

RMT

Essential reading for today's transport worker

news



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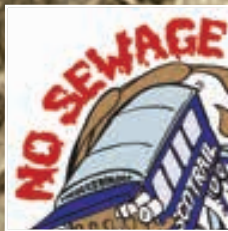
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www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Home phone			
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Date of Birth*		National Insurance Number*	

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

3 Sex. Male Female

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

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

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EDITORIAL



100 YEARS

This year the union is celebrating the 100th anniversary of women joining the ranks of the National Union of Railwaymen, one of the predecessors of RMT.

While women worked in transport on land and sea for many years before 1915, it took a world war for female membership to finally win out.

Such was the need to recruit women within the transport industry that the war government lifted the bar on women working in male grades.

As a result the proportion of female staff increased from two per cent before the war up to 16 per cent by 1918.

Today society has clearly come a long way and discrimination on the basis of sex, race and sexuality is not legally acceptable at work and beyond. But it has taken 100 years of campaigning to change archaic attitudes of ingrained bigotry and work still needs to be done.

Certainly we still have to fight against unfair treatment of men and women in the workplace and that remains the main job of the union. The union is continually fighting unfair dismissal and victimisation cases as well as resisting outsourcing and casualisation.

The magnificent victory at Docklands Light Railway shows exactly what can be achieved when workers stand together. It was only after a solid mandate for strike action, with a yes vote of over 99 per cent, that DLR operator Keolis/Amey finally reversed its plans to outsource staff.

The reps at DLR can be proud of themselves for showing that outsourcing and casualisation can be beaten, well done to everyone involved.

The union has also always fought for decent working conditions and high on the RMT agenda is to stop the

disgusting practice of train operators dumping raw human sewage onto the track across the country.

It is shocking that the government cannot even tell us what volume of sewage is being dumped creating disgusting conditions and a health risk for staff and the public alike.

Ministers have branded the system as 'disgusting' but there is no point for them to politely request that the private train companies desist, they are the one's profiting out of this scandal by allowing it to continue.

If bankers were getting sprayed with effluence at work every day instead of track workers you can guarantee that something would be done. Therefore RMT will not stop campaigning on this issue until action is finally and belatedly taken.

Our annual round of grades and advisory conferences kick off this month with the signallers meeting in north Wales. This is followed by the health and safety conference in Doncaster which this year will be looking at bullying and harassment in the workplace and how to stamp it out.

These important conferences are an opportunity for you to tell the union what you think which ever grade or sector you work in.

Finally it has been good to get out and about recently to meet the members with a visit on board the *Spirit of France* out of Dover with national secretary Steve Todd and taking part in celebrations for South Devon bus branch 25th anniversary.

It is only by meeting members, especially in the workplace and at branch meetings, can you stay in touch and gauge the feelings of the membership. ■

Best wishes

RMT News is compiled and originated by National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD. Tel: 020 7387 4771. Fax: 020 7529 8808. e-mail bdenny@rmt.org.uk The information contained in this publication is believed to be correct but cannot be guaranteed. All rights reserved. RMT News is designed by Bighand Creative and printed by Leycol Printers. General editor: Mick Cash. Managing editor: Brian Denny. No part of this document may be reproduced without prior written approval of RMT. No liability is accepted for any errors or omissions. Copyright RMT 2014

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

SETTLE/CARLISLE RAIL STAFF STRIKE AGAIN OVER REDUNDANCIES

Staff employed by the Settle and Carlisle Railway Development Company - providing at-seat catering on Northern Rail services between Carlisle and Settle - took further strike action last month in a continuing row over compulsory redundancies.

The action follows two rock-solid 24 hour strikes which attracted wide-ranging support and excellent media coverage for the union's campaign.

RMT's grievance is with the company - set up for sustainable and economic development along the line - which has declared the compulsory redundancy situation.

Yet the company is doing well financially so there is no economic reason for the redundancy situation.

The union described the redundancy announcement as a

"kick in the teeth for hard-working and loyal staff" as RMT has a proud history being involved in the campaign to save the line and supporting its development.

The Settle-Carlisle Line is a part of the National Rail network and all passenger trains are operated by Northern Rail. 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 congratulated members for their determination and solidarity and warned that the union has no option but to put on a third phase of action.

"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 but the union remains available for further talks," he said. ■



PICKET: A snow-swept Appleby-in-Westmorland where RMT members employed by the Settle and Carlisle Development Company held a third day of rock solid strike action against the compulsory redundancy of a work colleague. RMT has also revealed that over since October around 80 trains have gone out with no catering facilities due to the company failing to cover the jobs on non-strike days. Since the compulsory redundancy of the catering manager the services have slipped into complete chaos.

WREXHAM RAIL SERVICES UNDER THREAT

RMT is joining forces with rail users to save services which are under threat between Wrexham and Birmingham and Shrewsbury.

RMT and the Shrewsbury to Chester Rail Users Association (SCRUA), which has represented the travelling public using the line since 1986, understands that the current franchise holder, Arriva Trains Wales, is investigating plans to axe the 0747 Wrexham to Birmingham rail service from the timetable from May.

Also facing the chop is the 0700 from Shrewsbury which arrives in Wrexham at 0739.

As the SCRUA campaign group points out, the 0747 from Wrexham calls at Ruabon, Chirk, and Gobowen and provides an important and busy direct service for commuters and students from north east Wales to the West Midlands and Birmingham Airport.

Records show that there has always been a train to Birmingham at around the same time, even in Great Western

days when it ran to Paddington.

It is now being proposed that the Holyhead to Cardiff

'Premier' express service, which currently runs non-stop between Wrexham and Shrewsbury, should stop additionally at Ruabon, Chirk and Gobowen. But it runs 15 minutes earlier and passengers for the Birmingham line would face delay to their journeys through having to change at Shrewsbury.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said that the union stood

shoulder to shoulder with the SCRUA users group in their fight to save services.

"We know that this campaign also enjoys high profile political support and the union will be looking to maximise that through our own contacts.

"The train company needs to listen to the rail users and the staff and pull back from these ill-conceived plans before lasting damage is done to highly-valued and important services," he said. ■

LONDON MIDLAND STAFF BALLOT OVER VICTIMISATION

RMT is balloting members on London Midland from Euston to Tring for both strike action and action short of a strike over the victimisation of a long-standing union member

Steve Caldwell is a senior member of platform staff at Watford with over 32 years unblemished service and a string of commendations for delivering top quality support to the travelling public and for saving lives.

A string of trumped-up charges against Steve, amounting to a sustained campaign of harassment in response to his questioning of safety issues and his level of influence with union colleagues, have been exposed as bogus and have been withdrawn.

However Steve has still been punished, despite not a single allegation standing up, by being shifted miles from his regular place of work.

To compound that totally unwarranted sanction his appeal against it has been left hanging

in mid-air as the manager responsible has disappeared abroad on a cruise.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said that the treatment of RMT activist Steve Caldwell by London Midland was nothing short of shocking.

"He was suspended for four months while a string of bogus charges were subjected to flawed processes, including the use of concocted witness statements, and despite the fact that those initial charges have since been withdrawn Steve has still ended up being punished in an action which makes a mockery of the principles of natural justice.

"Now, to pile on the harassment, the manager due to give a verdict on his wholly unwarranted sanction has disappeared on a cruise for a month.

"RMT has no choice to ballot London Midland for members for action to defend workplace justice," he said.



AWARDS: Steve Caldwell has received numerous awards and commendations during his 32 years as a rail worker including for saving lives and serving the public. A recent nomination for the London Midland ambassador award said that Steve 'deserves a big reward for what he does for the company and the team'.



CROSS COUNTRY STAFF BALLOT OVER SACKING

Cross Country staff at Edinburgh Waverley are being balloted for both strike action and action short of a strike over the wholly unjustified dismissal of union member Charlie Letham.

Charlie Letham has been dismissed by Cross Country for allegedly missing his revenue targets despite the fact that the company procedure quite clearly stipulates that any

underlying issues shall be taken into account when the "CRISP" assessment is applied.

This was very clearly important in the case against the member who has suffered from medical and personal problems. In fact, both his GP and the company doctor made several recommendations to the company to assist them in aiding him in the workplace.

However, management

simply refused to acknowledge Charlie Letham's underlying health problems and ignored the recommendations from the medical professionals before proceeding to sack him.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said that Charlie Letham had been a loyal union member for 15 years and has done everything he can to continue working in his normal capacity.

"However Cross Country management decided that the easiest solution was to dismiss our member despite the weight of medical evidence.

"This is not a situation that can go unchallenged and is a shocking abuse of power demonstrated by the company management and we intend to force them to re-employ Brother Letham," he said.



TUBE DRIVERS BALLOT OVER DISMISSAL



RMT London Underground tube drivers have voted for strike action to demand the reinstatement of Alex McGuigan.

RMT has said time and again that it was not against drug and alcohol testing but the breach of policies and procedures in this case cannot be left unchallenged.

The member has a specific medical condition and the union maintains that it was the failure to follow agreed procedures and to recognise that condition that has led to this unwarranted dismissal. The outdated and flawed drugs and alcohol policy should include provisions for secondary testing and have recognised equality protections.

RMT regional organiser John Leach refuted a number of allegations by LU operations director Nigel Holness sent out in a letter to all members

"He says that he "will not enter into union negotiations

that put Londoner's lives at risk".

"This is completely untrue as RMT fully supports the zero-tolerance policy and takes seriously our obligations to protect the safety of passengers and staff.

"We are actually asking for further testing when a hand held breathalyser gives a positive result; this makes the process more robust and also complies with the Equalities Act in protecting members of staff with medical conditions.

"The current system is unfair because it doesn't offer safeguards to those with disabilities or who are on certain diets. One of LUOH's own doctors conceded that type 2 diabetes, liver disease and even fasting can give false positives on hand held machines.

It has always been our position that there is simply not sufficient evidence to say that Alex was guilty or broke LUL policy," he said. ■

DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY VICTORY AGAINST OUTSOURCING

Threat of strike action forces employers to ditch plans to farm out workforce

Docklands Light Railway operators Keolis/Amey have reversed plans to outsource staff following the threat of solid strike action.

The union called off the action after securing agreement on all of the key points in dispute.

The issues that triggered the ballot included the threat to outsource jobs, undermining working condition and the role of RMT health and safety

representatives.

On all counts the threatened changes have now been withdrawn after 99 per cent ballot result for strike action.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that was delighted to announce that the determination and solidarity of members across Docklands Light Railway had forced the pace in head to head talks with the operators Keolis/Amey.

"As a result we have secured

agreement on all of the issues the union had put into dispute.

"That means that the union has been able to call off the strike action that would have led to a total shutdown of the Docklands Light Railway.

"RMT members voted overwhelmingly for strike action and have proved that unity and organisation in the workplace can deliver positive outcomes that protect staff and their working conditions," he said.

Regional organiser John Leach said that DLR RMT members were a credit to the trade union movement and a beacon of just what strong industrial trade union organisation, across all grades, can achieve.

"RMT now moves forwards with our organisation strong and robust and with good, solid industrial relations on DLR intact," he said. ■

HULL TRAINS BALLOT IN REDUNDANCY DISPUTE

RMT is balloting staff across Hull Trains for industrial action in a dispute over the unwarranted redundancy of a member.

The dispute hinges on entirely bogus claims that the company had recently carried out a 'necessary minor reorganisation' which identified an individual as being at risk of redundancy.

At the members appeal hearing the company stated that she did not fall under the

collective bargaining agreements and therefore existing agreements did not apply.

However the company has identified the same member as an employee covered by collective bargaining on acceptance of the 2014 pay award.

Last year the same member reprimanded a senior manager at Hull Trains after she witnessed them verbally abuse a colleague.

Furthermore, at no time did Hull Trains inform the union, either at locally or nationally, that a reorganisation was taking place and that RMT members were at risk of redundancy.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the Hull Trains' failure to abide by the collective bargaining procedures was unacceptable.

"This union will not tolerate any member being removed from employment by underhand means. "The company are riding

roughshod over their own procedures and this has to be opposed in the strongest possible terms.

"RMT has given Hull Trains plenty of opportunity to reinstate our member but they have chosen instead to adopt a cavalier and confrontational attitude.

"As a result of that hard-headed approach our ballot for both strike action and action short of a strike will close February 24," he said. ■

RMT DEMANDS HALT TO USE OF FLAGGED-OUT VESSEL NAMED AFTER TOP NAZI

RMT has called on Shell UK Ltd not to award the Swiss-based Allseas Group SA the contract for the removal of three Brent platforms in the North Sea using its newest vessel, the Pieter Schelte – named after a top Waffen SS officer jailed for war crimes.

RMT revealed that the vessel also operates under a Panamanian flag of convenience, employing

socially-dumped foreign labour on pitiful pay and conditions.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was sickening that a vessel named after a senior Nazi was set to be working on a tax-payer funded contract in British waters.

“This scandal must be stopped and RMT will work with our sister unions and the ITF to bring this outrage to public attention and force it to be

called to a halt,” he said.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd added that with a massive decommissioning programme in place over the next 10 to 20 years, out of all the vessels that will be used hardly any of them will have British crews on board.

“We will be lucky if any of the work from the decommissioning benefits anywhere in the UK or any of

the UK workforce and yet it is UK taxpayers money that will fund the programme.

“That is an absolute disgrace which is brought into sharp focus by the revelation that a union-busting company, using a ship honouring a top German Nazi and flagged out to Panama, stands to rake in a fortune at British taxpayers’ expense,” he said.

ACT ON OFFSHORE ENERGY CRISIS

Union calls for action to defend jobs and the long-term security of UK energy supplies

RMT has called on the government to act after British Petroleum slashed hundreds of workers in the UK energy industry and warned that there was much worse to come.

The oil giant cut 200 jobs and 100 contractor roles in the North Sea following a review of its operations.

BP is the latest North Sea operator to announce job losses, with ConocoPhillips cutting 230 jobs, while Shell cut 250 jobs last August, and Chevron lost 225 in July.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the industry was making offshore workers carry the can for their failure to plan for lean times such as these.

“Instead they have gone for a short term ‘slash and burn’ approach that will have long

term implications for the future of the entire industry and the security of the UK’s energy supplies.

RMT, along with other unions and the Scottish TUC, met with Oil and Gas UK in Aberdeen recent over the on-going threat to jobs and the long-term security of the UK’s energy supplies.

RMT set out three core points which it believes form a solid basis for weathering the current storm.

The sector is in chaos as companies rush to slash costs in the face of a dramatic fall in oil and gas prices since the summer.

Rather than engage in dialogue, companies are preparing to shut down drilling activity, in some cases two years

ahead of contract end, lay thousands of skilled workers off at the stroke and ‘cold stack’ installations. This will also have a knock on effect in the supply chain, particularly supply vessels, helicopter transport and stand-by vessels.

RMT members working on production platforms have been told shift patterns would be altered from the current 2-on 3-off to equal time of 2:2 or 3:3. One of the HSE’s objectives for offshore shift systems is to ‘minimise tiredness and fatigue’ but equal time shifts combining with 12-14 hour working days is a clear escalation of risk in a hazardous industry.

A mix of the following options would be preferable to the ‘all or nothing’ approach taken by employers in the North

Sea: qualification for advanced tax relief for job sharing or other worker friendly initiatives; flexible working; temporary lay-offs; increased training activity; secondment to HSE inspection initiatives ahead of the introduction of the EU Offshore Safety Regulation in July; onshore engineering development projects; incentivised drilling programmes; incentivised maintenance programmes; and clearing any backlogs in safety critical maintenance work.

“The union is also continuing to lobby politicians for incentives to allow exploration, maintenance, safety and engineering development works to take place during this emergency period for the industry,” Mick Cash said.

VICTORY AGAINST SHADY LAND DEALS

Labour MP John McDonnell has welcomed “a major and historic victory” after a Parliamentary committee agreed to amend clause 5 of the Transport for London Bill which he dubbed a “public land grab”.

The Bill would have let TfL team up with private partners for land development projects – similar to the controversial Earls Court “masterplan”.

While the committee agreed to most of the Bill, the amendment means that TfL would need direct permission from the Secretary of State to enter limited partnerships.

Mr McDonnell, chair of RMT’s parliamentary group, pledged to “now take the fight to the floor of the Commons in order to try and defeat this Bill” before its third reading, due later this year.

He urged Londoners to lobby their MPs to oppose a Bill that he warned if passed “could result in the greatest public land grab by developers London has ever seen”.

Campaigners also attended the committee to prevent TfL from getting away with future developments similar to Capco’s demolition of Earls Court.

The Earls Court redevelopment, which TfL entered into with Capco, will bulldoze the famous venue and two council estates in order to erect luxury flats that campaigners predict will largely lie empty.

TfL failed to respond to requests for comment. ■

Parliamentary column



To be honest, at times, it feels like Parliament has got a ration on common sense.

Take the forced re-privatisation of the East Coast Mainline.

As you’ll know, when National Express failed it and bailed out, East Coast was taken back into public hands.

In its five years under public stewardship, it was turned around. It returned nearly £1 billion to the taxpayer, increased passenger numbers, introduced a new timetable, improved punctuality, invested in ageing rolling stock and achieved an industry leading approach to recycling and reducing carbon emissions.

The move to flog it back, cash-cow like, to private profiteers defied all business (and common) sense.

No doubt you also share my dismay that the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern super-franchise wasn’t awarded to our public sector. Instead it went to state companies in Europe, threatening our services and the livelihoods of hundreds of skilled railway workers here, including in my own city of Brighton.

It’s appalling that passenger services, welfare and worker rights would be so jeopardised.

Privatisation has comprehensively failed. Our once thriving railways, now fragmented, are today characterised by poor services and soaring fares (up by more than an eye-watering 20% for Brighton-London commuters under the current Coalition Government). They’re ripping off

COMMON SENSE ON RAIL

passengers, letting down (and letting go) workers, harming the economy and failing the environment.

We could keep puffing along. Keep patching up a punctured system, paying ever more for ever less.

Or we can fix the fault at the source, by bringing the ownership and operation of our railways back into public hands.

RMT is the leading voice in the campaign to do just that. It’s given me essential support as I fight the cause in Parliament, and my Railways Bill – which calls for franchises to be returned to public hands as they expire, or fail – draws on the impressive research in its Rebuilding Rail report.

A publicly-owned railway will provide quality services, fair prices and protect our jobs.

The idea has its opponents, of course, crying of a rose-tinted return to the ‘dark days of British Rail’.

There are certainly lessons to be learned from British Rail. But the system we once had was undermined, undervalued and underinvested. It didn’t fail us – our politicians did.

We need a new approach. I want to see a fully public and reunified railway. Network Rail had to be taken into full public ownership last year – so why not finish the job?

And the modern, efficient, affordable, clean, services enjoyed in other parts of Europe offer us a positive, forward-thinking blueprint.

A new rail system should be truly public – with workers and passengers participating in decision-making.

It should prioritise passengers, not shareholders. Cut bonuses – not staff (and with them their wealth of experience and knowledge). It should be accessible to all – financially and physically.

And it needn’t be a pipe dream.

We know de-privatisation is popular with the public and there’s also cross-bench support.

But Labour’s Leadership is yet to jump on board: Ed Miliband would only invite public operators to compete against private companies for lucrative rail contracts.

The proposal is a fence-sitting fudge, as he well knows: millions would be wasted in bureaucratic bidding wars. Our railways would remain, quite literally, in pieces and, quite probably, privatised.

Back the public, Mr Miliband, to give us a reliable public railway to be rightly proud of again: you’d be welcomed if you did.

In the meantime, I’ll push my Railways Bill at every opportunity. There can be no let up until common sense prevails, and our railways are put right.

RMT has always been successful in getting fairness and justice for its members – and it’s an honour to fight your corner in Westminster.

Caroline Lucas is Green MP for Brighton and her Railways Bill is due its Second Reading in Parliament on February 27 ■

A MARITIME MANIFESTO

Union launches manifesto for UK seafarers training and employment

The number of UK seafarers working at sea is in potentially terminal decline.

In 1982 there were over 30,000 merchant navy ratings in the industry, today there are below 23,000 UK officers and ratings active at sea. Demographics and recruitment rates mean that the UK will suffer from a maritime skills shortage by the beginning of the next decade if this decline is not addressed by government, with serious consequences for national security, seafarer communities and the national economy.

RMT represent around 5,000 UK ratings at work in the industry and propose the following policies for adoption by the next government in order to repair the maritime skills base through the training and employment of the next generation of seafarers:

1. Equal rights to employment, equality and immigration law for UK seafarers
2. Enforcement of protections for UK flagged and crewed vessels engaged in island cabotage
3. Promotion of Government funding for ratings training and apprenticeships
4. Legislate to keep the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in the public sector
5. Review the role and responsibilities of the

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

EQUAL RIGHTS TO EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITY AND IMMIGRATION LAW FOR UK SEAFARERS

As the table opposite suggests, shipping companies operating in the short sea sector from the UK exploit the lack of legal protection for UK based seafarers to employ low cost crews from around Europe and the world, to the detriment of the domestic maritime skills base.

If left unchecked, these practices, as well as having national security implications will leave the UK without a domestic workforce capable of operating or servicing a diverse range of shipping, with unwanted social and economic consequences, especially in port and isolated communities.

Three straightforward legislative reforms would revive seafarer numbers and repair the national maritime skills base, averting a damaging skills shortage in the maritime sector:

- Implement the Carter Report's recommendation for outlawing all forms of pay discrimination on UK ships
- Enforce the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 for seafarers
- Jobs on vessels working from UK ports to be included in the Work Permit skills test

Small numbers of ratings are



being trained every year, mainly in the public sector by Caledonian MacBrayne and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. A major increase in training and employment of UK ratings, across the industry could be achieved with the following policies:

- Make ratings training a mandatory part of the Tonnage Tax scheme
- Promote SMarT funding for ratings training and rating to officer conversion
- Promote ratings apprenticeships in deck, engine, catering and electro-technical through Government, employers and maritime colleges

It is for national security

reasons to retain the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in the public sector and to dramatically increase the number of new officers and ratings coming into the Merchant Navy. The following policies would secure the future of the RFA as part of a thriving maritime sector:

- Legislate to prevent the privatisation of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary
- Establish a Maritime Industry Monitoring Group in the MoD to monitor the impact current industry employment and other trends would impact on operational capability
- Retain the option of payroll deductions for trade unions in the RFA ■

HAND OVER:
Retiring shipping
EC member
Malcolm Dunning
(behind left) hands
over to new EC
shipping member
Lee Davidson
standing next to
him. Steve Todd
and Mick Cash in
front.



NEW SHOCK REPORT ON WORKING CONDITIONS ON UK SHIPS

RMT is calling on the government to intervene to save Britain's shipping sector from "terminal decline," as a new report slams the low wages being paid to foreign workers in the industry.

Research by Cardiff University professor Helen Sampson blasts the government's "free seas" policy for failing to protect the British workforce.

The report includes a list of "ships of shame" operating off the British coast.

In order to reverse declining employment and training rates for UK seafarers, the *Maritime Futures* report makes a number of recommendations, including a different approach to minimum wage enforcement and reserving jobs on specified routes for UK seafarers on UK registered ships.

Currently ferry companies get away with paying foreign workers well below the minimum wage by flying the flags of other countries.

But employing exclusively foreign workers in the trade has caused a skills shortage and threatens national security, the report argues.

Ms Sampson advocates reserving a proportion of each ship's crew for the



MEETING THE MEMBERS: National secretary Steve Todd and general secretary Mick Cash held discussions with members working on the Dover/Calais ferry route

national workforce, and cites numerous examples of better practice abroad.

She also insists that minimum wage laws should be applied directly to employers rather than waiting for workers to challenge them at tribunals.

RMT launched the report in Parliament alongside a *Maritime Manifesto* which calls for the Royal Fleet auxiliary to be protected from privatisation and a review of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

RMT shipping secretary Steve Todd said that UK seafarers were ageing and the next generation of seafarers, ratings and officers was not being trained.

"This report provides government and the industry with the tools to provide some balance and stability to seafarer recruitment, something which has been missing from the industry for decades but is absolutely essential to our national economic health," he said.

The report acknowledges progress made under the current government in linking training for ratings to the concessions available to international shipping companies from the Tonnage Tax and the development of ratings apprenticeships.

To build on that progress, the report recommends a mandatory link between Tonnage Tax and ratings training and support for travel and accommodation costs from shore based training for UK ratings.

UK seafarer numbers which have fallen over 70 per cent in 30 years and the number of ratings has fallen nearly 30 per cent since 2011 to around 8,500.

RMT general secretary, Mick Cash said that the *Maritime Futures* report provided clear pointers to where the next government needs to take action in order to protect seafarers' jobs and the Red Ensign from unfair crewing and registration practices adopted by international shipping companies to cut costs at the expense of our national interest.

"We should no longer tolerate shipping companies flying in low cost seafarers from around the world to work on ships from UK ports for rates of pay as low as £2.25 per hour.

"The maritime industry needs reform in favour of UK based seafarers, the maritime skills base and the UK register," he said.

*The *Maritime Futures Report* was commissioned by RMT and written by Professor Helen Sampson, Director of the Seafarers International Research Centre at Cardiff University. ■

http://www.sirc.cf.ac.uk/Helen_Sampson_-_Director.aspx

SHIPS OF SHAME: SEAFARER RATES BELOW THE NMW

(SOURCE: ITF INSPECTIONS AND INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT)

Operator	Routes	Basic rate of pay (per hour)	Flag of vessel	Seafarer Nationality	Crew (total ratings)
Condor Ferries	Portsmouth, Poole and Weymouth to Jersey and Guernsey	£2.35	Bahamas	Ukrainian	80
Streamline (MV Daroja)	Aberdeen-Lerwick; Aberdeen-Kirkwall	£2.25	Cyprus	Indian & Russian	20
P&O Ferries (Irish Sea)	Larne-Cairnryan; Larne-Troon; Dublin-Liverpool	£4.70 (passenger) & £3.65 (freight)	Bahamas & Bermudan	Filipino, Latvian, Spanish	200
Seatruck	Heysham-Dublin; Liverpool-Dublin; Heysham-Warrenpoint	£3.66	Isle of Man and Bahamas	Polish	30
Seatruck	Ullapool-Stornoway (Clipper Ranger – chartered by CalMac)	£4.19	Isle of Man	Estonian	10
Seatruck	Aberdeen-Lerwick (MV Helliard & MS Hildasay – Chartered by Serco NorthLink)	£3.66	Isle of Man	Estonian	20
Irish Ferries	Dublin-Holyhead; Rosslare-Pembroke	£5.55	Cyprus, Bahamas & Italy	Estonian & Polish	50
P&O Ferries (North Sea)	Hull-Zebrugge; Hull-Rotterdam	£4.70	Bahamas	Portuguese	300
Stena Line (North Sea)	Harwich-Hook of Holland	£2.39 (freight)	UK	Filipino	60

DOVER REPS

Two shipping branches worked together to develop a regional stage one reps course held at the Dover office recently.

Both Dover and Southampton shipping branches had newly elected reps attending the course, five from P&O Dover and two from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

The course was tutored by Fred Potter formerly of Cal Mac and it has given the reps the confidence to go out and better serve the membership in the respective workplaces.

The group also heard RMT president Peter Pinkney who gave an inspirational talk on the union, the trade union movement as a whole and the constant attacks from the employers and the government.

Head of learning in the



South East Region Ivor Riddell and Paul Shaw, the newly-appointed Shipping Development Officer, both explained the courses that can be provided through Union Learning.

EC and Dover shipping member Lee Davison said: "from

the feedback we had had everyone on the course came away with a lot more knowledge and are all looking forward to Stage two in the coming year".

COURSE: from left to Right Nathan Wilkinson, Dover Shipping, Lee Davison, Dover

assistant branch secretary, Dale Kember, Dover shipping, Jake Lucas, Dover shipping, Sam Mole, Southampton shipping, Steve Channing, Southampton shipping, Karl Taylor, Dover shipping, Martin Appleyard Dover shipping, tutor Fred Potter and Peter Pinkney ■

SCOTTISH LEARNING CONFERENCE

RMT union learning rep Andrew Elliott from the union's Lowlands and Uplands Learning project said that it was great to see so many RMT reps at the Scottish Union Learning Conference in Dundee in November.

"Conference organisers and our STUC colleagues noted that we all had our new RMT Learning Scotland Organising through Learning polo shirts on.

"The event allowed us time to meet up with ULRs and project worker Dan Henderson from the RMT Highlands and Islands project who were also well represented.

Conference discussed the overall funding situation and priorities for Scottish Union

Learning as a whole over the coming two years.

Guest speakers and the various workshops helped to develop our understanding of learning opportunities that are available, as well as looking at future possibilities with Open Learning.

"We discussed issues in a focused manner such as how to ensure recognition of members' prior learning and how to deal with the introduction of new technology in the workplace," he said.

Since May 2014 RMT ULRs have become more active in organising a number of courses in this first year of the project for the Scottish Lowlands and Uplands.

The focus of ULRs next year will be to ascertain the learning needs of members in the various workplaces and assist them in achieving their learning goals, so please speak to your ULR for

more information or contact the RMT Learning Coordinator Dennis Fallen d.fallen@rmt.org.uk or text 07920 446112. ■





Ministers and officials admit they don't know what volume of **HUMAN SEWAGE** is being dumped on Britain's railways!

There is no current statutory protection for track and maintenance workers from these discharges.

This filthy and disgusting practice continues unchecked.

Why should track and maintenance workers have to put up with this?



STOP
THIS ROTTEN PRACTICE
ONCE AND FOR ALL

Protecting our members' interests is our priority
Join us today

www.rmt.org.uk FREEPHONE 0800 376 3706



RAIL SEWAGE SCANDAL ROLLS ON

RMT has stepped up demands for urgent action following media reports that one in ten trains are still dumping human waste on the tracks and that exposure to the excrement has serious health implications for rail workers.

RMT had already learnt from a series of questions tabled by members of the union's Parliamentary Group that Ministers and officials did not have a clue as to how much excrement is sprayed around the rail network every year.

As well as this shocking admission questions also revealed that a quarter of trains with toilets on board don't have retention tanks and are discharging raw sewage.

- Services on the Great Eastern, Great Western, Midland and East Coast main lines are served by trains which discharge effluent to the track.
- Local and regional services in East Anglia, Wales, Scotland, the East and West Midlands, the North and South West of England are also involved in the practice.
- The government has confirmed that there is no statutory protection for track workers or passengers from these discharges.
- There is no formal or legal requirement to stop train operating companies from discharging toilet waste on to the track or to force rolling stock leasing companies to retrofit controlled emission toilets to those trains that currently discharge waste to the track.

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



sewer and that the human waste doesn't simply hit the track bed, it sprays out when trains are travelling at speed posing a serious health risk to track-based staff.

Rail works have also been delayed because staff have been confronted with pools of raw sewage and train depot staff are forced to scrape the excrement from the bottom of carriages.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was appalling that in 2015 the government still cannot even tell us what volume of raw and untreated sewage was being dumped at stations and on railway tracks across Britain creating disgusting conditions and a health risk for staff and the public alike.

"It is a shocking indictment on the state of our railways 20 years after privatisation, and with hundreds of millions of pounds a year being creamed

off in private profits, that unknown amounts of raw sewage are being dumped and sprayed across the tracks with the government unable to even tell us when it will stop.

"Ministers have branded the system as 'disgusting' but has not lifted a finger to end it.

"Not only is this a filthy way of disposing of human waste, but it also poses real health risks and dangers for RMT members out there working on the tracks and in the depots.

"There is no point the government politely requesting that the private train companies desist, they are the one's profiting out of this scandal by allowing it to continue.

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



RMT TAKES NORTHERN AND TRANS-PENNINE FIGHT TO MPS

RMT activists continue to hand out thousands of postcards in the run-up to the general election, taking the message directly to candidates that jobs and services are under threat 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 once more delayed the Invitations to Tender (ITTs) for the new franchises.

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.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the government's whole franchise timetable for the Northern and TPE routes

had clearly descended into chaos.

RMT regional organiser Craig Johnston thanked branches for getting out the message across the North.

"My sincere thanks to all those who turned up to hand out postcards to passengers at Lancaster, Manchester Victoria, Blackburn, Barrow-in-Furness and Hexham.

"We obtained some significant media coverage and thousands more postcards were handed out to members of the public.

"We have to stay focused and committed to the campaign - the specifications and invitations to tender for the new franchises could be announced at any time.

"The DfT and Rail North plans were due in December but have been delayed and the pressure is now on them to rush things out before the General Election campaigning period starts around March.

"Irrespective of what the specifications are we will be continuing to campaign after any announcement on specifications as we intend to make any proposals an issue at the forthcoming general election," he said. ■



100 years **WOMEN IN THE UNION**

RMT equality officer
Jess Webb outlines
the struggle for
women to become
part of the union

This year the union is celebrating women joining its ranks 100 years ago.

Certainly women worked on rail and at sea for many years before 1915, but it took a world war to break through resistance within the railway unions to allow female membership.

The National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) was created in 1913 with an amalgamation of three trades unions.

At the point of amalgamation there was a debate as to the name of the union, with one trade union arguing for 'railway

workers' because the companies employed over 12,000 women and the new union expected to recruit them.

However the argument that using the word 'railwaymen' would not stop women being recruited won the day.

The term 'railwayman', however, caused problems. Although the rule book stated that "Any person employed on any railway or in connection with any railway in the United Kingdom shall be eligible for membership" branch officers were still unsure if they could

allow female membership.

Attempts were made in 1912 and 1913 to clarify women's eligibility and some branches proposed that the name should be changed to 'National Union of Railway Workers'. This was, however, voted down and when women applied to join the union they were declined.

Britain entered into war on August 4 1914. With this came a sudden increase in railway traffic transporting troops and war supplies along with a sharp decrease in railway staff as thousands of men joined the

forces.

Such was the unprecedented need to recruit women within the industry that the Secretary of War Lord Kitchener appointed a sub-committee to discuss whether women could substitute men on the railways particularly in grades from which they were barred.

The sub-committee recommended the employment of women in some male wages grades. As soon as this bar was lifted in the spring of 1915 the companies were inundated with applications. The proportion of



female staff increased from two per cent in July 1914 to 16 per cent in 1918.

Given such a surge of women in the industry the issue of whether to allow female membership came to the NUR's AGM in 1915 with 25 branches in support of such a move.

The delegates' vote was 33 for and 23 against. Whilst this had been passed, women were classed as 'Scale D' which was for temporary staff with a more limited provision of union services and they were not allowed to serve on committees. The women were simply not expected to stay in post after the war had ended and a major reason that the union had allowed female membership was to protect the rates of pay for when the men returned home. The union, as well as the country, expected that the war would be over quickly and women would really only be working temporarily.

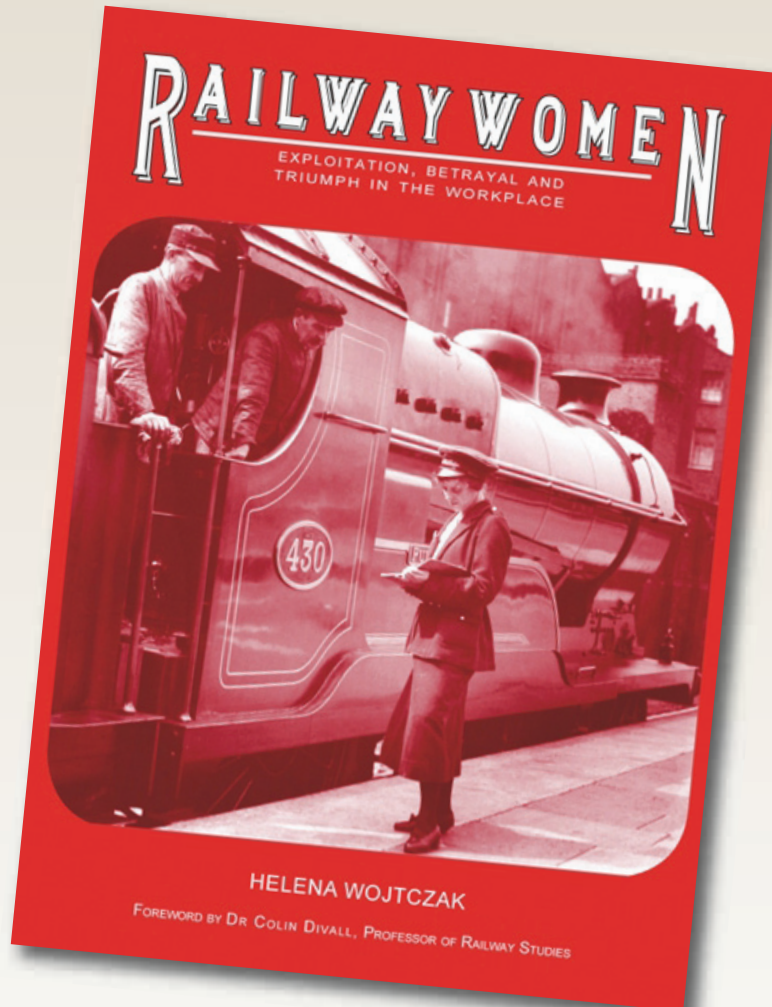
The first known woman to officially join the NUR was Jennie Burden, a 19 year old carriage cleaner who joined

Brighton 3 branch on July 2 1915. Over 2,000 women joined over the next six months. The women's names were entered in red ink in the union's register as opposed to the usual black.

With such an increase in women members the issue of the term 'railwaymen' was again raised at the AGM calling for the name to be changed to the 'National Union of Railway Workers'. But this was lost at the vote, 15 for, 44 against. The term 'railwaymen' only eventually went in 1990 when the NUR merged with the National Union of Seamen.

Jo Stanley's article in this magazine *Women seafarers and the First World War* (overleaf) suggests that the NUS had female members before 1915. This requires a study in itself.

It would be glib to say that from being allowed entry to the union, sexist discrimination would be put aside and women members were treated as equals. This would not be an accurate telling of the facts. Women members had to contend with opposition from their male



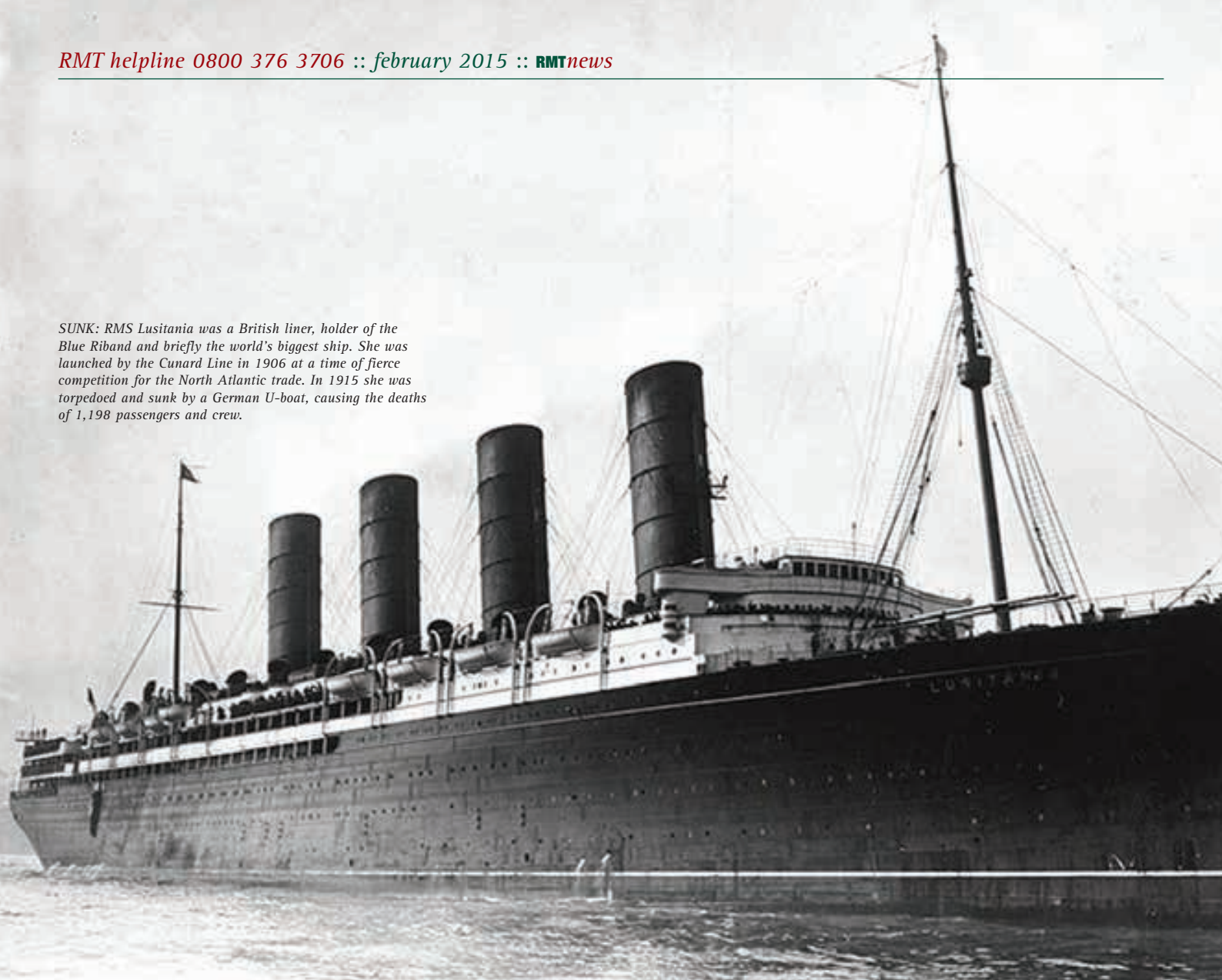
For anyone interested in reading more about the history of women within the rail industry there is no better source than Helena Wojtczak's brilliantly comprehensive book *Railwaywomen* (Hastings Press). Winning the Best Self Published Book Award in 2007, this is still a fabulous source of statistics and stories both shocking and uplifting about the fight by women within the industry for equality. Having a look at the Hastings Press website is highly recommended too as it has wonderful photos of women on the railways over the last 100 years www.hastingspress.co.uk

counterparts within the union as in society itself. The interesting debate now is reflecting on the opposition to letting women members join the union 100 years ago, is how far the fight for equality has come.

It is important that we use this anniversary, not just as a celebration, but to encourage women to progress within the union and to challenge discrimination that still lurks within our society. ■



SUNK: RMS Lusitania was a British liner, holder of the Blue Riband and briefly the world's biggest ship. She was launched by the Cunard Line in 1906 at a time of fierce competition for the North Atlantic trade. In 1915 she was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat, causing the deaths of 1,198 passengers and crew.



Women seafarers in the First World War



Jo Stanley reveals a hidden history of women at sea in wartime

Liverpool-based widow Jessie Pritchard, a stewardess on the steamship Dominion in summer 1915, committed suicide by jumping into the ocean. She'd seen two submarines manoeuvring round the ship and couldn't believe they were just Allied vessels.

Jessie was unusual. Most of the 1,700 women in the Merchant Service around the 1914-1918 war period kept calm and carried on sailing for as long as they could. Stewardess Carrie Keyes was still on the seas in 1918.

It wasn't just that they were patriotic or fearless. Their families depended on the earnings. And the war risk bonus (at the same rate as male stewards) helped.

Their union, the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union (a predecessor of the National Union of Seamen, which was subsumed into RMT 70 years later) didn't insist that the little ladies stayed safely home while real men fought.

But nor did it protest against the shipping companies laying off women. (Companies said that stewardesses weren't needed because there were so few female passengers. Such civilians were officially prevented from making unnecessary voyages).

Nor did the union agree, as other unions did, 'Well, we'll let women do men's jobs just for the duration'. Instead young boys and unfit men, not skilled women, were recruited to fill the positions of stewards who'd gone to war. (Stewarding was not a Reserved Occupation like other jobs on ships).

WHAT DID THE FIRST WORLD WAR MEAN TO WOMEN WORKING ON SHIPS?

21-year-old stewardess Violet Jessop found it initially exciting when, en route to New York, the wireless announced on Tuesday 4 August 1914 that war had begun: 'A new wave of animation swept over everybody ... [they] seemed revitalized and a new purpose leapt into many hitherto colourless lives ... it seemed uncanny, journeying

back ... to goodness knows what in the huge darkened Olympic.' War also meant:

- the chances of a voyage dwindled as female passenger numbers dropped off
- crew were at far more risk of death because of enemy submarines and mines
- women crew were sailing with new colleagues because their usual male workmates had joined the war effort
- they sailed with very different passengers to peacetime: desperate Belgian refugees fleeing their occupied homeland; for the first time on hospital ships, looking after the Nursing Sisters, including at Gallipoli; and carrying women munitions workers from Ireland to Britain.

The biggest loss of women crew's lives was when the Lusitania sank in May 1915. Fifteen women crew out of the 24 aboard were lost, including Cunard's first 'lady typewriter', Sadie Hale. A memorial poem to her recorded her as:

*'Blythe and agile, no lack-a-daise
A-sinking, yet in loving clasp,
Thus did she and her friend stand,
Soothingly in death's terror'd grasp,
There in sight of her dear Ireland.'*

Some deaths were horrific. In February 1916 the Bombay-bound Maloja hit a mine off Shakespeare Cliff, Dover. 'One little girl who was playing on deck ... told me quite unconcernedly that she saw the head of one of the stewardess blown off' wrote a Times reporter.

Stewardess Violet Jessop wrote the most telling story of all. Off Greece when the Britannic exploded in November 1916, she jumped into the sea, sank and rose three times, and finally her eyes took in

'an indescribable scene of slaughter, which made me shut them again to keep it out ... all round were heartbreaking scenes of agony, Britannic ... the white pride of the ocean's medical world, dipped her head a little,

took a fearful plunge until with a final roar she disappeared into the depths.'

Others too sailed on despite previous disasters. Jessie Cole carried on despite being torpedoed three times.

The only seawoman to endure a long period in a lifeboat, Teresa Edgar spent ten days in an open one off Fastnet in May 1918. Her captain referred to her afterwards as 'A brave little soul, asking no favours and trying to appear as cheerful as the rest.'

Even if you didn't drown you could face internment. Five stewardesses on the Brussels, a Great Eastern Railway ferry, were detained in Germany in summer 1916 after their captain famously challenged enemy orders.

The Germans were puzzled at the women's apparent lack of fear and confused by their dark blue uniforms with shiny brass buttons. Were they fighting women? Had Britain sunk so low that it would make even women fight in a war?

By the time the war ended 53 British seawomen had died, when their eighteen ships were hit. They represented about three per cent of the workforce. Many more were maimed and injured, some, like Violet, for life.

Compared to the 17,000 merchant seamen killed or missing, women's deaths were not great. But they were proportionate.

As usual with stewarding staff of both sexes, losses were high because they stayed below decks helping passengers get into lifejackets. Women crew also tended to hold back when the call came 'Women and Children First', on the grounds that they were staff first, female second.

Most of these seawomen went back to seafaring the very second they were telegraphed to get to the docks. War didn't lead to women being allowed to 'men's' work on ships. But unusually, probably because union membership was 100 per cent, they now had equal pay.



ANOTHER SECRET TREATY

Secret negotiations for a Canada EU Trade Agreement (CETA) will create another treaty for enshrining massive powers for global corporations and threaten transport jobs

Opposition to the corporate-backed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – a secret free trade deal being negotiated between the EU and the US – has shone a light on another murky deal between Canada and the EU, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

TTIP and CETA both threaten to fatally undermine democracy and unleash an orgy of job cutting and privatisation particularly in the transport sector.

The Seafarers' International Union of Canada (SIU) president James Given is calling on the Canadian government to hold an open and public debate of the contents for Canadians if CETA becomes a reality.

"We can guarantee one thing for sure, if CETA is signed and adopted, Canadian maritime jobs will be lost and it will not take long before the rest of the Canadian transportation sectors are affected, including, air, road and rail," he said.

He warned that there were over 1.4 million seafarers in the world and most seafarers gained employment through third party manning agents.

"If the Canadian government can say with 100 per cent certainty that they know who is on a vessel which is registered in Cyprus, owned in Greece, operated from Thailand, Classified in Japan, insured in the UK and crewed by Indonesian and Syrian seafarers hired through third party

manning agents, then they are living in a world that I did not know existed," he said.

European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) has also expressed concern over CETA negotiations which it believes jeopardise jobs and regulations on both sides of the Atlantic.

In addition to opposing the creation of Investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) courts which will allow corporations to sue states that get in the way of making profits, the ETF rejects the inclusion of a specific chapter on International Maritime Transport Services.

"In our view, the present proposals are a charter for seafarer exploitation and the undermining of collective bargaining in the maritime

industry, as they permit free movement of EU registered vessels or EU flag of convenience vessels between Canadian ports without any restrictions on nationality of the crew or basic protections from exploitative pay rates or working conditions," it warned.

The ETF has also made clear its opposition to TTIP and CETA which would include the opening up of domestic cabotage arrangements in North America and effectively end the Jones Act in the US or the Canadian equivalent which protects domestic jobs.

"It is difficult to comprehend how the domestic shipping industry can survive if the measures currently being proposed are implemented," the

ETF warned.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash has written, in solidarity with the Canadian Maritime and Supply Chain Coalition, to urge the Canadian government to take the following steps in subsequent CETA negotiations:

- To exclude shipping from the scope of CETA to prevent the elimination of thousands of Canadian jobs by weakening and abolishing the Cabotage laws;
- To oppose any further proposals aimed at jeopardising jobs, skills and collectively bargained standards Canadian transportation sectors;

- To provide assurances that CETA will not enter into force until it has been subject to full democratic scrutiny in the Canadian and European Parliaments;
- To support calls for a referendum on the trade deal before it becomes law and any damage made irreversible.

Ultimately TTIP and CETA negotiations are really seeking to massively weaken standards and regulations intended to protect people and our environment.

A new report '*Trading Away Democracy*' published by various NGOs, trade unions and

campaign groups based in Canada and Europe warns that Canada's experience with NAFTA has already opened the gateway to that country being sued 35 times. Canada has lost or settled six claims and has paid damages to foreign investors totalling over 171.5 million Canadian dollars.

These investor-state lawsuits are decided by private commercial arbitrators who are paid for each case they hear, with a clear tendency to interpret the law in favour of investors.

These companies would like to see any remaining 'barriers' to their profiteering to be removed, irrespective of the fact

that the very reason for the creation of these rules is to protect people, consumers, and nature.

If the CETA is signed and ratified with Investor-state dispute settlement intact, democracy will suffer while corporations gain new tools for frustrating any number of policies designed to protect the environment, public health, public services and the conservation of resources and, crucially, to make our society more sustainable and equitable. People, not corporations, should determine the future of the economy and society.



WHAT IS TTIP?

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a comprehensive free trade and investment treaty currently being negotiated – in secret – between the European Union and the US.

The main goal of TTIP is to remove regulatory 'barriers', ie national laws and regulations, which restrict the potential profits to be made by transnational corporations on both sides of the Atlantic.

Campaigners have warned that this could lead to over one million jobs and hand global corporations the right to sue countries in secret courts if they refuse to privatise public services.

Current 'regulatory barriers' being discussed in secret are in reality some of our most prized social standards and environmental regulations, such as trade union rights, food safety rules, regulations on the use of toxic chemicals, digital privacy laws and even new banking safeguards introduced to prevent a repeat of the 2008 financial crisis.

In addition to this deregulation agenda, TTIP

seeks to create new markets by opening up public services and government procurement contracts to competition from transnational corporations, threatening to introduce a further wave of privatisations in key sectors, such as health and education.

Most worrying of all, TTIP seeks to grant foreign investors a new right to sue sovereign governments in front of ad hoc arbitration tribunals for loss of profits resulting from public policy decisions.

This 'investor-State dispute settlement' mechanism effectively elevates transnational capital to a status equivalent to the nation-state itself, and threatens to undermine the most basic principles of democracy in the EU and US alike.

Many states are already feeling the sting of investor-state disputes. For example the Swedish energy company Vattenfall is suing against Germany's decision to phase out nuclear power. In the US the use of such clauses in NAFTA has led to regulation-



chilling cases, such as one £160 million case challenging a drilling moratorium in Québec. In the case of *Tecmed v. Mexico* a tribunal ruled that Mexico had not acted "free from ambiguity and totally transparently" when a local government decided not to re-license a waste treatment plant because of environmental concerns.

Opposition to TTIP is growing along with the campaign to prevent pro-business government officials from signing away key social and environmental standards. All people are encouraged to join this resistance by getting in touch with their local

campaigns.

The charity War on Want has revealed that the European Commission's own internal impact assessment acknowledged that there would be "prolonged and substantial" adjustment

costs caused by TTIP could lead to the loss of over one million jobs.

War on Want Executive Director John Hilary has written a pamphlet on TTIP which is available from: www.waronwant.org

War on Want
44-48 Shepherdess Walk
London N1 7JP
Tel 020 7324 5040
support@waronwant.org

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



LEGAL

LOVE AND THE LAW



Sarah Henderson from RMT's legal department outlines the pitfalls of cohabitation

It is a common misconception that couples who cohabit for a certain length of time have legal rights similar to that of married couples.

With the ONS releasing data this month that cohabitating couples grew by 29.7 per cent between 2004 and 2014 and is the fastest growing type of family in the UK, it is important that cohabitants understand where they stand legally.

The reality is cohabitants have significantly fewer rights than married couples.

Last month the Cohabitation Rights bill passed its second reading in the House of Lords. The Bill provides certain protections for persons who live or have lived together as a couple by, for instance, allowing a right to apply for financial settlement on relationship breakdown.

The Bill has a long way before achieving Royal Assent to become law and has already been met with some resistance in the Lords, being equated to "forced marriage".

Below is a brief outline of where cohabiting couples currently stand legally in relation to property rights and steps that an individual can take

in order to protect their position in the event of their relationship breaking down.

If property is held as joint tenants, then it is owned jointly and equally. On sale it will usually be divided equally between the couple, regardless of how much each party contributed to it. One party may be able to buy the half share of equity owned by the other. Alternatively, the property may be sold with each party retrieving a half share of the proceeds. If one of the couple dies, the other will automatically inherit their share.

Owning a property as tenants in common means each party owns a specific share e.g. 40/60 which they can dispose of as they wish. In the event of death, that share will go to the beneficiary named in the will, or to the estate where an individual dies intestate.

Problems can arise where property is held in the sole name of one partner. Regardless of whether the other has contributed financially to the property (by making mortgage payments, home improvements etc.) the starting point is that the owner retains full ownership. The burden is then

on the other party to seek to demonstrate that they are entitled to a share of that property. This is complex area of law involving constructive trusts and beneficial interests, and can often involve solicitors and going to court.

A deed of trust which sets out the beneficial interest of each partner in the property can ensure each party's interests are legally protected in the event of relationship breakdown.

If only one person is named on the tenancy of a rented home, that person can evict the other if the relationship breaks down. Where the sole tenant decides to leave the property, the landlord is not obliged to transfer the tenancy to the remaining party (unless ordered by the court).

A cohabitant not named in the tenancy should consider joining as a named tenant.

In all cases if there are children a court can order the transfer of the home to the parent who is mainly looking after them to ensure that child is housed. If part or all of the home is owned by the other partner, it will revert to them when the youngest child reaches 18.

For bank accounts, savings and investments, the law treats cohabitants as two separate individuals' i.e. they remain in the ownership of the person whose name they are in. Neither party can access money held in the other's account. If one party dies the balance will be the property of their estate. Where an account is held jointly, funds will generally be divided equally on the death of one partner the other partner automatically becomes entitled to the balance subject to tax considerations on the deceased's estate.

An increasingly popular solution to the issues highlighted is to sign a cohabitation agreement. These can clearly sets out cohabitants' rights and obligations towards one another and children of the family e.g. rights to the home and other shared assets, arrangements for children etc.

A court is able to ignore the agreement but will generally uphold its terms if satisfied it is indicative of the parties' intentions.

Finally, cohabitants should have a valid will, property and assets will follow intestacy rules without one.





Branch celebrates its 25 year anniversary with RMT general secretary Mick Cash

South Devon Bus branch was formed in 1989 when Torquay no.1 branch, Torquay salaried branch and Newton Abbot Bus branch were amalgamated when the union underwent reorganisation under the late general secretary Jimmy Knapp.

The committees of these branches together with the regional organiser, the late Alan Kemp, thrashed out a new constitution and decided upon a name, thus South Devon Bus branch was created.

Key members during this period who acted as leading representatives and branch secretaries were the late George Gallagher, Roy Willock, Norman Oldcorn and Paul Rossiter. Paul was branch secretary from 1991 to 2012 and was succeeded by Peter Simmons.

The privatisation of the national bus company in 1986 brought deregulation and the end of the closed shop. Due to the sudden withdrawal of the pay bill deductions, union membership collapsed. Paul and his colleagues spent many hours

collecting membership subscriptions at the site gates every week as members came to work. Due to their diligence and hard work the membership began to increase. The re-introduction of pay bill deductions, due to union pressure, also had a positive effect.

Yet the lack of training for union reps due to the closure of Frant Place led to the branch becoming a little stagnant.

Finally the branch recognised the potential in a new employee, Danny Ferguson, who became the rep for the following ten years. In that time there was a complete turnaround in management and union relations. Danny with Peter Edwards from Exeter and Tony Marriott successfully improved the terms and conditions.

Danny's legacy was to ensure that the branch always built for the future. This legacy was carried on by his successor Dave Gilbey who took over in 2006 as senior rep and to this day still works hard protecting



members of not only South Devon Bus branch but for the union in general.

The branch is much respected in the South West of England and delegates regularly attend regional council, bus workers conference and sends delegates to the AGM over the years.

The branch also submits motions to conferences with one that has come to fruition

recently in the form of the RMT Bus Workers Handbook. This was taken to the bus workers conference by the branch and then forwarded on to an annual general meeting where it was passed by the delegates for production.

Where possible the branch also sends members to the Bob Crow educational centre in Doncaster where Dave Gilbey is

a tutor and passes on his knowledge and experiences to new activists.

South Devon bus branch secretary Peter Simmons thanked activists and the personnel at head office that have assisted and supported the branch during the past 25 years.

"In the last two years our branch has invited the general secretaries of our union to hand out long service membership awards.

"In 2013 Bob Crow came to the branch and handed out 25 year membership awards to Ian Earley and Brian Bellamy while Ray Elliott, Amanda Bayliss, Joy Perkins, Chris Shuttleworth and Phil Gaizey received their 10 year awards

"The meeting was attended by more members than normal and it was such a success it was felt that it should be repeated," he said.

The new general secretary Mick Cash was invited to the branch where he presented Brian Hutchinson and Roy Bryant a gold medallion and badge in recognition of their 40-year long service in the trade union movement.

Martin Brooks received his 25 year award while Tony Pratley, James Montague and Mary Brock were all presented with their 10 year service award. The meeting was well attended and more members came to the meeting than normal and the branch thanked Mick for taking time out of his busy schedule to attend, especially so soon after officially being elected.

Mick Cash said that he had many fond memories as the assistant general secretary which dealt with bus matters before his election.

"Members of this branch have always played a positive role in this union, not only in rebuilding the branch after privatisation but nationally at many a memorable and enjoyable grades conference and at AGMs.

"Long may you continue to flourish," he said.

President's column



LEARNING FROM THE FRENCH

Recently I visited France to address the Versailles branch of the rail union CGT.

I have always said that we can learn a lot from our French comrades and this visit did a lot to reaffirm my admiration for our comrades across the Channel.

The subject I was asked to speak about was privatisation and its impact on the working class and trade unions.

There were over ninety members there and they were very attentive to what I had to say. They want to learn from our mistakes and make sure that the same does not happen over there.

Of importance to them is the reduction in jobs and the erosion of health and safety under privatisation, very understandable fears. Unlike in Britain, even though the meeting was relatively small, there was interest from the media.

I was interviewed by a television company and they seemed to be very sympathetic to the struggle against privatisation and also to the problems in Britain.

That night I was in for a further eye opener. I was invited to stay at Matthieu's, secretary of the Versailles branch. It is a beautiful area and the apartment was very nice. The eye opener was not about how beautiful it was but the fact that it was social housing owned by the state railway company.

Workers also paid rent according to their earnings. Matthieu is a driver, so he pays more rent than would a booking office clerk. That is something that I would love to see over here. It would help workers enormously.

I also had a meeting with several leading activists and their main concerns were not

the results of privatisation, but how to prevent it. That was a good question and a very difficult one to answer. Obviously they can take industrial action and organise demonstrations etc but will that prevent it? Unlike the UK, the French can go on strike a lot easier than we can and, while I was there, the local over ground drivers walked off the job because one of their members was attacked by a member of the public.

They instantly downed tools and walked off the job, something that we would never be allowed to do here. They have taken action on several occasions to try to stop privatisation and this has included demonstrations but, just like everywhere, the government continue to push forward on their privatisation agenda.

The next day I went on the demo and march through Paris with the CGT and members of other trade unions and activists. If you've never been to a demonstration in France, you should really try to get to one. The spectacle is amazing. Fireworks, flares, and loud singing of revolutionary anthems, it really gives hope and can put revolutionary fervour into the most jaded of us.

Luckily this demo didn't involve fighting with the riot police, apparently a common occurrence! They said that it was too cold and wet to do so.

France has a great history of revolution and fighting for a more equal society and continues to do so. We could do a lot worse than to listen and learn from them.

Peter Pinkney ■

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	EAST LONDON RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
AYR BRANCH NOMINATE JOHN TILLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	FELTHAM BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	LEEDS GOODS CARTAGE BRANCH SUPPORT ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	CHESTER BRANCH SUPPORTS JOHN TILLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
WIGAN BRANCH NOMINATE JOHN TILLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTH HANTS BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	NORTHEAST SHIPPING/OFFSHORE BRANCH SUPPORT ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	OBAN SHIPPING BRANCH SUPPORTS JOHN TILLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
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	BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE BRANCH SUPPORTS JOHN TILLEY 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	DUNDEE BRANCH SUPPORTS JOHN TILLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
EAST KENT BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	PRESTON NO1 BRANCH SUPPORT JOHN TILLEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTH EAST ESSEX BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	CENTRAL LINE WEST BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY

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

WIRRAL AWARD



RMT member Paul Roberts recently received his People's Choice Merseyrail award. Paul has just been medically retired from Merseyrail having been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. Paul is a lifelong rail

enthusiast and a very active RMT member for 12 years. Left to right Health and safety rep Loyd Whitby, Duty Manager John Patten and Paul Roberts. Branch secretary, Stewart Harris.

GO GREEN

Dear editor

I am pleased to see that my column has caused Brother Steve Metcalfe to write in and express his views. I welcome this as that is what I want my views to generate, debate.

However, I feel I must reply to some of his comments. Firstly, The Greens are not pro-EU, they support a referendum of our membership, which is, in my opinion, the right way to deal with it.

To bring up the behaviour of Brighton Council is an old chestnut and, although I don't support what they did, I suggest he looks deeper into the facts. He will see that this was a problem they inherited, and The Labour Party weren't exactly innocent in this.

The leadership aren't socialist? Really? It was only a few weeks ago that Natalie Bennett said she was. I think their policies are a lot more socialistic than The Labour Party's. Re-nationalise railways, repeal anti trade union laws, save and reinvest in NHS, build social housing, and tax the rich, not to mention abolishing the monarchy! Looks pretty socialist to me.

I admire Caroline Lucas, as do many in the RMT, because she has put a lot of work in to help our union as part of our parliamentary group, including a private members' bill to renationalise the railways. She was also one of the few MPs to vote against the Austerity Bill recently, something that some of our Labour members failed to do.

I welcome Brother Metcalfe's criticisms, he is entitled to his view, and I am entitled to mine.

Yours

Peter Pinkney, RMT president

**EDITORS NOTE: The 'Don't go green' letter published last month was sent in by Steve Metcalfe, apologies for the omission of his name*

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AUSTERITY DOESN'T WORK

Dear editor,

With the continual promise of more cuts and austerity from the Con Dem government it was not such a happy Christmas present to learn that the office for national statistics growth forecasts have been revised down - and despite all the Tory Chancellor's hype - the current account deficit is soaring to one of the biggest in the UK's history.

The Tory and Liberal Democrat coalition years have undoubtedly hurt but few people can really believe it has actually worked.

The situation is so bad that all the government can offer us for the future is more of the same - with public services and welfare taking even more of a battering.

In the 1980s the TUC launched a campaign against the then Thatcher government called 'No return to the 1930's' as we look to the New Year in 2015 it seems Thatcher's children have managed to turn that clock back for many individuals and families.

Inflation constantly outstrips real wages and the country has a real cost of living crisis.

Workers feel insecure due to a lack of employment protection, a growth in low paid jobs, odious zero hours contracts, temporary and agency work and attacks on workplace pension provisions.

At one time companies boasted how well they looked after their workers now there's a hire

and fire culture and rush to the bottom when it comes to occupational pension provision and workplace terms and conditions.

The NHS is in crisis - hardly a day goes by without another story of a failure, concern or worry. Instead of achieving targets the government seems to be revising them down despite the breath-taking hard work of NHS staff trying to cope with the chaos.

Local councils are now in virtual shut down mode - democratically elected but stripped of powers and undermined by central government cuts. Our roads are full of potholes, our pavements covered in cracks, our drains constantly overflow, our play areas stripped of play equipment - it's now been revealed that cash strapped councils are even turning the street lights off.

A generation of our young people are now experiencing a worse social, economic and workplace settlement than that enjoyed by their parents and grandparents. No work, casualised work, low wages and unaffordable housing are blights on their hopes and aspirations.

As we approach the General Election in a few months I wish everyone a happier new year. But that will only happen if we get rid of this Con Dem government. All the best for 2015.

Yours in solidarity

Craig Johnston

RIG BABY

Dear editor,

My name is Julie Green and I am the founder and editor of www.rigbaby.com.

I set up the site just over a year ago after my husband started working offshore with the aim of creating a lifestyle support and information platform for the industry and their families.

We have now grown to over 20,000 views per month on the site, with 14,000 regular users and growing.

As we continue to work towards our vision we would like to expand the resources and information available to the workforce on our site, as well as help to facilitate workforce engagement with other industry organisations.

As a regular reader of RMT bulletins, I'm sure it would benefit both the union and Rig Baby users to have this information featured on the site - thus increasing our resources and exposure of your messages and campaigns. Please feel free to contact me by email or phone any time.

Best Regards,

Julie Green

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For more information contact Stewart Cameron at RMT's South East Regional Office email s.cameron@rmt.org.uk or 020 7529 8853



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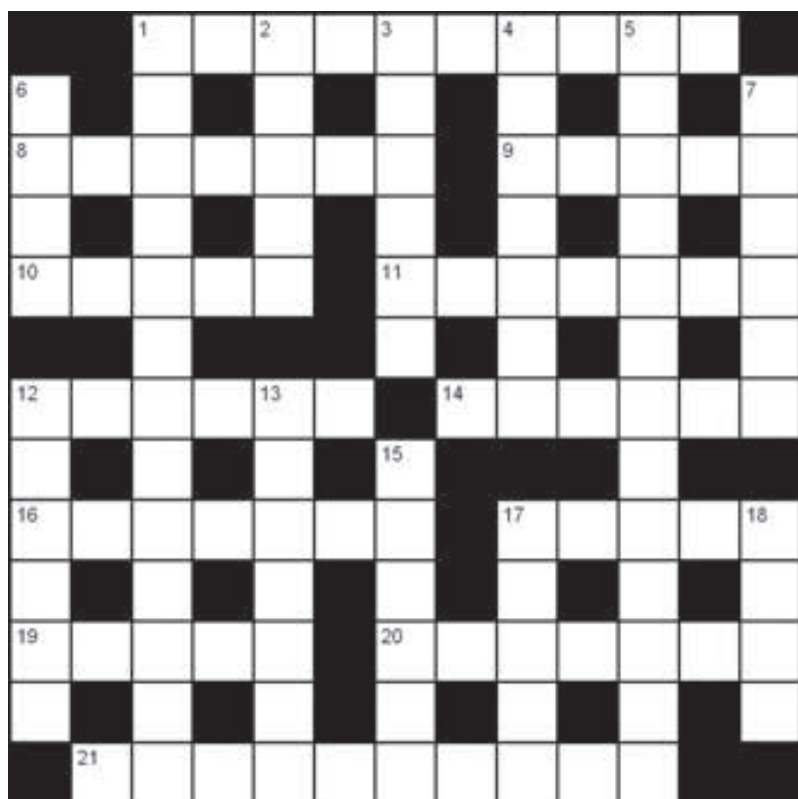
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Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Steve Arnold, Grimsby

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

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Sandal (10)
- 8 Enrage (7)
- 9 Woodland deity (5)
- 10 Lofty nest (5)
- 11 In Gaza, novel (6)
- 12 Chest (6)
- 14 Plain (6)
- 16 Small salmon (7)
- 17 Trunk (5)
- 19 Eel (5)
- 20 Ask (7)
- 21 Indignation (10)

DOWN

- 1 Indignation (13)
- 2 Dish (5)
- 3 Fuel (6)
- 4 Scrutinize (7)
- 5 Right to the last detail (6-7)
- 6 Fish (6)
- 7 Sneer (4)
- 12 Cut in half (6)
- 13 Oozing (7).
- 15 Sorrowful (6)
- 17 Levy (5)
- 18 Solemn promise (4)



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Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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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.

