

# RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

## NETWORK RAIL MEMBERS BACK STRIKE ACTION



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# 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 <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> |

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 <input type="checkbox"/> | Irish <input type="checkbox"/>                   | Gypsy or Irish Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other White background             |                        |  |
| B. Mixed/multiple ethnic groups          | White and Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>                     | White and Black African <input type="checkbox"/> | White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/>          | Other mixed/multiple ethnic background |                        |  |
| C. Asian/Asian British                   | Indian <input type="checkbox"/>                                        | Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>               | Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>              | Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>       | Other Asian background |  |
| D. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | African <input type="checkbox"/>                                       | Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>               | Other Black/African/Caribbean background          |                                        |                        |  |
| E. Other ethnic group                    | Arab <input type="checkbox"/>                                          | 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 <input type="checkbox"/> | Homosexual <input type="checkbox"/> | Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                          | Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you identify as transgender? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>          | No <input type="checkbox"/>         | If you wish to be contacted with information about union activities for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender members please tick here <input type="checkbox"/> |                                            |

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

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

|                |      |  |
|----------------|------|--|
| Your signature | Date |  |
|----------------|------|--|



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



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

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| To: The Manager | Bank/Building Society |
| Address         |                       |
| Postcode        |                       |

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

|  |
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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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Reference Number

|  |
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Your National Insurance Number

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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



# VOTING FOR JUSTICE

**N**etwork Rail members have voted overwhelmingly to take industrial action for job security and against what is effectively a pay cut.

Members voted by 80 per cent for strike action on a 60 per cent turn out and by 92 per cent for action short of strike action, comfortably outstripping even the rigged criteria proposed in the next raft of Tory anti-union laws.

Rail staff deserve a fair reward for the high-pressure, safety-critical work that they undertake day and night.

The last thing that the industry needs is a demoralised, burnt-out workforce living in fear for their futures on declining wages.

Network Rail needs to appreciate the anger amongst staff and come back to the table with an improved package or there will be a national rail strike.

RMT members at Docklands Light Railway Keolis/Amey Docklands and contractor Interserve have also voted for strike action over pay and working conditions in two separate disputes.

Members working for the Royal Navy's lifeline supply operation the Royal Fleet Auxiliary have voted by massive majorities for both strike action and action short of a strike.

The current dispute is rooted in the managements attempt to bulldoze through major changes that would hit staff across the board.

All these results show that members are prepared to stand up and be counted and fight for decent pay and conditions in the workplace.

RMT has also challenged the offshore energy industry to prove that safety can still be delivered against a backdrop of cuts to jobs and attacks on shift patterns and working conditions.

The challenge comes after a major offshore safety event that reiterated that the industry is a 'major accident hazard' working environment where the industry objective is "continuous

improvement" in safety standards.

This is despite the fact that one employers association has openly acknowledged there are increased risks associated with the imposition of extended working patterns.

The union is also demanding a public inquiry into the privatisation of the NorthLink ferries contract in 2012 after it was revealed that the cheaper public sector bid – tabled by Caledonian MacBrayne – was returned unopened.

These murky events have cast a shadow over the tendering of CalMac lifeline ferry services to the Clyde and Hebrides, which is currently underway, and which the trade union movement is fighting tooth and nail.

A similar threat to fares, jobs, services and safety exists on the new Northern and Transpennine Express (TPE) franchises set up to rob the region of hundreds of millions of pounds to subsidise rail services in other parts of Europe.

TPE services and Northern Rail have already creamed off almost £400 million to shareholders which could have been used for lower fares, new trains and more staff to help passengers.

The shortlisted bidders for the Northern Rail franchise are owned by Dutch, French and German state railways.

In short passengers in the North are to be used as used a cash-cow to hold down fares and improve services for railways in Europe, what a way to run a railway.

This new Tory government will be supporting this drive to the bottom so now is the time for maximum unity within the union and beyond in order to build solidarity.

We will be needing this strength to fight the promise of endless austerity offered by the Tories and their big business friends. ■

*Mick Cash*

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



# DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY STAFF BACK STRIKE ACTION

## Members working for Docklands and its contractors both overwhelmingly vote for industrial action

RMT members at Docklands Light Railway Keolis/Amey Docklands and contractor Interserve have voted for strike action over pay and working conditions in two separate disputes.

RMT reps have been involved in extensive talks with Keolis/Amey Docklands management regarding the 2015 pay review and other issues including the shifting of the pay

anniversary date. Following a series of meetings, the company had failed to table a suitable pay offer and, having noted the views of both reps and members, the union has decided to ballot for strike action.

The union is insisting that all DLR staff deserve to be rewarded for the hard work and commitment shown and that means receiving a pay award that increases wages in real

terms as well as improvements to members' terms and conditions.

In a separate dispute, RMT also balloted staff on a contract awarded by Keolis/Amey Docklands to notorious anti-union facilities company Interserve.

RMT reps have been in talks with Interserve management regarding a series of issues that remain unresolved and which sparked the ballot for strike action.

The union is in dispute as members are sometimes not being paid correctly or not being paid at all. Members are also not receiving proper payslips or receiving set hours contracts of employment and rosters, which RMT was told would be given to staff three months ago.

Members are also not receiving pay increases which maintain the differentials

between grades. This is a long-standing claim from when the contract was with Carlisle Cleaning and Security.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union now had a mandate from both the directly employed DLR staff and those hired in through Interserve to take action to win pay justice at the workplace.

"The union will not sit back while core issues on pay and working conditions are left unresolved.

"We have sent a clear message to management that staff are prepared to fight to demand decent rewards and recognition, a safe working environment, decent working conditions and will not be forced into accepting inferior pay arrangements from either KAD or their approved contractors," he said.



# FIRST TO AXE GUARDS AND CATERING ON NEW GREAT WESTERN TRAINS

RMT is preparing an industrial action ballot on Great Western services after First Group confirmed that it was planning to axe guards and catering services on the new Inter City Express trains being supplied by Hitachi.

It confirmed everything that RMT has been warning of since the union first saw the plans for the new trains which make it clear that FGW are seeking to impose Driver Only Operation on Super Express Trains (SETs) which could be operated with the driver as the only member of staff on board.

In respect of catering facilities, First Group has confirmed that whilst a full kitchen will be provided on all SET trains the intention is to introduce an at seat trolley service in standard class – the ‘Upstairs/Downstairs’ service that the union has been warning of from the outset.

The response from the company completely failed to address the assurances required and RMT has made it clear that it will take all necessary measures to defend the interests of its members from the implications of these proposals and fight tooth and nail for



both safety and job security.

RMT's demands in respect of the introduction of the new Inter City trains remain the same:

- To keep a safety competent guard on every train
- To keep full buffet car facilities and catering services
- Maintaining station staffing levels
- No job losses or dilution of current roles
- To bring depot, turn-around and on-board cleaning in-house.
- To maintain the job security in the current fleet engineering depots

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union had been campaigning for months to fight plans that could lead to

the axing of buffet cars, on-board staff and maintenance workers on First Great Western.

"We warned that FGW were ushering in an 'Upstairs-Downstairs' service on Inter-City services while British passengers pay the highest fares in Europe," he said.

Nearly 60 MPs have now signed the Early Day Motion 584 backing RMT's position and called on the government to reject any contracts for East Coast and Great Western services which propose any such cuts to rail staff.

Mick Cash warned that the company were ignoring the protests and pressing ahead with proposals that will allow for driver only operation and the removal of buffet cars and their replacement by a trolley service only catering facility along with the sacking and reducing of the

safety critical operational staff.

"First Group is working hand in glove with this government to condemn the vast majority to pay through the nose to travel in rammed-out carriages where the catering trolley is jammed at one end while the elite glide through the country like extras from Downton Abbey.

"First were recently handed a cash-laden, taxpayer-sponsored contract extension on FGW without any competition and clearly see that as a green light to smash up jobs, safety and working conditions as they milk the deal for all its worth.

"RMT is throwing its full industrial and political clout behind the fight to stop this attack on jobs, services and safety arising from the introduction of the Inter-City fleet," he said.



# DOVER HOSTS INTERNATIONAL MEETING



Dover Shipping branch hosted a joint meeting with the unions involved in the Ports of Dover, Calais and Zeebrugge recently.

It was the second delegation from RMT and GMB, which represents port workers at P&O in Dover, to the CGT offices in Calais after the company

announced proposed redundancies and wage cuts to port workers in October last year.

The meeting was very productive with discussion on pay, conditions, the expansions of the ports of Dover and Calais and social dumping in the maritime sector including on

Condor Ferries.

Delegates represented RMT Dover Shipping along with the CGT in the Port of Calais, DFDS and P&O, GMB and the ABVV Union from Port of Zeebrugge in Belgium.

There was a consensus that these meetings were very worthwhile and the way forward

in order to learn from experiences and looking to improve the terms and conditions of all members.

The next meeting will take place after the summer in Calais which will also include delegates from Holland and the ITF.

## ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY STRIKE VOTE

Members working for the Royal Navy's lifeline supply operation the Royal Fleet Auxiliary have voted by massive majorities for both strike action and action short of a strike.

The current dispute is rooted in management attempt to bulldoze through major changes that would hit staff across the board.

Following lengthy discussions between the union and the RFA – the supply arm of the Royal Navy – RMT members rejected the proposed Future Development Programme.

The RFA's decision to proceed with the programme without agreement sparked a ballot of members for industrial action

which delivered a massive mandate for action.

The dispute involves:-

- A failure to agree over banding in the competency based system. RMT believes that all existing employees should be band A or B and new entrants should be band C.
- Apprenticeship terms and conditions have not been agreed and RMT believes further work needs to be done on the Under 18's policy and hours of work for Under 18's.
- Future employment of Leading Hands. RMT does not accept the increased workload placed on the stores accounts members and admin assistants should be

retained.

- Tailored Schemes of Complements. A failure by RFA to provide written assurances that members' will be deployed in the 'right place at the right time'. We do not accept that the staffing levels proposed on TSoC vessels are adequate.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that was unfortunate that the RFA had refused to listen to union concerns in talks and had left RMT no alternative but to move to an industrial action ballot. "The issues in dispute are all about valuing a workforce that plays an integral part of the defence of the country and training that workforce for the future," he said.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd added that the union understood the importance of the role that every RFA seafarer played, but could not understand how the employer could make such massive distinctions between ranks in RFA.

"When it comes to issue of pay and bonus's there is no fairness or equity and the RFA expect the lower rank of rating to fund the higher rank of officer, something we are not prepared to accept.

"They now need to recognise the anger that these issues have generated, anger reflected in this ballot, and take urgent and appropriate action to resolve our grievances," he said.

# PROVE OFFSHORE OPERATIONS WILL BE SAFER

RMT has challenged the offshore energy industry to prove that safety can still be delivered against a backdrop of cuts to jobs and attacks on shift patterns and working conditions.

The challenge comes on the day of a major offshore safety event that reiterated that the industry is a 'major accident hazard' (MAH) working environment governed by a "goal setting" approach to health and safety, meaning the industry objective is "continuous improvement" in safety standards.

RMT has pointed out that as the industry claims that safety is, "the number one priority" it needs to prove that the health and safety of workers will be improved with the changes to shift patterns, working hours, workloads and the removal of welfare provisions.

The union currently believes that these changes will have a detrimental effect on the health and will inevitably impact on the safety of operations.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash warned that the enforced changes are a recipe for disaster.

"We are being inundated with concerns about the safety of offshore operations and many workers are expressing fears about the effects of increased workloads and working hours on their health.

"In a MAH industry such as oil and gas we would expect responsible employers to conduct research into the impact of significant changes to operations.

"Our members report there has been no attempt to consider the effects of these changes.

"We are therefore demanding the oil companies prove how these changes will deliver on the objective of continuous improvement in health and safety performance," he said.

Figures from ONS confirm that profitability of offshore companies nose-dived at the end of last year, with UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) companies' net rate of return falling to 10.4 per cent in

Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec 2014) – the lowest rate since the ONS started collecting figures in 1997.

This is against a net rate of return of 11.9 per cent in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec 2014) for private non-financial companies across the UK economy (down from 12.3 per cent in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014).

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that the figures confirmed that the next government should support RMT's call for protections for the offshore workforce to prevent a premature decline in exploration and production activity offshore.

He also said that members had revealed that one employers association had actually acknowledged there are increased risks associated with the imposition of extended working patterns.

"The Offshore Contractors Association has produced a document which sets out a 'risk assessment' process to deal with the hazards of extending shift

patterns.

"Our members argue that the basic principle of risk assessment is to mitigate against hazards, therefore by acknowledging that increasing shift patterns introduces hazards the industry is in fact increasing risks.

"The fact that workers will spend more time annually exposed to the inherent risks associated with a MAH environment demonstrates beyond doubt that the goal setting objective of continuous improvement is being abandoned by this industry and that in fact the "number one priority" is not safety, it is unquestionably profit.

"In the absence of any verifiable proof demonstrating that safety performance will not be detrimentally affected we will be challenging the Health and Safety Executive to take a critical look at the actions of oil companies across the UK sector," he said.



# NETWORK RAIL MEMBERS VOTE TO STRIKE

## Overwhelming mandate for industrial action even surpasses the proposed new Tory anti-union laws

RMT members have voted YES by massive majorities in a ballot of Network Rail members for both strike action and action short of a strike in the current dispute over pay.

NR members have voted by 80 per cent for strike action on a 60 per cent turn out and by 92 per cent for action short of strike action.

The vote comfortably outstrips even the rigged criteria proposed by the Tories in the next raft of anti-union laws expected in the Queens Speech. The mandate for action will now be considered by the union which will decide on the next steps in taking the dispute forwards.

RMT has rejected the latest NR pay proposals as falling well short of what is required to maintain the living standards, the job security and the working conditions for nearly 16,000 staff across NR operations and maintenance.

Intensive talks through ACAS have failed to produce enough movement from Network Rail leaving the union with no alternative but to move to the national industrial action vote. 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.
- Over 16,000 RMT members were balloted in all areas of Network Rail in the industrial action vote which had decisively rejected the pay package.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was a massive mandate for action and shows the anger of safety-critical staff across the rail network at attacks on their standards of

living and their job security.

“It is now down to NR to start taking this issue seriously, to understand the deep-seated grievance felt by their staff and to come forward with a renewed offer which protects pay and jobs.

“The union executive will now consider this overwhelming mandate for action and decide on our next steps aimed at securing pay and workplace justice.

“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.

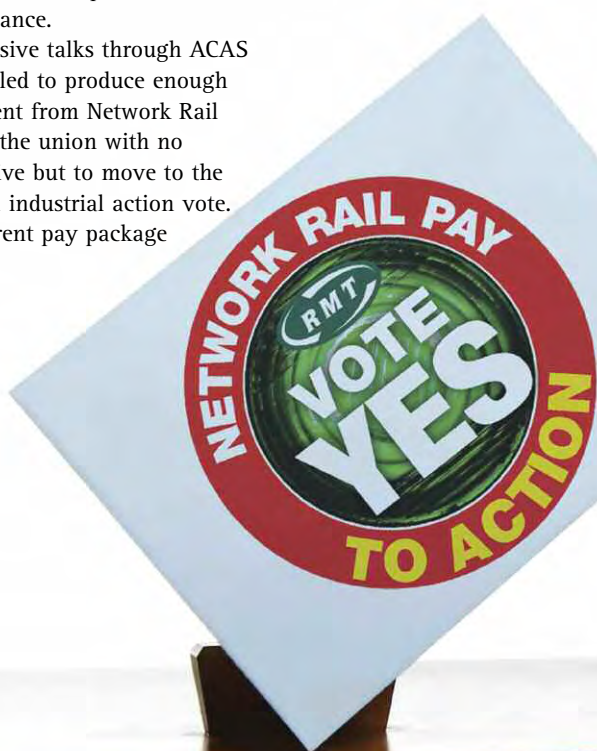
“In addition, we are extremely concerned that the “No Compulsory Redundancy”

commitment only applies to the first two years of the four year deal.

“RMT is in no doubt that this leaves Operations and Maintenance members extremely vulnerable, especially with the continued development of Rail Operating Centres and the on-going cuts programme at Network Rail.

“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 and the message has come back loud and clear that that is exactly how they feel about the current offer from Network Rail.

“RMT remains available for talks and we hope that the company will appreciate the anger amongst staff at the current offer on pay and conditions from Network Rail reflected in this ballot result and that they will agree to our call to come back to the table with an improved package,” he said.



## SIGNALS OF ROT IGNORED



### Union warnings ignored as corroded semaphore signal collapses in Norfolk

The collapse of a rusted in semaphore signal Cantley in Norfolk has once again revealed how warnings from union reps over serious maintenance issues are being ignored by senior managers.

The signal support had rusted right through at its base – an issue that the union had warned of along that section of line only to be told that the signalling is to be replaced at some point in the future with a new centralised system and that therefore repairs and replacements were not required.

The union said that it is pure luck that the signal fell away from the track rather than across it, and that it is purely by the chance that the threat of a derailment was avoided.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was a grim reminder that maintenance schedules had been allowed to slip and corners were being cut. I

“Once again we have an example where RMT reps had clearly warned about the dangers of the scrapping of maintenance work to these signals and once again those warning have been ignored.

“That is outrageous and RMT will not tolerate a position where lives are being put at risk on our transport services because of a pig-headed and cash-led reluctance to listen and to act.

“RMT will be raising this issue at senior level with Network Rail and we expect them to listen and to take the appropriate action.

“If it is down to the cuts imposed by central government through the Office of Rail Regulation then that needs to be in the public domain as a major political issue,” he said. ■

## Parliamentary column

# TORIES LAUNCH NEW ATTACKS ON TRADE UNIONS



Under a Tory majority government, the prospect of even greater restrictions on the freedom of trade unions may be realised.

The Conservative Party manifesto proposes increasing anti-union legislation across the board but especially in a number of industries including transport. Their manifesto states:

“Strikes should only ever be the result of a clear, positive decision based on a ballot in which at least half the workforce has voted. This turnout threshold will be an important and fair step to rebalance the interests of employers, employees, the public and the rights of trade unions. We will, in addition, tackle the disproportionate impact of strikes in essential public services by introducing a tougher threshold in health, education, fire and transport. Industrial action in these essential services would require the support of at least 40 per cent of all those entitled to take part in strike ballots – as well as a majority of those who actually turn out to vote”.

Whilst this is unclear as to what is meant by “workforce”, (whether it is all employees or all union members entitled to vote), even if it refers only to members of the union, a minimum of 50 per cent would have to vote in any ballot and a minimum of 40 per cent of total union membership (including non-voters) would have to vote yes. This would mean an 80 per cent Yes vote would be needed on a 50 per cent turnout.

This is even more shocking when the current government has just been elected with less than 25 per cent of

the electorate voting for them, and less than 37 per cent of those who voted.

The Tory manifesto goes further and states:

“We will also repeal nonsensical restrictions banning employers from hiring agency staff to provide essential cover during strikes; and ensure strikes cannot be called on the basis of ballots conducted years before. We will tackle intimidation of non-striking workers; legislate to ensure trade unions use a transparent opt-in process for union subscriptions; tighten the rules around taxpayer-funded paid ‘facility time’ for union representatives; and reform the role of the Certification Officer”.

Again, not all is clear but the excerpt indicates that external strike-breakers may be engaged by companies, mandates for strike action will be unrenounceable, facility time will be attacked and the Certification Officer may interfere to a greater extent in the internal affairs of trade unions.

Sajid Javid, the newly appointed Business Secretary, has said that the “reform” of the UK’s strike laws are a priority for the new government.

RMT will continue to fight against any attacks on trade union rights and to campaign for new freedoms.

RMT is affiliated to the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom. If your branch or regional council is not yet affiliated I strongly encourage you to do so.

Please visit <http://www.tradeunionfreedom.co.uk/>



# DEFENDING THE

## Well-attended bus workers' conference vows to organise workers and fight attacks on the industry

Mount a co-ordinated campaign to fight cuts in the bus industry, demanded delegates at the annual bus workers conference meeting in Ryde, Isle of Wight.

Jim Udale, Poole and District said that a sustained campaign was required.

"We have seen various attempts to fight cuts to bus funding including the buses matter booklet, but we need to go further with a sustained campaign to give the issues the widest possible coverage," he said.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash outlined how bus companies were putting on the squeeze in the name of profit and the pitfalls of operating in a privatised industry.

He said that the recent collapse of the western Greyhound bus company was a prime example of the unstable nature of the industry.

"RMT is running a number of campaigns in the rail industry and we need to use the same methods to defend the bus

industry, putting pressure on MPs and councillors to join in," he said.

He said that the union had joined with MPs in calling for an inquiry into concerns that the five largest bus companies were using the fall in oil prices to maximise their profits at the expense of passengers.

He said that Labour MP Ian Lavery of RMT's parliamentary group had noted in Early Day Motion 907 (see below) that while the price of oil had dropped 50 per cent bus fares had increased by an average of 4.8 per cent.

"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.

"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," said Mick.

Dave Letcher, Camborne Bus called for a "pro-active" campaign to equalise the differentials between Domestic and European Union driving hours for PCV Drivers.

"We need an end to the ruling that drivers on domestic work are allowed to take breaks between successive duties of as little as eight and an half hours on up to three occasions in a working week.

"It is no longer morally acceptable for a driver to be at the controls of a bus for periods of up to five and an half hours before being legally entitled to take a break," he said.

Dave Gilbey, South Devon Bus also called on the union to fight proposed further attacks on trade union rights which would make it even more difficult for bus workers to take industrial action.

"The Tories are trying to stop us using the tools of our trade to fight the privateers.

"They want to criminalise strike action and our ability to fight back," he said.

RMT president Peter Pinkney warned that the Tories were seeking to ban strike action unless there was a voting turn-out of over 50 per cent.

"This is a bit of a cheek when you consider that Boris Johnson was elected London Mayor on only a 17 per cent turn-out," he said.

Dave Gilbey made a call for the election of a national bus workers officer to represent the grade within the union.

"We need a person that has a good knowledge of the bus industry to give us a voice," he said.

Backing the motion, Peter Simmonds, South Devon Bus said that the profile of bus workers needed to be raised within RMT, an all-grades transport union.

"We are presently under-



# BUS INDUSTRY

represented in the union we need members and branches to send articles in RMT News and keep the bus workers' handbook up to date," he said.

Pat Isherwood, Falmouth Bus said that bus workers were also under represented on the union's national health and safety advisory committee as there was no seat held by bus workers.

"There should be a rule change to have an extra seat added as a permanent place on this body for a representative from the bus industry," he said.

Tony Dilleyston, Newport IOW No2 called for a central negotiating committee to cover the bus companies that RMT organises in consisting of the secretary and chair of every bus branch within that region which should be held at least every three months.

"At present in Go-Southcoast each branch is having their conditions attacked one by one.

"A central meeting will keep us united and keep the union aware of what is happening in each area," he said.

RMT Wessex regional organiser Mick Tosh said that his region was moving towards a unified approach to wages and conditions for bus workers.

Alan Pottage of the

organising unit reported on a number of recognition campaigns in bus companies including at Norfolk Green in Kings Lynn where over 50 per cent of the workforce had joined the union.

Alex Winter, Exeter No2 called on the union to lobby the government to insert compulsory large vehicle awareness as part of the standard driving test.

"Drivers are just not aware of the room required for a bus to turn a corner and we need something in the Highway Code," he said.

Sarah Bell, Traffic Commissioner for the west of the country, outlined her role at investigating road safety issues relating to the bus industry and held a question and answer session with delegates.

She explained how the traffic commissioner had the power to revoke vocational licenses from drivers and outlined how to avoid the pitfalls that could lead to a loss of livelihood.

John Wittingham, Chester said that bus companies and the Highway authorities should provide information for passengers explaining when major road works are planned that would cause diversions and prolonged delays to bus

services.

"Leaflets and notices should explain any delays to inform passengers and ease the burden on bus drivers to explain any delays," he said.

Brian McGann, Poole and District called on the union to enter into discussions with bus manufacturers and bus companies in order that the comfort of the driver is considered in the design of the cab area.

"The cabs of buses are our workplaces.

"Driving for up to five and a half hours at a time in a poorly designed seat and a poorly laid out cab can cause lasting damage to our members," he

said.

Dave Gilbey said that this was a serious health and safety issue.

"There is a cab committee in the union so we need to get it to that arena as well as through the other structures of the union," he said.

Incoming newly-elected assistant general secretary Mick Lynch introduced himself as the new officer covering the bus industry.

"We need to continue the work of Bob Crow and build a fighting, democratic trade union to defend our members.

"To do that we need to stay united and strong," he said.

## Early day motion 907

### LOWER OIL PRICES AND THE BUS INDUSTRY

That this House notes that the price of oil is 50 per cent below its recent trend price and is forecast to stay at its new lower level for a prolonged period; further notes that, while falls in the oil price represent pure profit for bus companies, bus fares increased by an average of 4.8 per cent across the UK between December 2013 and December 2014; understands that while some bus companies may have hedged their fuel costs on the basis of a higher oil price, that would only cover a portion of their fuel bill; believes that most bus companies' hedge period has expired since oil prices fell; recognises that bus companies are supported by taxpayer-funded grants which are devolved to local councils; and calls for an inquiry to determine whether the bus companies are profiteering from the fall in oil prices instead of passing on the benefit of the fall through reduced bus fares and improved services.



# DEFEND THE GUARD

## Traincrew and shunters conference calls for fight against Driver Only Operation

Stop Driver Only Operation (DOO) and defend the guard! was the message from the 2015 Traincrew and shunters conference meeting in Portsmouth.

Regional organiser Craig Johnston delivered a passionate update about the campaign he is spearheading against the introduction of DOO in the north.

Craig said that the guard supervises train evacuation and was, therefore, a key safety function which was being

undermined.

"The train operating companies want to take away the cost of the guard and we will be left with an army of agency staff on zero-hour, minimum wage contracts," he said.

Craig spoke of the need to organise these staff within to the union so that RMT can argue for them to be employed on proper terms and conditions.

Craig also recalled Bob Crow telling Sir Roy McNulty that privatised railways cost three to

four times the amount of a nationalised one and so why did he not consider re-nationalising the railways?

"McNulty replied that this was not his remit, thus proving that this is an ideologically driven campaign against terms and conditions rather than being about value for money as it has been portrayed," he said.

Craig told of how the campaign to defend Northern rail services, safety and jobs had seen a huge response with over twenty thousand completed postcards being returned to the DfT and of gaining the support of 50 MPs.

"We are involved in one hell of a battle for the safety and security of this industry.

"We will be going around the marginal seats in the north and taking this message to the voters that it is not just this issue but the privatisation of the

industry that causes these on-costs that mean that these savings need to be made.

"We need to convince them of the reality.

"We need to tell our members in the rest rooms that they need to go get off their backsides to protect their jobs," he said.

Ritchie Veitch, Edinburgh and Portobello backed complete opposition to DOO.

"There is a possibility of their being nine or 10 car sets in service with just one member of staff being on-board.

"The success of the Northern and TPE campaign is very impressive but more action is required to see guards retained and for 2015 to be the year of the fight-back," he said.

Jim Buchannan, Dorset Rail said that the union stood "shoulder to shoulder" on the issue.

"This is the first tranche of

the McNulty recommendations; we are paying for the failures of the government's privatisation policy and we need to fight back," he said.

Conference president Paul Howes welcomed delegates to the historic maritime city of Portsmouth and reflected upon the changes that have occurred within the union since last year.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash reiterated this when he told delegates that this was the first time he had addressed conference.

He said that despite these changes he intended for the union to continue in the same campaigning fashion because he recognised that that was important to members.

He spoke about the 2,300 new members that have been recruited in the past year and how this was due to the hard work of the rank and file members and the good work they do on organising.

"In July, the education centre in Doncaster will be re-branded as the Bob Crow National Education Centre in remembrance of Bob and the importance he placed upon educating our members and reps.

"The union's industrial strategy will also remain exactly the same and will continue to be determined by our members.

"We are, and will continue to be, the best fighting democratic union," he said.

Conference supported a call from Bristol Rail branch called for a consistent chain of care procedure to be introduced across all Train Operating Companies. Greg Harrison, Cardiff Rail explained that some companies level of care after members of staff had been involved in an incident were inadequate and that the chain of care policies differ enormously from TOC to TOC.

"An incident or assault can lead to mental health issues for the member of staff involved and awareness and support of these issues must be addressed," he said.

Billy Kim, Liverpool No. 5 said that TOCs should introduce



"straightforward, and standardised, guidance as this is about the welfare of their staff".

Numerous delegates told conference of incidents where the quality of care provided had been sub-standard and how they felt a uniform approach could improve the situation.

Dover District General Grades branch called on the union to engage in dialogue with the TOCs to ensure that the safety of the travelling public remained paramount and that this was a vital function of the on-board staff.

It called upon the union to implement a national working-party to ensure on-board members remain proactive when proposals were mooted to change their terms and conditions.

Edinburgh and Portobello raised concerns over drug testing, calling for legal guidance to be sought in the wake of the case of the Bristol bus driver who had been dismissed from his job for failing a drugs test but who had successfully argued that the traces had come from drug residue on the passenger's cash he had handled.

"As our members also handle cash we need some form of

protection for our grades," he said.

East Midlands Central branch raised concerns over the incidents of intoxicated passengers being placed on-board trains by members of the British Transport Police

"We need legal advice as to whether or not guards should have the right to refuse permission to travel," the successful motion said.

Mansoor Khan, Leeds City branch rose to call for industrial action to be taken until agency workers are withdrawn and employed on proper terms and conditions rather than zero hours contracts.

Billy Kim explained that this should not be seen as an attack on agency staff but a call to recruit them into the union so that we can negotiate for them on their behalf.

"We need to unionise them to fight with us not against us," he said.

Adrian Walsh, Three Bridges called for opposition to Managers and Administrative staff being trained in train dispatch duties.

"My safety role is paramount to me and to have that undermined by having part-time staff performing this role is

unacceptable, it is far too precious to allow anybody that is not fully qualified to perform this role," he said.

Senior assistant general secretary Steve Hedley updated conference on the new organising and education strategy that he has been charged with delivering.

"Grades conferences are vital for organising and so people can meet up to discuss strategy and make sure it is carried out.

"The future of this conference is threatened because the future of the grade is at risk.

The election will be close but if the Tories get back in we face another five year onslaught on terms and conditions and with a Labour government it will be the same but to a lesser extent.

"Our organisation helped form the Labour Party but then they were delivering something: NHS, houses, nationalised companies but now they are privatising it.

"Every other country can come to Britain and make a profit from our train industry so we have to show them we are not a docile organisation and we will not put up with this privatised monstrosity," he said.





# DEFENDING STATION STAFF

## Fight low pay, long hours and job cuts demands station grades conference

Delegates to the station and associated grades conference meeting in Cardiff called on the union to fight low pay, long working hours and job cuts in the industry.

Ross Marshall Central, Line West branch said that station grades were among the lowest

paid staff on the railway and when there is a percentage pay increase, because of the low wage, the increase is small.

Roy Carey, TfL said that the poorer grades were not benefiting from percentage pay rises and another method was required to bring station staff

into line with other staff.

Delegates called on the union to negotiate an across the board amount instead of a percentage figure to ensure everybody got a fair pay rise.

Linda Wiles, TfL also warned that pay rises were un-consolidated and not

pensionable so any pay rise needed to be consolidated.

Ross Marshall also condemned attempts by various train operating companies and London Underground to use disability to dismiss station staff workers.

He noted the “disgraceful”

sackings of London Underground station staff workers Karen Gryott and Noel Roberts because of disability despite clean sick records.

"We need to ensure that companies never use disability as a tool to sack workers," he said.

Linda Wiles said that the union should be quick to highlight such cases and defend members targeted in such as way.

Ross Marshall also warned that the disappearance of station grade jobs was having an impact on staff rosters.

"The fewer staff we have the more extreme the rosters are with only dead early and dead late turns and lots of weekend working," he said.

He called for all rosters to be fair, family friendly and put the worker first.

Conference called on the union to ensure that best practice rostering as outlined by the HMRI/ORR must be adhered to.

Richard Constable, Deptford said that station grades staff are being forced to work 12-hour shifts with no provision for additional paid breaks.

"This is in breach of working time regulations that state if someone is working for more than six hours a 20 minute break should be allowed away from their place of work.

"Many train operating companies often rely on station grade staff to do more than their normal roster hours and this can sometimes be up to 12 hours because of the shortage of staff," he said.

Delegates called on the union to put pressure on employers that do not provide additional breaks for working more than nine hours and up to 12 hours.

Phil Jones, Cardiff Rail said that the practice of lone working was not only prevalent but actually increasing.

"This issue is not just about safety, although that is important, it is being used to slash jobs," he said.

Conference called on the union to step up the campaign

to end lone working once and for all.

Phil Jones also warned that CCTV was being introduced in South Wales in order to control stations, sell tickets and deal with customer queries.

"These machines are cheaper than staff but they do not help passengers and it is being rolled out across the industry.

"Recently London Underground have given staff ipads and on the national rail the TVM system is being rolled out," he said.

Ashley Farrant, Plymouth No1 warned that technology was being introduced to shed jobs not improve services for passengers.

Delegates called on the union to campaign against the automation of station staff work and the associated declining safety standards.

Mark Ball, Waltham and District said that the sale of Oyster Cards from other outlets was being used in order to shut London Underground ticket offices.

"We must oppose the same process being employed to close ticket offices across the entire rail network," he said.

Senior assistant general secretary Steve Hedley backed the call and warned that newsagents could not replace safety critical railway staff.

"Only trained staff can evacuate stations, assist passengers and raise the alarm in case of emergencies," he said.

Mick Crossey, Camden 3 called for a campaign to get all cleaners brought back in house and paid the money and terms they deserve.

"Cleaners work hard and are vital for the safe running of the railway.

"However in many cases these cleaners are outsourced or made to be 'self employed' and thus received poor wages and terms and conditions.

"They have no pensions, no sick pay or any other benefits other workers enjoy so we need to fight for them," he said.

Chris Reilly, Reading said that cleaners were often agency



staff on zero hour contracts.

Delegates narrowly backed a call from Chris Cuomo, Deptford for cleaning grades to have their own grades conference.

"The union needs to look at how this will be financed as many of the cleaners are on minimum wage and do not have travel facilities," he said.

Ross Marshall opposed the motion on the basis that cleaners needed support within the current grades conferences.

"I understand the aspiration but we need a critical mass of activists to make it viable," he said.

Assistant general secretary Mick Lynch said that the union could put the aspiration of organising cleaners into the rule book in order to develop the idea further.

Ross Marshall revealed that the station grades conference budget was just £700 for the whole year.

"This has only gone up by £100 in the last ten years yet conference costs run to over £1,200 each year.

"In order to pay for the conference hall, refreshments, printing and postage and officer salaries we need to rely on branches and individual donations," he said.

Mick Lynch pointed out that conference could request financial assistance under rule 12, clause 8 in the union's rule book.

Delegates agreed to call for a substantial increase in funding from the union.

Mick Crossey pointed out that conference had no banner and called for one to be commissioned.

"Banners are very important as symbol of our activity and what we stand for and can be brought to festivals, rallies, demonstrations and conferences, etc, etc," he said.

Conference called on the union to fund a banner to be designed in conjunction with the liaison committee.

Delegate noted that the grades liaison committee was only permitted to have a mandatory one meeting a year under rule.

Ross Marshall said that this was far too little as station staff were under constant attack from cuts, the London Underground 'Fit for the future' programme and the McNulty proposals.

Delegates called for the frequency of meetings to be increased one per year to at least two per year.

Welcome to Blackpool North



**FARE RISES TO  
SUBSIDISE SERVICES  
ACROSS EUROPE**

# New Northern and TPE franchises set up to rob the region of hundreds of millions of pounds to subsidise rail services in other parts of Europe

RMT has launched a new phase of campaigning over the threat to fares, jobs, services and safety from the new Northern and Transpennine Express (TPE) franchises set up to rob the region of hundreds of millions of pounds to subsidise rail services in other parts of Europe.

TPE services and Northern Rail have already creamed off almost £400 million to shareholders which could have been used to pay for fairer fares, new trains and more staff to help passengers.

The shortlisted bidders for the Northern Rail franchise are owned by Dutch, French and German state railways.

RMT has pointed out that passengers in the North are to be used as a cash-cow to hold down fares and improve services for railways in France, Holland and Germany.

According to Vera Moosmayer, a spokesperson from the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, dividends from state rail operator Deutsche Bahn will ensure that the profits DB nets worldwide are re-invested back into Germany.

"We're skimming profit from the entire Deutsche Bahn 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," she said.

As a result there will be cuts to rail services and staff here. Passengers will be crammed into overcrowded, driver only operated trains, paying the most expensive rail fares in Europe. While all the time foreign and private train companies will suck up even more profits at the expense of rail services in the North.

RMT has taken a clear



message out onto the streets across the North that it is time to put passengers first and for the public to sign up for a publicly owned People's Railway in the North. That means:

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

RMT has launched a petition calling for a publicly owned people's railway in the North of England. To sign please visit <http://tinyurl.com/p8wm29c>

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that for all the posturing and hot air about a "Northern Powerhouse" from Tories George Osborne and David Cameron, the reality was that European rail operators were being given the green light to bleed Northern and TPE dry to subsidise their domestic operations.

"That is rail privatisation in action.

"RMT has been out on the streets for nearly a year now engaging the public and getting a fantastic response from the public," he said. ■

*"We're skimming profit from the entire Deutsche Bahn 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," German Federal Ministry of Transport spokeswoman Vera Moosmayer (Deutsche Welle April 7 2011).*

## Breaking News: Right of Membership!

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- Life cover that pays money back if you don't claim

- An accident plan for over 50s covering fractures, dislocations and burns as well as accidental death

Managing Director Dan Harrison explains: "Across our union partnerships, 1.5m members have benefited from the products and services we offer, with £21m paid out in claims, which demonstrates a real need for affordable protection that won't let policyholders down".

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to trade union  
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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.

**CONGRATULATIONS to Jack from Spalding** - Winner of our RMT Prepaid Plus £500 prize draw! Jack likes to shop at B&Q, says it's a good card and he would recommend this to other members. Here is our NEW prize draw ...

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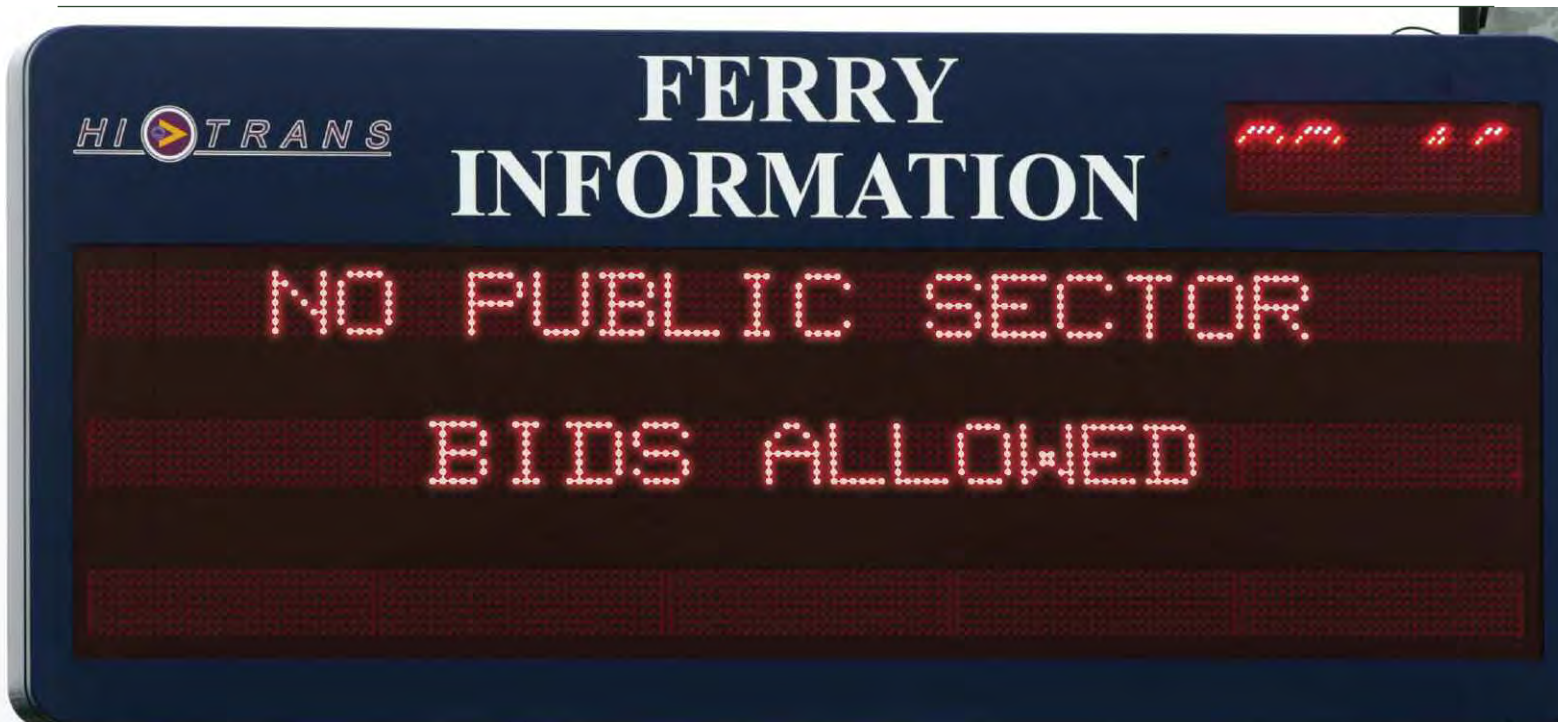
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# NORTHLINK FERRY CONTRACT SCANDAL

## Scottish SNP government returns cheaper public sector bid for Orkney and Shetland ferry services unopened

RMT is demanding a public inquiry into the privatisation of the NorthLink ferries contract in 2012 after the Shetland Times revealed that the public sector bid – tabled by Caledonian MacBrayne and thought to be cheaper than Serco who won the contract – was returned unopened.

The union said that the murky events cast a shadow over the tendering of CalMac lifeline ferry services to the Clyde and Hebrides, which is currently underway, and which the trade union movement is fighting tooth and nail.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was no surprise that CalMac's bid would have been cheaper than Serco's – the

SNP government whacked up the public subsidy to Serco by nearly £40 million (around 20 per cent) when it privatised the contract in May 2012.

This allowed Serco to trumpet to the London Stock Exchange the winning of a £350 million contract for Northern Isles ferry services.

“For Transport Scotland to have been found treating the public sector bid with such blatant contempt will not go down well with those seafarers who were made redundant following Serco's take over, not to mention their colleagues who would have seen their pensions raided had Serco not backed down when faced with RMT's intention to take industrial

action over members' pensions” he said.

Transport Scotland took the first legal step in re-tendering the £1 billion contract for Clyde and Hebrides ferry services (CHFS) in March, 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 below], 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 the 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 wrote.

RMT and other CalMac unions are familiar with this government's 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 has consistently stalled in starting talks with Cal Mac unions over the issue and the first meeting only took place in December 2014, leaving little time for discussions over the employment and pension protections in the next CHFS contract.

When the SNP government privatised Northern Isles ferry services in May 2012, it handed 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.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd added that members working for CalMac will be very concerned to learn of the Scottish government's instinctive contempt for public



sector bids just before the Invitation to Tender for the 2016-24 Clyde and Hebrides ferries contract.

"Transport Scotland continues to stall over the detail of pension and employment protections that will be in the tendering document, despite the best efforts of the CalMac unions and the STUC.

"There is a growing feeling that Transport Scotland and the Scottish government are heading full steam ahead to privatising Clyde and Hebrides ferries services, with the winning bid being announced after the Scottish Parliamentary elections in May 2016.

"We hope the Scottish government does not continue

to head down the Blairite route of privatising public services but the revelations over their treatment of CalMac's NorthLink bid does not bode well for Scottish ferry workers and the lifeline services they provide for remote communities and passengers," he said.

## LETTERS

### SUPPORT THE SNP

Dear editor,

Regarding the latest editorial from our new general secretary; he describes the SNP Scottish government (currently the only party in government in the UK with a democratically elected majority) as a 'regime'.

Interesting word choice - 'regime' - The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as: 'A government, especially an authoritarian one'; and 'authoritarian' as: 'Favouring' or 'enforcing strict obedience' to 'authority at the expense of personal freedom'.

Has Mick Cash taken leave of his senses? Or has he started reading the Daily Mail perhaps? I know that he is a 'New Labour' man but joining in the gutter press's hysterical descriptions of the SNP as a 'regime' is nothing short of pathetic. The 'Red Pawns' of the Scottish branch of the Labour Party in Scotland are about to be wiped off the political map because people can see that Labour and Tory are now exactly the same.

The SNP is to the left of Labour in almost every policy area and Labour has voted with the Tories in every 'austerity cuts' vote at Westminster. England needs a party similar to the SNP to take up the radical agenda. New Labour doesn't fit that bill.

Regards

Jeff Kirk

Edinburgh No.1 branch

### NO TO IMMIGRATION CONTROLS

There are many reasons to be critical of Bro. Pinkney's decision to stand for the Green Party in the forthcoming general election. Certainly, I find it disappointing that our President has chosen to represent an essentially middle-class, pro-small-business party in the electoral sphere.

But to attack Bro. Pinkney for opposing immigration controls, as Eddie Dempsey does in RMT News No. 3, Vol 18, is entirely wrong.

Bro. Dempsey presents support for immigration controls as a staple socialist demand, even claiming that Marx founded the First International to campaign for restrictions on immigration, to prevent "scab labour" from "Europe" being used to undermine "British workers". In fact, the First International was founded to forge practical links between the labour movements of Britain, France, Germany, and elsewhere; a spirit of internationalist working-class solidarity which Bro. Dempsey sadly seems to have forgotten.

He would also do well to acquaint himself with the work of another Marx, and Marxist: Karl's daughter Eleanor. In 1885, she helped migrant Jewish workers' organisations produce A Voice From The Aliens, an impassioned appeal to the "indigenous" British labour movement to unite with migrant workers to oppose the proposed law that would become the 1905 Aliens Act, the

first modern immigration control in British history (yes: modern immigration controls are only 110 years old).

Immigration controls are not neutral instruments that can be wielded either for working-class or ruling-class ends. They can only ever be instruments of state power and control, used under capitalism to divide and weaken the working class by creating false dichotomies between "legal" and "illegal" humans. In a world still shaped by the legacy of colonialism, in which majority-white countries hold the balance of global power, immigration controls are also invariably racist in their application.

If bosses use migrant labour to undercut local workers' rights, we focus our fire on the bosses, not on the migrant workers and the freedom of movement that allowed them to come here. Our approach to migrant workers is to organise them and fight for the levelling-up of rights and conditions, not to see them as our enemy.

Freedom of movement is a basic working-class principle. If wealth and capital are free to traverse borders uninhibited, we - the workers who created that wealth - should have the same freedom. There can be no such thing as a "socialist" immigration control.

From Daniel Randall  
Bakerloo branch

# RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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## LEGAL

# UNFAIR DISMISSAL VICTORY

RMT has successfully won an unfair dismissal claim with the judge also awarding reinstatement with effect from April 27 2015.

Wijesinghe Perera worked for the East Coast Main Line Company from October 1983 to February 2014, employed for over 30 years as an electrical engineer.

He was considered a model employee and his positive contribution was commended in an article in 2008 in the company's magazine where his dedication was celebrated. In the article, Mr Perera was recorded as saying: "I live for my work and, if I didn't think I'd done it properly, I couldn't hold my head up high".

On February 26 2014 Mr Perera was working on the night shift and started at 6pm and was to complete his shift at 6am. He took his lunch break at approximately midnight in the mess room. There were a number of colleagues that started their shift at 9pm who were also in the mess room, some of whom were sitting and talking. The television in the mess room was on showing a film. Mr Perera was tired and wanted to watch the news so he got up and changed the channel. One of his colleagues objected stating that they were watching what was on.

Mr Perera informed them that he had been on shift since 6pm and just wanted to watch the news. His colleague then got up and turned the channel back. In frustration at his colleague's action, Mr Perera went back over to the TV and hit the off button with force, unfortunately as it was a flat screen TV, it cracked. Mr Perera reported the matter straight away, apologised, and offered to pay for the damage. He had over 30 years' service and a clean employment record.

Mr Perera was shamelessly dismissed by the company for gross misconduct. The only reason given by the dismissing officer was that he could not be sure the matter would not reoccur. Mr Perera argued before the Employment Tribunal that the company had clearly failed to take into account or give sufficient weight to the fact that there had been no previous incidents in over 30 years of service and Mr Perera's own assurances in the appeal hearing that he would never do such an act again.

The company's disciplinary policy states that the procedure was not to be viewed, primarily, as a means of imposing sanctions but intended to emphasise and encourage improvements in the conduct of employees.

The Tribunal accepted that Mr Perera had been unfairly dismissed. The Employment Judge who heard Mr Perera's case ordered that he was to be reinstated to his role.

Counsel representing Mr Perera at the hearing was Kate Annand of Doughty Street Chambers.

Zillur Rahman of Thompsons Solicitors, who represented Mr Perera, said that the decision by the Tribunal had ensured that reason, logic and ultimately justice, has prevailed.

"It is, in my opinion inconceivable to think that the unfortunate act which Mr Perera committed, for which he profusely apologised for, could be a reason to dismiss and thereby do away with more than 30 years' worth of unblemished service, dedication and loyalty," he said.

Mr Perera thanked the union and its solicitors, particularly Zillur Rahman and Ben McBride, for "all the hard work and determination" staff had shown him over the months. ■



# A VIEW FROM THE PERMANENT WAY



I don't know if it's a Birmingham thing or a railway navy thing but a lot of the P-Way gangs, the workers who lay the rail track, are Brummies and Yam-Yams, though we also see Welsh and Donny gangs on occasion.

P-Way lads also have the habit of calling one another 'brother', where others might just say 'mate' or whatever, and it isn't because they're trade unionists, which many regrettably are not (yet).

I could be entirely wide of the mark here, but I like to think the habit has its origins in the collaborative nature of the work of the P-Way gangs and the collective mentality it inspires.

This mentality is less common on the other gangs, including my own Civil Engineering (Civils) troupe of ground workers, chippies and machine drivers with their tradition of short term, casual employment rooted in the building industry.

A Civils man loves his tools and, for most, our principle tool is the shovel. If it is sufficiently lightweight, the right shape, and of a decent quality, then it is his ticket to finishing the job quicker and going home sooner. Where 'job and knock' doesn't apply, it is still the difference between staying fit and healthy or his muscles aching all week from the strain of using a poor quality tool.

P-Way men are generally less well paid, less versatile, less qualified, even less physically fit than us Civils boys, but they are entirely dependent on the functioning of the gang as a united team. If one cog isn't functioning so the whole shift takes longer for everyone.

And for all that there are often a lot of tough and bloodied ex-cons on the P-Way gangs. If you ever find yourself seconded onto one of their gangs, you'll amaze yourself at the patience of the trackmen with you and all your unfamiliarity with pandrol clips and pads and stressing kits. It's

normal for them to juggle experience with inexperience.

So a Civils man loves his shovel, but a P-Way man loves his brother. By virtue of the scale of the work we are engaged in - the construction of an entire new railway, - our work groups are often large, twenty men or more. But amongst us Civils men we are ten or twenty individuals or pairs of mates or brothers, each going home in their own car, while the typical P-Way work group will be constructed of four or five gangs, each going home at the end of the shift to their own village or housing estate many distant miles from labour-hungry London.

So this Easter I was working again with the P-Way boys and took to thinking again on last year's tragedy that befell one of those P-Way gangs. Running into a friend from the Brummie P-Way crew, I asked after the ghosts of the Welsh gang that perished around this time last year. I remember running into the lads before it happened, but oddly I remember nothing about them, nothing at all but the hum of an accent, as if they were already ghosts in my mind when I met them, briefly and insignificantly, hours before their death.

The poor boys were driving back to Wales at the end of their shift from somewhere on our great Crossrail Project, driving the economy of the South East. All sleeping children in the back of the van, tiredness overcame the driver and he joined his brothers in the land of nod, and in fire and a crush of ripped steel in the layby.

That much I knew, but only through rumour. The Brummie was stoic in his reply, stoic with beautiful skill in his iron dignity. Three lads were killed, all young enough, but old enough to leave families. All killed except two, including the driver, who probably survived as they were the only ones in their seatbelts. They'd since removed the bull bars from the backs of the company vans, as apparently they'd impaled two

of the boys in the collision.

So I asked after the driver and the Brummie told me the horrible fate of the man with contiguous stoicism in words I can only allude to here in print, for no man is an island, though his torment is no secret on the railway. Stoicism is a beautiful thing, all about dignity and pride. But it has its limits. You could see the way it hurt the man to talk this way, this concrete and ballast way of flesh and blood and sons of mothers. The Civils man loves his shovel, but the P-Way man loves his brother.

You'll never hear about his brothers, not the dead ones nor the one who feels the burden of the guilt for their deaths. The public, with their weekends and white washes and trains to ride, they hear about the odd death on Crossrail or the railway in general, but they never hear about the men who take cancer from concrete dust. Never do they hear about those who die, knackered on the road when they've been 13 days on, and drive halfway across the country to wash their oranges in the hope of heading back the next day. Nor again do they hear about the crippled minds of the witnesses, the survivors, those builders of the future wrought in iron and too often turned in guilt to the industry of their own destruction.

There are worse places to work than the railway. But in few industries is there such an architecture of oppression to keep the brothers from standing as brothers: anti-union laws, tax legislation, legal blacklisting. In few industries is such tremendous power vested in so few, who are treated with such cruelty and contempt for all that.

One day we will rise, and we will capture, and we will govern the country, a monument to our labours and the labours of our dead, by new and different rules, us working folk, who built it all. But that day is a long way off yet, and it is a tired way, and a deadly way.

*Name withheld* ■

## President's column

# DOWN THE MINE



I went down a coal mine for the first time in my life recently.

It was quite an experience but also very sad. I was in Wakefield to address a meeting and Trevor Howard asked me if I wanted to visit the local pit which is now a museum.

I have spent a lifetime attending miners' galas, reading about their struggles, being inspired by them and speaking alongside them, so it was a great opportunity to get a feel for what their lives must have been like.

We were accompanied by Leeds branch secretary John Stewart and retired branch secretary Pete Daniels.

The tour started off with showing us how conditions were in early nineteenth century with whole families worked in the pits. The father would dig the coal, the mother would be behind him helping get the coal out of the seam and the children would be behind a door to the seam to open and shut it as the coal came through. Most of the time they would be sat in the dark as they had to buy their own equipment and candles were expensive.

These children were often as young as five and worked extremely long hours. This was a truly horrific life to lead for all while deaths and accidents were very common.

One of the things that hit home to me was just how little the owners valued human life. Our guide, a retired miner, explained how valuable the pit ponies were compared to human labour. Humans could be replaced easily, whereas the ponies were expensive to buy and maintain! Certainly the ponies seemed to be better thought off and better looked after than the human workforce.

Things improved as time passed, but working in mines continued to be extremely dangerous. No matter how much actual working conditions improved, there were still constant

dangers from gas, explosions etc. Still, the massive improvements brought it home just how effective the NUM was in winning better pay and conditions. Something, we should always remember, which was achieved by industrial struggle and led by some of the greatest trade union leaders in history such as AJ Cook, Arthur Scargill and Mick McGahey.

The mining industry theme continued on my way back from the Scottish TUC in Ayr to the Engineering Grades Conference in Edinburgh. I was given a lift by Davie O'Donnell and Mick Hogg was also in the car and their knowledge of the history of industrial struggles in Scotland is phenomenal. We passed through Fife and saw many closed pits. Mick told me how the mine owners had it all sewn up. They owned the houses that the miners lived in as well as the shops and the pubs. This meant that when the miners got paid they were basically handing their wages back to the owners.

What both these visits brought home to me was the loss of close communities as well as the huge job losses. The result is dead ghost towns, with communities having little or no hope. One of the worst phrases that I hear is "think yourself lucky that you have a job". This makes me very angry. EVERYONE should be entitled to a job, health care, leisure time, and a decent pension at the end of their working lives. Our job as trade unionists is to fight to achieve that for all of our society.

Finally, I want to wish Greg Hewitt all the best for the future in his retirement. He chaired his final engineering grades conference as he retires next year and it has been a privilege to know him as a comrade, and friend. Good luck Greg.

**Peter Pinkney** ■



# RMT MEMBERS ON A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

## Wessex regional organiser Mick Tosh sees off the RRS Discovery on its voyage to the Antarctic

The original Royal Research Ship *Discovery* was built and launched in Dundee on the River Tay, my native city.

She was captained by the famous 'Scott of the Antarctic' who died on his ill-fated expedition to the South Pole. This ship is now permanently moored in Dundee as part of Dundee Heritage Trust.

Dundee is known as the 'City of Discovery' so it was a proud moment for me when myself and assistant national secretary Mark Carden went along to represent the union on the new *Discovery* crewed by RMT members and flying the red ensign.

The story would have been even better had she been built in a British shipyard but she was built and launched in Vigo, Spain using taxpayers money, a sign of our times and lack of

shipyards to build ships. That said this is a good news story nonetheless.

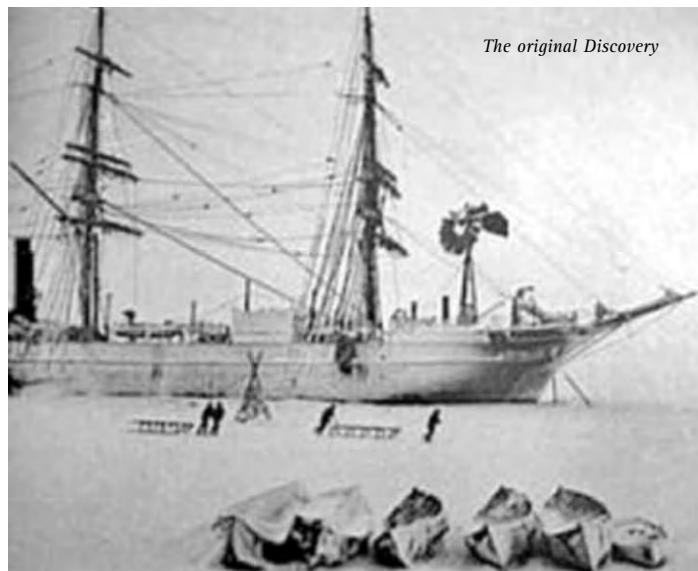
The ship is the fourth vessel to bear the name and continues the tradition of oceanographic research at sea. She is equipped for mapping the seabed, whilst her dynamic positioning capability means Remotely Operated Vehicles can be used. Her wide range of cranes and overside gantries, with associated winches and wires, will allow many different types of equipment to be deployed from the ship. These facilities help support the UK marine science community as it undertakes research of national and global importance.

A Royal Research Ship (RRS) is a British-operated merchant ship that conducts research for government scientific research organisations, notably the

British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

The new *Discovery* displaces around 6,000 tonnes some five times more than the original. The original *Discovery* was the

last wooden three-masted vessel built in the UK. I think she took around five months to travel to the Antarctic but I don't think the present one will take that long!



# LGBT PRIDE EVENTS

This year RMT will be taking the campaign for the nationalisation of the railways to the following Pride events:

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| <b>Birmingham</b> | May 23    |
| <b>London</b>     | June 27   |
| <b>Brighton</b>   | August 1  |
| <b>Plymouth</b>   | August 8  |
| <b>Cardiff</b>    | August 15 |
| <b>Glasgow</b>    | August 22 |



Pride marches are family friendly events and all members, whatever sexuality or gender are welcome to join in.

For any queries or if you wish to take part, contact RMT Equal opportunities officer Jess Webb [j.webb@rmt.org.uk](mailto:j.webb@rmt.org.uk)



## RMT Annual Garden Party for Cuba

**Weds 17 June 2015, 7.00pm**  
**Maritime House, Clapham, London**

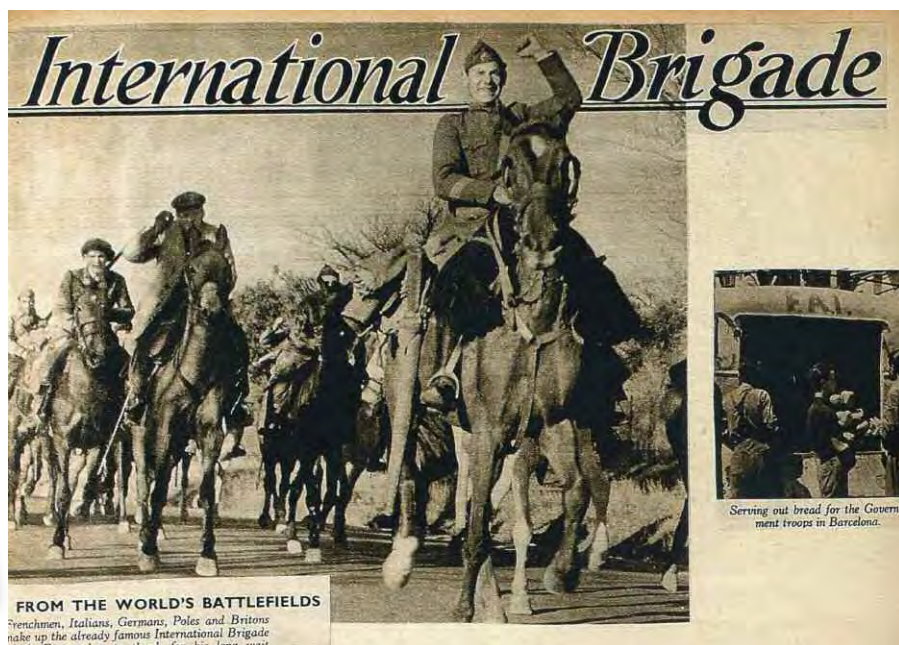
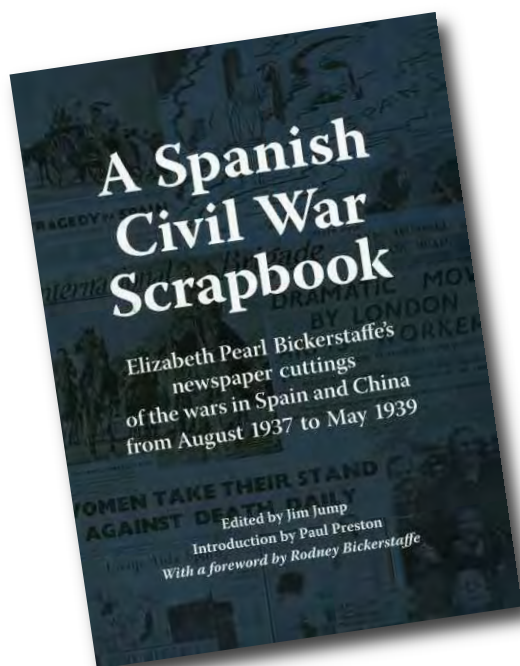


**In association with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign**

**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**

# A SPANISH CIVIL WAR SCRAPBOOK



This scrapbook, kept by a 17-year-old children's nurse in Yorkshire, offers an insight into the political and emotional impact that the Spanish Civil War had on a generation who lived through the agonising defeat of the Spanish Republic.

Elizabeth Pearl Bickerstaffe's

cuttings reveal the extent of human suffering in the war in Spain – and likewise in China – in which civilians were the main casualties. They also tell of the efforts in Britain and by the International Brigade volunteers in Spain itself to prevent this latest triumph for the fascist

powers in Europe. And we sense the fierce commitment to the cause of the Spanish Republic felt by the newspaper correspondents and photographers who witnessed this unfolding tragedy.

In his foreword, Rodney Bickerstaffe underlines the

important part played both by the events in Spain and by his mother's scrapbook in shaping his political values.

The Union has obtained copies of this publication which are available to members at the cost of £10.00 each contact [a.scott@rmt.org.uk](mailto:a.scott@rmt.org.uk) ■

## THE EU: A VIEW FROM THE LEFT

The Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign has produced a timely pamphlet analysing the true nature of the European Union.

The original Common Market was opposed strongly by the left and supported by the right. The Tories took us in and the left campaigned to get out in the 1975 referendum.

The left correctly identified the Common Market as essentially anti-socialist designed to roll back the socialist gains in post-war Western Europe. Today's EU has developed

into anything imagined by those early opponents and is now simply a branch of global anti-democratic neo-liberalism.

We now see millions out of work and the Eurozone has become an utter economic failure sliding into deflation.

It is time to reject the EU and the economic disaster it has become and to begin to reverse the damage inflicted on so many millions of lives across Europe and beyond. For more information go to [www.lesc.info](http://www.lesc.info)

Kelvin Hopkins MP Luton North ■



# MOSTLY HATING TORIES

Last year I was at an anti-violence against women meeting.

About half way through, there was a break, and Janine stood up, and recited poetry. I have known Janine for a long time, but never knew that she wrote poetry. I was very pleasantly surprised as she was very good. Her poems were on serious subjects, some hard hitting, but some also had a wry humour in them.

This book is a collection of some of those poems. Part of the success of Janine's poems, that evening, was the way they were delivered, however they lose nothing in their written version. They cover a wide range of subjects including autism, anti-Tory rants, pet dogs, homelessness, violence against women, and family matters.

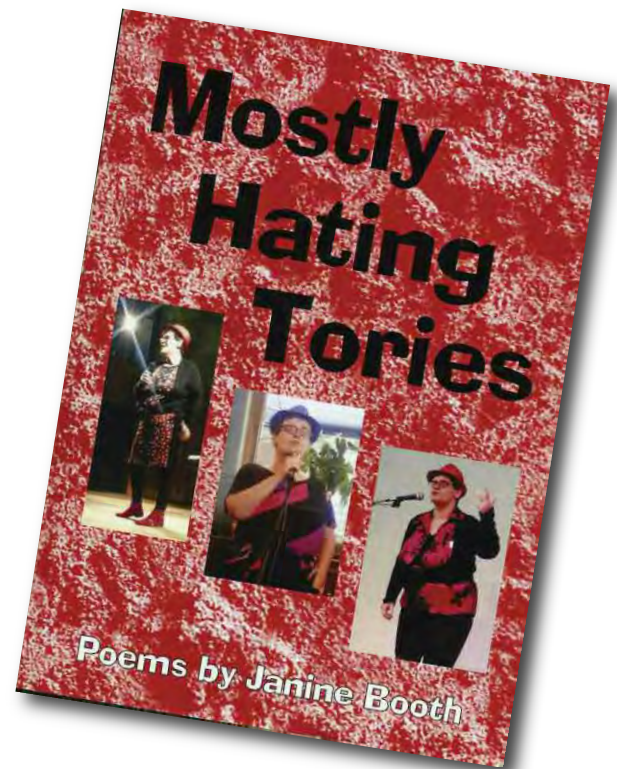
My favourite, is one that she

performed that night, called "Her Name Is Reeve". It's about the woman who was killed by Oscar Pistorious, the woman constantly referred to, by the press, throughout his trial as his "girlfriend". It really hits home, and I bet you had all forgotten who she was until I just mentioned her. Read this poem, and you won't.

*"Her name is Reeve  
She is a woman  
A person in her own right"*

My taste in poetry is more Keats, and Shelly, but I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed this collection. It is difficult to be objective when reading work by a friend, but I am pleased to say I would like this whoever wrote it. It is only three pounds- buy it!

Peter Pinkney ■



## Voice and Vision

June 27 2015

St Clement's Church, Leigh on Sea, Essex on Saturday  
6.30pm to 9.30pm. £12 entrance

A night of songs of Resistance,  
Democracy and Peace

with...

### Dick Gaughan

Legendary Scottish folk singer Dick Gaughan and many others will be performing songs that appear on the acclaimed Voice and Vision collection, released by Topic records in conjunction with the GFTU.

This tribute to Tony Benn and Bob Crow is a fundraising event for the Leigh on Sea folk festival, the largest of its kind in the country. For updates, information and tickets, go to the festival's website [www.leighfolkfestival.com](http://www.leighfolkfestival.com), as well as its facebook and twitter pages.

For more info on the Voice and Vision album go to [www.topicrecords.co.uk](http://www.topicrecords.co.uk)



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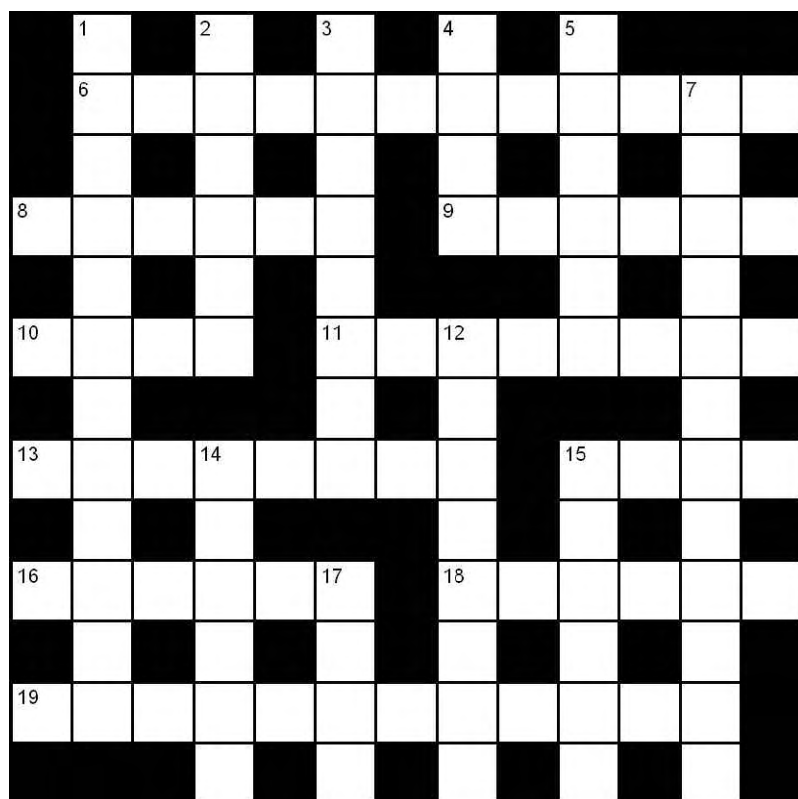
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## £50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Barry Trout, Plymouth.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by June 12 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

### ACROSS

- 6 Developmental (12)
- 8 Decomposing (6)
- 9 Farewell (3-3)
- 10 Fair (4)
- 11 Furtive (8)
- 13 Disability (8)
- 15 Corrosive (4)
- 16 Internal organs (6)
- 18 Pilot (5)
- 19 Having some authority (12)

### DOWN

- 1 Lucrative (11)
- 2 Force (6)
- 3 Posh dead end (3-2-3)
- 4 Appendage (4)
- 5 Uncover (6)
- 7 Periodically (12)
- 12 Stress (8)
- 14 Term of affection (6)
- 15 Scared (6)
- 17 Settee (4)



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

2 **Marital Status** married ☐ partner ☐ single ☐ divorced ☐ **Drivers Licence No.**

### 3 Your Employment.

|                 |  |            |  |
|-----------------|--|------------|--|
| Employer        |  | RMT Branch |  |
| Job Description |  |            |  |

4 **Mr** ☐ **Mrs** ☐ **Ms** ☐ **Miss** ☐

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7 Normally your payments are made once a month (28th) to RMT Credit Union Ltd.

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.....  
.....

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

Your signature

Date

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|-----------------|-----------------------|
| To: The Manager | Bank/Building Society |
| Address         |                       |
|                 | Postcode              |

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Bank/Building Society account number

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