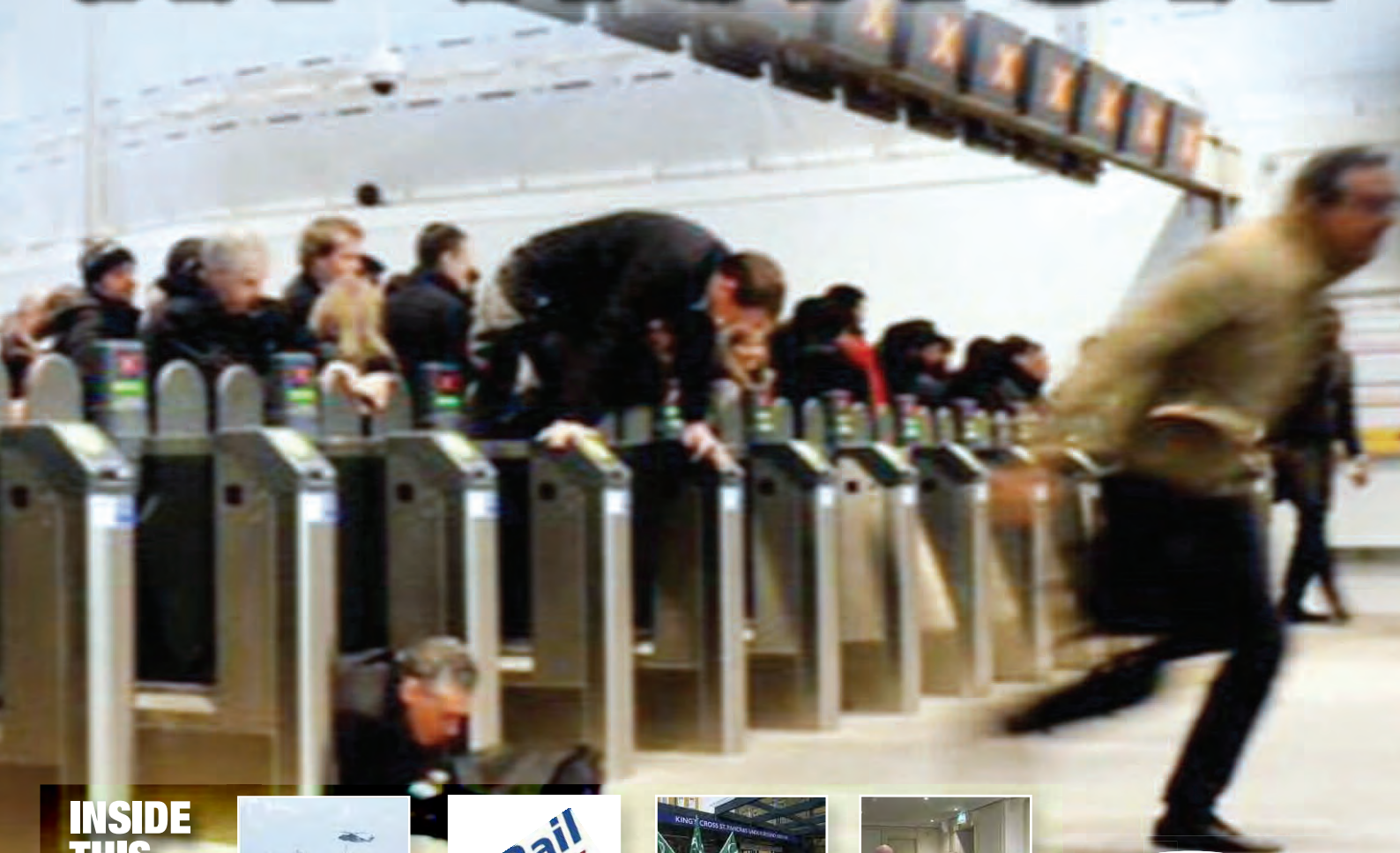


RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

PRIVATISATION IN ACTION



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www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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

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

BRANCH NUMBER

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

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

3 Sex. Male Female

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

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

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

Sexuality	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Bisexual	Prefer not to say
Do you identify as transgender?	Yes	No	If you wish to be contacted with information about union activities for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender members please tick here	

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

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

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



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

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

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Branch Sort Code

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

Originator's Identification Number

9	7	1	7	4	5
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Reference Number

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

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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EDITORIAL



THE CHAOS OF PRIVATISATION

The chaos witnessed at London Bridge recently can be blamed squarely on the fragmentation and privatisation of the railways with its myriad of contractors and sub-contractors.

The catalogue of faults identified by our reps is breathtaking but entirely predictable.

RMT blew the whistle on the situation but we were ignored at the start and we are still being ignored now and our demand for a summit on the growing safety and overcrowding scandal on our transport services has fallen on deaf ears.

Transport for London is also pressing ahead with closing London Underground ticket offices without consulting unions or passengers or adequately trialling the impact first.

The recent shocking incidents at Clapham South and Baker Street, where a woman and child ended up under trains, shows the importance of a properly staffed railway where services and safety come first.

The overcrowding at both Tube and railway stations proves that transport bosses are trying to squeeze a quart into a pint pot alongside a backdrop of cuts to staffing and basic passenger services.

Yet the voices and the warnings of staff on both rail and tube are being ignored by senior managers who are engaged in an orchestrated and politically-motivated cover up of the risks and the facts in pursuit of a cuts agenda.

The contract extension to First Great Western is truly a reward for failure on a grotesque scale.

This is a company that ducked nearly a billion pounds worth of payments to the taxpayer, rakes in a fortune, offers lousy quality of service and treats its staff like dirt.

Only on Britain's privatised

railways could an outfit this toxic be given a green light to carry on its racket.

The public will be appalled and the fight for public ownership of rail goes on.

The Scottish government has also launched the privatisation process for Caledonian MacBrayne lifeline ferry services in line with European Union directives.

The Scottish National Party regime claims that a consultation carried out in 2011 is enough to begin tendering the £1 billion contract for Clyde and Hebrides ferry services and there will be no vote on it in Holyrood.

Yet CalMac workers know full well that their jobs, pensions, pay and terms and conditions are at risk from this skewing of the procurement process in favour of private bidders.

A joint parliamentary committee report into the collapse of the City Link over Christmas last year has found that there is an "overwhelming case" for improvements to current legislation when a company goes into administration to help protect the rights of workers and safeguard the taxpayer.

The next stage in the RMT's campaign is to demand a full and forensic examination of the facts by ministers which leaves no stone left unturned. It is the very least City Link workers deserve.

Finally congratulations to Dover shipping branch for successfully fighting to get 37 people out of zero hours contracts and into full time jobs after an 18 month battle with P&O.

There are plenty of positions to be filled throughout the transport industries and we need to take up their example to ensure that the scourge of zero hours is defeated.

Mick Cash

BUS COMPANIES PROFITEERING FROM OIL PRICE FALL

RMT and MPs are demanding a public inquiry into bus companies profiting by refusing to pass oil price cuts on to passengers.

Those accused include Britain's five largest operators – Arriva, First Group, Govia, National Express and Stagecoach.

Over the past year oil prices dropped by up to 50 per cent but, rather than falling, fares actually increased by an average

4.8 per cent last year.

RMT is concerned that operators were “using the fall in oil prices to maximise their profits at the expense of passengers”.

Labour MP Ian Lavery, who has put down Early day motion 907 on the issue, raised questions on the scandal in the House of Commons forcing the government to admit: “The Chief Secretary to the Treasury recently wrote to the five largest

UK bus operators seeking their assurance that they are doing all they can to ensure passengers benefit from the fall in oil prices”.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the case for proper scrutiny of bus firms’ reaction to oil prices was overwhelming.

“There has to be an open and transparent inquiry into our clear concerns that bus companies may be profiteering

from the fall in oil prices while at the same time they continue to threaten the jobs, pay and working conditions of their staff,” he said.

“If our bus services came under public ownership, rather than the current fragmented system driven purely by profit, it would be easier for the windfall bonus from lower oil prices to be immediately reinvested in services and lower fares,” he said. ■

VICTIMISATION FIGHT ON FIRST GREAT WESTERN

RMT members on First Great Western took a second phase of strike action over Easter in a victimisation dispute.

The dispute was sparked when a member of train crew was fitted up and victimised by the company and a ballot delivered an overwhelming mandate for action sparking a first phase of rock-solid strike action.

RMT called on FGW Conductor (Guard), Train Driver HSS, Train Driver West and Train Manager (Guard) members at Penzance to take the strike action and an overtime ban.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash congratulated members for taking action to put pressure on the company.



“It is clear from the current dispute that there is a culture of bullying and intimidation of staff rife within the money-spinning racket which is the

First Great Western operation. “RMT will not allow this culture to go unchallenged and the union will defend our individual members and the

principle of workplace justice.

“The union remains available for talks in this dispute,” he said. ■

RMT WEBSITE

Did you know that the RMT website was designed to act as a mobile phone app? All aspects and functions of the website were designed to scale perfectly on mobile and tablet devices and for instant access simply bookmark the site and an icon will appear on your screen.



WESTERN GREYHOUND SHOCK COLLAPSE

News that bus company Western Greyhound in Cornwall ceased trading last month came as a total shock for the 130 staff as they turned up for work.

The shock move came just a day after management gave no indication at a meeting with the union that there was any problem with the business in any way.

In fact, management told RMT representatives that they were looking forward to carrying on negotiations on improving pay, terms and conditions and securing job security.

Either management were lying to the union or those in the negotiations were as in

the dark about problems with the business as front line staff.

Whichever way, the deceitful and brutal announcement of the news is another example of the attitude to the workforce in this country, mirroring the collapse of City Link over Christmas.

RMT has committed to using all of its resources in defending members' interests by seeking assurances that all outstanding pay will be honoured, all redundancy payments are made and that all pension rights and all other entitlements are met.

RMT is currently liaising with solicitors on exploring

the options which may be open to members with regards to wages and all other outstanding financial matters.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that once again private businesses were treating their employees with contempt with no personal regard for their futures and we shall be looking into all aspects of this company's collapse, including the role played by its major shareholders.

"In the meantime we will be doing everything within our power to assist our members at this traumatic time for them and their families," he said.



DECLINE IN SHIPPING SAFETY

Shipping casualties in UK waters soar by nearly 30 per cent, making this country second most prone to shipping injuries in the world

The waters around the British Isles have seen the most shipping casualties since 2005, according to a new report by the insurance company Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty (AGCS).

The British Isles, North Sea, English Channel and Bay of Biscay has been the location of the most shipping casualties since 2005 with over 4,380 incidents. Nearly one in five of all incidents around the world have occurred in this region. It

was also the scene of the second highest number of casualties during 2014 with 465 injuries, up 29 per cent year-on-year.

Over reliance on electronic navigation aids has caused a number of incidents in 2014. Captain Rahul Khanna said in the report: "Inadequate training at grass roots level is to blame for this overdependence on e-navigation tools. The minimum standards have been met, but this is not good enough. We

need to go above and beyond them to give robust training".

The stability of car carriers has also been a focus of the International Maritime Organisation since the catastrophic capsizing of the passenger/car ferry Herald of Free Enterprise in March 1987. Movement of cargo on these types of ships can affect their stability and a large superstructure means that they are more susceptible to wind and bad weather.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that the union was very alarmed at the huge rise in casualties in UK waters which comes following massive cuts to the MCA and to UK SAR/firefighting at sea capabilities as well as a steep decline in ship inspections.

"Regulatory bodies clear need more powers to enforce higher safety standards and, as the report points out, more robust training is needed," he said. ■



ENDING ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS AT DOVER

After the 18 months of negotiations with P&O Ferries, Dover Shipping branch has managed to get 37 people promoted out of zero hours contracts and into full time jobs.

Union EC shipping member and Dover branch secretary

Lee Davison said that the branch had been campaigning against these contracts since the company first introduced them and had made it a top priority to put an end to them and to prove to the shipping companies region that these contracts are not beneficial to

them as a business or to members.

"There are plenty of positions to be filled out on the vessels and we need to ensure that these are done with contract of guaranteed hours for not on the scourge of zero hours.

"We as a team feel this is a great step forward for us and our members and will keep applying pressure at every opportunity to gain secured hours and contracts for those who had no choice but to take a zero hours contract," he said. ■

HANDS OFF NORTHERN AND TRANSPENNINE

RMT held protests outside a meeting of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority in Leeds last month against Northern and Transpennine Express (TPE) tender documents which includes the introduction of Driver Only Operation and other dangerous cuts.

The union also warned local councillors in a letter that the three shortlisted bidders for the Northern Rail franchise are owned by Dutch, French and German state railways which means rail passengers will be used as a cash-cow to hold down fares and improve services in other states.

The letter also revealed new RMT research showing that since 2007 Northern Rail has sucked passengers dry to pay £179 million dividends to shareholders while (TPE) has paid £213 million to shareholders.

That's just shy of £400 million which has been taken from railways in the North which could have been used to

pay for fairer fares, new trains and more staff.

The letter warns that government plans for a new ten year franchise for Northern Rail and nine years for TPE will continue the northern and TPE rail rip off for another decade.

The warning for politicians came as RMT launched a new campaign for a publicly owned People's Railway in the North, which would mean:

- Every penny that is put into the railway will be invested in the railway
- Funding fair fares, new trains and more services
- More help for passengers: trains will keep their guard with proper staffing for stations and ticket offices
- Democratic oversight by communities and councils, instead of rail policy in the North being dictated by private and foreign companies.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash warned that the leadership



FIGHTING: RMT Northern and Transpennine Express franchise campaign postcard hand-out at Carlisle Citadel Station with Lee Sherriff Labour Parliamentary Candidate for Carlisle

of West Yorkshire Combined Authority was supporting the cuts despite the fact that most individual councillors are probably not aware of what it is being done in their name.

"These plans are being spun in a pre-election stunt that they claim will modernise rail services in the North when in reality they will condemn passengers to poor quality, unsafe and destaffed services for years to come.

"The tender documents allow bidders to axe guards and move to Driver Only Operation, compromising safety in the interests of private profit.

"RMT is calling for a commitment from Labour that they will scrap the Northern rail carve up plans if elected and the union will make the continuing fight for jobs, safety and services a key election issue," he said.



NEW NETWORK RAIL PAY CUT BALLOT

RMT is balloting Network Rail members for industrial action following discussions with representatives from around the country which rejected the latest pay proposals that fall well short of what is required to maintain the living standards, job security and the working conditions for nearly 16,000 staff across NR operations and maintenance.

The move to a ballot comes after an earlier offer was rejected by a massive 93 per cent on a 56 per cent turn out in a referendum vote. Since then, intensive talks through ACAS have failed to produce enough movement from Network Rail leaving the union

with no alternative but to move to a national industrial action vote.

It is crucial that we deliver a similar mandate in this ballot and the union is urging all members to play an active part in getting the vote out to ratchet up the pressure on the company.

The current pay package proposals which RMT has put into dispute are summarised as follows.

2015 – A £500 non-consolidated lump sum payment.

2016, 2017, 2018 – An RPI level of inflation increase in pay would be applied for each year.

The “No Compulsory

Redundancy” commitment would be extended until 31st December 2016. .

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said:

“Our members have already decisively rejected the initial pay package offered by Network Rail. Despite intensive talks we have not been able to secure enough significant movement and that puts us into dispute and triggers the start of a national industrial action ballot.

“As far as we are concerned the one off, non-consolidated, lump-sum payment this year is wholly inadequate and fails to recognise the massive pressures staff are working under to keep services running at a time when

the company is generating profits of £1 billion. It is our members battling to keep Britain moving around the clock and they deserve a fair share from Network Rail for their incredible efforts. There is also a real threat to jobs in two years time.

“Our rail staff deserve a fair reward for the high-pressure, safety-critical work that they undertake day and night and the last thing that we need is a demoralised, burnt-out workforce living in fear for their futures. “We need a comprehensive YES vote in this ballot to keep the pressure on.” ■

RAILTRACK TWO ON THE CARDS?

The government is on the verge of dragging Britain back to the lethal days of Railtrack according to reports in *The Telegraph* newspaper which suggest that there is a move to break up and sell off the current Network Rail organisation.

Network Rail, a publicly owned body, was created after a wave of lethal incidents involving the privately owned Railtrack which were driven by the demand for profits at the

expense of passenger and staff safety,

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was no surprise that the run up to the election has been chosen as the vehicle to flag up the break up and privatisation of Network Rail.

“It is a move that would drag us right back to the lethal and chaotic days of Railtrack which led us to a wave of disasters including Hatfield, Potters Bar and Ladbroke

Grove.

“RMT has warned repeatedly that demands for cuts at Network Rail, alongside the fragmentation of maintenance and renewals and the proliferation of contractors, were being used as a way of undermining the organisation to set it up for privatisation – a scenario which hasn’t been helped by some shocking mismanagement like the shambles at London Bridge.

“However, the current problems support the case for public ownership of the entire railway, not a further drive to fragmentation, profiteering and privatisation that would raise the horrific spectre of Railtrack Two.

“RMT will fight these moves and will campaign for a People’s Railway – publicly owned and run in the public interest,” he said. ■

TRAVEL CHAOS TO INCREASE

RMT has warned that the road congestion witnessed at Easter due to railway closures, inflated train ticket prices and a "massive backlog" of maintenance work was set to get worse.

An estimated 16 million cars will use the roads, with many forced to drive because of a large programme of work on train lines.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the real problem was a massive backlog on the rail maintenance and renewals side which leaves engineers trying to squeeze impossible targets into limited windows of opportunity.

"That problem has been compounded by cash-led cuts to staffing and schedules which RMT has warned repeatedly would leave services on a knife edge.

"The travelling public are paying a heavy price for years of underinvestment, fragmentation and private profiteering while rail demand has surged ahead.

"RMT has set out an alternative to this chaos and that has at its core an end to privatisation and fragmentation, an end to the cuts and the diversion of private profits into a massive programme of direct investment under direct public control," he said.

No trains ran from London Euston to Manchester due to major work at Watford. Improvement work on the West Coast line between Crewe and Warrington and between Carlisle and Glasgow also severely restricted services to northern England and Scotland.

The Easter holiday also saw no Southeastern train company services running to or from the London stations of Charing Cross, Waterloo East or Cannon Street.

Other disrupted areas due to engineering work included parts of Kent, lines running through Reading in Berkshire and some services from Paddington. ■

Parliamentary column

LIFTING THE LID ON THE CITYLINK SCANDAL



The experience of RMT members at CityLink should make any politician think twice before denying the need for reforms to company and employment law in this country.

Much in the same way that zero hour contracts have been identified as a scandalous source of exploitation, recent Select Committee reports have left no doubt over the need to reform the way workers are treated when the company they work for goes out of business.

The report into the disgraceful circumstances around CityLink's demise produced by the Scottish Affairs and Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee reveals just how opportunist investment funds like Better Capital can play the system to minimise their losses from the demise of major employers, at the expense of workers, the taxpayer and suppliers.

It is crystal clear that City Link took a deliberate decision not to inform employees and contractors of the company's likely collapse before Christmas last year. It is also the case that insolvency rules, on everything from how and when information is shared with employees, to the order in which creditors are paid out, are heavily biased to benefit private investors, directors and management whilst the workforce lose

their jobs and the prospect of an expensive and lengthy court case to receive any compensation.

The current system provides perverse incentives to withhold information or to skip proper consultation processes in contravention of the law and at a high cost to workers who lose their livelihoods. It also creates incentives for employers to use cheap, insecure forms of employment, such as zero hours and bogus self-employment, which gives a worker all the responsibilities of an employee but none of their rights or protections.

CityLink contractors and RMT reps were deliberately deceived by company executives over the true state of the business. The lack of consultation with trade union reps is particularly galling and the Select Committees report recommends that the Government reform the insolvency process to ensure that workers and trade unions are kept informed of the financial condition of the company from the moment an administration order is under consideration.

Whilst some people always lose out from administration, the current system is deeply unjust. Crucially, secured creditors are cushioned from the full impact of an insolvency because the

losses are primarily borne by those who work for a company on a self-employed basis, or as contractors or suppliers. The Committee recommends ending this preferential treatment, through placing workers, including those employed by sub contractors and suppliers at the front of the queue of creditors, not private investors.

At present, it is in the financial interest of a company to break the law, and ignore the statutory redundancy consultation period, if the fine for doing so is less than the cost of continuing to trade. This typifies the irresponsible and immoral approach to business taken by Better Capital and their ilk which must be reined in by the next government.

This whole sorry affair again highlights the threat to workers from bogus self employment and zero hours contracts. Employment law as well as insolvency law must provide effective legal penalties against the use of zero hours contracts and forcing workers into bogus forms of self employment of the sort so blatantly exploited by CityLink. This must never be allowed to happen again.

Ian Davidson
Labour MP for Glasgow
South West



FIGHTING FOR JOBS

RMT's clerical grades conference calls for resistance to ticket office closures

Stop ticket office closures demanded by the McNulty agenda, declared RMT's annual supervisory, clerical and other salaried grades conference meeting in Greenwich last month.

Peter March, Hull congratulated the union on the on-going campaign over the Northern Rail and Transpennine Express (TPE) franchise proposals.

"The attack on our grade is linked to the McNulty report and is down in black and white in the prospectus proposals for the Northern Rail and TPE refranchising which proposes ticket office closures and doing

away with back office functions and station supervisory roles amongst many other culls.

"TPE, Northern Rail and 'Rail North' are all looking to introduce the use of smart cards in order to close ticket offices and reduce staff," he said.

Peter said that relief regional organiser North Craig Johnston had led an excellent campaign in raising awareness to the public over plans to cut thousands of railway jobs.

"However there has been more emphasis on the role of the guard than that of supervisory and clerical jobs in this campaign.

"RMT is an all grades union

and as such we believe equal emphasis should be put on the many clerical jobs that are under threat as well as threats to other grades," he said.

Conference also heard from Teresa Pearce, Labour MP for Erith and Thamesmead, who has put down Early Day Motion 863 about safety and security role of rail station staff.

In the EDM Ms Pearce, a member of RMT's Parliamentary group, warns against plans to reduce station staff numbers.

"Passenger Focus supports proper staffing at stations and has called for obligatory staffing initiatives as part of the government's franchise

agreements with operators

"Numerous stations are already de-staffed and further cuts at railway and tube stations will increase platform train interface risks to passengers as well as stations becoming unwelcoming and inaccessible places," the EDM says.

It also calls on the authorities to ensure that all rail operations guarantee a sufficient number of trained station staff to safely dispatch trains, protect the travelling public and maintain security at all stations.

Brian Woods, Feltham called on the union to ensure that

where gate line staff who are in the Revenue Protection Grade and are ticket checking trained should be at least a Revenue Protection Assistant Grade.

"Gate line staff are poorly paid and they should be paid for other duties they are asked to carry out," he said.

Conference also called on the union to ensure that if any ticket office staff are asked to sell Oyster cards or top up oyster cards they should be given a grade and not an allowance as this affect their

pension when they retire.

Graham Knott; South Hants and Eastleigh Workshop called on the union to ensure that where restructured Gateline (CSAs) are used to cover other non-restructured grades work, all other means of cover have been exhausted and that these staff have been provided the correct level of training.

"These staff should also be paid the correct salary and enhancements if they are used to cover these duties," he said.

He also won backing for his

call to update and re-design the clerical grades charter and application forms, booklets and posters in order to increase recruitment within these grades.

"As an all grades union, RMT is the only effective union that will defend clerical, supervisory and admin grades," he said.

Richard Constable, Deptford said that it was appalling that some companies would not give more than 20 minutes paid breaks to clerical, supervisory and salaried grades, even when some shifts can last up to 12

hours.

"Under Health Safety Legislation a 20-minute break should be accrued in the first five hours, this can be in five minute slots but must total 20 minutes that then leave another six hours and 40 minutes without a break," he said.

Conference called on the union to write to all companies that is in breach of health and safety legislation, where in their terms and conditions of service such breaks we are not allowed.

RMT delegation to WTUC



WOMEN'S TUC

Delegates to the Women's TUC conference gathered in Congress House in London last month to debate and discuss how austerity was affecting women up and down the country.

The main theme of the conference was to remind woman to use their vote in the upcoming general election.

The RMT delegation spoke on various motions, including the cutting of staff on the railways. RMT members face the threat of the closure of ticket offices, cutting train dispatch staff and

the Train operating companies wishing to expand driver-only operation.

The mention of RMT's demands of re-nationalising the railway brought a spontaneous round of applause from the floor. RMT also moved a motion on celebrating the role of women in this union in the past 100 years and the need for the continued support of the TUC to ensure woman have an active role in the trade union movement.

RMT also supported a composite on the safety of

woman seafarers and bringing an end to zero hour contracts. RMT delegates also contributed in debates on subjects varying from how the rise in suicides on the railways effect our members, support for a campaign on sexual harassment on public transport affecting the travelling public and staff and making women's voices count during the general election.

Mary Jane Herbison was successfully re-elected to represent RMT on the TUC women's committee for a further year.



Mary Jane Herbison

PROTESTING AGAINST TUBE TICKET OFFICE CLOSURES

RMT members and supporters protested at Tube stations across London last month against the closure of Tube ticket offices.

Transport for London is pressing ahead with closing all London Underground ticket offices and is doing so without consulting passengers or adequately trialling the impact first.

This is in order that closed ticket offices can be leased out to retail businesses, a short-sighted step that will exacerbate already dangerously high and rising peak passenger throughput.

RMT regional organiser John

Leach said that TfL's conduct in ignoring criticism including from workers representatives, the statutory passenger body London Travelwatch and, in the case of ex-Silverlink stations, in defiance of legal obligations, was a scandal.

"Given the ongoing reduction in staffing levels, and the impending introduction of night time opening of some Tube lines, remaining LUL workers are set to be asked to work anti-social hours frequently.

"Clearly, LUL's proposals - if enacted - would see the health and well-being of staff suffer as a result of having to often

switch between day and night shifts," he said.

RMT was joined with other concerned organisations, including Hands Off London Transport will be holding protests and leafleting at stations across the capital in the near future

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the fight to stop the closure and smashing up of ticket offices, and the axing of station staff, would go on and last month's series of demonstrations marked a ramping up of the RMT campaign to stop this cash-led carve up of jobs, services and safety.

"The recent shocking incidents at Clapham South and Baker Street, where a woman and child ended up under trains, shows the importance of a properly staffed railway where services and safety come first.

"The overcrowding at both tube and railway stations proves that transport bosses are trying to squeeze a quart into a pint pot alongside a backdrop of cuts to staffing and basic passenger services.

"That toxic combination is a recipe for disaster and that is the message we will be taking to the public in Fridays series of London-wide events," he said.



TRANSPORT FOR LONDON BILL

Due to an impending cut in the grant that it receives from central government, Transport for London is under pressure to generate extra revenue by granting long leases on prime sites in and around stations to developers.

As a result TfL has introduced the Transport for London Bill introduced into Parliament which, if it becomes law, would allow TfL to engage in what are known as limited partnerships with private developers.

Such partnerships minimise tax, are not transparent and would prevent TfL from being able to engage in the management of a project. The

limited partnership model is not one local authorities have ever used – and with good reason.

The union opposed the relevant clauses of the Bill and arranged for expert legal advice on the issue, engaged with community groups such as Save Earls Court and mobilised our Parliamentary Group led by John McDonnell MP.

Senior assistant general secretary Steve Hedley made a presentation to a Parliamentary committee arguing for safeguards on TfL's property activities.

TfL, as a public entity responsible for public assets, should only interact with organisations that pay UK tax

and register accounts with Companies House. The TfL Bill is about minimising tax for the developers and TfL, with the Exchequer losing out.

RMT legal advice shows that if a developer on a project were to go bust or be liable for fines relating to release of asbestos from demolished buildings etc, TfL – despite having no management control – could end up picking up the tab by ruthless developers.

The union's legal advice was that Limited Liability Partnerships or Limited Companies would be more prudent and usual for public entities and that TfL already has right to set up such bodies. In response, TfL proposed amending the Bill to include a provision that the Secretary of State approve it engaging in a Limited Partnership.

However the Parliamentary Committee, including former Tax Inspector Labour MP Rob Ffello, shared RMT concerns.

Accordingly the Bill was amended so that TfL would only be able to enter into limited partnerships with the Secretary

of State's consent via an order "under the affirmative resolution procedure, laid before both Houses in draft with potential dehybridisation measures required".

Last month the bill went back before the Commons and MPs John McDonnell, Jeremy Corbyn and George Galloway tabled amendments who 'talked out' the bill. This means that the bill will likely be stalled until after the election.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that ultimately public land held in the name of TfL that is not needed for current or future transport needs, should be made available for affordable housing developments.

"We hope that those in power after the May general election will recognise the importance of using TfL's vast estate towards addressing the intertwined issues of transport and housing.

"We will remain vigilant in our efforts to amend the damaging provisions of the bill and block privateers feasting on public assets and again ripping off the state," he said. ■

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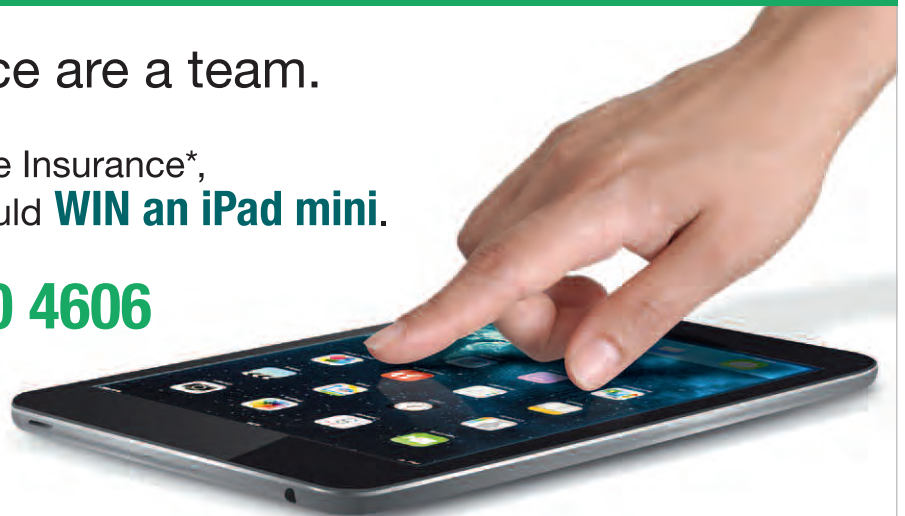
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LIFTING THE LID ON LONDON BRIDGE CHAOS



Farce traced back to the fragmentation and privatisation of the railways with myriad of contractors and sub-contractors

RMT has exposed a catalogue of faults left behind by contractors working on the £500 million redevelopment of London Bridge which have been the catalyst to the chaos and overcrowding at the station.

Senior RMT officials have identified the poor installation of new track and signalling layout, incorrect procedures followed, dangerous corners cut, union concerns ignored and Network Rail engineers left to correct contractor faults.

Meaningless and fantasy computer models also underestimated traffic and footfall used to justify plans.

Works at the station have been undertaken by a variety of contractors and sub-contractors with Balfour Beatty the main

firm on the track remodelling and Costains in charge of the overall station redevelopment.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that RMT had warned from the off that the continuing chaos at London Bridge could be tracked back to the fragmentation and privatisation of the railways with its myriad of contractors and sub-contractors and the drive to cut corners and rush through important works in the interest of meeting financial targets and protecting profits.

"The catalogue of faults identified by our reps is breathtaking and, alongside the abject failure to listen to our members who understand how a railway works, shows that the continuing chaos and

overcrowding at London Bridge was entirely predictable.

"Even though RMT blew the whistle on this right from the off at no point since the pictures of the dangerous situation emerged have our reps and our members been asked for their views by the DfT and the politicians who are posing about claiming that they are tackling the crisis.

"We were ignored at the start and we are still being ignored now and our demand for a summit on the growing safety and overcrowding scandal on our transport services has fallen on deaf ears.

"RMT will continue to expose the truth while those responsible offer nothing but PR stunts and sticking plaster solutions," he

said.

He said that the voices and the warnings of staff on both rail and tube were being ignored by senior managers who the union believes are engaged in an orchestrated and politically-motivated cover up of the risks and the facts in pursuit of a cuts agenda.

"That dangerous ignorance has to stop before we have a major disaster on our hands.

"We have seen too often what happens when officials, politicians and authorities conspire to ignore whistle blowers and cover up the truth.

"RMT will fight to stop that scenario developing any further in our transport services," he said.





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**This is London Bridge –
one of the UK's busiest
railway stations**

**RMT warned of
dangerous overcrowding
due to botched
redevelopment plans**

**We were ignored – the
result is sheer chaos
with our members
abused and assaulted**

**This is fragmentation
and privatisation in
action – join us to end
this scandal**

**Protecting our members' interests is our priority
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FOR PUBLIC OWNERSHIP



As RMT campaigns around the country for rail renationalisation, RMT general secretary Mick Cash outlines why it's a vote winner

Britain needs more railways. Whether it is reviving abandoned railway lines or building new ones, it is clear that this is what the voters want.

Richard Beeching's famous 1963 report, *The Reshaping of British Railways*, led to the closure of 5,000 miles of track and over 2,300 stations. It was a political attempt to rid this country of rail based on the wrong-headed idea that in the future the car would rule supreme and with an eye on the super profits from oil consumption and road-building.

Today we know that the opposite is true and people need to get out of their cars and on to public transport.

More than 50 years after thousands of miles of track were condemned by Beeching's axe, it is good to know that hundreds of miles of track are set to re-open including the line from Tweedbank to Edinburgh in the north to the Tavistock-Bere Alston line across Dartmoor in Devon.

Today the Robin Hood line between Nottingham and Worksop, axed by Beeching in the 1960s, now carries

thousands of commuters every day. The Campaign for Better Transport estimates that as many as 200 lines could be reopened.

There is clearly a greater demand for public transport both between the big cities and within rural areas. However, before we start talking about a great renaissance in rail, we need an honest appraisal of how our railways are run today.

The current dysfunctional system for running our railways known as privatisation has delivered, among other things, massive profits for the private operators, the highest fares in Europe, a huge maintenance backlog, a rolling stock crisis and very low customer satisfaction.

Moreover passengers and taxpayers are carrying virtually all the financial burden.

A recent ORR financial report revealed that passengers contributed a record £9 billion and taxpayers £3.7 billion while franchise holders made a net contribution of just £43 million after all their public subsidies were taken into account.

Network Rail's £25 billion spend over the next four years

on upgrades and new lines, is also coming from the taxpayer.

There is also a national rail rolling stock crisis.

For instance 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 Pacer 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 Pacer carriages.

Now we hear that refurbished vintage London Underground trains are to be brought in to replace the Pacers, raising ever more safety concerns and comfort concerns.

As a result RMT believes that train procurement in Britain has been an expensive shambles caused by the fragmentation and profiteering that has been lumped onto the taxpayer through two decades of privatisation.

RMT negotiators have also uncovered plans for new fleet of Inter-City rolling stock that would lead to the axing of buffet cars on First Great

Western and East Coast Inter-City services.

Under the proposals for the new trains there will be no buffet car available to standard class with the service replaced by a trolley operation.

FGW have already removed the popular traveling chef services this year clearly in preparation for the plan to reduce services to passengers even further with the new IEP trains.

This move is solely about profits, profits for First Group on Great Western and profits for whoever picks up the new, private East Coast franchise.

Therefore the union has launched a major campaign to defend these services and the jobs that go with the current catering operations. This includes a political campaign by our group of MPs in Parliament which has already put down Early Day Motion 584 in defence of FGW and East Coast services.

You would have thought that the British experience with rail privatisation would have put the rest of the world off such a move. But European Union transport commissioner Siim Kallas has proposed a fourth EU rail liberalisation package last year to enforce competitive tendering for rail contracts and to abolish nationalised, publicly-owned rail services.

The unelected EU Commission wants full separation between firms that own rail infrastructure and train operators as imposed in Britain by Tories using EU directives in



1994.

Many foreign state-backed companies have exploited these EU directives and today run three-quarters of Britain's rail franchises and use the profits paid for by passengers here to improve services and cut fares in their own countries.

In fact, a German Transport Ministry spokesperson has openly admitted such a strategy.

"We're skimming profits from the entire Deutsche Bahn

operation and ensuring that it is anchored in our budget - that way we can make sure it is invested in the rail network here in Germany," he said.

RMT research shows that Dutch state firm Abellio now operates a network in Britain over two and a half times the size of the one in Netherlands.

In short our railways are being used as a cash-cow to run services across the rest of Europe.

Deutsche Bahn is also seeking to run 'open access' services on East Coast route which has been publicly-run after National Express walked away from the franchise in 2009.

Publicly-run East Coast has warned that the proposals would damage passenger services, hit the taxpayer and lead to the "cherry picking of services".

So if foreign governments

can run our railways and make a profit out of them, why can't we?

This scandal has got to stop. We should have a publicly owned railway which can provide lower fares to the travelling public as well as a stable platform to plan for the future today. Now that would indeed deliver a great renaissance in rail, a move that most voters would support wholeheartedly. ■



RAIL SEASON TICKETS COULD BE 10 PER CENT CHEAPER IN PUBLIC SECTOR,

Season tickets could be 10 per cent cheaper by 2017 if rail services were run by the public sector, according to new research published by the Action for Rail campaign.

The research, carried out by Transport for Quality of Life, shows that £1.5 billion could be saved over the next five years if routes, including the Northern, Transpennine and West Coast Main Line, were operated by the public sector.

Contracts on 11 train lines

will come up for renewal between 2015 and 2020; Northern, Transpennine, Greater Anglia, West Coast, London Midland, East Midlands, South Eastern, Wales & Borders, Great Western, South Western and Cross Country.

The report says that if they were run by the public sector the Treasury would be able to pass on massive savings to commuters over the next five years, including introducing free off peak travel for children

travelling with their parents.

The biggest saving would come from recouping the money train companies currently operating these routes pay to their shareholders.

The report estimates that £520m million in shareholder dividends alone could be saved if the 11 train lines were run by the public sector when their franchise came to an end.

The study says that if the 11 routes were operated by the public sector the following

could happen:

- Before the end of 2015 it would be possible to introduce free off peak travel for children travelling with their parents
- From 2017 regulated fares – including season and anytime day tickets – could be cut by 10 per cent.
- From 2020 all fares could be cut by three per cent.



CALMAC COUNTDOWN

Scottish government
launches privatisation
process for Caledonian
MacBrayne lifeline
ferry services



Transport Scotland took the first legal step in re-tendering the £1 billion contract for Clyde and Hebrides ferry services (CHFS) last month, effectively announcing the start of a competition between the private sector and CalMac for these lifeline public services.

CalMac workers and passengers learnt that the next operator, from October 2016 would be in position for up to eight years, although the winning bidder would not be announced until after the Scottish Parliamentary elections [see table], raising the possibility that CalMac will be privatised by the SNP.

SNP Minister for Transport and Islands Derek Mackay made clear in a press release that he supports this unnecessary, expensive and unpopular re-tender of Scottish ferry services.

"We are looking to award a contract that runs for a period

up to eight years.

"This will make it more attractive to potential bidders by giving the operator more opportunity to deliver service improvements and efficiencies over the course of the contract," he said.

RMT and other CalMac unions are familiar with this government's cynical manipulation of Scottish ferries policy, going back to the postponement of the original tender in autumn 2012, when the Scottish government guaranteed meaningful dialogue with the trade unions over employment and pension protections before the tendering process re-started in 2015.

The government consistently stalled in starting these talks, so much so that the first meeting only took place in December 2014, leaving precious little time for vital discussions over the employment and pension protections in the next CHFS contract.

This government also privatised Northern Isles ferry services in May 2012, handing Serco a contract that effectively invited the successful private bidder to attack members' pensions.

Only RMT's threat of industrial action made Serco back off.

The Invitation to Tender for the Clyde and Hebrides contract will be published in June. The Pensions Working Group met April 7 and the trade unions are

meeting CalMac at the behest of RMT to discuss what protections for pensions and employment the current operator will put in the contract, should their bid be successful.

RMT must receive a guarantee of no less favourable conditions in the non-negotiable specifications for the next CHFS contract which will be published as part of the ITT. If not, RMT members in CalMac will again be asked if they are prepared to take strike action to protect their jobs, pensions, pay and terms and conditions.

The union has exhausted all avenues in the face of the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland's dodging of discussions. Derek Mackay was appointed in November but only had an introductory meeting with transport unions in March. That meeting was on Transport in general and the Minister has ignored RMT's request for a one to one meeting on the CHFS tender.

In the coming months there will be no hiding place for the Scottish government if it does not take steps to ensure that bidders for the next CHFS contract are prevented from cutting jobs and pensions in order to fund a cut price bid to run these services and receive over £1 billion in public subsidy and investment, not to mention similar revenue levels from passenger and freight fares.

And what about the voice of local communities and their

elected representatives in all this clamour from Transport Scotland to attract private bidders for CalMac? The SNP tell us that the consultation carried out in 2011 on their Draft Ferries Plan is enough to inform the next CHFS contract and there will be no vote on it in Holyrood.

But what were people asked in 2011? Rather than the straightforward question of whether they supported privately run ferry services, the Scottish government asked about allowing 'operators the flexibility to innovate and reduce costs where possible'.

Former UK cabinet minister Brian Wilson has described the Scottish government's plans for Clyde and Hebrides ferries as 'a timetable for privatisation'.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that whilst the SNP claim public support for this 'greater flexibility', CalMac employees know full well that their jobs, pensions, pay and terms and conditions are at risk from this skewing of the procurement process in favour of private bidders.

"Ultimately if the SNP cannot maintain existing protections in the ITT for CalMac members' jobs and pensions then RMT members would be fully justified in contemplating industrial action in response to this cynical betrayal of public sector workers and the remote communities they serve," he said. ■

Activity

Date

Submission of Contract Notice

17 February 2015

Invitation to Tender

June 2015

Conclusion of first negotiations and call for further tenders

September 2015

If required, conclusion of second negotiations and call for further tenders

Variable, according to requirements. NB may bring forward subsequent dates.

Invitation for Final tender

By December 2015

Submission of final tenders

By end of January 2016

Anticipated award of the contract

End of May 2016

Proposed start of Public Service Operations

1 October 2016



BLACK AND ETHNIC ADVISORY MEETS

RMT members gathered in Liverpool last month to put key BEMAC issues on the wider union agenda.

The packed conference saw delegates taking part in a Liverpool slavery history event and address several issues including opposing the closure of black community centres.

Retired shop steward and expert on the black experiences in Britain Eric Scott Lynch addressed delegates saying: "We are not written into history we are written out".

He cited historical examples of black people being in Britain well before slavery and even as far back as being soldiers in the Roman conquests.

"There were African Roman soldiers and DNA testing shows we have been here a lot longer than people give us credit for," he said.

Neil Spencer, Harlesden engineering called on the union to support the campaign to keep black community centres open.

"These attacks on our community centres serves only one purpose which is to cause a social breakdown of our community.

"We would like to stress that our community centres are a vital part of our Black community and is somewhere where we socialise and gather for social events.

Also these venues are fundamental for our children of today and tomorrow," he said.

Supporting the motion, Naser Rafiq, Leeds city branch delegate said: "The community centres are places where politics and activism takes place. They see that as a threat."

Immigration was also high on the agenda too with several delegates expressing anger towards the Immigration Act.

Delegates unanimously called on the union to support the Movement Against Xenophobia (MAX) who are campaigning to repeal the Act.

Delegate Glen Hart said: "We need to get positive image out there and stop people jumping on the anti-immigration bandwagon," he said.

Turning their attention to international affairs, delegates backed calls for a trade boycott of the Dominican Republic.

RMT BEM agreed: "It is scandalous that the Dominican

court has chooses to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the 1937 massacre by stripping Dominican-born men, women and children of Haitian descent of their citizenship, rendering them not only stateless therefore unable to attend school or make a living, consequently becoming even more vulnerable to all kinds of hostilities including, increasingly, physical violence".

With the general election early next month, the low level of BEM voting registration was of concern to members.

TickIt organiser Chester Morrison spoke to members about the importance of BME eligible voters registering to vote, regardless of which political party they choose.

"When we are out on the streets trying to get people to vote, we come across many who have internalised that feeling of powerlessness because they have had their minority status pushed down their throats and they feel they are the position not to do anything about it. That is not the case," he told delegates.

Turning to the murder of

black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson in the US which sparked out a political campaign for end to police violence, Mr Morrison said: "In that situation what we have is a place where in excess of 67 percent of the inhabitants the eligible voters are African American.

"The positions to be elected are majority occupied by white folks.

"Disengagement becomes habitual. Speaking to some young people in Wolverhampton recently, these young folk were cursing the city council. I just said; 'However crap it is somebody has to run it why not you?'," he said.

Mr Morrison said that apart from registering to vote being vital for black people to have an impact on democracy, it would mean those black people could be selected for jury service and end the dominance of all-white juries.

Delegates also expressed solidarity for Petrit Mihaj – a sacked Sodexo worker who recently won his ET. He was given a return to work order but so far the company has refused to take him back. ■

President's column



WORDS DIVIDE US

One of the best things about being president is being invited to speak at various events. I enjoy the RMT ones, but the ones outside the union can be more interesting because you get a different perspective on the struggle.

One such meeting was the Occupy Against Murdoch. They are part of the wider Occupy movement, and were holding a week of protests outside the News Building which is next to the Shard at London Bridge. Being amongst these people made me feel really inspired, something which is becoming harder to feel the older that I get!

One of the reasons for this was the diverse political views of the people in attendance. There were people from all walks of political life who were there to protest about the obscenity of the super-rich. A point brought home by the amount of homeless that were in the nearby vicinity. This is clearly WRONG, and we should feel blessed that groups like Occupy are trying to remedy these injustices.

They are able to put their political differences aside to fight the common enemy and we should be able to do the same. While the left bickers about political nuances,

people are suffering, not just in Britain but across the globe. We need to look at what we have in common instead of our differences and unite against our common enemy, big business and the capitalist system itself.

This was brought home to me in a book that I am currently reading, called *The Robin Hood Guerrillas*, a story of the Tupamaros movement in Uruguay. This movement included the recent President of Uruguay, Jose Mujica, a truly great man in my opinion. If you don't know him, please make every effort to find out about him, he will definitely inspire you.

Anyway, in the book, there is a quote from the Tupamaros which says "Action unites us, words divide us". To me that quote is something we could well do to take heed of in this country. We should be looking at what we have in common instead of what differences we have.

Look at the things that have happened in Britain, privatisation, anti-trade union laws, austerity cuts, the erosion of social housing and NHS etc etc. We have to do what big companies do, work together. We have had successes in the past, most notably poll tax demonstrations, so it can be done.

A lot of marches have brought us together, and we should build on those alliances and make them more permanent. Bring various groups together, such as Occupy, Peoples' Assembly, UK Uncut, and 38 Degrees. There are more of us than "them" and by uniting, we can win.

Times are very different now to what they were nearly one hundred years ago. The problems are similar but we are now dealing with them on a different kind of stage.

They are no longer the same kind of Imperialists and there are different kinds of Tsars. We need to start thinking about, and looking for, new answers. Young people are quite radicalised and are looking for solutions and they want it now.

They don't want to sit in rooms and discuss things, they want to go out and do something to stop the injustices and we need to learn from them and work alongside them. The left has more in common than it has differences, let's build on them, and all be inspired by the likes of Occupy.

Action unites us, words divide us- indeed comrades, indeed!

Peter Pinkney

BRIAN MUNRO REMEMBERED

The RMT executive and officers welcomed the daughters and partner of the late Brian Munro, former EC member for the London Transport Region to the union headquarters last month.

Brian's tragic death last year meant that he was unable to collect his EC medal, so Jim McDaid, Brian's replacement as branch secretary for Bakerloo Branch, requested that the presentation be made to his daughters.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash, National Shipping Secretary Steve Todd and the EC



members welcomed Isabel and Brenna to the boardroom along with their mum Lucy. It was a very moving moment where

Mick paid tribute to the passion and commitment of Brian and recognised all the hard work that he had done for the union

and the wider labour and trade union movement, a moment for Brian's family to treasure.

ROAD FREIGHT GRADES MEET

The devastating collapse of City Link at the end of 2014 – and the unscrupulous nature of many employers in the industry – set the tone of this year's road freight transport conference in Scarborough.

Nevertheless, delegates were optimistic about building membership in the sector and set out ambitious plans for recruiting new members in the year ahead.

Assistant general secretary Steve Hedley told the conference that road freight is an area for the union that has tremendous potential for building RMT membership.

"There is no reason why we can't grow membership in the road freight sector by hundreds of members over the next couple of years," Steve said.

He outlined how badly City Link had treated its workers, pretending there was nothing untoward going on at the company in the period before its shutdown. This was in spite of the fact that while it was doing this the administrators had already been called in, leaving staff totally unaware that they were about to lose their jobs.

Steve explained that City Link didn't give its employees 40 day's notice as they were required to do so by law as a calculated act, as their pre-Christmas business income would far outweigh any fine.

"It's one law for them and one law for us. When a union breaks the law its funds are sequestrated and faces a heavy penalty," he said.

He went on to explain the company's cynicism and that when challenged about the fact that sub-contractors – workers who were encouraged to go self-employed by the firm –



ROAD FREIGHT: L-R Andy Budds, Steve Hedley, Andy Blackman, Andrew Hill

have been left owed money by the firm, company boss Jon Moulton said that they should have found a better employer in the first place.

One bit of good news that Steve brought to the conference is that he understood that most of RMT's City Link workers found work quickly afterwards as they were approached by other companies when the firm folded.

Steve informed the conference that RMT is calling for a full parliamentary inquiry into the way that City Link was shut down and will continue to fight for justice for the sacked workers.

"Any director should be banned for life," Steve added.

Following Steve's speech there was a spirited discussion about recruitment in the road freight sector.

Maurice Hamilton, Leeds Goods and Cartage said that he believed that the fines pool was a big selling point and if its existence was promoted more then it could help build membership.

Doug Reader, London Anglia Midland Transport, called for the union to sponsor and staff stalls at as many truck shows

across the country as possible in order to raise the profile of the union and recruit new members into the sector.

"Due to the closure of City Link and other company contracts in the last year, we have grave concerns about the dwindling membership of the Road Freight Sector of the RMT union," he said.

Andrew Hill, conference secretary, called for the union's wider support in making a "concerted effort to substantially increase the membership in the grades which attend this conference."

Andy Budds, for the executive committee, outlined the progress that had been made on decisions since last year's conference. However, he

explained that a number of motions had been related to City Link when it was a functioning entity and therefore no longer applied.

Vic Winning, London Anglia Midland Transport, asked for recognition of the importance of reps attending all branch and as many regional council meetings they can. He called for the union to write to all reps covered by the conference so that the issue is pressed home.

"Branch meetings are where problems are discussed and sorted, not in the company workplace or between members at tea breaks," he said.

Next year's conference venue will be held in the Portsmouth area.

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN BEGINS

London Anglian and Midland Transport Branch will be kicking off RMT's road transport recruitment campaign with a stall at Peterborough Truckfest at the East of England Showground on May 3/4.

This is a national event with thousands in attendance and the branch sees it as a great chance to raise the profile of the union.



MPS EXPOSE CITY LINK SCANDAL

A joint parliamentary committee report into the collapse of the City Link courier company over Christmas last year has found that there is an “overwhelming case” for improvements to current legislation when a company goes into administration to help protect the rights of workers, allow for better communication and safeguard the taxpayers interests.

The committee also:

- Strongly criticised City Link and their owners Better Capital with MPs saying they were “dismayed” that small business and self-employed drivers working for City Link were encouraged to take on additional costs despite the strong possibility that they would not receive payment for their work.
- Found contractors were “deliberately deceived” as to the true state of the business with City Link and Better Capital being “morally, if not

legally responsible, for the difficulties many of the individuals and small businesses now find themselves in.”

- Found existing arrangements incentivises companies to break the law on consultations with employees and this has had a high human cost in the City link decision making process.
- Found that there was a “differences of opinion” as to whether or not City Link could be made viable but it was it was a “matter of regret” that better Capital felt its interests could be only be protected at the expense of the future of City Link and continued employment for its workers.
- Welcomed the fact that the UK government ensures employees can claim the money they are owed if their employer goes into administration, but said it

was of great concern that under current legislation taxpayers are left to pick up the bill allowing private investors to recover more of their investment.

- Disagreed with the current system where those who have given secure credit are cushioned from the full impact of the insolvency because of the losses borne by the workforce. The Committee called on the government reform the Insolvency Act to give preference to all of a company’s workers regardless of whether they are directly employed

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the independent cross-party report endorsed RMT’s view that Better Capital and City Link deliberately deceived employees and that Better Capital put their interests before those of saving City Link or the workforce.

“Piling scandal on top of

scandal the report says the law on consulting with employees was deliberately broken with a high human cost.

“This allowed the bandit capitalists to cut and run while workers lives were ruined and the taxpayers were left to pick up the pieces.

“RMT welcomes the MPs recommendation that there is an overwhelming case for reform to protect workers in the future and calls on the government to act swiftly on the recommendations.

“The next stage in the RMT’S campaign for justice for City Link workers is the administrators report to the government into conduct of City Links directors.

We are demanding that results in a full and forensic examination of the facts by ministers which leaves no stone left unturned. It is the very least City Link workers deserve,” he said.

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LEGAL

NEW RMT LEGAL SERVICES



RMT general secretary Mick Cash explains the union's new legal department and the services it offers members

It was the late general secretary Bob Crow's vision to establish our own legal department to service members in England and Wales. This is something that I believe in and have continued to develop.

Previously lawyers in England and Wales were unable to deal with some of our work on a pro-bono basis in return for us giving them our personal injury cases due to a ban on referral fees (where a solicitor receives a sum of money in return for receiving personal injury cases).

This so-called ban was aimed at unscrupulous claims firms but, like most hasty legislation, caught out the innocent in particular union's legal services to members.

All Unions and their Legal services were required to rethink how we delivered them both now and for the future. Fortunately the law in Scotland is different and the same regulations don't apply so we are able to keep the same arrangements that we have with our Scottish Lawyers but in England and Wales we had to change.

The solution for this union

was simple, we recruited our own Legal Team. We now have three qualified solicitors working for us and have a trainee solicitor who is undergoing her training contract with the union; the first time this has happened. Our goal is simple, we aim to deliver a first class service to our members. I'd like ultimately to deliver a one stop shop where members can come to us and we can refer them on to the relevant specialist lawyers who will have been approved by this Union as worthy of working for us, covering areas of law from family to conveyancing.

As a consequence of the expansion of the legal team and limited space in Unity House; we moved the Legal team to Maritime House where the offices are better equipped to allow our members and our legal team privacy.

From the middle of the year our team will take on cases completely running them to the Tribunal. Whilst we are a medium sized union we punch above our weight and the Legal Team is no exception to this idea. None of our contemporaries offer

this breadth of service.

In addition we have developed a legal help line which is serviced six days per week (including Saturday) this help line is similar to a Citizen Advice Bureau and is able to deal with issues from sale of goods to neighbour disputes and terms and conditions of employment. Our call handlers are there to direct our members to the right agency; to help them with simple advice or to refer them to our panel of specialist lawyers where the member can instruct the lawyers and know that they have been vetted and approved by RMT and the lawyers' fees will have been discounted and fair for our members.

We also have a Criminal helpline in England Wales and Scotland. Increasingly because of the attacks on legal aid our members are turning increasing to us for advice and assistance whether it is work related criminal matters or non-work.

I remain committed to our goal and shall work with our Legal team to develop our services in the year and years ahead.



WHY READ THE MORNING STAR?

The Morning Star is the only daily paper that actively campaigns for working-class politics. The only paper that reports accurately on strikes and industrial disputes. The only paper that supports the People's Assembly and reports authoritatively on what is happening in Cuba, Palestine, Ukraine and elsewhere.

The Star offers a unique, non-sectarian perspective on national and international industrial and political issues, not offered by the mainstream media. We are a reader-owned co-operative, supported by a range of trades unions: Unite, CWU, NUM, POA, UCATT, FBU, Community, GMB and RMT.

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The Morning Star has just reached its 85th anniversary. It was founded in 1930, in a country mired in the Great Depression that followed the Wall Street Crash, to act as the voice of working people resisting a ruling class determined to make them pay for its crisis. The parallels with today are obvious, and the need for our paper – the voice of the organised labour movement, the only daily paper committed to anti-imperialism, peace and socialism – is more acute than ever as we approach the general election.

Austerity is not an accident. It is not, as it is sometimes portrayed even on the left, a misguided economic policy aimed at reducing debt and fostering an economic

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recovery which happens to be missing its targets. Austerity is a logical – and so far successful – strategy by Britain's ruling class to increase its share of our country's wealth by taking it away from working people. In the process, the gains won by workers over the past century have to be reversed. That means attacks on our pensions, our wages and our workplace rights, as well as on public services such as the NHS, locally accountable schools, free higher and further education and many more things which previous generations fought for in order that people could live, work and retire in dignity.

But this doesn't mean austerity is inevitable. Working people have fought and won before, which is why we have these services in the first place. And every day workers are resisting the ruling-class onslaught, most effectively through their trade unions. Only the Star reports these struggles. But we must reach more readers if that story is to be heard loud

and clear. And May 2015 is to become the general election – the most significant one for many years – the labour movement won.

The Morning Star is not simply a newspaper. It is a tool for an education and mobilisation in the workplace and the community that no activist or politically committed person on the left should be without. We hope you will become a daily reader. You can place an order at any retailer selling newspapers. It is also available from all branches of Martin McColls (www.martinmccoll.co.uk) and One Stop retailers (www.onestop.co.uk/store_locator.php).

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In association with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign

Tickets available soon at £15. Free bar, buffet and music celebrating freedom for The Miami Five and solidarity with Cuba

General Secretary: Mick Cash
President: Peter Pinkney

LETTERS

POLITICAL DILEMMA

Dear editor,

In RMT News a member wrote in with concerns about voting for the Green Party and what Peter Pinkney said.

We all know that in the past our union had links with the Labour Party just like our sister rail unions do at the moment. But over the years, including the New Labour era, our industry has been neglected.

More and more members are finding it hard to vote Labour because there is no mention of public ownership of the railways, £8 national minimum wage by the year 2020 and supporting Trident. These policies do not go far enough and the missing policies that trades unionists want are reasons why the Labour Party cannot take our votes for granted.

TUSC, the Green Party and others that listen to what the public want will attract votes even though the big three parties will continue to dominate the political arena. Labour MPs who support the work of RMT and are members of our parliamentary group are a taste of what Labour should be.

Best wishes

Richard Alcock

KENT MAY DAY

Dear editor,

I am writing on behalf of the Kent Workers Mayday Rally Aylesham to express our thanks for the support and solidarity shown for this event by RMT nationally and the many branches that have donated towards it.

Although we expect this event to be a fun day out, there is also a very serious side to it in that we are rallying to demonstrate the concerns of an organised workforce that is being subjected to constant attacks by government on our ability to represent our members.

Whoever forms the next government should be in no doubt that we will continue to press for better trade union representation and to hold all those who claim to represent us to account!

If you are thinking of joining us on the day, fast trains take less than an hour to Canterbury West where you may have a pleasant stroll across the City to Canterbury East where trains take eleven minutes to Aylesham. The site is adjacent to Aylesham station so you can't miss it.

We look forward to seeing many of you on the day.

Fraternally

Mike Sargent, Event Coordinator

EAST MIDLANDS BUS RETIREMENT



Tom Duckmanton retiring after 45 years membership with East Midlands Bus Branch Secretary Mick Percival

KENT WORKERS MAYDAY RALLY Aylesham



**Monday
4th May 2015**

This is an occasion for workers and their families to come together to enjoy a day of celebration and commemoration of worker's struggles and traditions and organisations - from the past to the future!

**remembering
our past fighting
for our future**

If you or your organisation wish to help, or want to be involved, please get in touch with us as soon as possible.

If you wish to have a stall or a vehicle on site

Please contact KWMDR on **07958 625 904**

join us!

email: kentmayday@mail.com call: **07463 860 466**
facebook: [/Kent Workers Mayday Rally](https://www.facebook.com/KentWorkersMaydayRally) twitter: [@KentMaydayRally](https://twitter.com/KentMaydayRally)

TRADE UNION BADGES

They have their *Orders of the Garter and the Bath* we have our trade union badges and awards.

Since the mid-19th Century trade unions have produced badges to show their pride in being a member of a union and also their battle honours, won, lost or drawn.

Members have fought for the right to wear the badge, have struck for that right and been sacked defending that right. The badge is outward sign of our sense of solidarity and commitment to the basic principle of "An injury to One is an Injury to All".

In our history there are thousands of trade unions from the tiny factory based unions of the cotton industry of the late 19th century to the mass unions of today. Membership has ranged at times from a handful to over one and half million in a single union.

Members such as those of the Preston Operative Flagger and Slaters Trade and Benefit Society (1864-1925) which never had more than 56 members had pride in their badge as much as those of the General Railway Workers Union (1889-1913) with over 20,000 members when it helped to form the NUR in 1913.

The art of the union badge is also part of our forgotten history. The symbols of the trade, the design, the mottos from "Unity is Strength" used by many unions, the important internationalist "Workers of the World Unite" of the NUR (1913-1990) to the more grovelling "At the Command of Our Superiors" used by the Amalgamated Society of Watermen Lightermen and Bargemen (1914-1922) all tell a story which is as much political as it is the art of the badge.

Behind the Badge is an attempt to pull all this information together from the history of the individual union, its growth, amalgamation or



demise, with a few anecdotes thrown in, to showing one of the largest selections of trade union badges at a price for the ordinary trade unionist. Volume One lists over 600 trade unions and features 200 badges. Volume Two covers another 400 trade unions and 200 of the rarest trade union badges.

It is not an academic book but written by trade unionists for trade unionists. All badges are cross referenced to the text. The index and contents are colour coded in volume two to show some organisations which have been claimed as unions but we have proved are not. We also list books and films that feature unions from the 1984 miner's strike to Sylvester Stallone playing a truckers union leader in the USA.

It is our history and, as much as they try to bury it, we must continue to keep it alive and show as much pride in it as our 'superiors' (as the bargemen would have said) show in theirs. ■

For more information email Norman Biddlecombe:
normanbiddlecombe@yahoo.co.uk

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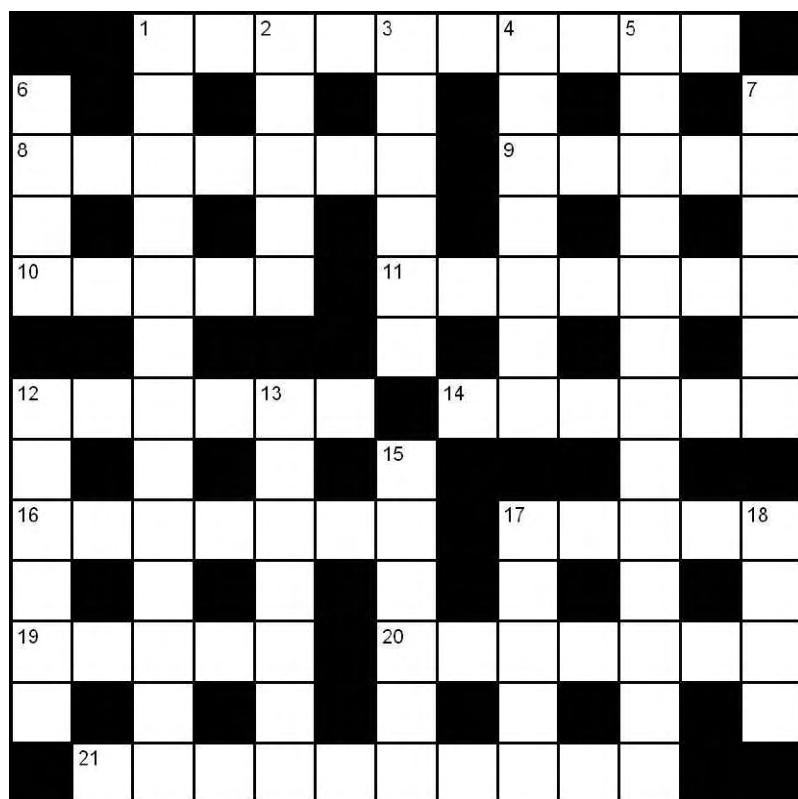
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Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Bob Hunter-Dorans, Inverness.

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

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Mapper (10).
- 8 Conscript (7)
- 9 Mischievous (5)
- 10 Mix up (5)
- 11 Bring to light (7)
- 12 Greet (6)
- 14 Be present (6)
- 16 Title for boy (7)
- 17 Race course (5)
- 19 At that place (5)
- 20 Erase (7)
- 21 Presence (10)

DOWN

- 1 Lofty in style (13)
- 2 Offbeat (5)
- 3 Regretful (6)
- 4 Excuse (7)
- 5 Fizziness (13)
- 6 Notion (4)
- 7 Barefoot (6)
- 12 Nap (6)
- 13 Vessel with three tiers of oars (7)
- 15 Decapitate (6)
- 17 US ski resort (5)
- 18 At that time (4)



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Date of Birth		National Insurance Number	

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3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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Address

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Date

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Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

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

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

