

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

PTSD DANGER!

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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 ☐ Annual Basic Salary

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 ☐ Hetrosexual ☐ 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/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. ☐

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

Originator's Identification Number

9	7	1	7	4	5
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Reference Number

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Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
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Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

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

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 any change 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



PTI DANGER

New figures have exposed the growing dangers on London Underground and the national rail network at the Platform/Train Interface (PTI) – the most hazardous part of the network for passengers.

The figures show that the number of passengers falling between the train and the platform has more than trebled in ten years and RMT believes that this is due to dangerous overcrowding and the axing of safety-critical station staff.

That's why the union has produced a dossier as part of a national fight against the introduction and extension of Driver Only Operation (DOO) as greedy train operating companies look to dilute safety regimes in favour of maximising their profits from the privatised network.

It sets out a range of examples from across the country which details the real consequences of axing and undermining the safety-critical role of the guard for the travelling public.

In London a passenger fell between the train and the platform at Canning Town – exposing the growing problem of overcrowding and making a nonsense of LU's move to de-staff station control rooms.

It has been estimated that the growth in Tube passengers will mean more than four passengers per square meter at 50 of the 62 zone one stations within fifteen years.

These projections require urgent action if we are to avoid a lethal cocktail of gridlock and extreme passenger danger right across the tube network.

Stations and platforms are already being closed on a routine basis and such emergency measures are set to become commonplace.

Axing station staff jobs against this background is criminally irresponsible and RMT is calling on the new London Mayor Sadiq Khan to reverse the cuts and take union safety warnings

seriously.

Members working at ScotRail have voted overwhelmingly for industrial action over the extension of DOO and public support for renationalisation and for guards to be kept on their trains has soared.

It is a battle also being fought on Southern as Govia Thameslink Railway attempts to remove guards and introduce DOO.

This fight is winning public support as polls have found that nearly 90 per cent of passengers that have to endure using GTR every day want the company thrown off the railway and the service nationalised.

The union is organising a show of solidarity next month with Merseyrail guard Martin Zee and the legal battle he finds himself in after a member of the public was injured when she tried to board the train after the door closure procedure had commenced when the door closing alarm was sounding.

Unbelievably, despite winning backing from the company for the actions he took, the Crown Prosecution Service has decided to go ahead with the case.

As a result staff may have no protection even if they follow correct procedures whilst carrying out door operating procedures.

Finally congratulations to everyone involved in the campaign to keep Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services in the public sector where they belong.

This is a major victory for the union and a successful defence of the principle of public ownership and operation of lifeline Scottish ferry services.

It shows you exactly what a campaigning, fighting union can achieve.

Best wishes

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



RMT CALMAC VICTORY

Union wins campaign to keep Caledonian MacBrayne ferries public

RMT has welcomed the Scottish government's announcement that the next Clyde and Hebrides ferry services (CHFS) contract has been awarded to the incumbent public sector operator, Caledonian MacBrayne.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was a major victory for the union and a successful defence of the principle of public ownership and operation of lifeline Scottish ferry services.

"The Scottish government has accepted the union's arguments over the broader social and economic benefits of lifeline ferry services in the west of Scotland remaining in the public sector with CalMac.

"It is also a complete vindication of RMT members' decision to take industrial action in June last year which secured meaningful employment and pension protections in the

contract put out to tender by the Scottish Government in July," he said.

National secretary Steve Todd said that the union had worked in tandem with the other CalMac unions and the STUC as well as a supportive public to defend and promote the public sector bid during this unnecessary and expensive tender process.

"Negotiations can now continue with CalMac on the Pension Fund and whilst the union is under no illusions as to the need for reforms to the governance structure at CalMac and ferry procurement policy, the fact that the bid from Serco was rejected should give all RMT members encouragement in the on-going struggle against privatisation across the transport industry.

"The union will also step up the campaign to secure an exemption for all publicly

contracted Scottish ferry services from the damaging and pro-private EU regulation which demand regular tendering of these lifeline public services," he said.

The union won the support of the annual Scottish TUC congress meeting in Dundee representing 576,708 trade union members across Scotland.

RMT's 21 delegates were very active regarding CalMac and other campaigns and the union had a stall and ensured that the RMT-commissioned report The Economic Benefits of Public Sector Provision was inserted into every delegate's wallet and made available for visitors, international guests, politicians and the media. ■




 Thameslink

NEW CONTRACT ALLOWS GOVIA THAMESLINK RAILWAY MORE TRAIN CANCELLATIONS

Government orders 25 redactions, mostly relating to staffing issues, from the new agreement

A new government agreement, representing a last ditch attempt to prevent the termination of the Govia Thameslink railway franchise, will allow the company to increase train cancellations by a third, representing almost 9,000 additional cancellations per year.

The “remedial plan” was produced in February by GTR and agreed with the government but was only smuggled out by Ministers under a raft of complex franchise documents late last month.

The purpose of the amendment of the original franchise agreement was to address GTR’s contractual breach of the Schedule 7.1 benchmark for cancellations and admits that “the overall number of cancellations has increased and GTR have exceeded its threshold for TOC [Train Operating Company] cancellations”.

But astonishingly the plan then goes on to allow GTR to inflict more misery on passengers by increasing the “Default performance level” for

train cancellations by a third from 2.01 per cent of train services in the original franchise agreement to a maximum of 2.75 per cent in the new agreement over the coming months.

The Default performance level will also continue to allow for more trains to be cancelled under the new agreement compared to the original franchise agreement.

RMT estimates that on average this will increase the number of trains cancelled before GTR is in breach of its franchise agreement from 23,391 to 32,000.

At the same time a new independent poll by Opinionium has found that 87 per cent of passengers who have to endure using GTR every day want the company thrown off the railway and the service nationalised.

The Remedial Plan, which was agreed in February before any industrial action on Southern, also admits that the unpopular Driver Only Operation system already operated on part

of the network has “significantly increased the number of incidents”....“causing trains to be delayed and in some cases restricted to call at staffed stations only or cancelled”.

Under an alarming interpretation of the Freedom of Information Act, the Secretary of State for Transport Patrick McCloughlin has also ordered 25 redactions, mostly relating to staffing issues, from the 20 page document.

Despite this the document admits that issues relating to drivers are caused by mismanagement and regular disruption to the franchise has had “a debilitating effect on frontline staff, including traincrew”.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the dirty secrets of rail franchising had been dragged out under the spotlight which will spark a new wave of anger amongst the passengers on the GTR franchise.

“Not only is the government bending the rules, and inflicting more misery on the travelling

public, but they are admitting that Driver Only Operation, the issue at the heart of the current Southern dispute, has already compromised safety and led to a spate of cancellations.

“The government is now opening the door to GTR to hack-back and cancel services at will without fear of any penalty.

“It is shocking that the day after even Tory MPs were lining up to demand that GTR be stripped of the franchise that the government has done the complete opposite and given the company carte-blanche to carry on treating their passengers and staff with complete contempt.

“Nearly 90 per cent of GTR’s regular users want the company thrown out and the routes taken under public ownership,” he said.

RMT recently held a protest at the London headquarters of Keolis, the French co-owners of Govia Thameslink Railways, as part of the campaign to defend jobs, services and safety on the failing franchise.



CANNING TOWN

CANNING TOWN OVERCROWDING TRAGEDY

RMT said that there “must be no cover up” over an incident this month where a passenger fell between the train and the platform at Canning Town – exposing the growing problem of overcrowding and its impact on the Platform/Train Interface (PTI) and making a nonsense of LU’s move to de-staff station control rooms.

The union had demanded a “full and transparent formal investigation” and has listed the concerns raised as one of a growing number of safety-critical issues that must be addressed by the new London Mayor and his transport officials.

In the incident, Canning Town Jubilee Line and DLR platforms ended up dangerously overcrowded after the passenger fell under the train as growing numbers of people ended up being shunted from one part of

the station to the other.

There was little idea of passenger numbers and the scale of the over-crowding problems owing to the fact that the state of the art control room – with communications, CCTV and emergency monitoring equipment – has been left permanently unstaffed due to the cuts to station numbers that RMT has been fighting.

It was just one of several safety-critical incidents that have occurred since London Underground decided to effectively close many of their hi-tec station and expensively-equipped control rooms because of staffing cuts.

Major and busy stations including Canning Town, West Ham and Fulham Broadway are all victims of these cuts.

RMT has warned that the Canning Town incident will not be the last and points to the

latest Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) annual report which warns that life-threatening incidents at the Platform/train Interface are on the rise.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the appalling incident at Canning Town should be a wake-up call to London Underground that it’s staff cuts programme is compromising safety and, against the background of overcrowding on a daily basis, highlights the daily risks that are confronting both passengers and staff alike.

“There must be no cover up of this incident and RMT demands a full and transparent formal investigation to establish the facts.

“With the industry safety watchdog, the RAIB, warning of the growing dangers at the Passenger/Train Interface it is

patently obvious that cutting staff against that backdrop represents a lethal gamble with rail safety.

“Despite London Underground having fully functional hi-tec control rooms, with state of the art equipment that warns in advance of an incident and controls communications, they have decided to close these in many places because of the cuts programme bulldozed through by the last Mayor. “RMT reps have been warning the company for weeks now of the lethal consequences of those cuts and those warnings are now coming home to roost.

“RMT intends to raise this appalling situation as part of a wider agenda of safety-critical issues with the new Mayor and the union repeats its call for a halt to the disastrous London Underground job cuts programme,” he said. ■

TOP MANAGERS CELEBRATE TUBE JOB CUTS AND TICKET OFFICE CLOSURES

RMT has slammed the spectacle of senior Transport for London managers at Mayfair's luxury RAF Club celebrating the completion of a massive cuts programme that axes 800 safety-critical station staff and trashes 289 tube ticket offices.

In a gloating bulletin circulated to staff the management reported that almost 50 people from the Fit for the Future Stations (FtFS) team spent an enjoyable evening in the luxurious setting of the RAF Club in Piccadilly as they celebrated the successful completion of the main ticket office closure programme.

Mike Bracken, Head of Fit for the Future delivery team, spoke of the dedication and commitment of the team and congratulated everyone for their achievement.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was obscene that TFL managers treated themselves to a slap-up beano



in the heart of the West End to celebrate the axing of 800 safety-critical jobs and the smashing up of London's tube ticket offices.

The union is demanding to know whether some of all of the cost of this spectacle was

funded by the taxpayer.

"While TFL is talking about further cuts of over £2 billion that would devastate safety and services it is a massive kick in the teeth for the staff across the combine to receive bulletins from the management gloating

about their axe-swinging antics.

"RMT members are furious that while they are being stretched to breaking point the top brass are out on a jolly in a luxury, private members club in Mayfair," he said.



TUBE LINES MEMBERS BACK ACTION OVER NIGHT TUBE AND PENSIONS

Tube Lines maintenance and engineering staff have recorded an overwhelming vote for action over Night Tube, pay and pensions

Over 85 per cent voted for strike action with an even larger majority for action short of a strike.

The dispute is over the

company's refusal to discuss outstanding pensions issues until after the launch of the Night Tube operation.

There are also major unresolved issues over Night Tube staffing arrangements and a threat to undermine PRP agreements through Tube Lines refusing to base budgets on the negotiated

levels of performance-related pay.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that RMT members had shown their anger at the way that Tube Lines had attempted to tie in attacks on pensions with the offer on pay and Night Tube.

"There are also major unresolved issues over the

Tube Lines staffing arrangements for the Night Tube and over performance-related pay.

"It is absolutely essential that there is the earliest possible resumption of serious and meaningful talks on these issues and the union is ready to engage in those talks," he said. ■

UNDERCOVER SPY COP EXPOSED

Both RMT assistant general secretaries faced blacklist as union demands answers from police and bosses

The Blacklist Support Group has exposed that Carlo Neri, who was active in union circles in the 2000s, was an undercover police officer that had infiltrated peaceful RMT picket lines.

Photographic evidence shows that in October 2004 the spy cop was present at the industrial dispute following the sacking of the prominent RMT activist and now senior assistant general secretary Steve Hedley at the Kings Cross terminal for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

The presence of the police spy from the Metropolitan police's disgraced Special Demonstration Squad was captured on camera by the freelance photographer Andrew Ward.

The photographs show the police spy standing behind an RMT banner with the slogan 'Reinstate Steve Hedley' while handing out leaflets to construction workers who had walked out in support of the victimised union activist.

Steve Hedley said that he was appalled that a secret police spy thought that it was justified to turn up on a peaceful RMT

picket line in order to gather information.

"I had earlier housed this person rent free as he claimed he was being made homeless and feel shocked that taxpayers' money could be used like this to betray the trust of people engaged in completely legitimate industrial action.

"We heard a lot growing up about police states in other countries whilst it turns out our state was doing exactly the same thing here," he said.

The identity of the person in the photograph was discovered by Dave Smith while researching for the updated version of the book *Blacklisted* and first made public this month.

The author said that the Blacklist Support Group was only standing up for workers' rights.

"However it seems that the British state considered us such a threat, that we were kept under constant surveillance by shady anti-democratic units in the police.

"This is nothing less than political policing and has no

place in a democracy.

"This took place during the Tony Blair government and I want to know why trade unions were being spied on under a Labour Home Secretary. David Blunkett has serious questions to answer," he said.

The Channel Tunnel Rail Link

dispute is recorded on

Consulting Association blacklist files of Steve Hedley and GMB organiser at the time, Steve Kelly.

Both Steve Hedley and Dave Smith have been granted core participant status in the Pitchford public inquiry into



undercover policing.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union had been aware for some time that there was a destroyed "rail file" at the heart of the black listing conspiracy that has never been properly investigated.

"These photographs show clearly that rail union activists were being targeted as part of the police operation and it time for the truth to be dragged out.

"Both of RMT's assistant general secretaries, Steve Hedley and Mick Lynch, were blacklisted and the union is demanding to know how many others were being spied on by the police and the employers organisations.

"The fight for truth and justice goes on," he said.

The GMB union recently won a £75 million legal settlement in the High Court over blacklisting and announced it would write to all councils demanding they blacklist the blacklisters.

When a blacklist of construction workers was uncovered in 2009, activists said some files contained information that could only have been supplied by the police.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has paid tribute to the Blacklist Support Group's "brilliant and brave fight" against building firms.

He called for all levels of government to use public procurement policies to ensure contracts are given to companies "who don't blacklist workers, who don't discriminate against trade unionists."

The blacklist firms, which include Carillion, Sir Robert McAlpine and Skanska, still dominate public-sector contracts.

Shadow home secretary Andy Burnham has said that he would move an amendment to the Investigatory Powers Bill to outlaw police and security services monitoring of legitimate trade union activity.

SUPPORT MARTIN ZEE!

Show solidarity with the Merseyrail guard outside the court on Monday July 25

The union is organising a show of solidarity with Merseyrail guard Martin Zee and the legal process he finds himself in.

The next court date is on July 25 2016 and members are encouraged to show solidarity with Martin by attending The Queen Elizabeth II Law Courts, Derby Square, Liverpool Merseyside L2 1XA with other RMT members.

Attendance would be a legitimate expenditure from branch and regional council branch management fund.

Martin was involved in an incident at Hamilton Square last year in which an 89-year old woman was injured when she tried to board the train after the door closure procedure had commenced when the door closing alarm was sounding.

The individual concerned received a number of injuries after falling between the train and the platform. By following the training Martin received from the company, he was instrumental in assisting the train driver in isolating the electrical supply to the third rail by placing the short circuit bar on the running and conductor rail.

Martin then lowered himself between the platform edge and the train and offered assistance and reassurance to the woman until the emergency services arrived.

Merseyrail's investigation into the incident and the company's response to the findings of that report is exemplary.

The company has taken no action against the RMT member and all of the recommendations in the report are addressed to system risk issues rather than individual failings. This is in line with RMT's campaign of fair culture programme in the

investigation of incidents.

However the Crown Prosecution Service commenced a prosecution of Martin under Section 34 of the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861. This statute allows for the prosecution of staff on the railway who endangered the safety of any person conveyed or being in or upon a railway. The maximum penalty under the Act is two years imprisonment.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that if the CPS did not withdraw these charges it could result in grave consequences for the rail industry in general, leaving staff with no level of protection regardless if they even follow agreed company training procedures whilst carrying out door operating procedures.

"This could ultimately result in police prosecutions should a member of the travelling public choose to ignore warnings not to board a service whilst Train doors are closing, potentially resulting in injury," he said.

The union has raised the matter directly with the ORR, seeking clarification on approved power operated door training standards requesting information as to who is protected in circumstances such as these and whether the wider rail industry is aware that police charges may be brought against rail workers even in circumstances when procedures are carried out as per the agreed company standard.

The union has also raised the issue through the RMT Parliamentary group members to build a high profile political awareness around the case and to place pressure on the CPS to do the decent thing and withdraw the charges.



ORGANISING AT CALEDONIAN SLEEPER

RMT reps at Serco Caledonian Sleeper report on progress and developments within the service

After a very difficult first year working for Serco since it was awarded the iconic cross border Caledonian Sleeper Service by the Scottish government on a fifteen year franchise, there are signs things may be getting better for the hard working staff who have been joining RMT in increasing numbers.

Following on from last year's dispute and strike action, which was solidly supported by members, the union is now beginning to properly organise workers to ensure that hard won terms and conditions can be maintained and improved in the

years ahead.

We had recently been elected as company council and local level reps and were keen to take up the one-day training course which the lead officer Gordon Martin arranged for us in Glasgow.

Donald Graham from RMT's organising unit led the lively debates and discussions which ranged from the role and responsibility of RMT representatives, through to the important requirement for good communication between reps and members and the need to strategically map the workplace

on an on-going basis to ensure new members of staff were encouraged to join the union.

We discussed a number of methods of communicating with our members and we will be producing regular newsletters and sending emails to members to keep them fully informed.

Donald also made a very strong case for us to be active not only in the workplace.

This meant attending branch meetings where all matters of importance can be fully discussed and decisions made which can include changes to union policy through branch

motions to the national executive committee and the annual general meeting.

We also had a presentation from one of the Director's with an informative question and answer session which was welcomed by us all.

With much more to learn we have completed application forms to attend reps training courses at Doncaster and look forward to the next stage in our development as reps and continuing to build towards 100 per cent RMT



SCOTRAIL STRIKE VOTE

Public support soars for renationalisation and for guards to be kept on ScotRail trains

Members working at ScotRail have voted overwhelmingly for both strike action and industrial action short of a strike over the extension of Driver Only Operation and Driver Controlled operation.

The vote was over 75 per cent for strike action with an even bigger majority for action short of a strike and the turnout was 75 per cent.

RMT's policy is for no extension of DOO on any route or service and for the guard to be in full operational control of the power operated doors.

RMT has made it clear that the union is totally opposed to any proposals for extending DOO, reducing or abolishing the safety role of the Conductor and reducing or abolishing the role of the Conductor in operation of the doors.

Scotrail has been repeatedly informed of RMT's position and the company had claimed that they accepted the importance of these issues.

But, instead of talking directly to the union, Abellio/Scotrail have resorted to targeting individual members through social media and junk mail in a campaign of misinformation which has backfired spectacularly.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said that the magnificent result shows that our members on Scotrail stand determined and united in this fight for jobs and safety on Scotland's rail services.



"The workforce know that any extension of DOO or DCO is a clear attack on our members hard earned terms and conditions.

"The workforce also know only too well that there is a very real threat to passengers of watering down and wiping out the safety critical role of the guard on these Scotrail services.

That is a lethal gamble with basic rail safety," he said.

The overwhelming majority of the public also want to see guards retained on ScotRail trains and are seriously concerned at the impact on passenger safety of rolling out Driver Only Operation (DOO) across Scotland.

The latest Opinion poll conducted for the union showed that the travelling public in Scotland, like the rest of the

country, are opposed to the removal of guards on trains.

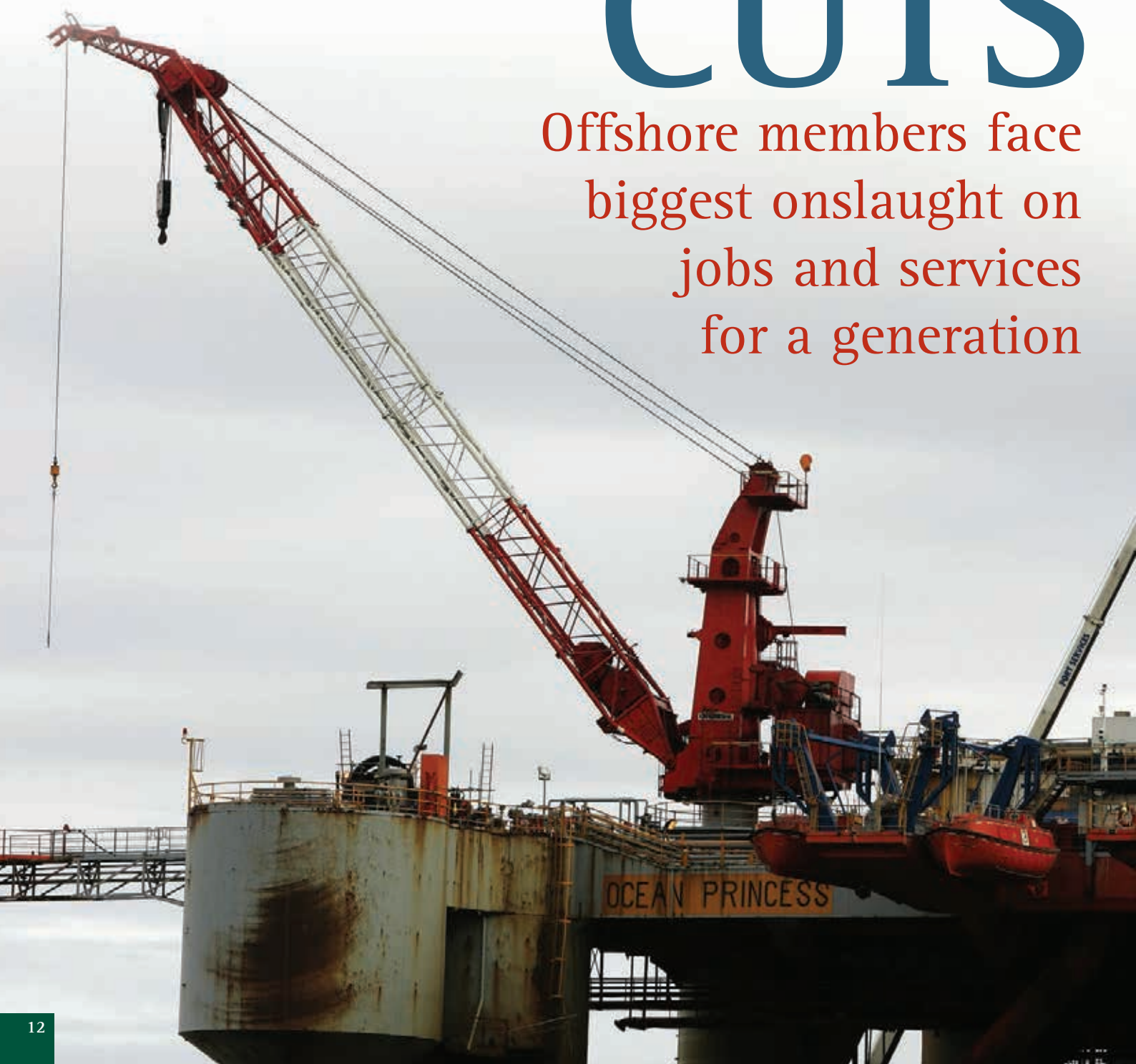
Frequent users that travel every day support ending privatisation and bringing Abellio ScotRail back into public ownership in Scotland by 82 per cent, as do 70% of the regular passengers as a whole ..

Three quarters (73 per cent) are concerned about the safety of travelling on trains that no longer had an on-board train guard and 77 per cent believe Abellio Scotrail should not allow trains to operate without at least one member of staff assisting passengers and protecting their safety.

That figure rises to 84 per cent of women passengers who also said by 82%, that they would be concerned about the safety of travelling on trains that no longer had an on-board train guard/ conductor. ■

FIGHTING OFFSHORE CUTS

Offshore members face
biggest onslaught on
jobs and services
for a generation





The offshore shipping grades conference met in Aberdeen recently to discuss safety cutbacks and attacks on wages, terms and conditions by company bosses.

Conference chair Mike Bainbridge told delegates that they faced unprecedented challenges and that “the companies want to drive down the cost of labour in the offshore sector”.

RMT regional organiser Jake Molloy gave an exposition of the complex setup that the industry works under and the relationship between the regulatory bodies, the oil companies and the contractors. He explained the importance and nature of the union’s involvement in the Offshore Coordinating Group which was recently created to coordinate activity by five trade unions.

National secretary Steve Todd told delegates that workers were facing the biggest onslaught that he had witnessed.

“The last 18 months has seen the biggest attack on our members’ terms and conditions in my memory in the shipping and offshore industry,” he said.

Derek Moore, North East Shipping called for a lobby of parliament to introduce immigration rules for those working on ‘one port’ vessels that supply support service or standby offshore installations.

He explained that in 2007 the government announced that it would extend the application of

the points based system to cover seafarers working on one port voyages from April 2009.

The Department of Transport accepted that for a ship to be included in the points based system its purpose must be connected to service, supply, support or provide standby cover for an offshore installation on the UK Continental Shelf waters. This effectively means all vessels working in the offshore sector.

However when the issue was looked at in 2009 no conclusion was reached on implementing the proposals and the issue has not been reopened since.

“We need to support a campaign even if it requires the support of other shipping unions to fight the Department of Transport and Chamber of Shipping resistance and archaic dogma in doing what is right and stop the decimation of seafaring jobs, including those in the offshore construction sector working on vessels in the UK offshore sector,” Derek said.

He further called for “dialogue to be extended to other offshore unions in Norway, Denmark, Holland and Southern Ireland in seeking cooperation that similar lobbying is conducted in those countries also to bring about an EC change in policy and amendment to EU immigration policy”.

Ronnie McDonald called for a campaign to pressure the government into helping

individuals who had lost their jobs offshore in the downturn.

“They must be able to keep their skills and retain a valid Basic Offshore Safety Induction and Emergency Training (BOSIT) certificate so that they can return to work in the upturn,” he said.

Ron Dixon explained how members were becoming increasingly concerned about the numbers of workers who are being taken on in the industry with “self-employed” status.

“Members complain that employees of some companies are being paid off while self-employed workers continue to provide services.

“Self-employed workers are undermining their employment protection and rights.

“Members complain that they don’t have the same commitment to installation initiatives, especially safety initiatives.

“The biggest concern is that self-employed workers could pose a serious threat to our members and directly employed workers in the event of a major accident or incident resulting in serious injury or death.

“Members fear that employers or installation owners and duty holders could seek to transfer responsibility for such an incident to the self-employed worker,” he said.

Conference backed a demand for these concerns to be raised with other trade unions through the Offshore Coordinating Group

and called for lobbying of Oil and Gas UK (OGUK) to end the situation.

RMT president Sean Hoyle said that the key problem with the industry was that the companies had made short term decisions based on the drop in oil prices in order to attack workers’ rights, rather than looking at the huge profits they make over a longer period of time.

“The companies use the excuse of low oil prices to drive down wages and conditions,” he said.

Les Linklater from Step Change in Safety outlined the safety issues and challenges facing an industry where cutbacks offer a real challenge to safety in an industry fraught with potential dangers.

He explained the situation in the wake of the crash of an Airbus Group SE helicopter off the west coast of Norway in April. He said that while in theory this should have been the safest helicopter, due to technology monitoring the components, investigators are focusing on possible failures of some components linked to the rotor system.

RMT general secretary argued that the best way to increase the power of the unions in the sector was recruitment.

“If we increased membership in the sector so we had more people in the union we wouldn’t be facing half the problems we have today,” Mick said. ■



GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO BLOCK LOCAL AUTHORITIES RUNNING BUS SERVICES

RMT has exposed moves by the government to prevent local authorities from running their own services.

The moves came after it was revealed that private companies' profits had received a massive boost from cheaper fuel prices. Their costs are nearing 30 per cent below recent averages and companies have used forward purchasing contracts to lock in these low prices until the end of the decade.

The government is looking to take a slice out of the companies' inflated profits by further reducing the subsidies it provides to the sector by engineering fewer routes - meaning fewer journeys for it to subsidise.

The government's new Bus Services Bill will allow bus companies to co-ordinate routes

- previously prohibited as contrary to anti-trust legislation.

The new Bus Services Bill would also enable larger local authorities to set routes and exercise greater control over services provided by bus companies. However, under the final clause of the bill - draft section 21 - it prohibits local authorities from running their own services, even in conjunction with a private operator.

So, though the Bus Services Bill could result in a local authority exercising greater control, those bus services will have to be provided by commercial operators in the name of profit.

Local authorities own and run bus services successfully in a number of cities including Reading, Edinburgh and

Nottingham.

RMT believes that other local authorities that want to own and operate bus services themselves should not be prevented from doing so.

As well as local authorities tending to operate cheaper and more widespread services, they generally treat staff more fairly too.

Whereas under private operators' jobs, pay and decent working conditions in the British bus sector have taken a battering.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the government was rightly terrified of local authorities running their own bus services.

"Local authorities owning, controlling and operating bus services more efficiently than the private sector blows a hole

through their market-fixated philosophy.

"The government, by setting out in its draft bill that local authorities be forbidden from running bus services, while in the same bill facilitating greater local authority oversight, is incoherent.

"The shiny-faced management consultants that dreamt up this shake-up of the bus sector, have yet again wasted public money with one of the most pointless restructuring exercises yet.

"RMT will campaign for the Bus Services Bill not to limit municipal ownership.

"Further, we will defend our members' jobs, pay and conditions together with ending the long-hours culture that puts staff and the public at risk," he said. ■

CALLING BUS WORKERS!

RMT has a long and proud history of organising and representing bus workers, standing up for your rights, winning good deals in the workplace and protecting and improving safety as well as terms and Conditions.

In the RMT, bus workers set the agenda for their sector through their own sector conference and through their own network of branches organised directly in the depots and garages.

Backing them up they have a strong and powerful national union that organises solely in the transport sector with a range of benefits and services and a reputation for standing up for its members.

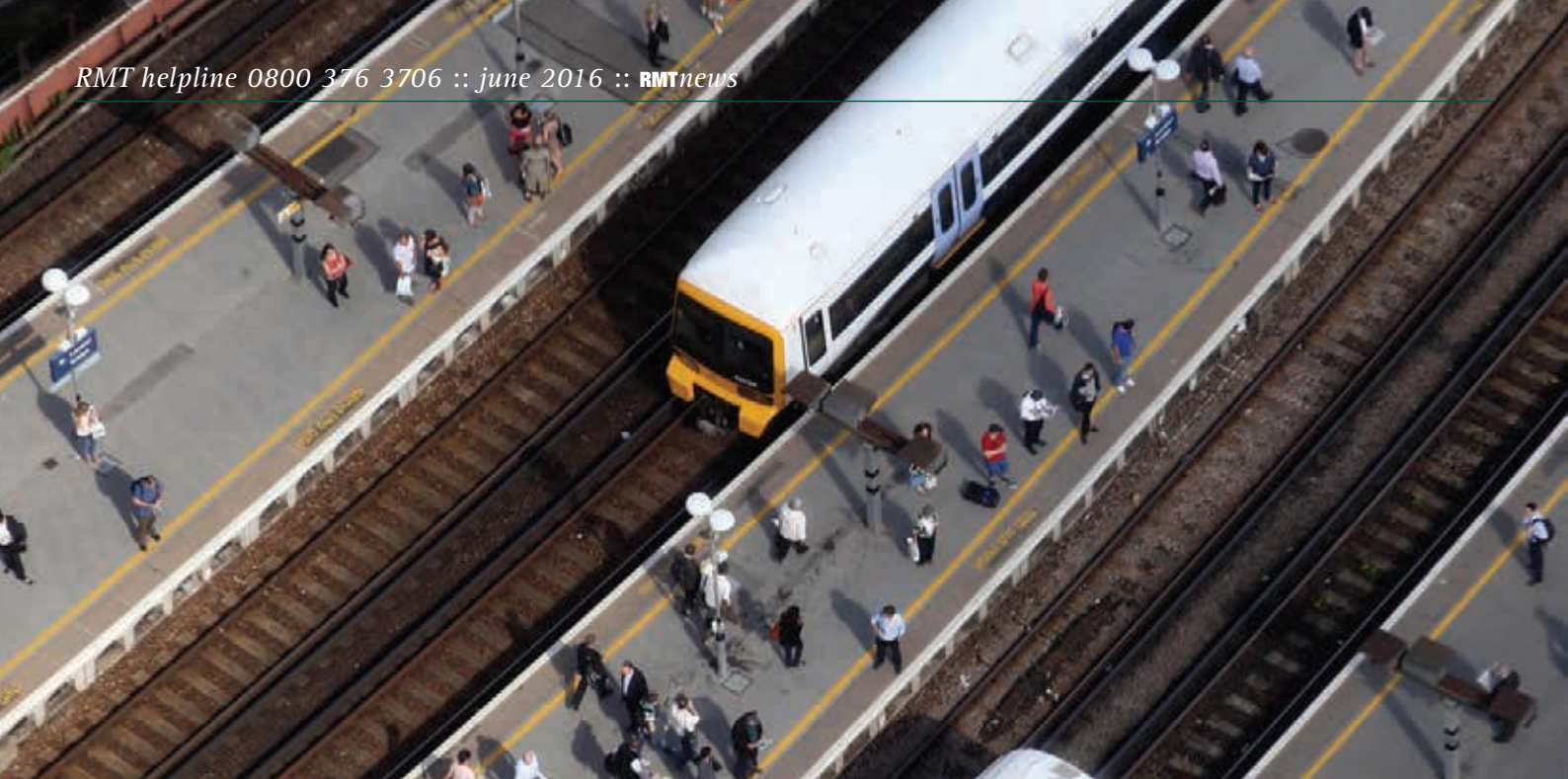
In the Bus Sector the RMT campaigns for:

- Improved Bus Drivers' Hours and Rest Breaks:
 - maximum continuous driving of 4.5 hours;
 - maximum daily working of 10 hours per day;
 - Paid breaks
 - Progressive reductions in contracted hours without loss of pay.
- Improvements in shift and duty rosters – bus workers deserve a decent work/life balance and family-friendly rosters are essential to their welfare and well-being.

RMT demands that the needs of the staff should be central to the compilation of rosters and that they should be agreed with your representatives.

- Health, safety and well-being – driving a bus can be extremely stressful. RMT demands that cab and vehicle design ensures a safe and comfortable environment for drivers and also that working arrangements ensure that staff safety is a top priority.
- Pay, terms and conditions – the bus sector is of vital importance to our communities and the economy as well as being a highly skilled profession and that's why RMT campaigns for bus workers to be rewarded properly with:
 - Overtime premiums
 - Unsocial hours payments
 - Increase annual leave
 - Improved sick pay
 - Decent pensions

Only a well organised workforce backed up by a strong trade union can keep this agenda moving forward.



TRAP AND DRAG DANGER

RMT demands investigations into the rise in trap and drag incidents at the Platform/Train Interface

New figures have confirmed RMT warnings over the growing dangers on London Underground and the national rail network at Platform/Train Interface (PTI).

New figures pulled out of Transport for London by a Freedom of Information request show that the number of passengers falling between the train and the platform has more than trebled in ten years.

RMT has laid the blame on dangerous overcrowding and the axing of safety-critical station staff.

The FOI, reported in the *Evening Standard*, revealed that

a total of 307 incidents were recorded last year up from under a hundred less than ten years ago.

RMT demanded an investigation after a woman got trapped between the platform and a Jubilee line train at Canning Town. The union is still awaiting a response to that request.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) recently highlighted the case in March last year of a woman who was pulled onto the tracks at Clapham South after her coat got caught in a train door. RAIB

is also warning of an escalation of risks at the Platform/Train Interface.

The new figures also reveal there has been an increase in the number of falls onto the platform or into the carriage as passengers board or leave trains. Last year 288 were reported, three times the number when data was first recorded in 2003.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the severe and escalating dangers at the Platform/Train Interface on both tube and mainline had been catapulted into the public eye by these shocking new figures.

“Only a fool would sit back and ignore a three-fold increase in potentially lethal incidents.

“RMT has warned that axing 800 station staff, against a background of chronic overcrowding, unleashes a poisonous cocktail across the tube network that threatens life and limb.

“The union is demanding action and that means reversing the staffing cuts and taking RMT’s warning about overcrowding seriously instead of winging it which is exactly what is happening at the moment,” he said. ■

PASSENGER/TRAIN INTERFACE [PTI] INCIDENTS

Since January 2011 there have been 10 serious incidents at the Passenger/Train Interface [PTI] that have been or are subjected to investigation by the UK's National Investigation Body the Rail Accident Investigation Branch

Event date	Event location	Description	Operation type
28.01.2011	Brentwood Station	Passenger fall between train and platform	D00
10.10.2011	King's Cross Station	Body part trapped in door, passenger dragged along	D00
22.10.2011	James Street Station	Fatality. Fall between trains and platform	Non-D00
12.04.2012	Jarrow Station	Body part trapped in door, passenger dragged along	D00
24.11.2012	Charing Cross Station	Passenger fall between train and platform	D00
05.06.2013	Newcastle Central Station	Body part trapped in door, passenger dragged along	Non-D00
03.02.2014	Holborn Station	Passenger clothing trapped in door, dragged along	D00
12.03.2015	Clapham South Station	Passenger clothing trapped resulting in fall between train and platform	D00
10.04.2015	West Wickham	Passenger backpack trapped resulting in fall between train and platform	D00
25.07.2015	Hayes and Harlington	Passenger bodypart trapped in door. Dragged along	D00

ROLE OF THE GUARD D00/PTI DOSSIER

RMT general secretary
Mick Cash introduces a
new union publication in
the campaign to defend
the guard

This dossier has been produced by RMT as part of our national fight against the introduction and extension of Driver Only Operation on Britain's railways as greedy train operating companies look to dilute the safety regime in favour of maximising their profits from the privatised network.

It sets out a range of examples from across the country which details the real consequences of axing and undermining the safety-critical role of the guard for the travelling public.

The examples are horrific but the current moves, in the wake of the government-backed McNulty report that made D00 the default option, mean that it will be the tip of the iceberg if we don't halt and reverse the

drive to take out the guards.

Everyone who works on the railway knows that the Passenger/Train Interface (PTI) is the number one area of risk.

That fact is accepted by the safety agencies that monitor and manage the safety regime across the rail network.

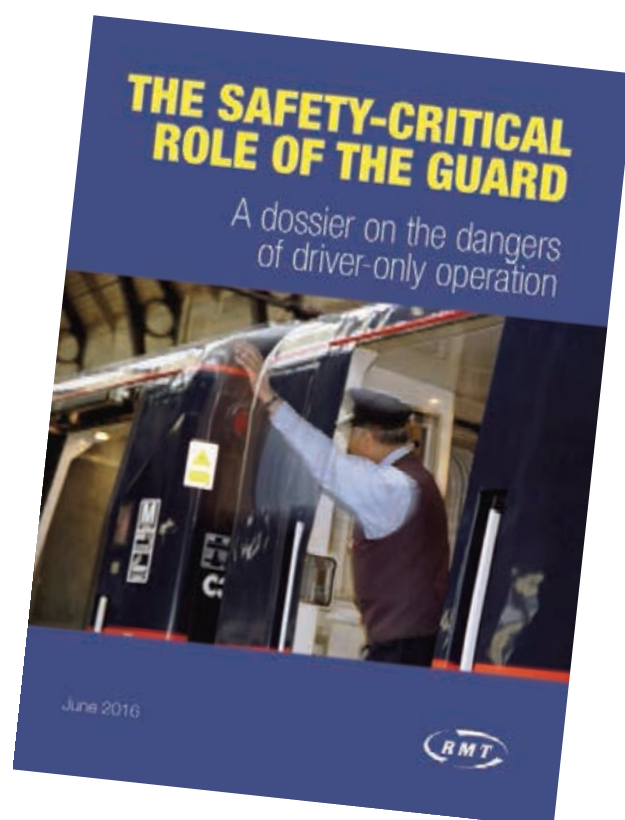
With surging demand, unmatched by rail capacity, overcrowding on trains and platforms is now endemic. The guard, working with their platform and driver colleagues, is the pivotal point in the safe management of the dangers presented at the passenger/train interface. Removing them, or downgrading their role, is a lethal gamble with passenger safety.

Only a fool, or someone motivated solely by the bottom

line on a company balance sheet, would contemplate tampering with guards on Britain's crowded railways. And yet that is exactly what is happening.

This report is designed to inform and mobilise public opinion behind the union's on-

going fight against Driver-Only Operation and the clear and present danger that it presents. RMT is committed to fighting in the industrial, political and public arenas to defend the guard. This report explains why. This publication is available from Unity House ■





VIVA CUBA!

RMT member George Waterhouse reports from an inspirational work brigade organised by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign

WE climb up onto the old soviet-looking truck heading out of camp. Packed together are bodies tired from lack of sleep, the open air washes away the effects of last night's rum.

A cold trickle of rain scatters away resting lizards and frogs, washes away the night sweat of humid dormitories. The morning sun gently heats as the merciful rushing wind cools.

We drive past farmers waving with one hand as the other controls their horse and carts, old people playing cubilete in shaded porches and smiling waving children

running alongside.

A comrade's hat is blown off and the truck stops and reverses to retrieve it, solidarity – that basic human instinct – features heavily in life here. It is drilled into the work we do.

Large spiders and small scorpions flee the curving sweeps of our machetes as we clear the banana groves of weeds.

Twenty-eight young trade unionists took part in this year's May 1 solidarity brigade from Unite, Unison, GMB, RMT, CWU and Usdaw, organised by Cuba Solidarity Campaign. We were

international guests at the May Day rally in Havana and the International Solidarity with Cuba conference the following day.

We stayed at the Julio Antonio Mella camp in Caimito, 25 miles south-west of Havana, the largest contingent among 240 delegates from 34 countries, including Canada, South Africa, Palestine, Chile, Ukraine, Korea and Japan.

We slept in bunk beds in dormitories without air-conditioning. Showers and toilets were basic with limited privacy and the water supply

regularly failed.

The food on the camp was always rice with either beans or plantain and meat – generally chicken or beef. There was salad and fruit available although it took some time for delegates to get used to waving away flies.

The morning alarm consisted of a cockerel crowing, followed by a Cuban folk song and ending with a clip of a speech by Fidel Castro. By the time Fidel had finished his speech you were expected to be ready.

Brigadistas undertook a programme of early morning agricultural and manual work,

meetings, visits and cultural events.

As part of its latest programme of reforms the Cuban government is promoting co-operative farms, with land being given to co-ops. We visited several to learn about how they function.

On one we saw how the co-operative had developed a production line of brick manufacture, on another was a rabbit-breeding programme and a building full of tobacco drying.

Co-operatives are run democratically, after a new applicant has served a probationary period the rest of the co-op votes on whether or not to accept them.

A memorable experience on one farm was when the co-operative vice president described how discipline is enforced. In his office were three large pictures of Fidel Castro, Raul Castro and Hugo Chavez. He said he sits down workers and tells them that these three socialist heroes are watching them.

May Day was exhilarating, almost overwhelming. We were woken up in the middle of the night in order to be in Havana for 5am.

We queued up to enter the section for international guests in the dark with the

faces of Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos lit up across the Plaza de la Revolucion. As the sun came up, schoolchildren performed a display with handkerchiefs as a sea of people assembled behind a banner that proclaimed: "The people of Cuba are united behind the construction of socialism."

On a podium behind us stood President Raul Castro and CTC trade union federation general secretary Ulises Guilarte, who delivered speeches.

May Day is a massive event in Cuba. As we drove around the country every little village and town featured homemade banners proclaiming "Viva el Mayo" and "defendiendo el socialismo."

More than a million people appeared to be dancing and singing along the route, which is even more impressive given that similar marches take place in every regional city. Socialist slogans were chanted and pictures of Fidel and Raul were held up.

Some were dressed in military uniform and others in carnival-style outfits. The banners represented union branches and people held up giant cardboard pencils to represent education workers,

diggers for construction workers and even a large cardboard ambulance was held up by health workers.

It is an inspiring sight that I will never forget.

Camp cultural night saw each delegation put on a stall and performance celebrating their respective nations. Red bandanas with Korean militant union slogans, Palestinian keffiyehs, plays, poems and food and drink from around the world.

Our performance celebrated the four nations represented and was directed by a delegate from the Rhondda who sang a beautiful version of Calon Lan. Beneath a starry plough flag a Belfast delegate sang Amhran na bhFiann.

We joined together in a circle dance for a spirited rendition of The Bonnie banks o' Loch Lomond and finished with Hey Jude, with football shirts and scarves in the air.

One evening we visited a local Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR) in Sancti Spiritus. CDRs function as a community organisation that sorts out problems in the neighbourhood, from stopping anti-social behaviour to organising activities for the local children.

The Cubans were horrified when one of our delegates

told them she didn't even know her neighbours on her street.

They put on a street party for us outside. Young children and old people danced with us beneath a CDR banner proclaiming victory for the revolution.

The May Day brigade was a once in a lifetime experience standing with Cubans as they marched through Havana, worked in the fields or sat with a glass of rum in their houses. I've been to Cuba many times on holiday but have never encountered such real experiences of Cuban society.

The Cuban people struggle with pride and dignity as the revolution overcomes inevitable contradictions and obstacles placed in its path. Cubans are proud of their revolution and are fighting to continue its successes into the 21st century.

Delegates can take home a sense of inspiration at what can be done and apply it to our workplaces. It was an honour to represent my union on the best delegation I've ever had the pleasure to participate in. ■

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign organises a Young Trade Unionist May Day Brigade every year for more information go to <http://www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/>



Review

STOP TTIP

This well-researched Campaign Against Euro Federalism (CAEF) pamphlet exposes how the European Union is engaged in secretive negotiations to impose so-called 'free trade deals', including the notorious Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the United States, which will fundamentally undermine the democracy and sovereignty of EU member states.

These deals are not primarily about trade but removing all 'barriers' which restrict the potential profits of powerful transnational corporations.

As such they would greatly reduce the ability of governments to invest in local development, impose new limits on the right to democratically regulate on behalf of citizens and the environment, endanger public services and jeopardise labour standards and food safety.

A provision known as investor state dispute settlement (ISDS) in these deals allows corporations to sue governments for any laws and practices that threaten their profits.

There are already over 3,200 bilateral ISDS agreements in the world, and foreign corporations have used them to sue governments for many billions over ownership of resources, health, safety and environmental laws.

Another planned 'trade' deal, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada, is equally disturbing. Canada is already one of the most sued countries in the world as ISDS was first included in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, the

US and Mexico and has been used extensively by the corporations in the name of profit.

There have been 35 corporate ISDS challenges against Canada which have already paid out over £100 million to US corporations.

Foreign investors are seeking another £1.35 billion from the Canadian government in new cases and Canada has already spent over £35 million defending itself from NAFTA challenges.

Two-thirds of the cases challenge environmental protection or management of Canadian resources, issues that should reflect the democratic will of the people of Canada. As yet US corporations have never lost a NAFTA case.

Even more disturbing, CETA could act as a 'back door' for US corporations whether TTIP is adopted or not as these corporations have subsidiaries in

Canada that would enable them to use ISDS against EU institutions, national governments and, ultimately, institutions like our National Health Service.

Another international treaty raised in this booklet that is causing growing concerns is the so-called Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) which overrides national sovereignty and imposes non-reversible deregulation and privatisation on a wide range of services solely for the benefit of transnational corporations.

TiSA removes the right of 52 nations to make employment laws in 37 sectors of the economy and promotes undercutting by cheap imported labour, in a process known as 'social dumping', speeding up a 'race to the bottom' in terms of wages and conditions.

All these treaties would fatally undermine national sovereignty and democracy,

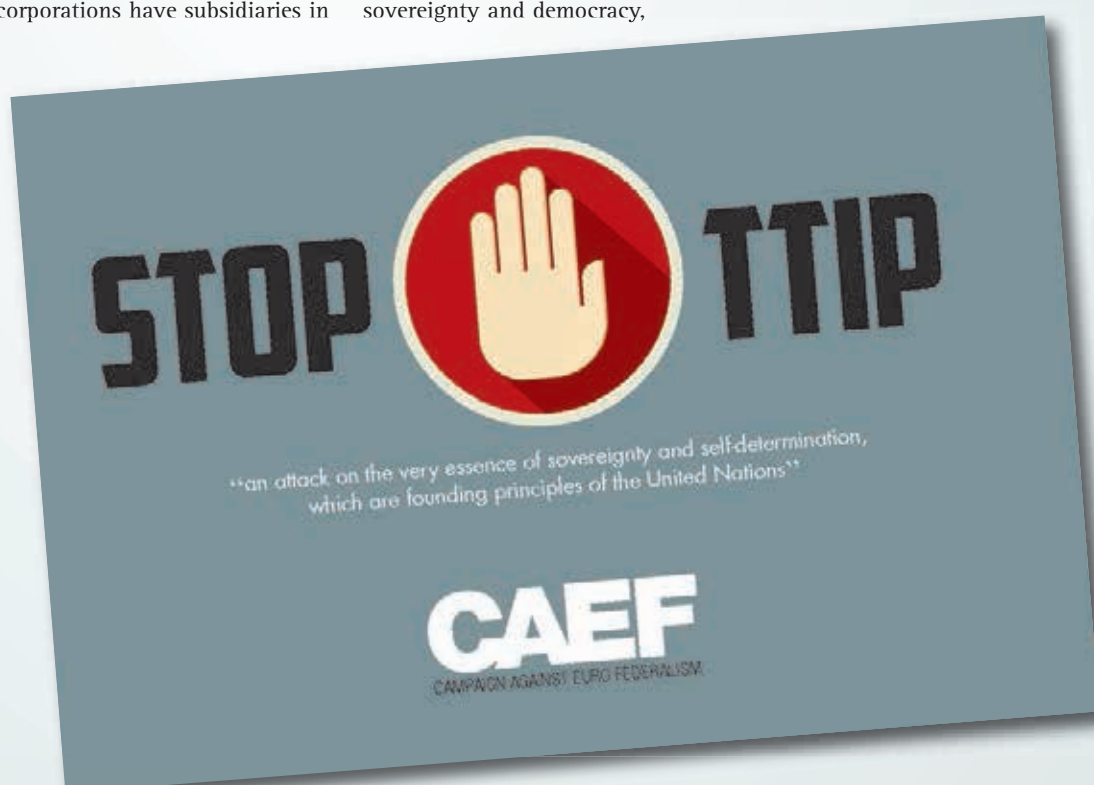
destroy jobs and force millions into a downward spiral of poverty.

Ultimately this pamphlet reveals that you cannot oppose TTIP, CETA and other 'trade' deals without opposing this country's membership of the European Union. Not least because they would outlaw local authorities' support of local businesses, allow multinational corporations to sue us if councils deny fracking permits and open up services to privatisation.

Over 1,500 councils across Europe have already said they don't want TTIP and in the UK more than 35 councils have declared themselves TTIP-free zones.

To be a part of the resistance to corporate dictatorship you will need this publication.

Available from free by emailing bdenny@rmt.org.uk ■





RMT LGBT CONFERENCE

Fighting for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality in the workplace

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists from across the country meeting in Manchester passed a range of motions around equality in the workplace.

Delegates pledged to fight transphobia in the workplace, campaign to protect same-sex couples survivor pensions and to include wider groups within the LGBT caucus at their annual advisory conference in May. Piccadilly and District West delegate Benny Ashmore said: "We are all aware that over the last year, transgender issues have gained media. "Transphobia is a serious social problem being dealt with daily by transgender people in the workplace, behaviour that goes against RMT's values and policy on equality.

"We believe the union

should be promoting the battle against transphobia, as it is against racism and homophobia," he said. Conference agreed unanimously to urge the general secretary to produce anti-transphobia posters, similar to the anti-racism material already produced by the union. Survivor pensions for same sex couples was discussed with delegates unanimously agreeing to fight discrimination which still exists. According to the TUC, despite the legalisation of same-sex marriage, same-sex couples do not have the same rights to survivor pensions as heterosexual couples, due to there being a 2005 cut-off before which survivor pension payments do not have to be made.

The motion called on the union to make members aware of this inequality and petition the government, work with the TUC and find other ways to put pressure on government and pension companies. Delegate John Shackelford said: "The TUC has lobbied on this but I am and others are not getting any younger and we have to look out for our partners". Delegates also agreed to add the "+" sign to LGBT to reflect those members who consider themselves "non-binary". Concluding conference, RMT general secretary Mick Cash praised delegates for the popular design of the LGBT RMT badge, describing it as useful in engaging with the public on issues facing LGBT people.

"Our prime role as a trade union is to organise.

"The Tories have introduced the anti-trade union bill but the union continues to grow.

"We need to make sure we aim for fully organised workplaces.

"Organising is not just about recruitment but it is about training our reps to deal with the issues facing members," he said.

With the upcoming EU referendum, Mr Cash reiterated the union's long-standing leave view, adding: "I'm the son of immigrants, this isn't about being anti-European.

"It is about not being dictated to by a rich and powerful elite running the EU," he said.



RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

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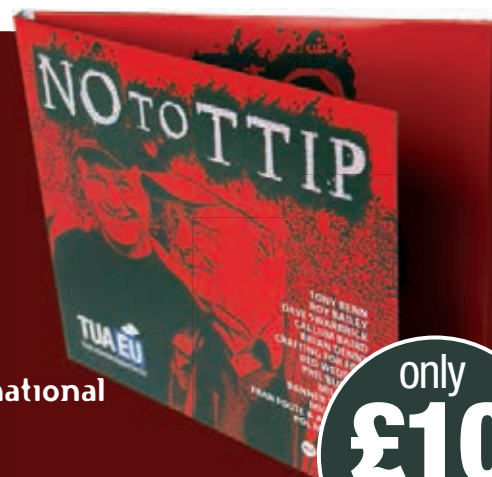


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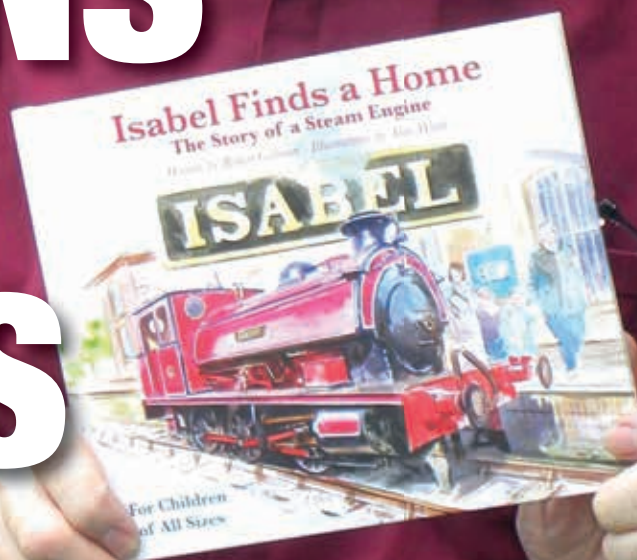
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TRAINS IN VEINS



RMT News talks to children's author and member Bob Gillman about his work and his new book *Isabel Finds a Home*

Readers may remember that *RMT News* reviewed a book for children some years ago written by Bob Gillman and wonderfully illustrated by Alan Ward called *Tales of Upchurch Station*.

Well Bob is back, along with Alan, with another blockbuster *Isabel Finds a Home – The Story of a Steam Engine*.

As Bob tells us, this book is not designed to be a historical treatise or a technical manual.

“Hopefully it is an introduction to children so they may develop a passion for preserved railways and become interested in volunteering on a heritage line,” he explains.

As you may have noticed Bob loves a steam train, in fact, he himself is a volunteer fireman and signaller on the popular Epping-Ongar heritage railway.

“Railways are in my blood.

“My great-grandfather worked on building railway bridges in Ceylon; before the war, my father worked in the LNER boiler shop at Stratford works, and I am a Relief Signaller in some of the few

remaining signal boxes on London Underground (LU).

But he didn’t start out as a railwayman. Born in West Ham, when he was 17 he began work in the printing trade - his first job was as an apprentice photo engraver, making metal printing plates of photos. During this time he served as a union rep, known in printing circles as Father of the Chapel.

In 1999, Bob was threatened with redundancy, so he decided to have a complete change of career.

“My other great interest in life has always been trains, so I applied to work for London Underground,” he says.

His application was successful and, after training, he began work as a signaller on the District Line.

“I enjoy my work, it’s not a nine to five job and every day is varied,” he says.

His partner Alexandra - who shares Bob’s enthusiasm for all types of locomotives - agreed: “Bob is much happier since he began this job.”

He also has served as an RMT rep for the District Line

signallers.

Bob became involved with heritage railways in 1976 helping out on the West Somerset Railway where he trained as a steam engine fireman before volunteering closer to home at Epping.

He explains the ethos that drives thousands of people from all different walks of life to become involved in this very British past time.

“It has long been the tradition in this country to champion the cause of the underdog.

“As soon as something is abolished or closed down, someone, somewhere, will start a preservation group to secure our heritage before it is lost in the mists of time.

“This is especially true in the realm of transport and railways in particular.

“Flying in the face of political shortsightedness and the closure of so many railway lines, heritage railways have sprung up in practically every county, with volunteers determined to reverse this trend.

“Nostalgia, and the need to

preserve the proud history of our forefathers, strikes a chord in many hearts.

“It is important to remind ourselves of our great industrial past and the simple fact that, in the 19th century, British engineers used their expertise to build railways all over the world,” he says.

There is clearly a special place in his heart for the Epping Ongar Railway, in fact his desire to write his latest book comes from spending time on the EOR and helping with the restoration of Isabel the historic steam locomotive.

“Like many others, this line has been preserved for all the reasons we’ve talked about and, although our trains are not permitted to run into Epping station, it has the unique honour of still being attached to the end of LU’s Central Line.

“Formerly part of the London Underground network, the EOR has been lovingly restored by our dedicated group of volunteers but there is still much to do and we are always looking for help!” he says with a smile. ■

Review



Jack Denny, aged 9, reviews *Isabel finds a home, The story of a steam engine*

The story begins in the 19th Century in 1866 when a train engineering company was founded.

In 1919 they built a little steam engine called Isabel.

This little engine goes through a tough life and she is abandoned at train stations until a man rescues her. The man paints and upgrades her and she lives a happy life at a heritage railway.

I liked the nice paintings

inside and the rough sketches throughout the book.

I liked the way the author uses embedded clauses and I would like to read his other books too.

“Isabel Finds a Home – The Story of a Steam Engine” (ISBN 978-0-9537406-7-3) is available to order from all good bookshops, or directly from Railway Cat Creations website: www.railway-cat.co.uk ■

AUTISM IN THE WORKPLACE

London Underground RMT rep Peter North reviews *Autism Equality in the Workplace: removing barriers and challenging discrimination* by Janine Booth

Autism is a condition which affects around one in 50 of us. The barriers that are put in the way of autistic people succeeding in life and in the workplace are something we can all help tackle together: this book explains how.

Janine Booth's book looks at these barriers and suggests how to remove them on the basis that it is the workplace which is incapacitating, not the worker who is unable to do the job required of them. Janine's perspective can perhaps best summed up in the explanation of overcoming one common yet unjustified issue; "the number one strategy for removing barriers to fitting in is to accept us for who we are".

The book is split into five sections covering the issues that autistic people are faced with, solutions to these barriers, legal rights and how we as trade

unionists can improve our workplaces together. The use of illustrations, lists, and a question and answer format to describe the barriers autistic people face make the book accessible and easy to read.

Numerous accounts and quotes of unacceptable and unnecessary situations provide first-hand experience. A common theme, and something many of us will recognise, is that bosses could often have resolved issues with little difficulty, it just needs understanding and willingness.

An overview of the way this can be done is provided in areas including finding work, passing an interview, being given suitable work and doing the job day to day.

'Autism, Work and the Law' is the penultimate chapter which deals with legal rights and protections for disabled people

internationally. The UN's 'Convention of rights of persons with disabilities' is described as a major step forward; yet it won't surprise many of us to learn that a government being a signatory to the charter doesn't mean they actually implement it.

In the UK a specific law has been passed called The Autism Act. The government describes it as 'fundamentally sound'; Autism-Europe describes it as 'fundamentally flawed'.

This is just one example of why the mantra at the end of the book - 'nothing about us without us' - is so important.

The final chapter looks at how change can come about. The answer is in a progressive workplace policy, negotiated between unions and employers and created with autistic people.

The approach and solutions that the book details is useful knowledge for any trade unionist. Beyond that, Janine's method in investigating, explaining and offering solutions to barriers and problems faced is a model all trade unionists can learn from and apply when dealing with



similar issues in their own workplaces.

As Janine poeticises "Design a fresh start where there's room to relax; to think, to imagine, to heal up the cracks; agree some new rules where we all have control; of our workplaces, life spaces, world as a whole". Yes, let's.

The book published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers is available to buy from www.jkp.com/uk/autism-equality-in-the-workplace.html

RMT members can get a 10 per cent discount on the cover price of £12.99 by entering code Y16. ■

RMT AT TUC DISABLED WORKERS CONFERENCE

Ann Mooney of Glasgow No5 branch reports on the TUC Disabled Workers Conference

RMT members from across the country attended the TUC Disabled Workers Conference in London last month.

This year's conference had as its overarching theme, Demanding Rights, Demanding Dignity. As a public service union, along with delegations from other public service unions, RMT delegates strongly advocated that demanding rights and demanding justice

applied equally to workers and service users.

Highlighting the opportunities for bringing both sides together in defence of public services in the face of privatisation, one RMT motion spoke about the multiple impacts of job losses, service cuts and of a profit-before-service ethos.

In particular it was argued that job losses and deteriorating

services made public transport less accessible for disabled passengers, while also increasing levels of mental and other forms of ill-health among hard-pressed workers.

A Unite union motion for the legal right of access to public transport for people with disabilities was seconded by RMT.

This advocated removing long-standing restrictions around the time of travel for people with concessionary tickets, while improved timetabling and the 'joining-up' of different forms of public

transport would serve to make services much more accessible to groups who are effectively excluded from the current chaotic arrangements.

Access to public transport, the title of the RMT motion, also touched on similar themes and this was seconded in turn by Unite.

This motion reflected on-going RMT campaigns against the closure of ticket offices, cuts in customer-facing staff and our long-standing opposition to D00, driver only operated train services. There is plenty of evidence that disabled ■

President's column

SAVE OUR SEAFARERS

At last year's Annual General Meeting a resolution from Glasgow Shipping branch was carried unanimously entitled "Save Our Seafarers".

Seafarers are the only group of workers excluded from the full protection of National Minimum wage legislation and Equal Pay legislation.

This means even ships travelling entirely within UK waters have crews being paid slave wages, as little as £2.25 an hour and we estimate that at least 8000 seafarers are currently paid below the minimum wage.

This super exploitation is taking place despite many of the shipping companies' responsible being in receipt of over £1.6 billion in tax breaks, funded by the taxpayer.

Tonnage Tax concessions allow shipping companies' to pay corporation tax levied on the tonnage of the vessel rather than on the profits generated and in return there is a mandatory link to provide training for UK seafarers

at officer level, the training of UK crew remains only voluntary so it's no surprise that there is little seen of this.

The RMT maritime sub-committee, made up of Lee Davison, Karlson Lingwood, Mikey Craig & Paul Shaw, with the support of the national secretary Steve Todd have been working hard on the campaign called for in the AGM decision. I know the assistant national secretary Mark Carden will do a great job as the Coordinator for this "Save Our Seafarers" Campaign.

We can all see what can be achieved just by looking at the amazing success of the "Keep Cal-Mac Public" campaign and I want to congratulate all involved, as the importance of this victory cannot be over stated.

The EU in-out vote will be over by the time you read this and I'm sure we will all have heard plenty of rubbish from the "unsavoury brigade" on both sides, so I'm pleased that our union refused to share platforms with any of them and ran a progressive pro-worker

and pro-democracy campaign.

Indeed I will sign off on the subject with a recent statement from the Beast of Bolsover Dennis Skinner who stated "My opposition from the very beginning has been on the lines that fighting capitalism state by state is hard enough. It's even harder when you're fighting it on the basis of eight states, ten states and now twenty eight states".

Wars of nations are fought to change maps. But wars of poverty are fought to map change.
Muhammad Ali

In Solidarity

Sean Hoyle



passengers rely heavily on help and support from public transport staff, from across the industry. The presence of such staff is often re-assuring to passengers in general but they offer an additional sense of security and support for those with additional needs.

Janine Booth, RMT member of the TUC Disabled Workers Conference Committee, was re-elected to serve again, winning the highest number of votes in the process.

Chairing the first session of the conference, Janine invited all delegates to join a demonstration by DPAC, Disabled People Against Cuts, that was taking place in London during the conference. This provided delegates with first hand experiences of how disabled groups took direct action and otherwise organised to resist government cuts.

The two-day conference highlighted the human costs, as

well as the costs to society as a whole, of cuts in services, cuts in benefits and the increasing impact of austerity on some of the most disadvantaged groups in society. Government talk about everyone being a valued member of society was shown to be a complete sham by delegates who spoke of some of the most debilitating and exclusionary impacts of government policies. Disabled passengers and disabled

workers have interests in common.

Despite the efforts of some politicians and sections of the media to present these groups as in opposition to each other, there is little doubt that defending services, increasing staffing levels and improving customer-focus works to benefit both workers and passengers.

Both John McDonnell and Debbie Abrahams, Shadow

Minister for the Disabled, spoke passionately of their beliefs that this and the previous government and their austerity measures had done little to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in our society.

They re-iterated this by highlighting the immorality of how tax cuts, avoidance and evasion are benefitting the wealthy to the detriment of those in need. ■



L-R Mark (support worker)
David Hewitt, Mohammad
Mujahid, John Stanford, Carl
Day-Crewe, Janine Booth, Ann
Mooney, Mark Thomas, Nesar
Rafiq



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Obituaries

REMEMBERING SUKI JEHANGIR

RMT member Suki Jehangir Parmar, a health and safety rep for the LOROL North London Line, passed away suddenly last month, writes Theresa Opoku-Ware.

Suki and the rest of Dalston staff became colleagues have been a family for over 10 years. Over the years Suki always put people before herself without thinking about it.

She had an infectious work ethic which many people who worked with her adopted. Her customer service and relations were great and she trained many staff about the ticket office role. She was bubbly and very dedicated to her job she never had time for herself unless it was necessary. She was a true giver.

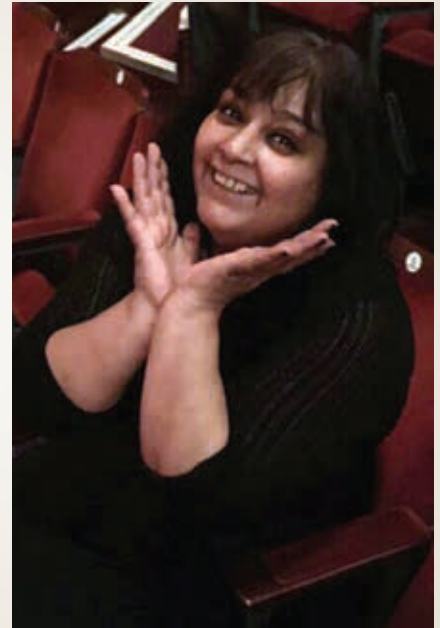
Suki even supported customers and on one occasion paid for a monthly travel card for a customer who had no money and her pay day was not due until few days later. Although the customer never returned her money this did not stop Suki

to continue doing good for others who were in need.

Suki loved everyone and made it difficult for people to differentiate between her blood family and friends. About six years ago, Suki became RMT health and safety representative on the north London East and she became known to most of the senior management and staff she never worked directly with.

Suki was a trustworthy and royal person. Dalston has lost a puzzle which can never be found. Although we will have to move on she will still remain in our heart forever.

As a family all we want is for our sister and work colleague and friend is to rest in peace. There will only be one Suki Jehangir Parmar and no one can replace her. Suki you have left me in the hands of these boys, even though they will look after me I still feel alone.



REMEMBERING LEON BRUMANT

Leon Brumant, London Underground worker, RMT rep, and socialist and anti-racist activist, died on April 22, aged just 30 years old, writes Daniel Randal.

He is survived by Nailah, his young daughter. He was an inspirational organiser and a profoundly effective communicator, with a non-sectarian attitude to politics that saw him build links and win friends across the socialist left, inside and outside of his union.

He served on the RMT's national Young Members advisory committee and was my predecessor as RMT London Transport Regional Council young members' officer.

He had recently been elected assistant secretary of the London Transport Regional Council, as well as RMT health and safety representative for the Special Requirements team, the department of London Underground in which he worked.

He was also a founding member of Brent Anti-Racism Campaign, a community anti-racism and anti-fascist campaign in the part of London where he had grown up and still lived.



Leon grew up in a working-class community in north-west London. His political journey to socialism had taken in Christianity, Islam and versions of black nationalism, which continued to inform aspects of his politics.

He was an intensely thoughtful individual, a voracious reader of political and philosophical texts, and tenacious and engaging in debate and discussion.

His commitment to the campaigns he became involved in was unparalleled; he was prominent in fights such as the

"Justice for the 33" campaign, a struggle against the unjust sacking of agency workers at the north end of the Bakerloo Line.

Leon was one of my closest friends and comrades at work and in the union. I first met him a few months before I started working on the Tube, and he was a constant source of guidance, inspiration, and support to me from that point onwards, to a far greater extent than he probably ever realised.

Almost the entire national leadership of the union attended his funeral, along with dozens of reps and activists from across the region, as well as hundreds of the rank-and-file members, a testament to the immense high esteem in which he was held.

This obituary can hardly do justice to his political work, still less to his sense of humour or his warm and steadfast friendship. We have lost a comrade who in many ways represented the future of the movement, and we have lost a dear friend. Our union, our movement and all of our lives will be poorer without him.

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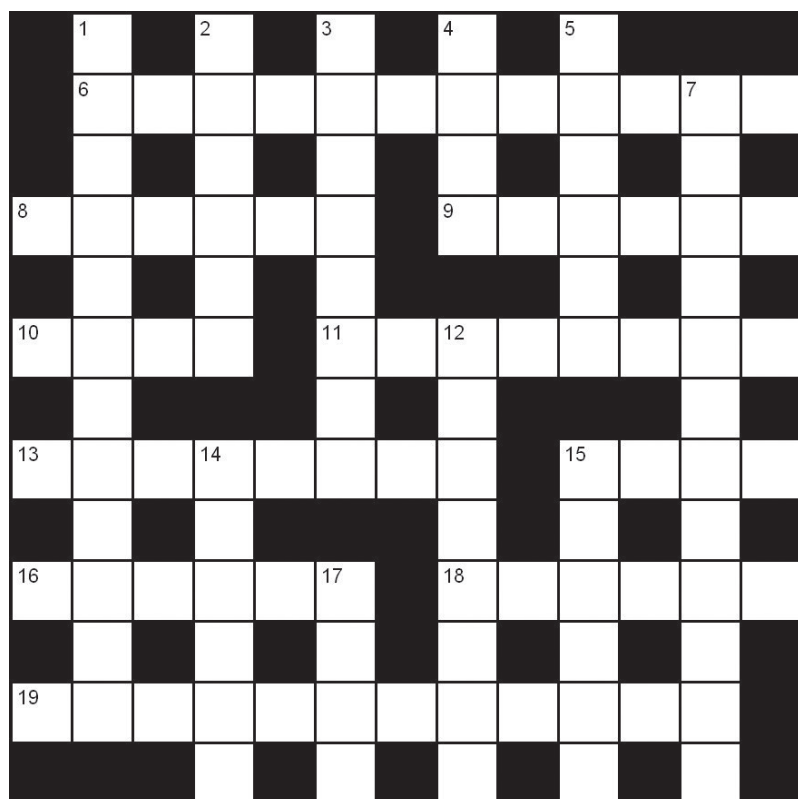
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Winner and solution in next issue.

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- 6 Side of summit (12)
- 8 Power (6)
- 9 A discrimination (6)
- 10 Let it stand (4)
- 11 Exposure to air (8)
- 13 Punctilious (8)
- 15 Whirlpool (4)
- 16 Fuel (6)
- 18 Stray (6)
- 19 Allegorical (12)

DOWN

- 1 Large stadium (12)
- 2 Freak (6)
- 3 Staunch (8)
- 4 Drama queen(4)
- 5 Feature (6)
- 7 Inharmoniously (12)
- 12 Branch of ballistics (12)
- 14 Graphic double (6)
- 15 Make wealthy (6)
- 17 Repeat (4)



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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.

