will be taken to their destination by a professional driver in a safe environment.

Finally, number five, we will with the RMT and the wider Labour movement campaign to resist the constant attack on Trade Union and Employment rights and for re-peal of the anti trade union laws and also their replacement with a positive framework of trade union rights. The fact is strong trade unions and widespread collective bargaining coverage means higher standards of living, securer, safer employment and less inequality. Strong trade unions don't just protect workers, they protect communities and help create a better world.

Solidarity and Happy New Year to all RMT members.

John McDonnell is the convenor of the RMT Parliamentary Group and the Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington



DEFENDING OFFSHORE WORKERS

RMT sets out crisis
management plan
to rescue British
jobs in wake of oil
price slump

RMT has set out an action plan for politicians to rescue British jobs and infrastructure in the wake of the slump in world oil prices.

The union has major concerns about the impact of cost-cutting across the sector after several different operators including Total, Apache, Shell and others have made clear that terms and conditions are to be slashed in an effort to reduce costs.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash warned that if immediate action wasn't taken then it runs the risk of turning today's crisis into longer-term damage that would threaten the very core of the offshore industry.

"With tens of thousands of jobs at stake, along with the prospect of lasting damage to infrastructure, production capacity and the safety culture, intervention is absolutely critical," he said.

He demanded that Westminster and the Scottish Parliament adopt an immediate crisis management approach to ensure sustained production, maintenance of infrastructure, retention of skills, and a robustly regulated regime in the future.

The most worrying element of these cuts are the proposed changes to working patterns which could see workers currently working to-weeks on, three-weeks off, being altered to either two-on, two-off; or three-on, three-off.

These changes if pushed through will see significant redundancies and a loss of experience. For those remaining, the 'safety culture' RMT has developed over the years will be irreparably damaged as working hours increase significantly whilst income stands still. Talk of low morale is already widespread, which in a major hazard industry should be cause for concern.

The cost-cutting agenda will see major refurbishment projects delayed indefinitely, as investment dries up.

The Health and Safety Executive key programmes 3 &

4, 'Asset Integrity' and 'Ageing Infrastructure' respectively, are wholly reliant on investment for redevelopment and refurbishment, without it many installations will be run inefficiently and moreover with greater risks and hazards.

History demonstrates that during every downturn which the sector has suffered it has come close to disaster and the fatality rate has increased. The pressure to reduce costs, but maintain production, creates scenarios like the Shell Brent Bravo incident of 2003; insufficient numbers of motivated people avoiding the risk of losing production by doing little or no intrusive maintenance on safety critical equipment so leaving us a spark away from another Piper Alpha disaster.

The HSE will be stretched trying to deal with the introduction of the new EU Offshore Safety Directive which will require every installation to submit their respective safety cases. The impacts of cost-cutting may well elude the inspectorate as they deal with the 'paperwork' of safety case assessment and they are already under resourced.

The Offshore Elected Safety Representatives (ESR's) are enthusiastic, committed amateurs and undoubtedly are making a difference. However, the ESR's are primarily workers and are subject to the same pressures and constraints as their peers. Therefore when faced with the same fears and threats their approach to auditing and inspecting will inevitably be impacted.

The frequently referred to 'Wood Review' sets out the 'master plan' for maximising recovery from the UK sector and sustaining production. However, the 'collaboration' required to enable this is reliant on the infrastructure being fit for purpose.

New fields are smaller and more difficult to access so a means to transport the product to shore is critical to sustainability, which in turn

means the existing infrastructure has to be maintained to the highest standard. The 'Wood Review' was drafted and based its projections on an oil price in excess of \$100 a barrel, as a result such sustainability must now be at risk.

If none of these issues are addressed, then the industry face the loss of the infrastructure and with it the ability to exploit remaining reserves. On top of this, the UK tax payer faces a massive bill - some estimate as much as £30 billion - for decommissioning and meeting the EU commitments on a clean up.

Westminster must adopt a crisis management approach and ensure sustained production, maintained infrastructure, retention of skills, and a robustly regulated regime.

WHERE NEXT FOR OIL?

Sir Ian Wood, founder of the Wood Group and a government adviser, said that fears that the UK oil industry was close to collapse were "over the top" but the sector was facing a "very difficult year".

"It will be a tough time for the industry and the people that work in it, but we are entering a downturn from which we will recover.

"The UK Continental Shelf does face a very difficult year to 18 months which will see a slowdown in investment, the loss of some offshore production, up to 10 per cent, and the possible loss of around 15,000 jobs within an industry which employs 375,000, although this is difficult to estimate," he said.

Forecasters Oxford Economics said that "oil prices are likely to be lower over the longer-term than forecast three months ago" due to weak demand from China and strong production from the US.

But it expects oil prices to rise to 111 US dollars (£71) a barrel by 2020 and 200 US dollars (£128) a barrel by 2040.

Chief Secretary to the

Treasury Danny Alexander described the recent slump below 60 US dollars (£38) a barrel as "a big concern" but insisted the North Sea is "open for business" and backed by government support for decommissioning, investment and exploration.

"We have to accept that there is going to be significantly less tax from North Sea oil and gas because that is necessary to get the investment, to continue to create the jobs and support what is one of the most important employers, not just in Scotland but across the whole of the UK.

"It is very important to send a message to investors around the world that the North Sea is open for business," Mr Alexander said.

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon called on the UK Government to provide more tax incentives.

"The Scottish government will continue to do what we can around skills and innovation, but we need serious and very definite measures from the UK government to help," she said.

Stuart Haszeldine, professor of carbon capture and storage at Edinburgh University's School of GeoSciences, has called for an "urgent review" of the "extreme" taxes levied on oil and gas production.

He said that it should also provide tax incentives to encourage investment in "enhanced oil recovery", which involves injecting carbon dioxide into mature fields to both decarbonise the atmosphere and extract more oil.

He warned that major redevelopment and refurbishment projects will be "delayed indefinitely as investment dries up", the Health and Safety Executive "will be stretched to maximum capacity trying to deal with the introduction of the new EU Offshore Safety Directive", the sustainability of production is "at risk", and the UK taxpayer faces a bill of up to £30 billion for decommissioning. ■

RAIL STAFF IN SCOTLAND SACKED AS FARES RISE

Just days after the imposition of more exorbitant rail fare rises, Scottish railway staff are to be sacked as a result of a 'turf war' between First and Scotrail operators Abellio.

Eight on-board hosts working for contractors Skytrac, based in Edinburgh Waverley and working on First TransPennine Express (TPE) services, have been issued with redundancy notices.

They have been told that they were being made redundant over what amounts to the simple issue of access to hot water and would now have to find new jobs.

Their employer, Skytrac Rail Solutions – who have paid no rent to ScotRail for using their catering depot for the last seven years – have now been asked to

leave the premises by the ScotRail operators.

Skytrac is the catering provider for First TransPennine Express, which runs services from Edinburgh and Glasgow to Manchester Airport. A Standard Class 'Anytime' return on this route costs £131.80 – a First Class equivalent costs a whopping £253.60

Skytrac says that redundancies were unavoidable, as there's nowhere for them to get hot water for the tea and coffee service – a point which the union fundamentally disputes and which could easily be sorted out between First and the company.

However, Skytrac now plan to use Manchester-based staff who will stay in hotels in Edinburgh at a cost of between

£50-£500 per night, which over the course of a year would work out at three members of staff wages for one person.

These staff will need exactly the same facilities as they do now, making a mockery of the whole justification for the redundancies.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that staff had lost their jobs because of what amounts to a penny-pinching row between First, Abellio and Skytrac.

"It defies belief that a hard-working group of staff were issued redundancy notices whilst they were working.

"First Transpennine Express has sat idly by and watched hard working individuals be thrown onto the employment scrapheap without any

intervention.

"These staff members have repeatedly gone way beyond our job description – from helping during break downs, to helping during medical emergencies.

"They have been caught in the middle of a turf war and that is disgraceful.

"This situation has clear parallels with the way that Skytrac sacked staff when they closed their Glasgow depot at the end of 2012.

"RMT is demanding urgent talks with Skytrac and will also be applying pressure on Network Rail, Scotrail and Abellio to resolve this scandalous situation," he said.

The union will also ensure that the matter is raised in both the Scottish and Westminster Parliaments. ■

STOP DUMPING SEWAGE ON SCOTLAND'S RAILWAYS

RMT has called on Network Rail and Scotrail's new operator Abellio to end the filthy and disgusting practice of dumping raw sewage onto Scotland's railway tracks from train toilets by next year.

Workers whose jobs take them trackside end up being sprayed with human excrement, yet the problem can be eradicated easily by fitting retention tanks on older trains.

RMT is calling on Transport Scotland and Network Rail to bring forward the proposed target date for the fitting of retention tanks across the Scotrail fleet from December 2017 to April 2016.

The union is calling for both organisations to put pressure on Abellio, which set to make a fortune out of the Scotrail franchise, to dip in their pockets

and retro-fit the retention tanks.

The franchise documentation talked of 2020 as the target date for ending the dumping of effluent. Since then, following a campaign of political and public pressure organised by RMT, the Transport Minister has moved that date to December 2017 but RMT believes that the date can be brought further forward.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash made clear that the union would not rule out an industrial response to bring a halt to the discharge of human waste onto the tracks if there is any dragging of heels.

"RMT has already made significant progress in bringing forward the date when the scandal of dumping raw sewage on Scotland's railway tracks is brought to an end.

"But we believe that April

2016 is a perfectly realistic and achievable target for halting this filthy and disgusting practice.

"RMT has said all along that if it was wealthy bankers

getting sprayed with sewage rather than rail workers then this scandal would be ended overnight," he said. ■





FIGHTING CASUALISATION

Unions unite against contractors using umbrella companies, undermining safety and increasing exploitation

Rail workers from across the country lobbied Parliament last month to oppose the exploitation of workers through the use of umbrella companies and to highlight the safety concerns of those working alongside an increasingly casualised contractor workforce.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash welcomed the joint rally with building union UCATT and Unite who both organise in the construction industry and who are up against many of the companies RMT members encounter working on the rail network.

"This is an important opportunity for rail workers to raise their concerns in Parliament and also to show the firms using umbrella companies that the trade union movement is united in opposition to this super exploitation.

"RMT has repeatedly pointed out that casualisation and exploitation on the rail network is diluting the safety culture.

Fatigue, zero-hours contracts and the pay-roll rip off are massive issues for RMT members that we intend to raise with MPs," he said.

UCATT general secretary Steve Murphy outlined at the rally how workers operating under an umbrella company are required to pay both the employers' and employees' national insurance contributions, representing up to 25 per cent of eligible earnings.

"Despite pay rates being

advertised at a much higher level the worker is only actually paid the national minimum wage, wearings are then boosted by mechanisms such as expenses and performance related pay.

"Many umbrella companies issue zero hours contracts, which mean that the worker is not guaranteed work and does not have set hours.

"Therefore when and for how long they are required to work can differ from week to week and, in some cases the worker is not even entitled to work for anyone else," he said.

- Payslips are made so complex that it is difficult if not impossible to understand all the deductions being made from the pay the worker receives.
- The umbrella company charges the worker directly for their services and fees can

be up to £30 a week.

Emma Lewell-Buck MP told the rally that the Tory-led coalition government had been ignoring the issue for too long and loopholes in the law had to be closed.

"The government's reluctance to take the side of millions of workers against these shady umbrella companies is typical.

"Everyone but this government is up for the fight and making the changes needed," she said.

UCATT has produced a report, The umbrella company con-trick, available on the UCATT website and RMT has also produced The Great Rail Payroll Rip-Off, available on the RMT website exposing how contractors use bogus self-employment on zero-hours contracts to rip off rail workers, paying just minimum wage for highly-skilled work. ■



ROLLING STOCK RACKET ROLLS ON

Chronic shortage of trains in the North further exposes national rolling stock crisis caused by privatisation

A chronic shortage of rolling stock on the TransPennine Express route, operated by Keolis and First Group, will worsen in April as TPE will lose nine of its 70 trains to Chiltern Railways in Oxfordshire.

Chiltern struck a deal with the train leasing company Porterbrook for the nine Class 170 three-car sets. This is purely because the rolling stock outfit can make more money out of Chiltern on a longer-term leasing deal than TPE.

This is despite the fact that the TPE franchise, which connects Newcastle to Leeds as well as Manchester to Liverpool, is the most overcrowded in the country which is already using diesel trains to pull around what are, in effect, heritage carriages.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that train procurement in Britain was an expensive shambles locked into the fragmentation and profiteering that has been lumped onto the taxpayer through two decades of privatisation.

"The companies using these trains get to privatise the profits while the public get to shoulder over £10 billion of risks, it is an absolute disgrace.

"Even worse, the Inter-City trains are being designed to axe the guards and strip out buffet cars, an issue that RMT is fighting a full-scale battle over," he said.

Following rail privatisation in 1994 three rolling stock companies (ROSCOs), Porterbrook, Angel Trains and Eversholt, bought up the British Rail fleet and have been leasing them to the train operating companies ever since for enormous profits.

In 2009 the Competition Commission found that the companies had ripped off the taxpayer by as much as £100 million. The Commission blamed the rip off on the franchising system and on the Tory government of John Major for selling the rolling stock for a fraction of its worth.

The ROSCOs fiasco has not even delivered claims that the private sector would bring massive investment. The increase in rolling stock in use since privatisation is a paltry three per cent while passenger journeys have increased by nearly 100 per cent. Moreover most rolling stock currently in use still pre-dates privatisation

over twenty years ago.

Increasingly, the Department for Transport has been trying to bypass the profiteering ROSCOs – largely owned by financial institutions which use them to reduce their tax bill – and buy trains directly. However this method passes most of the risk entirely back to the taxpayer.

A recent House of Commons Public Accounts Committee report published last month found that the DfT was transferring risk away from the rail industry back to government.

Committee chair Margaret Hodge MP said that the DfT's decision to buy the new trains for Intercity Express and Thameslink itself had left the taxpayer bearing all the risk.

"The Department has no previous experience of running a procurement of this kind, let alone two with a combined value of £10.5 billion.

"Yet it has chosen to break with its previous approach of leaving it to rolling stock companies and train operators to buy trains, transferring risk away from the rail industry back to government.

"This means that if passenger

forecasts are wrong and fewer new trains are needed in future taxpayers will have to pick up the bill," she said.

The committee found that the only way the Department could limit the risk was by requiring train operating companies to use the new trains to run their services regardless of whether they best fit the services they would like to offer.

RMT welcomed the fact that the Public Accounts Committee had shone some light on the murky racket of train procurement.

"This crisis has left us desperately short of rolling stock with the British public paying through the nose to travel in clapped-out, overcrowded carriages.

"We also welcome the fact that they have drawn attention to the need to defend and develop train building capacity in this country.

"The only real solution to this rail rolling stock crisis is full public ownership and an end to the greed and exploitation of privatisation," said Mick Cash.



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NOTIFICATION OF RESULT OF RMT POLITICAL FUND REVIEW BALLOT

The union will on request and free of charge, supply a member with a copy of this report.

The Independent Scrutineer's report (Electoral Reform Services) have declared the following result for the ballot, which closed at first post on Monday November 3 2014, is as follows:-

Number of voting papers distributed for the purposes of the ballot: 72,635

Number of voting papers returned to the scrutineer: 22,228

Turnout: 30.6%

Number of votes found to be spoiled or otherwise invalid: 25

Total number of valid votes to be counted: 22,203

THE RESOLUTION is that the political objects set out in section 72 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 be approved as an object of the Union.

Do you vote in favour of the Resolution?

RESULT

Number of valid votes cast for the resolution 21,435 (96.5%)

Number of valid votes cast against the resolution 768 (3.5%)

The union will on request and free of charge, supply a member with a copy of this report.

NOTIFICATION OF ENTITLEMENT FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE RMT POLITICAL FUND

In accordance with Rule 5A each member has a right to be exempted from contributing to the union's political fund; a form of exemption notice can be obtained by or on behalf of a member either by application at or by post from – (i) the head office or any branch office of the union; or (ii) the office of the Certification Officer.

CAMPAIGNING AGAINST INTER-CITY SERVICE CUTS



CARDIFF: Protestors in Wales

New Intercity Express Programme (IEP) Hitachi fleet threatens to bring in Driver-Only Operation and the axing of buffet cars, on-board staff and maintenance workers

RMT kicked off 2015 with a major campaign to fight plans that would lead to DOO, axing of buffet cars, on-board staff and maintenance workers on Inter-City services while passengers pay the highest fares in Europe.

Activists got out the message by handing out protest postcards to send to their MPs at Bath Spa, Bristol Temple Meads, Exeter, Paddington, Plymouth and Swansea protesting about the configuration of the new fleet of trains under the Intercity Express Programme (IEP).

RMT has been battling against proposals for driver only operation and the removal of buffet cars and their replacement by a trolley service reducing the safety critical operational role of train guards /conductors as well as station de-staffing and ticket office closures.

The union has also objected to proposals that could see the

loss of skilled safety critical train maintenance jobs as part of the deal.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union was ramping up of the campaign against cuts to jobs and services on First Great Western on the day that Britain got back to

work after the extended festive break.

"This government of the rich, for the rich and by the rich now intend to introduce services on Britain's long haul rail services which would condemn the vast majority to pay through the nose to travel in rammed-out

carriages where the catering trolley is jammed at one end while the elite glide through the country.

"This move has got the stamp of Cameron, Osborne and the posh boys from the Bullingdon Club plastered all over it.

2RMT believes that all rail



PADDINGTON: Protestors in London



*PROTEST: RMT general secretary Mick Cash with protesters at Kings Cross fighting the threat to jobs, services and safety from the new Inter-City trains on the East Coast.
Photo Credit – Guy Smallman/RMT*

users deserve a high quality service and that means employing the staff to deliver that rather than cutting corners to maximise profits and targeting what's left at the rich.

"RMT is throwing its full resources and industrial and political clout in 2015 behind the fight to stop this attack on jobs, services and safety arising from the introduction of the Inter-City fleet on both the East Coast and the Great Western routes.

"These new Hitachi trains have been explicitly commissioned by the government to allow the sacking of on-board staff, the axing of buffet cars and have left a question mark hanging over the future of the existing maintenance depots.

"RMT's campaign will point out the public that they have a massive stake in this drive to milk the Inter-City routes for every penny the private companies can extract.

"They would be forced to pay higher fares to travel on crowded and unsafe trains

where they will struggle to even get a drink of water on a long haul journey.

"We will be calling on the passengers to join us in piling pressure on their MP's to reverse this latest assault on rail services and jobs in the name of private greed," he said.

A recent tweet from train builder Hitachi has confirmed that Britain's new Inter-City fleet will be stripped of their buffet cars – leaving them with a trolley-only service in standard class with hot meals restricted only to those who can afford to pay eye-watering sums to travel first class.

The tweet has been sent as Hitachi load up the first of the trains prior to shipping from Japan, the units will be shipped over and will then be bolted back together flat-pack style on arrival in Britain, nailing the other big lie that they will be 'built' in the UK.

Branches can get campaigning postcards from their regional offices and more information is available on the RMT website. ■



PROTEST: EC member Mick Lynch puts the case to the media against IEP job cuts

Early Day Motion 584

Primary sponsor: Frank Dobson MP **REDUCTIONS IN STAFFING ON EAST COAST AND GREAT WESTERN RAIL SERVICES**

That this House notes with concern that government and train operating company plans for implementing the multibillion pound Intercity Express rolling stock programme which will ultimately be funded by the taxpayer and fare-payer could see significant staffing cuts on East Coast and Great Western services; is dismayed that new rolling stock being introduced from 2017 could have the buffet car removed, meaning that hot food and meals will only be available in first class whilst other passengers will be forced to rely on a trolley-only service for long, often crowded, journeys so more seats can be crammed onto inter-city services, and perturbed that this upstairs-downstairs catering service is under consideration when passengers already pay the highest rail fares in Europe; is alarmed that driver only operation is also proposed for this rolling stock which would downgrade the train guard's safety operational role and increase risks to passengers by restricting responsibility for safe operation of the train to the driver; further notes that passenger safety and service will be further jeopardised if the new rolling stock is used as cover for de-staffing stations, particularly train dispatch staff; further notes the threat to skilled maintenance workers' jobs in these proposals which would further impact on passenger safety and service and exacerbate the rail industry skills crisis; and calls on the Government to reject any contracts for East Coast and Great Western services which propose any such cuts to rail staff.

FIGHTING EU AUSTERITY AND TTIP

RMT pledged solidarity with workers in Belgium that took part in a general strike last month against EU austerity policies and the proposed EU trade deal with the US known as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Belgian unions are fighting government plans to bulldoze through measures which include raising the pension age, freezing wages and imposing massive public service cuts, attacks mirrored throughout the EU as the austerity and privatisation agenda rips through working class communities across Europe.

Belgian union resistance kicked off with 100,000 people marching in Brussels. The latest general strike halted trains, buses and trams throughout Belgium, with high-speed trains to France, the Netherlands and Germany suspended, along with Eurostar services to London.

Workers at steel firms, the ports of Antwerp and Zeebrugge, the post office and in education are planning further actions.

Belgium has a long post-war tradition of collective bargaining between employers and workers. But the current coalition, made up of three right wing parties including the Christian Democrats, is pushing a right wing free-market agenda in line with EU rules.

However a coalition of Belgian unions, green and left parties is opposing the latest decision to scrap plans for the

annual automatic cost-of-living raises next year. They also reject plans to raise the retirement age from 65 to 66 from 2025 and to 67 in 2030.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that comrades in Belgium were showing the way with general strike action that was a beacon to workers fighting austerity across the EU.

"Across Europe it is pay, jobs, pensions and public services that are being battered by the EU-wide austerity agenda while the bankers, spivs and speculators who caused this crisis are back in business now with their snouts firmly in the trough.

"RMT pledges solidarity to all workers and communities who have had the courage and determination to fight back," he said.

Other member states like Greece, Spain and Italy have also experienced increasingly volatile protests against EU-imposed structural adjustment programmes which includes transferring whole industries into the private sector.

Spain's new left wing party Podemos, which is attracting huge popular support, has said that the euro currency "was conceived as a real mouse trap" to enable right wing economic policies to be imposed.

Italian trade union USB has also led large protests against recent anti-trade union measures being demanded by Europe's "troika" - the European Commission, the European



NO TTIP: Belgian police stand next to an effigy of German Chancellor Angela Merkel as demonstrators burn bales of hay in front of the EU headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, during a protest against EU austerity policies and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).



NO EURO: Greek protesters carry anti EU banners, one reads in Greek "Down with the dictatorship"



HEALTH CUTS: Italian healthcare workers protest in Rome against healthcare cuts included in the Italian government's spending review decree.



Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund – the three institutions responsible for imposing austerity Europe-wide.

Demonstrators and riot police clashed across the country and in Rome protestors bombarded the German embassy with eggs and paint. Germany, which has the only economy in growth in Europe, has widely been seen to be behind the EU push for evermore austerity.

The European Commission has warned France, Italy and Belgium that they are in breach of the deficit-and-debt rules under the Stability and Growth Pact and has warned that they must slash spending budgets by March or face fines.

France has already twice received a postponement of its deficit reduction deadline

And, despite promising to wipe 3.6 billion euros off its deficit, Paris could now face a fine of up to 4.2 billion euros.

Italy and Belgium are already blacklisted because of their public deficits, which are far above the 60 per cent of GDP demanded by the EU. Spain, Portugal, Malta and Austria are also at risk of breaching hardline neo-liberal EU rules.

Germany's finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble and the German EU commissioner Guenther Oettinger are both demanding tough action for fear of the EU being accused of letting France and Italy off the hook because they are large member states. The EU, backed by Germany, has already imposed harsh austerity measures on Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Cyprus. ■



President's column



A NEW BEGINNING

Well last year certainly ended on a sour note with the news of nearly 3,000 redundancies at City Link. What a Christmas present.

The real surprise for me was the shock the news was greeted with. Why? This is what capitalism does, this is how it works. It is a system that benefits the wealthy, a system that needs to be done away with.

This is not just my opinion, it is enshrined in our rule book. Rule 1 Clause 4 (b) which states: "to work for the supersession of the capitalist system by a socialistic order of society".

I know that there are many political opinions and ideas within RMT, but this rule has been there, as far as I am aware, from the very beginning and it is a vital rule. Our forebears knew the corruption and inequality of the capitalist system and wanted to do something about it. How we achieve this is up to debate.

One school of thought would be to go down the armed uprising road similar to what happened in countries such as Cuba, Russia and China etc. Others would like to see a democratic parliamentary route, such as happened in Chile, Nicaragua, and, latterly, in Venezuela.

The former choice is highly unlikely to happen, so we need ways to look at it following the democratic road. The Labour Party, as I have said many times before, is not the answer. Apart from the fact that, in my opinion, you can't reform capitalism only destroy it, the Labour Party with its radical 1945 agenda, is long gone.

I do not think that they have any sort of socialist agenda anymore. They seem to want to be part of the central ground, a sort of red Tory party. We cannot rely on them anymore, there is no way that they are going to change, you only have to listen to Ed Milliband to know that. He repeatedly says that he

will continue with cuts and he is considered left wing!

Capitalism has peaks and troughs and, whenever there is a trough, it is the poorer classes who pay. Companies expect to at least maintain their profit levels during difficult times. To do this they cut public spending and put the squeeze on workers. It never enters the heads of any of the three main parties to raise taxes and put the burden on the people who cause the slumps, and the very ones who can afford to help.

The answer to this problem is that the Left need to think and act in new ways. They should build alliances with like-minded groups, discuss things they have in common and not continually bicker about their differences. As long as they do that we are faced with the inevitable continuation of the capitalist system and all it brings with it including wars, poverty, inequality etc.

We should look at what is happening in Greece, and Spain with Syriza, and Podemos. I have said this before, and make no apology for saying it again, there is lots we can learn from them. I thought a Syriza speaker at a meeting I attended last year was very brave when she said "Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky are important, but we don't live in that century anymore!"

There is a lot to be said for that statement. We can use the works of those people and build on them to face new challenges, challenges they did not know about. We all want the same thing, a fairer society to benefit all, so we need to think hard as to how we bring that about.

Peter Pinkney ■

MUSIC FOR WORKERS

Workers Music Association tutor Phil Hargraves invites RMT members to a lively and friendly musical holiday

If you are interested in music, singing, playing or composing, you can indulge your hobby with other working people at the annual Workers Music Association's summer school.

This year it takes place between August 25/30 at Castle Head near Grange-over-Sands in the South of the Lake District.

It's 10am on a Sunday morning, and I'm taking a ten-piece band through an examination of the music of Thelonious Monk. Under normal circumstances, something is wrong with the world here – I didn't become a musician to even be out of bed at that time on a Sunday, never mind working on the challenging music of one of the twentieth century's great musicians.

But in fact this means that it's the WMA Summer School at Castle Head in South Cumbria, and I wouldn't be anywhere else in the world.

The Workers' Music Association was formed in 1936, a year of turmoil as Europe stumbled towards fascism, to promote peace and socialism and ally musicians with the labour movement.

When British composer Alan Bush founded the Summer School, summer schools were something of a rarity, and the original school focused on choral and orchestral work. This year is the 69th, and its range has broadened considerably.

A quick stroll around Castle Head will expose you to my Modern Jazz course, the Bach double violin concerto, some of Ewan McColl's folk songs – a staunch supporter of the WMA in his time, Vaughan Williams' opera 'Sir John in Love' and the



Brass ensemble playing Handel.

Later on, you'll hear the chorus tackling songs of Peace and Freedom (in four parts), a trad jazz band playing 'Exactly Like You' and the composers' group imagining the future – and we haven't even got to the evening activities yet.

As befits a Summer School with strong Trade Union links, the school is not at all elitist.

People are welcomed at all levels of ability, and we endeavour to bring them on during the week and give them something to take away with them, to work on during the rest of the year. Recognising that music is a co-operative, rather than a competitive, activity, we consider that 'where you're headed' is of more importance than 'where you've got to'.

While there are now many

residential summer schools, most focus on a single musical style, and very few have the WMA's breadth. This does mean that people are not constrained to single areas of music, and we often host informal groupings of people trying other forms of music, and interesting cross-genre collaborations often spring up during the week. Ballroom, bar, library, even on the stairs – it's hard to avoid a concert of some sort. Not that you'd want to.

After your evening meal, the choir is warming up in the ballroom. Many people have had their first foray into choral singing via the Summer School chorus, and everyone's invited in. Meanwhile the Big Band is reading through some classic standards down the corridor. After that, the night is still

young and there's recitals and folk nights, ceilidh dancing and jazz sessions to enjoy, or simply a relaxing evening in the lounge, there's a bar just outside, if all that's too much for you. After all, we'll be doing this all again tomorrow!

More details about the WMA's summer school, including prices, can be found at www.wmasummerschool.org.uk – many trade unions provide scholarships and local branches can often be approached for help as well.

In addition, there is a number of bursaries and scholarships available to individual students, so we try to make sure that no-one is excluded. So we look forward to seeing you.



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RMT OPENS THE NORTH WEST REGION OFFICES

A gathering of activists and guests from the wider labour movement saw RMT general secretary Mick Cash dedicate a new suite of offices in central Liverpool's Temple Square.

Pride of place in the new suite is taken by the John MacDonald Room, a large and versatile education and meeting space named in memory of the late RMT regional organiser.

Alongside a substantial general office, the suite also boasts offices for the two regional organisers, a reception area overlooked by a portrait of late RMT leader Bob Crow and generous archive and storage space.

Decorated in RMT colours and hung with pictures of key



locations around the North West and North Wales, the ground-floor suite also has a kitchen, toilets and disabled access.

"These superb new offices are an excellent resource for RMT members in the North West and represent a confident investment in the future of our union," said Mick Cash, declaring the premises open for business.

"It is fitting that our

education and meeting room is dedicated to the memory of John MacDonald – he would be proud of the regional programme of reps' courses we are planning in conjunction with our National Education Centre," said regional organiser John Tilley.

"We're grateful to our Liverpool docker comrades at the Casa for giving us

'temporary' digs for ten years," said fellow RO Daren Ireland, "but we needed bigger premises and we now have our own first-rate facility in the city centre to improve our services to members and we

have room to grow more fighting trade unionists". ■

The new RMT offices are at 2, Temple Square, Temple Lane, Liverpool, L2 5BB, telephone 0151 236 3912, fax 0151 236 3917.

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS





RELEASE THE FIVE:
EC meets Che's daughter
(centre) before the news
breaks that the Miami five
had been released

MIAMI FIVE FREE

RMT welcomed the release from prison of the final three members of the Miami Five last month.

The release of Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero and Ramon Labañino from US prisons follows the release of Alan Gross by Cuba as part of a 'prisoner swap' on humanitarian grounds and marks a shift towards new relations between the United States and Cuba.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash immediately invited the Miami Five to this summer's annual RMT Cuba Garden Party and announced that RMT's support and solidarity with the Cuban people would continue.

"The decision by the US to release the remaining members of the imprisoned Miami Five is great news and follows years of relentless campaigning by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, work supported by RMT particularly Bob Crow himself," he said.

The came news just days after Aleida Guevara, daughter of Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara, visited RMT headquarters to speak to executive members and thank the union for the solidarity it has shown with her country over the years.

Aleida, a doctor like her

father, was visiting Britain to talk about Cuba's role in fighting Ebola in West Africa, where the country has over 400 medical volunteers.

Cuban doctors make up the largest contingent of foreign health workers working in Ebola affected countries despite having suffered under a cruel economic blockade imposed by the US government for more than 52 years.

Despite this, Cuba offers international humanitarian assistance to developing countries wherever it is needed. It also provides free medical training to students from poor backgrounds, and has helped deliver more than 3.5 million free sight-saving operations in Latin America.

"Cuba has a social conscience and we do not give our excess

of what we have, we share what we have with all those in need," says Aleida.

The country also places health and education at the forefront of its domestic policies too, with the Cuban population benefiting from some of the best levels of health and education in the region.

The release of the five, whose only 'crime' was to infiltrate fascist terrorist Cuban émigré groups in Miami, came as US President Barack Obama announced moves to normalise diplomatic and economic ties with Havana.

Mr Obama said that Washington's aggression was "outdated" and the changes were the "most significant" in US policy towards Cuba in 50 years.

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign offers several

opportunities for trade union members to take part in study tours and brigades to Cuba where they can witness Cuban society and the effects of the blockade first hand, visit health and education projects and share experiences with Cuban workers in their workplaces and communities.

If you would like to know more about tours in 2015 including visits and tours visit www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/tours, email tours@cuba-solidarity.org.uk or call 0207 490 5715.

You can also support the work of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign by making sure your branch is affiliated to CSC. Email campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk to see if your branch is affiliated and what you can do to help. ■





SUPPORTING HERITAGE RAILWAYS

RMT News discovers solidarity brought the spectacular Severn Valley Railway back from the brink

Alight from the train at Kidderminster main line station on the Worcester to Birmingham Snow Hill line, walk through the drap ticket hall and, across the car park, you will see a beautifully restored Victorian train station.

This majestic structure is the start of one of Britain's premier heritage lines, the Severn Valley Railway.

Soaking up the period atmosphere inside, taking in the antique glazed concourse canopy, the museum, tea room, licensed restaurant and the 'King and Castle' pub, it is hard to believe that the building has been here less than ten years.

Erected in 2006, it is an exact replica of a Great Western Railway from the 19th century and a monument to the work and determination of the staff and volunteers that keep this railway alive and expanding each year.

One of the full-time staff, RMT member Colin Bromley, is on board the first steam train out of the station on its 16 mile journey through some beautiful countryside, across the 200 foot cast iron Victoria Bridge located between Bewdley and Arley, and

on to its final destination Bridgnorth.

He is our guide as we journey through the 480 yard Foley Park Tunnel before being greeted by the sight of elephants bordering the railway (yes, elephants, the SVR crosses a wildlife park) before making the ascent to Bridgnorth - its castle is worth a visit in itself.

Colin explains that, along with the restoration of the Severn Valley railway, a maintenance facility has been built at Bridgnorth, where he works as a fitter, as well as a carriage restoration and maintenance facility at Kidderminster.

He started working at SVR as a volunteer after finishing an engineering degree.

He explains above the noise of the stream train while listening for any wheel slippage.

"Quite steep this gradient," he says while pointing out that there are around 80 dedicated full-time staff as well as an army of fantastic volunteers that give their time and skills to the railway.

He says that they could all benefit from trade union membership.

"You insure your car, so why not insure your job.

"Ultimately you never know when you might need help, whether it is representation at work or legal assistance," he says.

Colin appreciates that RMT not only represents volunteer and full-time workers in the heritage sector, but also supports its expansion and calls for more government assistance to protect an important part of our industrial history.

"Heritage railways have often become important parts of the local economy, bringing tourists

into the area, and it's not easy to find jobs around here," he says listing some of the weirder jobs he has taken up in order to stay in the area.

He also explains the strong bonds of solidarity between heritage railways which has literally kept the SVR line going.

During violent thunderstorms in 2007 the SVR railway suffered major damage, including numerous landslides with many sections of the line left suspended in mid-air. At Highley station the Up Starter signal and the embankment was



Colin Bromley, fitter at the maintenance works at Bridgnorth

washed away completely.

In a remarkable act of solidarity many other already hard-pressed heritage railways pledged to help, including Mid Hants Railway, Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, West Somerset Railway, Avon Valley Railway, Dean Forest Railway, Great Central Railway, North Yorkshire Moors Railway and the Bluebell Railway.

He explains that, in turn, that the SVR has raised funds for other lines in order to repay that debt including helping to build a new bridge for North Yorkshire Moors Railway and producing sorely-needed parts in the SVR workshops.

The SVR also benefits from being connected directly to the mainline so it can run trains across the country as required.

As we enter the huge boiler shop works at Bridgnorth it is clear that Colin has been modest about the scale of work that is being undertaken here.

Boilers, bogies, chaises and wheels all lay around waiting to be worked on and boiler-suited workers are busily welding, oiling and turning various unidentifiable bits of machinery and parts.

The Severn Valley Railway has a varied collection of steam and diesel locomotives, too many to list, but they have all, at one time, had a spell in the maintenance facility.

"Some jobs are relatively short and others, like full overhauls, can take up to ten

years," he says nodding to a brooding part-disassembled steam engine waiting to be put back together.

Colin points out that the works is always expanding, even taking on apprentices each year so a new generation of workers can learn the skills necessary to keep these great steam and diesel beasts running for everyone to enjoy.

Emma Harrison, aged just 17, is one of five new recruits to the railway's Heritage Skills Training Academy this year.

Emma says that it has fulfilled a lifetime ambition due to her love of heritage and steam railways.

"A great saying in our family is 'a holiday is never a holiday without a railway in it'," she says.

SVR steam and diesel services operate from May to September plus weekends throughout the year, Christmas and school holidays with ten trains each way at peak times. You can download the timetable at the excellent SVR website www.svr.co.uk

Phone: 01299 403816



APPRENTICES: from left to right: Ryan Parsons, Tom Hubble, Emma and Alan Brookes with Dean Parkin standing.



DOVER SHIPPING SUPPORTS MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	BRISTOL BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	DONCASTER BRANCH SUPPORT ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	WAKEFIELD AND HEALEY MILLS BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SHEFFIELD & DISTRICT BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SHEFFIELD AND DISTRICT BRANCH SUPPORT ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	CENTRAL LINE WEST BRANCH NOMINTES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
RMT OFFSHORE ENERGY BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	MEDWAY AND DISTRICT BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	WIMBLEDON BRANCH SUPPORT ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	NOTTS AND DERBY BUS BRANCH NOMINTES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
WISHAW AND MOTHERWELL BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SURREY AND HANTS BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	DERBY RAIL SUPPORT ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	Placing election adverts A new system has been put in place to ensure all election adverts appear in RMT News. All requests for branch election adverts must be sent to a designated RMT email address: electionads@rmt.org.uk
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CENTRAL AND NORTH MERSEY BRANCH SUPPORT JOHN TILLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	NEWPORT IOW NO2 BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	KEITH BRANCH SUPPORT ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	
NEWCASTLE & GATESHEAD BRANCH SUPPORT ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	CROYDON NO1 BRANCH SUPPORT MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	GLASGOW 1&2 BRANCH NOMINATE ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	
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LU ENGINEERING BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	IPSWICH BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	EDINBURGH N01 AND PORTOBELLO DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATE ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTHAMPTON SHIPPING BRANCH NOMINATE ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
LEEDS CITY BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	GREAT NORTHERN RAIL BRANCH SUPPORTS MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	WALTHAM CROSS & DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTHALL, EALING & SLOUGH BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
PADDINGTON N01 BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	NORTH THAMES BRANCH SUPPORTS MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	LONDON ANGLIA MIDLAND TRANSPORT BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	MARCH AND DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
NORWICH BRANCH SUPPORTS MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	DORSET RAIL BRANCH NOMINATE ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	BIRMINGHAM ENGINEERING BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	BRIDGEND, LLANTRISANT & DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
KINGS CROSS SUPPORTS MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	LINCOLNSHIRE ROAD CAR BRANCH SUPPORT ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	PICCADILLY AND WEST BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SWINDON RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
NEASDEN BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	WATERLOO BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	WATFORD BRANCH SUPPORT MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	POOLE & DISTRICT BUS BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
JUBILEE SOUTH BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	EURO PASSENGER SERVICES BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	ANDOVER & SALISBURY RAIL BRANCH NOMINATE ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
EUSTON N01 BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	CAMDEN 3 BRANCH SUPPORT MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	BAKERLOO BRANCH NOMINATE ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	NUNEATON BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
SOUTH LONDON RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	PERTH N01 BRANCH NOMINATE ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	BERWICK RAIL BRANCH NOMINATE ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	DEPTFORD BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY

LEARNING SUCCESS IN SCOTLAND

RMT shipping member Sean Lafferty has successfully completed a Certificate of Higher Education in Business Management this month through his trade union.

Sean, a Chief Steward with Caledonian MacBrayne, was one of 15 learners from across the Highlands and Islands who embarked on the two-year qualification with the Open University in Scotland in 2012.

Sean's HNC-level qualification was sponsored by Scottish Union Learning. The course was aimed at helping workers in the Highlands and Islands gain qualifications to improve their job prospects.

"My main ambition was to develop my knowledge and skills to help me become a better manager for myself, my team and my company and I feel that my initial goals have been realised.

"I have one more rank to achieve within my department and will definitely be putting my



name forward when the opportunity arises.

"I would never have embarked on further education without this course and now I am a third of the way to completing my degree in Business Management, which I am committed to completing over the next four years," said Sean.

Sylvia O'Grady, Lifelong Learning Manager for Scottish Union Learning, said that the course exemplifies the role of trade unions in developing the workforce by providing opportunities for workers to enhance their skills and qualifications and consequently, improve their career prospects.

Khadija Patel, Project Officer for The Open University, said that the Open University and Scottish Union Learning have a shared belief in lifelong learning and in supporting students to develop a strong sense of collective, as well as individual endeavour, to enable every student to achieve their potential.

LETTERS

FOREIGN OWNED TRANSPORT COMPANIES ARE PRIVATISED

Dear editor,

I see one of your correspondents is disappointed with RMT News' October front page (Scotrail GOING DUTCH) and thinks you shouldn't mention the fact that '75 per cent of rail franchises are now foreign owned'.

The disappointing reality is that most UK train and freight operators are now foreign owned. This is testament to the role of European Union's rail liberalisation directives and procurement rules in undermining public ownership of public transport.

The Scottish government's decision to award the Scotrail franchise to Abellio, duplicates the errors of Westminster governments, by allowing our publicly funded transport services to create profits for export abroad. RMT's parliamentary group is right to call for an urgent inquiry into this scandal.

The SNP boasts "creating and protecting jobs

is at the very top of our agenda". But, as our late, great general secretary Bob Crow always reminded us, 'if you don't own it, you don't control it'.

Commercial franchises (whether private, or foreign state-owned) are driven by profit, inevitably leading to job and service cuts.

For example, the eight RMT members made redundant by Skytrac Rail Solutions at Edinburgh Waverley station over the recent Xmas period, as a result of a turf war between Scotrail (Abellio) and TPE (First Group). So much for the SNP protecting jobs.

Abellio was founded by Dutch Railways (NS) in 2001 precisely to take advantage of EU transport liberalisation. Deutsche Bahn and SNCF established similar commercial subsidiaries to take part in the EU rail privatisation bonanza.

The logic of EU privatisation has now taken hold - exactly as the European Commission

intended - leading these 'state owned' rail companies to behave as private corporations both here and in their own countries.

Building a publicly-owned alternative to privatisation, cuts and job insecurity is a national question, because the kind of public services we want is a democratic issue and the nation is the highest level at which democracy meaningfully exists.

RMT recognises this with our long standing policy for renationalisation of our railways. If the SNP, or any political party, wants to rebuild public transport under public ownership, they will have to be prepared to take the keys back from both foreign state-owned and private rail firms alike and tear up the EU's rail privatisation agenda altogether.

Yours in solidarity,

Alex Gordon

RMT Paddington No.1 branch

DON'T GO GREEN

Dear editor,

I disagree with our president Peter Pinkney's comments (Nov/Dec RMT News) advocating that the union supports the Green Party in the next election in May.

There is nothing socialist about the Green Party leadership. There are a few token 'green socialists' but they are largely emasculated by a mass of confused, wishy-washy, middle class liberals. For a start, the Greens support the European Union even after the EU's criminal attacks on workers in Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Cyprus and elsewhere. The European Central Bank has totally destroyed the social fabric of these countries.

None of the founding principles of the EU have anything to do with our union's aims of socialism, in fact quite the opposite. The Brighton Green council has moved against

organised workers, particularly council workers, whom our union has supported in their disputes.

My council in Lancaster, a Green-Labour coalition, has implemented cuts at many levels and supported 'Rail North'-a collaboration with the Con Dems, TPE and Northern Rail designed to implement job cuts we have just lobbied against on November 4!

Lancaster Green councillors have not once attended a Tebay rally since the disaster in 2004.

Wherever they have been in power the Greens have completely let down working class people and their unions, why can't Brother Pinkney see this plain fact?

The Greens 2010 manifesto pledges to stop unions, as well as the CBI, from giving money to parties of their choice. RMT has just voted by over 96 per cent for a political

fund. We have also backed TUCS at the last three AGM's running.

Notwithstanding Bro Pinkney's admiration for Caroline Lucas MP, he is on completely unstable ground and his views on aligning with the Green Party are off beam from the majority of the membership.

Until the Greens stop opposing HS2 and HS3, which RMT supports, we cannot support them. Until they support full EU withdrawal on a socialist programme the same must apply. Opposing TTIP is not enough. Until they oppose all cuts on a socialist basis the same must apply.

I am surprised and a bit angry at Bro Pinkney's ill-considered article and I hope he will be enlightened as to the extent of his error as he is a good and sincere president with integrity.

Yours fraternally

THE GRINCH WHO STOLE CHRISTMAS

Dear editor,

For me and my colleagues at City Link, Christmas is a time to relax after many weeks of hard work, leading up to the big day. Weeks of forced overtime, working 10 hour shifts, sometimes more delivering and collecting parcels for customers all over the UK.

Christmas is time when we might spend a little more money than we intended, but safe in the knowledge that the mandatory overtime we worked would be paid into our banks, to help pay those dreaded bills that come our way in January.

This year, however, was very different for over 2,700 employees of City Link. There were only tears of despair - all thanks to a certain Mr Jon Moulton. The venture capitalist, who's gambled with the lives of so many, for the financial gain of so few, but he's not all bad. He didn't intend the bad news to come out on Christmas Day after all, he was saving that little surprise for Boxing Day. It was only through RMT that members learned the truth that, after all the denials and reassurances



CITY LINK: City Link members protest at Motherwell depot

from the senior management, the company was in trouble.

Since the announcement the union has worked tirelessly for its members, even though many of the full time officials were on leave. They helped to organise demonstrations and put pressure on MPs of all political parties, to get answers as to why Better Capital can treat its workers with such contempt, leaving them with no redundancy payments. This bill will now have to be picked up by the tax payer. It seems the profits are privatised, and losses are nationalised.

On NYE, we thought we'd been thrown a lifeline, in the shape of a consortium that was prepared to run the business as a going

concern, but hopes were dashed at the last moment.

On a personal note, this leaves me and my two adult children, who are also employees, heading for the dole queue. I've been too busy helping to organise demonstrations and trying to keep the press and politicians involved with our plight, but soon I, along with many others, will have to face reality and accept that we have been thrown on the scrapheap.

It's with great sadness, a lump in my throat, that I now have to say, that I am now an ex-RMT City Link rep at Motherwell City Link depot.

Yours, Mick Ward

RMT PROTEST AGAINST ANTI-GAY LAWS IN KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

RMT activists handed in a letter of protest to the Kyrgyz Republic embassy in London recently after lawmakers voted to adopt a so-called "gay propaganda" law.

The law mandates jail terms for gay-rights activists and others, including journalists, who create "a positive attitude toward non-traditional sexual relations".

The letter, signed by RMT general secretary Mick Cash, said that the proposed law would violate fundamental human rights, including the rights to liberty, security and physical integrity, freedom of expression, and peaceful assembly and

association.

"We note a Human Rights Watch report that described how Kyrgyz police routinely subject gay and bisexual men to "physical, sexual, and psychological violence; arbitrary detention; extortion under the threat of violence". According to the report, this violence "rose to the level of torture" on occasions.

"It is of great concern that the Kyrgyz Interior Ministry refuses to acknowledge any problem.

"We also note that the country's top cleric issued a fatwa against same sex



relations, saying the government should be wary of "public organizations that disseminate social discord".

The union called on Kyrgyz president Almazbek Atambayev to reject plans to introduce this oppressive and discriminatory legislation and stop the attacks against the Kyrgyz LGBT community. ■

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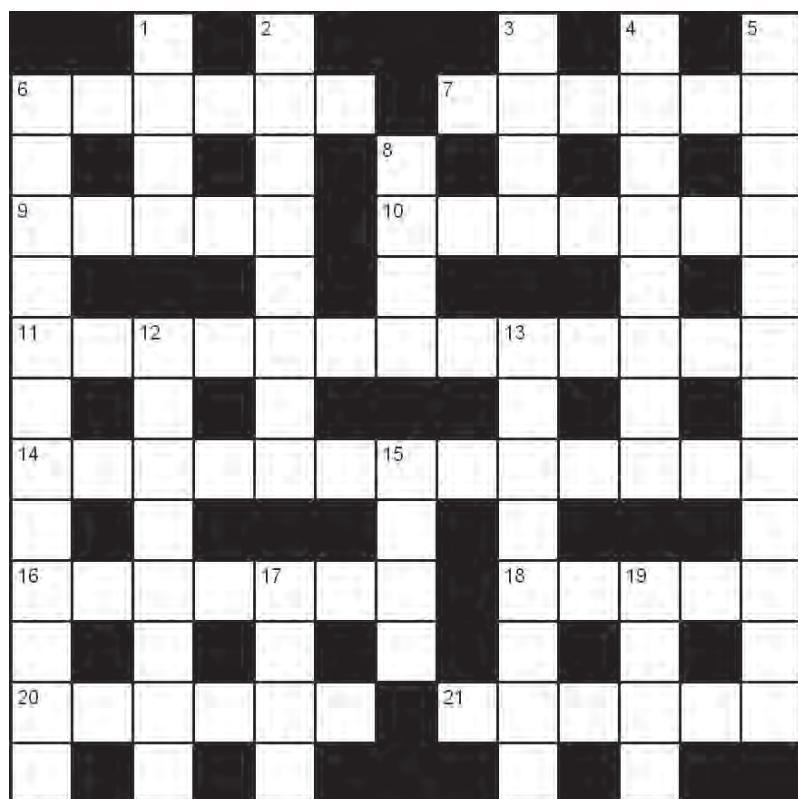
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Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Steve Wood of Kingswinford

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

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 6 Pass by (6)
- 7 Renovate (6).
- 9 Minor actor (5)
- 10 Raise (7)
- 11 Rewrite (13)
- 14 Insensitive (13)
- 16 Distance (7)
- 18 Skilled (5)
- 20 Irritate (6)
- 21 Beautiful (6)

DOWN

- 1 Stop (4)
- 2 Killer (8)
- 3 Present (4)
- 4 Indian prince (8)
- 5 Contemptuously (12)
- 6 Exciting (12)
- 8 Half (4)
- 12 Doomed (8)
- 13 Lift (8)
- 15 Notion (4)
- 17 Competent (4)
- 19 Vessel (4)



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3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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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.

