

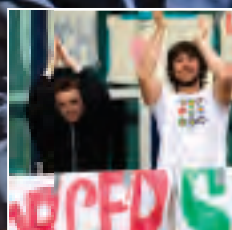
Essential reading for today's transport worker

RMT news

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ON PAGE 21

Standing up for Trade Unionism

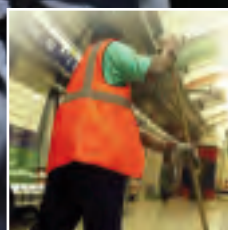
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WORKERS SURVEY
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www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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CREDIT UNION

EDITORIAL

STANDING UP FOR WORKERS



At this year's TUC Congress next month RMT will be calling for support for John McDonnell's Private Members Bill which seeks to eliminate attempts to sabotage strike ballots in the Courts.

This union deplores recent court cases against trade unionists that have voted overwhelmingly for action to defend safety, jobs and conditions only for the courts to rule out strikes on technicalities.

This wave of litigation by the employers is part of a new push from the bosses to get the new government to ban strike action even further.

With public spending cuts set to intensify this autumn there is no doubt that the government and the employers will see the anti-union laws as a weapon to choke off resistance to cuts in jobs and services.

Now is the time for the trade union movement to rally round and defend the basic right to strike and the right to defend jobs, standards of living and public services.

That is why RMT is calling for support for the lobby of Parliament on October 13 in support of John McDonnell's Bill and its second reading on October 22.

The results of ConDem slash and burn economics can be seen in the Potters Bar crash that could have been avoided if safety rather than profit had been the priority on our railways in May 2002.

The recent verdict of the inquiry into the tragedy, which took the lives of seven people and injured 70 others, confirmed that it could happen again today.

Coroner Judge Michael Findlay Baker QC was absolutely right to express the concern that circumstances continue to create a risk of other deaths.

Cuts to maintenance and renewals being imposed on our railways today are dragging us back to the same poisonous cocktail of conditions that led to Potters Bar.

With the new ConDem government putting all ministers on orders to plan cuts of up to 40 per cent, we are already seeing the devastation caused to the fabric of our society.

In the transport sector, the Intercity Express programme is on hold, there are

big question marks over electrification projects, high-speed trains and Crossrail, and many of the London Underground improvements now look unlikely to happen.

It has also emerged that concessionary travel on Tyne and Wear Metro is under threat – a move that could be the opening attack on Freedom Passes and other travel schemes.

The Bus Service Operators' Grant is under threat, raising the prospect of service cuts, particularly in rural areas, and sharp fare increases, while there are calls for the abolition of the pensioners' bus pass, and there are new threats of privatisation for Caledonian MacBrayne.

All of which adds up to fresh attacks on transport workers' jobs, pay, pensions and conditions, as well as worse services and higher fares.

These attacks are being carried out across Europe as European Union politicians privatise transport networks and smash up public services and hand them over to the privateers as a result of EU diktats.

This kind of scorched Earth neoliberal economics being imposed by unelected eurocrats and bankers will not create jobs or a future for working people and must be resisted. That is why RMT will be joining the demonstration against EU-inspired austerity measures in Brussels on September 29, get there if you can.

Working people can win if we stand together, RMT members in the port of Harwich, who saw their pay frozen last year, have extracted an improved pay offer after voting overwhelmingly for strike action.

At Network Rail we have made slow progress in talks on operations side, with fresh proposals also emerging on maintenance. Whatever does finally emerge from these talks, NR members will have the final say.

Whatever grade of transport worker, you all face the same pressures and threats to your job and the best insurance is a strong union, so if your workmate's not in RMT give them the application form on the opposite page.

Best wishes

Bob Crow

RMT News is compiled and originated by National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD. Tel: 020 7387 4771. Fax: 020 7529 8808. e-mail bdenny@rmt.org.uk The information contained in this publication is believed to be correct but cannot be guaranteed. All rights reserved. RMT News is designed by Bighand Creative and printed by Leycol Printers. General editor: Bob Crow. Managing editor: Brian Denny. No part of this document may be reproduced without prior written approval of RMT. No liability is accepted for any errors or omissions. Copyright RMT 2007

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

HARWICH DOCKERS WIN IMPROVED OFFER OVER PAY

RMT members working at Harwich International Port have won an improved pay offer after threatening discontinuous industrial action in a dispute over pay and conditions of service.

Over 100 dockers, known as port operatives, and support staff suspended planned 24-hour action last month followed by a 24-hour overtime ban on services to the Hook of Holland and Denmark as well as cruise services in and out of Harwich International.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that members at Harwich had been hit by a pay freeze last year and had been made a totally unacceptable offer this year.

"They were simply not prepared to sit back and watch while their standards of living are eroded and had voted overwhelmingly for action.

"RMT members at Harwich sent out a clear signal to the company that they expect fair treatment on pay and conditions and that they are prepared to fight to get it.

"RMT is pleased that the company recognised the strength of feeling, and the determination of our members, and came back with an offer that addresses the issues at the core of this dispute," Bob said.

RMT will be holding a referendum on the offer with a recommendation to accept.

VOTE YES TO DEFEND TUBE JOBS AND SAFETY

All London Underground members balloted for action as Tory GLA members walk out to block vote backing the RMT campaign against job cuts

RMT is balloting staff across London Underground for strike action and action short of a strike against 800 station staff job cuts and the closure of over 240 ticket offices or major cuts to opening hours.

The ballot comes as London Mayor Boris Johnson was forced to confirm that nine out of ten Tube stations face severe restrictions or total closure of ticket offices in direct contradiction of electoral promises he gave Londoners.

A deliberate policy of not filling vacancies is already compromising safety with the latest scandal exposed by RMT on the Metropolitan Line where an incident report confirms that stations are being left unstaffed contrary to safety protocols.

In addition, the latest cuts imposed on Transport for London by the government as part of the ConDem austerity agenda have yet to bite and the union has warned that many more Tube staff jobs could be axed with the London Tory group demanding that all 3,500 drivers and operators be fired and the Tube moved over to driverless operation.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union would fight the jobs assault on the tube, and the undermining of staff and public safety.

"Not only has London Underground failed to give us the assurances that safe staffing levels would be protected but behind the scenes even bigger attacks on our members, and the services that they provide to the travelling public, are being cooked up.

"London Underground appears to be willing to rip up the safety rule book when it comes to staffing levels.

"We already have repeated examples of stations being left unstaffed on a regular basis with the latest incidents on the Metropolitan Line.

"This disregard for safe working practices will have dire consequences in the event of a major incident and RMT will not sit back and wait for a tragedy to hit the network before we act," he said.

After months of accusing the union of scaremongering over maintenance cuts, Tube bosses have also admitted that services are running on dangerous and rotten infrastructure as the government lines up further attacks on the budget and the tube upgrade programme.

In an unprecedented move, TfL warned of the dangers of allowing trains to continue to run on signaling and equipment dating back to the 1920s – the first time that TfL has backed

RMT's safety concerns over the tube cuts programme.

LU bosses warned that there is much worse to come after revealing massive backlogs in maintenance and upgrade works and a severe shortage of staff in all areas.

TORY COWARDS

Tory GLA members staged a walkout in the London Assembly to prevent a vote on a motion (see below) calling on Boris Johnson to review plans to axe jobs and to close or slash the opening times of ticket offices.

The motion, in the names of Labour's Val Shawcross and the Lib Dems' Caroline Pidgeon, called on Johnson to "reaffirm reasonable and safe staffing levels right across the London Underground".

Green Party GLA members were also due to back the motion as London politicians recognise the damage to safety and quality of passenger service that would be unleashed by the cuts.

RMT welcomes the cross-party support for the campaign to stop the cuts which will turn the Tube into a mugger's paradise as well as having a corrosive effect on the quality of passenger service. ■



RMT WINS LONDON LIVING WAGE FOR LOW PAID WORKERS TUBE CLEANERS

RMT secures massive victory as all Tube cleaners paid the London Living Wage of £7.85 per hour backdated to July 1

RMT has mounted a long and hard campaign for the cleaners to be paid the London minimum wage and the final group, the Tube Lines cleaners working for ISS, will at last join their colleagues on a decent rate of pay from July.

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said that it was a massive and historic victory for the

union and London Underground cleaners.

“This will come as a boost for other low paid workers right across the city.

“It shows very clearly that if you join a union, get organised and stand up and fight then you can win major improvements to your rate of pay.

“For years we have mobilised

the cleaners and mounted demonstrations – often in the teeth of the most outrageous intimidation – and now we see the culmination of that all-grades industrial and political pressure with this ground-breaking agreement on pay.

“It is a tribute to the solidarity, bravery and resilience of our members and their reps

that they have stood firm and won this truly inspirational victory.

“We will now focus our energy on the fight for decent working conditions and facilities for the tube cleaners.

“With this victory on pay chalked up we move on to our demand for working conditions to match it,” said Bob. ■



VESTAS WORKERS LAUNCH NEW FACTORY

RMT members launch new, unionised factory one year after Vestas wind turbine occupation

One year after workers occupied the Vestas wind turbines factory on the Isle of Wight, a new organisation, Sureblades, has risen from the ashes and is due to begin production of blades next month just yards from the closed factory.

Sureblades has been driven by Sean McDonagh, an RMT member and one of the sacked Vestas workers involved in the occupation against the company shutting down where he ran operations from outside the gates.

With the assistance of RMT officials, Sean and his colleagues met with government officials and development agencies to put together the Sureblades business plan in tandem with Keith Housell who already installs turbines across the south.

After the occupation ended Sean travelled to Dorset every week to meet Keith to start up the company.

Sean said that Sureblades aims to begin the manufacture of micro-turbine blades in Newport by late September and the company expects to have capacity to mould blades up to 12 metres long.

"We will be using cutting edge technology which will mean that the blades are 100 per cent recyclable unlike conventional blades which have to be burnt or dumped in landfill," he said.

This imaginative new project has fatally undermined the argument put forward by the company at the time of closure that there was no market for UK manufactured turbine blades.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the union was right behind the concept.

"These workers have shown that it is far too easy for companies in the UK to soak up government grants and then just cut and run when it suits them without any meaningful consultation, never mind a ballot of the workforce.

"We are also very pleased that the planned new operation will be 100 per cent RMT and that officials of this trade union have helped open the doors and make the contacts which have turned this project into a reality.

"But the real credit lies with the determination and inspirational solidarity of the workers who refused to accept that they were beaten," Bob said. ■



ONE YEAR ON: Protesters celebrate a victory at the Vestas eviction court hearing during the occupation at the wind turbine plant, Isle of Wight a year ago.
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POTTERS BAR INQUEST VERDICT— IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN

The Potter's Bar inquest has found that the deadly crash in May 2002 had been caused by unsafe points – and it could happen again.

In the verdict Coroner Judge Michael Findlay Baker QC warned that there was a continuing risk to rail passengers and said he would file a report under Rule 43 of the 1984 Coroners Rules which allows coroners to express concern that circumstances continue to create a risk of other deaths.

"Whatever the causes, the passage of over eight years from the derailment to the conclusion of the hearing of the inquest is indefensible," he said.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that the judge had reinforced the point that RMT made in its evidence to the inquest – that there remains a continual risk of another major disaster on our railways as inspections and maintenance fall victim to financial cuts.

"It remains an absolute scandal that it has taken over eight years to get to the point where we have at last got an inquest verdict but it at least

confirms what we already knew – that this tragic loss of life at Potters Bar could have been avoided if safety rather than profits had been the priority on our railways," he said.

He said that RMT had written to Transport Secretary Phillip Hammond, the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) and the Health and Safety Executive demanding assurances that urgent action is being taken on rail safety.

"Basic failures of inspection and of maintenance, driven by the greed and fragmentation of rail privatisation, led us to Potters Bar.

"Those responsible for creating that lethal culture, the politicians and their business associates, will never share the pain of the victims of their gross mismanagement and they have escaped prosecution for their role in this avoidable disaster.

"Since the disaster, Jarvis and Railtrack, have gone out of business and that makes a mockery of justice.

"Nobody should be under any illusions that the cuts to maintenance and renewals being imposed on our railways today



are dragging us back to exactly the same poisonous cocktail of conditions that led to Potters Bar," he said.

The ORR, the Crown Prosecution Service and British Transport Police are now planning to reopen investigations into whether criminal proceedings could be brought over the deaths of seven people in the Potters Bar rail crash eight years ago.

In October 2005, the CPS said that no charges of manslaughter by gross negligence could be brought.

But a CPS spokeswoman said: "We will be looking to see whether any evidence came out of the inquest which would

require us to review the decision".

More than 70 people were injured and seven died when the 12.45 King's Cross to King's Lynn train came off the rails as it approached the station on 10 May 2002.

- RMT has demanded an urgent government investigation into evidence obtained by RAIL magazine that hundreds of serious accidents have not been reported, sparking union fears that a culture of non-recording of incidents is rife at Network Rail and is directly linked to the senior management bonus culture. ■

RMT TAKES LEGAL ACTION AS JARVIS WORKERS GET NOTHING WHILE BANKS ARE PAID OFF

RMT is demanding government intervention to ensure that former Jarvis workers get £28 million in wages that are owed to them following the collapse of the company.

The demand came after the administrators Deloitte suggested that the workforce are unlikely to get a penny while the Jarvis bankers are getting paid back in full.

RMT has lodged legal claims on both the individual and collective aspects of the collapse of Jarvis.

These claims are on the basis that Jarvis/Fastline failed to consult with the union in relation to redundancies and that individuals were unfairly dismissed, had

unlawful deductions from their wages and that their contracts were breached. The legal action also incorporates claims that TUPE should have applied against the following companies:

Jarvis, Fastline, Network Rail, Babcock Rail, BAM Nuttall, Amey, Colas Rail, DB Schenker, Freightliner, WS Atkins, VolkerRail, Balfour Beatty, Swietelski, Torrent Trackside, C Spencer

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said the government had an obligation to the Jarvis workforce to make good the money that they are owed.

"These workers were employed to maintain and upgrade the nation's railways and it's only because of privatisation that

they ended up working for a cowboy outfit like Jarvis.

"If the government can find tens of billions to bail out the banks then they can find the £28 million that's owed to the Jarvis staff," he said.

He said that with the government driving their transport cuts policy at full tilt redundancies at Babcock Rail, Balfour Beatty and Amey/Colas are also expected as well.

"Yet again it's the workforce taking a hammering while the company directors and the banks that finance them are protected at every turn.

"That's Britain under the ConDems in 2010," said Bob. ■

DEFEND BUS SERVICES!

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BUS CUTS: Bus passengers, many of whom are on low incomes, pay more fuel tax than wealthier air and rail passengers. While buses still pay a significant amount of fuel tax, aviation pays none. BSOG is equivalent to a £437 million a year investment in buses. In contrast, aviation gets a £6.5 billion a year tax break by paying no fuel duty (Source: Green Alliance, June 2009).

RMT backs campaign against Beeching-style bus cuts and warns that pensioners' Freedom Passes could be next target for ConDem cuts

RMT has pledged to campaign to work with passenger groups, local communities and pensioners organisations to defend bus services.

The pledge following warnings from the Campaign for Better Transport that fares could face increases of up to 10 per cent alongside "Beeching-style" cuts to services in many parts of the country.

As part of the spending review, there is a danger that government support for bus services could be scrapped.

The government support under threat is Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), which takes the form of a rebate to operators on fuel duty.

This partial tax rebate, which has been in place for over 40 years, supports local bus services across the country. It's the only direct national funding that bus services get. The government's own assessment of the impact of BSOG is that on average bus use is 6.7 per cent higher, fares are 6.5 per cent lower and services are 7.1 per cent higher outside London than if the funding were completely withdrawn – but these are national averages and a conservative estimate.

The reality is that bus operating costs would rise by around 10 per cent, fares would go up 10 per cent, and bus services would be cut by 10 per cent.

As a result, buses would carry 10 per cent fewer passengers for the same level of costs (excluding BSOG) and the same level of revenue as now. Buses in all areas will be hit with rural and suburban areas and

services at weekends and evenings suffering the biggest cuts or fare rises.

The operators themselves could not absorb the loss of this funding. Bus driver and manufacturing jobs would be hit, investment in services cut and small operators in particular driven out of bus operations altogether.

EARLY DAY MOTION 402

MPs have been signing Early Day Motion 402, which highlights the risks of scrapping BSOG and calls for this crucial public support to be retained.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said that there was no doubt that bus services, particularly in rural areas, are right in the front line when it come to transport cuts.

"It looks like the ConDems are going to give the private bus operators, who have milked fat returns out of their services for years, the opportunity to dump what they consider to be unprofitable services cutting off hundreds of thousands of people from their transport lifeline.

"Thousands of jobs will also be under threat.

"Buses should be run as public services and if the cuts are not stopped many elderly people and those without cars will be isolated while the private bus companies cherry pick the lucrative routes in a return to the short-term vandalism of Beeching," he said.

He said that the bus companies were also lobbying hard to have free pensioner travel restricted and they may now seize the opportunity of the government's cuts agenda to

turn the screw.

The private bus operators have lobbied hard for the scheme to be restricted and in a recent interview, the work and pension's secretary Iain Duncan Smith has indicated that pensioner benefits could be threatened.

"We can promise them they will have one almighty battle on their hands as the unions link up with pensioners' organisations and community groups to fight these cuts," Bob Crow said.

Other supporters of the campaign include Campaign for Better Transport, the group of six Integrated Transport Authorities, the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK, Friends of the Earth, Campaign to Protect Rural England, UNITE, Community Transport Association, Guide Dogs, Greenpeace UK, UNISON and Bus Users UK. ■

EDM 402

BUS SERVICES OPERATOR GRANT

That this House recognises the importance of local bus services in tackling congestion in urban areas, in contributing to carbon reduction and in providing a lifeline service in rural areas and for households without access to a car; notes that the Government's own calculations suggest that if Government BSOG (Bus Services Operator Grant) support for bus services were to be withdrawn, substantial fare increases, service reductions and job losses would follow; and calls on the Government to continue to support bus services by retaining BSOG.

Angela Smith MP

Parliamentary column

WELCOME TO RMT'S PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

RMT's Parliamentary group of Labour MPs, led by John McDonnell MP, has a track record of fighting for RMT members and the wider trade union movement, putting down early day motions, lobbying and hosting meetings and a number of other important activities.

So it's great news following the election that a number of Labour MPs have agreed to join the RMT Parliamentary Group which means, combined with existing members, there will be 21 MPs in the new RMT group.



Diane Abbott
Hackney North & Stoke Newington



Gerald Kaufman



Kate Hoey
Vauxhall



Katy Clark
North Ayrshire and Arran



John McDonnell
Hayes & Harlington



Kelvin Hopkins
Luton North



Jeremy Corbyn
Islington North



Jim McGovern
Dundee West



Ian Lavery
Wansbeck



Alex Cunningham
Stockton North



Austin Mitchell
Grimsby



Karl Turner
Kingston upon Hull East



Ian Davidson
Glasgow South West



Linda Riordan
Halifax



Chris Williamson
Derby North



Brian Donohoe
Central Ayrshire



Marsha Singh
Bradford West



Mike Wood
Batley Spen



Paul Flynn
Newport West



John Trickett
Hemsworth



Joan Walley
Stoke-on-Trent North

RMT DEMOLISHES CASE FOR DISCRIMINATORY PAY FOR SEAFARERS

Union steps up pressure on the new government to end the discrimination on seafarers pay

The RMT submission on pay race discrimination at sea to the review to the Department for Transport review fatally undermined Chamber of Shipping support for continued discrimination and gained a favourable recommendation.

The main arguments put forward by the Chamber of Shipping and examined in the review were as follows:

- Increased costs – The Chamber of Shipping claims that employment costs per trip will increase by between 10 per cent and 130 per cent with discrimination completely outlawed (option A), and by between six per cent and 31 per cent if only discrimination against EU nationals was prohibited, (option B).

RMT, supported by the TUC, advised the review that such estimates based on current pay would be overstated because pay differentials were narrowing.

- Competitiveness – The Chamber told the Carter review that differential pay was standard practice across EU Member States and internationally. The union was able to counteract this by pointing to higher standards in other EU States.
- Flagging out – The Chamber said that 172 ships would flag out under option A, or 141 under option B. RMT was again able to refute this argument by pointing to

the advantages of the UK flag. More importantly high level advice obtained by RMT revealed that in many instances flagging out may not be effective.

- Consequences of flagging out – The employers also said that flagging out would cause the movement of shipping operations abroad, the gradual replacement of 4,000 UK seafarers, a negative impact on the maritime cluster and reduced strategic capability.

RMT also challenged these assertions and has underlined how we believe that the end of discriminatory practices can provide stability for existing UK seafarers and in the longer term enhance training and employment prospects.

In addition, the RMT submission outlined the wider benefits of improved employment prospects for port towns and communities. The union also underlined the moral arguments and advised the Department for Transport that the shipping industry could no longer be allowed to ignore basic employment and equal rights legislation. RMT also stated that responsible shipping companies would benefit from fairer competition.

The Carter review concluded that:

“On the basis of the evidence submitted, I recommend outlawing the practice of nationality-based pay differentials for seafarers altogether (option A).”

Unfortunately, there is no



guarantee that the new Shipping Minister will uphold the recommendations. However, the union has asked the Government to implement the findings of the review as soon as possible. In addition RMT Parliament group convenor John McDonnell MP has tabled the following Early Day Motion 319 (below) calling for the government to implement the findings.

Meetings have also been held with the new Shipping Minister with John McDonnell accompanied by Karl Turner MP, son of former NUS official Ken Turner and member of the RMT Parliamentary group.

For a copy of the RMT submission please e-mail Steve Yandell in the National Policy Department at s.yandell@rmt.org.uk or call 0207 529 8819. ■

EARLY DAY MOTION 319

That this House welcomes the government's publication of the independent external review of evidence submitted to the consultation on regulations to end discriminatory pay on UK ships; further welcomes the recommendation of the review that the practice of nationality-based pay differentials for seafarers be outlawed altogether on UK ships; believes that no UK industry should be permitted to ignore legislation on non-discrimination and notes that this discrimination has resulted in rates of pay below the national minimum wage on UK ships; and therefore urges the Government to endorse the findings of the independent external review and to bring forward regulations to end this discrimination as soon as possible.

John McDonnell MP

EU LOBBY FIRM 'BUYS UP' EU MARITIME OFFICIALS

Corporate accountability campaigners are worried that a PR outfit that lobbies the European Union on maritime issues has "bought up the top of the EU's maritime department lock, stock and barrel".

The alert came as Maltese EU commissioner Joe Borg, responsible for EU maritime affairs and fisheries until last year, gets set to start work with Fipra, a PR consultancy actively lobbying on maritime issues, whose main office is about 100 yards from the commission's headquarters in Brussels.

The commission gave Mr Borg the green light to work at the firm recently, claiming that his "activity falls outside the scope of his portfolio during his time in office".

Mr Borg will join his old colleague John Richardson, a former director in the European Commission's maritime and

fisheries department, who in 2008 became Fipra's "maritime policy and diplomacy special advisor".

During his time at the commission, Mr Richardson headed the task force that drafted the EU's 2007 Integrated Maritime Policy, which deals with competition, employment and environmental standards in the sector.

Of the Corporate Europe Observatory, the EU transparency watchdog, sharply criticised the developments, noting that Fipra has not even signed up to the commission's own lobbyist registry.

"Fipra appears to have bought up the top of the EU's maritime department lock, stock and barrel," he said.

A total so far of six of the 13 EU commissioners who retired earlier this year have now gone on to work for banks, lobbying firms, insurance companies and

airlines.

Fipra's own website and the activities of the two men in question indicate there is an intimate connection between their old and new roles.

Mr Borg while still commissioner was already rubbing shoulders with Fipra people, speaking at the company's annual conference in Malta last year. The Maltese maritime flag is now the second largest in Europe after Greece and the seventh largest worldwide.

The manner of Mr Borg's recruitment also sheds light on his approach to the Fipra role.

Fipra's Ukko Metsola, who is married to Roberta Metsola Tedesco Triccas, a legal attache in the Maltese mission to the EU, indicated that Mr Borg used personal connections to fish for a job with the lobbying firm. ■

UNIONS ARGUE AGAINST LOOPHOLES IN SHIPPERS REST RULES

RMT joined the International Transport Workers Federation in condemning shipowners' demands to water down rules on rest hours.

The international seafarers' organisation also expressed concerns about a reduction of training requirements for watchkeeping engineers.

The ITF supported an increase in the minimum rest hours to 77 hours a week and 10 hours a day with a maximum 14 hours between rest periods, bringing the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) into line with the International Labour Organisation Maritime Labour Convention.

However, the International Chamber of Shipping persuaded delegates at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) meeting in Manila to allow

exceptions to meet 'short term' operational requirements.

Unions pointed out that such exceptions posed a risk of seafarers suffering fatigue affecting their own and the vessels' safety.

ITF seafarers' section assistant secretary John Bainbridge said that the ITF would continue to oppose flexibilities in hours of rest above those agreed.

"Any agreement for seafarers to work 98 hours per week in the Year of the Seafarer is not sending out a message seafarers will be comforted by," he said.

The ITF was also disappointed that the convention did not address fatigue or enhance skill standards and even reduced the minimum training requirements for watchkeeping engineers from 30 months to 12 months by stealth. ■

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RMT

SEAFARERS' HELPLINE
In this issue of RMT News shipping members will have a leaflet about a confidential debt helpline dedicated to seafarers.

JUSTICE FOR THE SHREWSBURY THREE

RMT backs the Shrewsbury Pickets Campaign and the fight for justice for the pickets wrongly imprisoned in 1973 on trumped up charges

Trade unionists from all over the country rallied in Shrewsbury recently to demand justice for the 24 men convicted in 1973 on 'conspiracy' charges for simply taking part in a building workers' dispute.

A march took place from Abbey Foregate to the Crown Court, where TV actor Ricky Tomlinson was one of 24 workers convicted in 1973 during the "flying pickets" trial.

Mr Tomlinson, a plasterer at the time, was jailed for two years for an alleged offence under the 1875 Conspiracy Act.

The strike was all over the country but the 24 were arrested in Flintshire and Mold in North Wales and tried in Shrewsbury Crown Court to "set an example".

Mr Tomlinson called on the police to provide evidence that his trial had been fair

"I'm challenging the Chief Constable to come to a public meeting where people could hear for themselves that there was no case to answer at our trial.

"I want him to debate with me that this trial wasn't legal," he said.

Justice for the Shrewsbury Pickets campaign national secretary Mike Abbott said that the workers' only 'crime' was to go on strike over their demand for £1 an hour and better safety and working conditions in the construction industry.

It was the second year that the march involving over 500 people had taken place.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow said: "We've come down today to get some justice for the people who were the victims in the dispute.

"Employers have blacklisted trade unionists whose only crime was to defend people's conditions and try to improve pay," he said.

The campaign is preparing a submission to the Criminal Cases Review Commission and a campaigning DVD, for more information go to

www.shrewsburypicketscampaign.org.uk



Bob Crow



Ricky Tomlinson





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Aberdeen

Resistance to the massive attack on jobs and services planned by the new 'ConDem' coalition government was the key challenge for delegates at RMT's 2010 annual general meeting, held in Aberdeen last month. Delegates pledged to defend jobs, pay, pensions and services in the face of the government's calculated plan to make workers pay for an economic crisis triggered by the speculative greed of unregulated bankers.

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STOP NR CUTS

The union should use every available means to stop “callous” attacks by Network Rail on maintenance workers’ jobs and safety, the AGM agreed.

The AGM condemned the dangerous proposals in NR’s phase 2 b/c reorganisation plans, which had serious implications for the safety and job security of our members employed by Network Rail and potentially deadly ramifications for rail users and operational rail staff.

The deferral of renewals work had led to thousands losing their jobs and many more facing an uncertain and insecure future.

Greg Hewitt, Brighton & Hove, painted a grim picture of the situation facing RMT members and the public on Britain’s railways if Network Rail cutbacks were allowed to go through unopposed.

“How many more people will die in this industry before the government and Network Rail take action on safety?” he asked, pointing out that the new government had announced £683 million of cuts to the transport budget, adding that “everything is up to be slashed



Mick Cash

and burned”.

“Network Rail is ruthlessly determined to axe 1,500 members’ jobs, and we can’t cope right now as it is.”

It was not only RMT members set to lose their jobs who would suffer, but those left behind to deal with “bigger backlogs and lowering of safety standards”, Greg added.

“Our brothers and sisters are sick and tired of the company’s arrogance and bullying,” said **Steve Wallace, Fort William** and a number of people were simply giving up and leaving

But the company was now using trumped-up charges and summary dismissals to get rid of people.

The type of efficiencies being demanded, like cutting walking time from 34 to 20 minutes a mile, were outrageous, and it was important to use every piece of ammunition available to the union.

RMT members would not be deterred by High Court injunctions, **senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash** said.

“If Network Rail continues to attack our members and the safety of the travelling public, we as a union are fully prepared to take them on through industrial action,” Mick said.

PAY JARVIS WORKERS, DELEGATES DEMAND

Delegates unanimously backed the right of ‘redundant’ ex-Jarvis staff to receive the pay owing to them when the company went into administration.



Steve Wallace

Delegates agreed that the union must use every means available to ensure that all ex-staff of Jarvis and its subsidiaries, including Jarvis Fastline, who had been receiving monthly redundancy payments before the collapsed received all outstanding payments.

Delegates pointed out that one of the main reasons behind the Jarvis collapse was a lack of investment in safety which led to the Potters bar disaster.

Dave Hobbs, Newport, could not hide his contempt for outgoing Network Rail boss Iain Coucher, who was set to receive two huge bonuses.

“On top of his £605,000 salary and while Jarvis workers have been made redundant and cannot afford to feed their families that is disgusting and sick,” Dave said.

NR’s management style was not based on the public interest but on a bonus culture, said **Mike Sargent, Cinque Ports**.

Agencies had taken advantage of the redundancies by offering unemployed skilled workers zero-hours contracts on far worse terms and conditions, said **Senior Assistant General Secretary Mick Cash**.

KEEP THE GUARD – KEEP THE TRAIN SAFE

Delegates pledged to redouble efforts to defend the safety role of guards across the rail network, with industrial action if necessary, and slammed First Scotrail’s decision to impose driver-only operation on the Airdrie-Bathgate line.

Scotrail’s efforts to impose driver-operation were the latest in a long line of efforts by train-operating companies to cut costs by cutting the safety role, said **Ruth Strong, East Midlands Central**.

Incident after incident had underlined the importance of the guard, said Ruth – not least the recent derailment at Loch Awe, where even the company had acknowledged that the guard had played a key role.

“If these companies can save a few quid they’ll do it,” said **Steve Skelly, Bridgend Llantrisant & District**, pointing out that it fell to the union to defend safety in the industry.

The AGM gave its “complete solidarity” to traincrew members at Scotrail making a fighting stand against D00.

Delegates also expressed dismay that ASLEF had signed an agreement with Merseyrail committing to a deal on D00, and demanded an end to the society recruiting guards at the company.

AGM welcomed plans to electrify the Liverpool-Manchester Chat Moss line, and for further electrification between Huyton and Wigan, Manchester and Blackpool, but demanded that rolling stock to

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Ash Malik

be used must be configured to give the guard full control over power-operated doors.

The combination of electrification and new rolling stock had given employers the opportunity to try to impose DOO, noted **Pat Sikorski, assistant general secretary**, and it was now clear that a wider campaign to defend the guard was needed.

The union had exposed the complicity of the Scottish government in colluding with Scotrail, even to the point of discussing underwriting the company's losses as a result of industrial action.

The stakes had risen, and employers were now in the business of trying to break the union, so the union had to take the argument into the community and campaign at every level possible, said Pat.

TIME FOR A FIGHT ON BUS PAY

RMT will launch a national campaign alongside sister unions across the bus industry for a "decent living wage" for drivers and maintenance workers, delegates agreed.

Unanimously backing a call

for a mass campaign, including pressuring MPs through the RMT parliamentary group, delegates debated how to win decent pay for bus workers.

Bus drivers were among the lowest paid in the transport sector, said Darryl Emberson, Poole & District, with rates as low as £6.50 an hour for some, and substantial variation around the country.

"With the cost of living rising, some bus drivers are no longer able to support their families. This cannot carry on," he said.

Blaming "profit-hungry privateers," Darryl said that now was the time to take the fight forward against the employer and the government over the issue.

Fellow bus driver **Pauline Harris, Plymouth No 5**, said that bus drivers could not afford a mortgage even if their partner had a full-time job.

The AGM recognised that cross-industry solidarity was necessary to win pay advances and to defend bus members from the further attacks on pay that were coming.

SINGLE INDUSTRIAL UNION IS THE AIM

Delegates overwhelmingly backed a call to work more closely with sister unions with the ultimate aim of establishing a single industrial union, reflecting long-standing RMT policy.

The RMT rulebook seeks to "secure the complete organisation of all employed" in the rail, sea and other transport

sectors and the biggest issue for conference so far provoked a vigorous debate for and against.

Gary Abbot, Bristol, said that the attacks being lined up by the ConDem government demanded greater unity in the industry and his view was echoed by fellow region seven delegate Steve Skelly, who stressed that workers in the industry needed a single union.

Peter Rowland, Manchester South, said the motion "did not sit easy" with him, insisting that RMT was big enough to "fight our own battles."

Some delegates also pointed to pitfalls of working alongside "an elitist craft union", but **Bob Law, Jubilee South and East London Line**, encouraged delegates to embrace the RMT philosophy of a single transport union.

"It is not the bureaucrats we are interested in – it is the membership," he said.

And Brian Munro, Bakerloo Line, argued that the divisions created by having three transport unions suited management.

Bob Crow said that a single industrial union would be unstoppable: "We could use all our energies to fight the employers," he said.

"If we had a merged union, I couldn't give two hoots whether I was general secretary as long as members had clout," he said.

His own experiences as a young trade unionist had taught him that "the only things you win in life are through muscle. You win through density of membership".

EUROPEAN UNION: TIME TO LEAVE

Delegates called unanimously for Britain to withdraw from the European Union.

As member states face increased attacks on workers' living standards, delegates pointed out that Britain's railways could not be brought back into public ownership under the Lisbon Treaty.

Gary Abbott, Bristol, said that the union's own policy of "democratic public ownership of public transport" could not be fulfilled while Britain remained a member of the EU, even if the government had the political will.

Steve Skelly, Bridgend, Llantrisant and District, reminded AGM that the Viking and Laval cases in the European Court of Justice had enshrined that "big business interests supersede workers' right to strike."

Responding to the threats from the EU with unprecedented "austerity measures" being unleashed across Europe, RMT delegates showed their solidarity with Greek and Portuguese workers who have taken a series of one day and general strikes in the last few months.

Mike Sargent, Cinque Ports, put the blame for the EU austerity measures squarely at the feet of a "crisis of capital".

"Working people are paying for a crisis of capital with unelected EU commissioners who are the tool of the IMF unleashing itself upon us".

Looking to workers in Greece and Portugal for inspiration,



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Mike asked delegates “to prepare for direct action as our brothers and sisters there have done”.

General secretary Bob Crow said the original project of the “capitalist EU” was to “stop the threat of socialism and communism spreading”.

“They were worried by the social benefits people had in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union at that time,” he said.

“When the Soviet Union disappeared the EU became a different animal – it became about liberalising economies”.

Referring to EU rules on the free movement of capital, goods, services and labour, Bob said: “Freedom of movement is freedom for the bosses”.

Forecasting great strife for working people in Britain, Bob said the only way to respond was through “co-ordinated direct action” across the working class movement and warned that four million people could be officially unemployed soon.

“We have to up link with working people in Europe and throughout the world,” said Bob.

NO TO RACISM

ANTI-RACISM initiatives must be built into training for RMT reps and activists, delegates agreed.

Recognising the union’s “proud record of fighting racism,” delegates endorsed a call from **Alex Hogg, Edinburgh No 1 and Portobello District** that emphasised the need to challenge racism wherever it appears in our society, including the workplace

The initiative will be incorporated into all General Representatives courses, encouraging activists to take the responsibility to challenge racism and to “be part of the solution”.

RMT was built on solidarity and justice, and racism had to be picked up wherever it was encountered, including in the canteen, said **Del Marr, South East Essex**

Brotherhood and sisterhood were a cornerstone of the union,

which promoted fairness and social justice – but had no room for racism said **Bob Crow**, welcoming the call.

RMT had worked hard alongside a unified Hope Not Hate campaign in Barking and Dagenham to help defeat the BNP during the general election.

“The BNP can only survive when there is social deprivation, lack of jobs and housing – you don’t see riots on the streets in posh places like Henley,” said Bob.

“I’m delighted that in Barking the BNP have gone, every single one of them, kicked into touch,” said Bob – although ‘new’ Labour’s candidate in the constituency bore responsibility for creating the conditions that had allowed the BNP to gain a toehold

It was important to promote a society of tolerance, said Bob, – but free speech did not mean the right to attack someone for the colour of their skin or their sexuality

BAD-WEATHER PLANS NEEDED

Delegates condemned employers for withhold paying or requiring staff to take annual leave if they were unable to get to work during adverse weather conditions.

The union should negotiate proper plans with employers which ensured that staff were not made to pay for lack of foresight, or forced to take unacceptable risks to get to work.

There were many members – many of them women, who had lost pay or had been forced to take leave if they had been unable to get in, said **Mandy Evans, Swansea**.

“This hits women particularly hard because they are often the prime carers and if the schools are not open there is a big problem,” Mandy said.

Lower-paid staff were not able to work at home when the weather was bad like some higher grades, said **Ruth Strong, East Midlands Central**

“There was a disproportionate effect on women, which makes it discriminatory,” said Ruth.

Employers always wanted to give the impression of being flexible and caring – until it costs them money, noted **general secretary Bob Crow**.

“When people are being warned not to travel it is a disgrace if people are then not paid if they cannot get to work,” Bob said.

AGAINST SEXISM

RMT will launch a campaign to combat the sexism often encountered by women working in a male-dominated industry, delegates agreed.

The union had to understand how deep the problem ran in order to combat it, said **Mandy Evans, Swansea**.

The AGM agreed to survey members to identify the depth of the problem, and set up a campaign including workshops for women to support each other and train all reps to be aware of and challenge sexism at work.

Agnes Lingard, Waltham Cross & District, recalled the experiences of a young member who had been the butt of sexist remarks where the perpetrators were simply not aware that they were harassing.

The aim was to eliminate all forms of workplace harassment, said Bob Crow, welcoming the call.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

RMT President Alex Gordon opened conference with a call to the trade union and labour movement to mobilise the “largest demonstration of our entire history” in the autumn to oppose the ConDem cuts.

Alex emphasised the destructive role of the EU in ordering austerity measures across Europe while simultaneously paying tribute to sister unions in Portugal and Greece for their resistance to the cuts.

“We have seen in Greece the tremendous demonstration of

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people power led by the Greek trade unions, but also including pensioners, the self-employed and school students against the 'austerity measures'," he said.

"Last week our comrades in the Portuguese trade unions mobilised a demonstration of 300,000 people in Lisbon against austerity cuts - some three percent of the total population of ten million"

"Comrades, we in this country had better get our marching boots on."

Mounting a vigorous defence of industrial trade unionism in Britain, Alex pointed out that RMT had the ability to "organise and campaign for workers' rights, which unites members of all grades in a common industrial enterprise into one democratic organisation."

Alex highlighted the success of the union's campaign to stop compulsory redundancies in maintenance at Network Rail.

"It is a tribute to this union and to the loyalty of our members employed by Network Rail that despite trawling for 1,500 redundancies in the name of 'efficiency', not one RMT member has been made compulsorily redundant by this company," he said.

But he lambasted rail privateer Jarvis, labelling its insolvency hours before staff were due to be paid "the most disgraceful events in the era of

rail privatisation in Britain."

And of the stand taken by Jarvis workers, Alex said: "Their demand for 'Jobs Not Dole' is being echoed by workers all over Britain and the world."

While highlighting the importance of struggle against unscrupulous transport bosses he made clear that the root of the problems facing members were to be found in "capitalist globalisation", with its "application of just in time production methods and above all deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation".

RMT 'A BEACON' SAYS MCDONNELL

RMT'S EXAMPLE provided "a beacon" for the entire trade union movement, **parliamentary convenor John McDonnell MP** told delegates.

The Hayes and Harlington MP drew repeated applause from delegates, pledging his continued solidarity with the union and unveiling his plan to table legislation aimed at removing some of the unfair legal barriers preventing workers taking strike action.

The ConDem coalition government just wanted "to get the casino working again", and had launched a class war against people in Britain.

"All of a sudden it's us, not the banks - somehow we are spending too much money on public services, on health and education," John said, adding that a "coalition of resistance" had to be forged,

"Whether it is in parliament or on the streets I will be with you in solidarity," he pledged, calling for the biggest possible unity across the movement for the coming struggles.

VESTAS EXPERIENCE

THE EXPERIENCES and lessons of the Vestas occupation were the subject of a packed AGM fringe meeting, almost a year after wind-turbine makers occupied their plant on the Isle of Wight in an attempt to stop their employers closing it to

move production abroad.

Although originally a spontaneous act by non-unionised workers at the factory, campaigners and workers teamed up with RMT, which provided organisational and legal assistance.

Closer links between unions and environmentalists were crucial, said **Luke Evans of Workers for Climate Action**, which worked closely with RMT during the occupation.

Developing those links was a crucial two-way process, educating each other on environmental issues and trade unionism, Luke said.

The example of the Vestas workers showed that the need for more "non-violent, extra-parliamentary direct action" to win further gains for workers, said general secretary Bob Crow.

"Our job as a union is to say to members that there is hope that we can fight and that we can win."

- The Vestas occupation showed that workers had a key role to play in fighting climate change, AGM delegates agreed.

Unanimously adopting a call from the union's young members' conference, AGM agreed that climate-change campaigns should be promoted among RMT young members, and to build stronger links with the Workers' Climate Action campaign.

Climate change affects everybody, and it is not just a young members' issue, noted Emma Baldwin, Watford, urging delegates to become involved.

In the next 30 or 40 years some parts of the world could be under water, including Norwich or Hull, noted Ross Marshall, Neasden, and ignoring it was not an option.

Climate change will not respect any boundaries, noted assistant general secretary Pat Sikorski, and already affects everyone.

The Vestas occupation had focused people's minds on the issue, but the world's big capitalist powers, led by the United States, stood in the way of worldwide agreement to combat it, and it was people-power that would win action.

A balanced energy policy, using fossil fuels with carbon capture and developing renewable sources, including wind power, was the way forward, not the nuclear option, said Pat.

PENSIONS: TIME FOR DIRECT ACTION

STATE PENSIONS must be increased above the poverty level and pensioners guaranteed free long-term social care, delegates agreed.

Retired members' delegate Ron Douglas said 3.5 million pensioners were in poverty and stressed that young members needed to take up the fight for decent pensions.

"All you delegates here today are workers and one day you will become pensioners, and we want dignity and security in retirement" he said.

The 100 wealthiest people in Britain trebled their income last year, noted **Glen Burrows, Bristol retired members' branch**: "There is no recession for them," she said, pointing out that it was no accident that Britain had among the meanest pensions systems in the world.

Pensioners should take direct action to force the government to pay a decent state pension, **general secretary Bob Crow** said.

Bob said that pensioners should blockade motorways to get what they want - a basic state pension which is worth more than £165 a week.

Although he strongly supported the National Pensioners Convention's campaign against pensioner poverty, "marching up and down in Blackpool with placards making demands is not enough."



John McDonnell MP

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"You need to go and block motorways and say we are not moving until we get what we want. Let's have some real direct action."

ADRIAN IS YOUTH AWARD WINNER

LONDON TUBE driver and RMT young members' advisory committee and LGBT committee chair **Adrian Rowe** was the proud winner of the union's prestigious John Cogger Youth Award.

Bob Crow paid tribute to Adrian's efforts in helping to establish the national young members' advisory committee.

The union's young members were the future of the union, and it was crucial to encourage and nurture the youth, said Bob.

Adrian, whose efforts helped treble the number of delegates at the RMT young members' conference since 2008, said he was proud to have been able to play a role in building it.

Although confessing to having been "forced" by his sister to join the union, Adrian is also a member of the London Transport Regional Council executive, communications officer for Neasden branch and youth rep on the executive of the TUC's Southern and Eastern region.

Thanking mentors including Tony Rico, Brian Munro, Joanne Parry, Emma Baldwin, Ross Marshall, Les Bruty, Alan Pottage and Dave Marshall, Adrian also paid tribute to the "great man and great trade unionist" after whom the award is named.

- Participation by RMT young members in the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Rally, Burston Strike



Adrian Rowe

commemoration, the Durham Miners Gala and the Jim Connell memorial event in Ireland should be encouraged, delegates agreed.

Delegates also registered "deep concern" over police tactics such as 'kettling' and pre-emptive arrests used against lawful demonstrations.

It was essential to keep bringing young activists into the union, and events like Tolpuddle and the Burston Strike rally were great forums for bringing young members into the movement, said **Emma Baldwin, Watford.**

Without constant new blood the union would eventually wither and die, said **senior assistant general secretary Mick Cash**, and it was important for working people to pass on the history of our movement to new generations.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

New York transit workers up for fight

THE TRANSPORT Workers' Union in the United States faces the same problems as its brothers and sisters in Britain, said **John Samuelson**, newly elected president of its 37,000-strong New York state branch, Local 100, told delegates.

A track worker for 18 years, John now leads the union's negotiations with Jay Walder, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's boss and former Transport for London finance director.

John's colourful description of Walder – "a lousy, miserable anti-worker bastard, and he doesn't think too highly of me either" – drew laughter and applause from delegates.

"I don't know what you RMT guys did to him when he was in London, but he came to New York with a definite chip on his shoulder," said John.

Walder had declared war on

Local 100, had already laid off 1,000 MTA workers, was demanding massive contractual concessions and was determined to "put the union in its place", he said.

"We aren't going to let that happen, we will fight him tooth and nail," John pledged.

He pointed out that Local 100 motto was "We Move New York" – although the union's members have already demonstrated their ability to bring the city's transport to a halt.

The union would not allow the MTA to hold a gun to its head by threatening more layoffs if the union failed to make massive concessions, and the union was working in the community to build a united front against cuts, John said.

"Through our campaigns we have thoroughly debunked in NYC myth that the union is enemy of the community," he said.

"And we are rebuilding the trust with our members, creating a democratic, member-led fighting union."

"The day I lose the perspective of a track worker, is the day that I can't be president of Local 100 anymore," said John.

Portuguese workers resist EU-inspired privatisation

PORTUGUESE rail workers would strike on July 8 in a national day of industrial action and demonstrations in defence of jobs, public services and workers' living conditions, Manuel Cruz, of the country's SNTSF rail union, reported.

Manuel emphasised the need for international solidarity to resist EU-inspired privatisation of transport and public services.

"Our transport systems are under attack by neo-liberal policies embodied in the Lisbon Treaty – a treaty that strengthens federalism and the domination of big-power neo-liberalism and militarism," Manuel said.

He made common cause with RMT in the struggle to win



Ron Douglas

change that would put the needs and aspirations of working people ahead of profit and exploitation.

"RMT's efforts to promote united and broad action across Europe, such as the Lille demonstration in May, are very positive.

"The trade-union movement has an increasingly important role in resisting the global offensive faced by working people, and an historical responsibility to unite to prevent the destruction of social rights won by generations of workers."

Portuguese rail workers were resisting – but the offensive was being intensified and that required struggle on a new level, he argued.

Hungarian rail workers

HUNGARIAN rail workers have suffered the same disastrous privatisation as that imposed on Britain's railways – and are now facing the prospect of the same anti-union laws, Istvan Gasco, president of the country's VDSZ rail union told delegates.

Calling for international solidarity in fighting privatisation and anti-worker attacks, Istvan revealed that the Hungarian government had slashed more than 1,000 kilometres of track, including 30 branch lines, in just three years.

An industry that once employed 125,000 workers had shrunk to one with just 40,000, despite resistance that had included nine strikes in the last

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two years.

And on top of years of massive cuts and broken promises, Hungarian workers were now threatened with anti-union laws that would, like Britain's, fly in the face of International Labour Organisation norms and carry the express intention of blunting resistance.

"We face common problems and it is essential that we work together to confront them," Istvan said.

France

The importance of international solidarity was also stressed by Christian Joncret International officer of the French CGT union, who detailed the attacks on jobs, pensions and public services faced by French workers.

More than two million workers had demonstrated on the street against the Sarkozy austerity measures, but 'Liberalisation' of rail markets needed to be resisted across borders, said Christian.

Haiti still needs help

Delegates expressed solidarity with the people of Haiti following the devastating earthquake in January, which came on top of generations of imperialist interference.

Glenroy Watson, Finsbury Park, condemned the militarisation of Haiti that had taken place since the earthquake, calling for continued material support for the people of Haiti.

Haiti had largely now been

forgotten by the world's media, and it was crucial to keep highlighting it, said **Snehesh Datta, Central Line West**.

Recalled that RMT members had sailed to Haiti with aid, but that more was needed, said **Andrew Clare, South West & South Wales Shipping**.

Supporting Irish reunification

Delegates welcomed progress made in the Irish peace process and the constitutional route-map towards a united Ireland – but warned against Tory attempts to undermine it.

The AGM was appalled that the Tory leadership hosted a secret conference with diehard unionists with a view to recreating the old Conservative and Unionist Party, re-cementing one of the pillars of sectarianism and prolonging division.

Re-affirming RMT's 20-year policy supporting Irish unity, delegates agreed that the British government should become a persuader for Irish unity in order to create the conditions a pan-Irish referendum on reunification.

The Tories could not be trusted when it came to creating lasting peace in Ireland, said **Brian Munro, Bakerloo**

"Cameron's recent cosying up to the Ulster Unionists is to undermine the Good Friday agreement".

Peter Pinkney, Teesside, evoked the memory of the Irish republican socialist and trade unionist James Connolly and republican political prisoner Bobby Sands who had fought

ALEX HOLDEN

It was with enormous sadness that the union learned of the death of brother Alex Holden in a tragic incident at work on Tuesday, July 27.

Alex was well known well beyond his Manchester Victoria branch, where he was a guards' health and safety rep, as the Secretary of Manchester and Northwest Region and secretary of the Train Grew Grades' Conference.

Alex was also the winner of the RMT Youth Award in 2002 and a keen participant in the Rail Against Privatisation march in 2005.

General secretary Bob Crow said that tributes had flooded



into the union from branches, regions and individual members around the country, underlining that he was an enthusiastic and dedicated member of the union, respected by all who knew him.

"I know that I speak for the entire RMT family when I say that our thoughts and deepest condolences go out to his family, friends and colleagues," he said.

for a united Ireland.

Recalling his own time in the British army, Peter said that Britain "needed to let the Irish people decide their own future and put an end to this shameful part of our history".

Some delegates raised concerns about being seen to tell the people of Northern Ireland how to decide their own future, but **assistant general secretary Pat Sikorsky** said it would be for the people of Ireland to choose their own future.

"When the time is right, of course it will be up to a referendum and the people of Ireland will choose," said Pat.

- In the face of continued globalisation and attacks on union rights, as witnessed by the European Court's Laval, Ruffert and Viking rulings, delegates endorsed a call

from Dorset Rail to develop stronger international links with unions at all levels.

- Delegates endorsed a call for an Anti-Slavery Day on January 11 each year, highlighting the importance to end the modern-day human trafficking that affects nearly a billion people worldwide, according to the United Nations.

Andy Littlechild LUL Engineering recalled personal experience of witnessing slavery in London when he was in the building industry, and Ash Malik, Stratford No 1, said that many workers were being kept in near-slave conditions.

It was a positive step that legislation had now been passed which would make an Anti-Slavery Day a reality, noted Bob Crow. ■



ARE YOU A VULNERABLE WORKER? RMT CAN HELP YOU

Are you a cleaner, shop worker, catering assistant, security guard, hotel worker, seafarer, or other exploited worker?

Do you feel exploited, do not get sick pay or not in a pension scheme?

Do you feel health and safety standards in your workplace are dangerous?

THEN THIS SURVEY IS FOR YOU. RMT IS HERE TO HELP YOU



As announced in the last RMT News, this month's edition contains the vulnerable workers survey to help RMT tackle the inequalities of the most vulnerable members, and potential members, of our union.

We tested the survey by travelling up and down the country to meet and talk to a wide range of workers in trains, ships, stations, hotels, and shops.

Where RMT are well organised, a cleaner can earn up to £11 an hour whereas many others are surviving on the national minimum wage of £5.80 with no sick pay, no shift allowance, no pensions, and bad and dangerous conditions.

RMT catering staff on the main line trains can earn over £20,000 per year while non-unionised workers in stations' shops can be on zero hours contracts, poverty wages and locked in their kiosks with no proper breaks. They even need to ring a bell to be allowed to

go to the toilet!

UK seafarers on average earn around £20,000 per year, although many are, of course, on lower wages, while foreign nationals working on UK ferries are working up to 84 hours per week at less than the national minimum wage of £5.80 per hour. UK seafarers also work 84 hours per week but work longer tours of duty, ie, working for three months prior to a month off.

THE UNION ALSO CAME ACROSS

- Non-members on lower rates of pay, working next to RMT members.
- Anecdotal evidence of sexual harassment
- Gangmasters operating in and around some underground stations
- £10 demanded to get shifts at work
- Two different companies operating in the same areas on different rates of pay

General Secretary, Bob Crow says, "If you know anybody who falls into the categories then show them this article and get them to fill in the survey"

We will use the results of the survey to develop an "information and advice website" aimed primarily for vulnerable workers.

Just fill in the survey and send it back free post to:

National Union of Rail,
Maritime & Transport Workers
FREEPOST (VWS) NW 3
706 LONDON NW1 3YD

You do not need to give your name but, if you are an RMT member, you can write down your membership number and may win the £500 prize for completing the survey. This will be drawn in September by RMT general secretary and president.

*If you want more information about the project, contact:
Alec McFadden, Vulnerable
Workers Project manager
07831627531 -
a.mcfadden@rmt.org.uk*

**TAKE
PART
IN THIS
SURVEY
AND YOU
COULD
WIN
£500!**

Please return the Survey
(in confidence) by 16th
September 2010 to

RMT (VWS) FREEPOST NW3
706 London NW1 3YD

All replies will be dealt with
in the strictest confidence

1. ABOUT YOU

Male Female
 How old are you? Under 22 22 - 35 36 - 50 51 - 65 over 65
 What is your first language?
 What is your job?
 Do you work for a contractor or agency YES NO
 Who is your Employer
 Do you work part time / full time? Part-time Full time
 How long have you been working for them?
 Under 1 yr 1 - 3 yrs 4 - 5 yrs 6 - 10 yrs Over 10 yrs
 Do you get sick pay? YES NO
 Do you get shift pay? YES NO
 Are you in a Pension Scheme? YES NO
 What is your hourly pay? Minimum Wage £5.80 per hour £6 - £8 per hour
 £8 - £10 per hour £10 - £12 per hour Over £12 per hour
 Do you have more than one employer? YES NO

2. RMT & YOUR WORKPLACE

Do you have an RMT Trade Union rep in your work place? YES NO
 Do you know how to contact him/her YES NO
 Are you treated worse than others at work because of YES NO
 Race Age Sex Disability Pregnancy / Maternity Other
 What is your biggest problem at work?

 Do you feel exploited at work? YES NO
 Have you been or are you being bullied at work? YES NO
 Are you afraid to complain to your employer YES NO
 Does your work place have good health & safety conditions? YES NO
 Do you have an RMT H&S Rep YES NO
 Do you know how to contact them YES NO
 Have you ever had an accident in the work place? YES NO
 Are you aware of RMT Accident Benefits? YES NO

3. YOUR PERSONAL SITUATION: Would you like RMT to put you in touch with another organisation to help you with Social Welfare YES NO

Credit problems Debt problem Tax credits ESOL
 Housing Taxation Pension Immigration

Have you borrowed money from anyone who you know regularly lends money to other people without getting you to sign a credit agreement? YES NO
 Do you have a permanent home? YES NO
 Are you aware of the RMT Credit Union? YES NO Are you a member? YES NO
 Would you like more information about the Credit Union? YES NO
 Do you have access to email? YES NO email
 Are you aware that RMT News is available at www.rmt.org.uk YES NO
 Would like more information / involvement in the survey? YES NO
 You can contact the Vulnerable Workers Project Manager at a.mcfadden@rmt.org.uk

Ethnic Profile Please tick the box which best identifies your ethnic origin

White Black African Black Caribbean Black Other
 Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Chinese
 Irish Other (please specify)

Are you a member of the trade union RMT? YES NO Membership No

You could win £500 for completing the survey

What is the most important thing RMT can do for you ?

DURHAM MINERS' GALA 2010



Photography by R Gaunt

RMT members took part in the 126th Durham Miners' Gala on Saturday July 10, marching from the city centre all the way to the Old Racecourse.

Although there are no deep mines left in the Durham Coalfields, the Durham Miners' Gala continues to be a very popular day for trade unionists across the country.

RMT general secretary Bob Crow was guest of honour this year and watched the parade from a balcony with other labour movement figures.

Many RMT branch and regional council banners were given an airing for the day, proudly marching with elaborate miners' standards.

The miners' huge banners are traditionally embroidered in silk

and hang from a cross member.

Guide ropes are held by banner-bearers and, in the past, when there had been a death in the mines during the previous year, there would have been a black cloth draped over it as a sign of mourning.

But more recently, they have been draped with black cloth on significant anniversaries of disasters at the colliery they represent and even to mark pit closures.

The Chopwell pit, often referred to as "Little Moscow", has the only banner that contains images of both Marx and Lenin.

The 1935 Chopwell banner toured the Soviet Union and is still thought to be somewhere in Moscow even today! ■



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LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER MEMBERS MEET IN BELFAST

This year's RMT Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) members' conference was held in Belfast.

General secretary Bob Crow made the opening address and warned that the election of a Tory-led government carried both economic and social dangers as the old-school Thatcherites, still deeply embedded in the fabric of the Conservative Party, flexed their muscles.

Bob talked about the range of industrial and political struggles that the union is engaged in and told the conference that RMT as a whole has a huge amount to learn from its LGBT membership.

"You know all about discrimination and about organising and standing together to fight for your rights. "That's a lesson that you can

pass on to the rest of us as we enter the difficult days that we know lie ahead under this ConDem government," he said.

President Alex Gordon picked up the theme, warning the delegates that all the progress that had been made over the years on LGBT issues was now under threat.

"There is no question that in many workplaces serious progress has been made and that the same is true within the ranks of the union itself.

"That progress is down to the sheer hard work of activists like yourselves.

"With the election of this new government, and looking at the track record on equalities issues of the Home Secretary Theresa May, we have to be on the look out for any moves to roll back the gains that have been made and we have to be

ready to campaign hard to block any attempts to turn back the clock," he said.

Alex also opened up a discussion on improving communications and on encouraging more LGBT members to take an active role in the union.

There were a range of suggestions including more regular features in RMT news and a stronger web presence and there was a warm welcome for the first issue of "Standing Proud" – the quarterly national newsletter from the LGBT advisory committee.

Delegates discussed the opportunity to make a greater use of "RMT Junction" – RMT's own social networking site, and to ensure that more activists and members knew about the Junction project and signed up to it.

Donald Graham from the Organising Unit led off a session on building membership and the activist base and using selective advertising in targeted press and at targeted events to get the positive RMT trade union message out to the wider LGBT community.

RMT equalities officer Pat Wilkinson took the conference through the diary of Pride events this year that the union will be taking a presence at and encouraged everyone to play a full part in ensuring that RMT has the highest possible profile.

The conference finished on a positive note with delegates noting the good level of attendance and the positive discussions that will be fed into the national advisory committee through re-elected Chair Adrian Rowe and his colleagues. ■



RMT JOINS TOLPUDDLE FESTIVITIES



MARTYRS: Wreath laying ceremony at the grave of James Hammett. Three great, great, great granddaughters of James Hammett lay wreaths - Laverne Hunter (L), Kathy Claxton (R) and Lilian Wood.



Thousands descend on Dorset village to remember the six Tolpuddle martyrs deported to Australia for the 'crime' of forming a trade union

A large contingent of RMT members joined thousands of trade unionists at the Tolpuddle festival, which culminated in a huge demonstration through the village to commemorate the martyrs of 1834.

In warm sunshine over a dozen RMT branch and regional banners could be seen behind the RMT brass band and among the hundreds of socialist and trade union standards on the march.

Each year the three-day festival of music and politics commemorates the memory of the six agricultural labourers arrested in 1834 for forming a trade union and transported to Botany Bay, sparking a huge campaign for their freedom. RMT general secretary Bob Crow spoke as a guest on the live BBC Politics Show directly from the festival, calling for the repeal of the anti-trade union laws that contravene international labour conventions.

He also called for a co-ordinated campaign of generalised strikes and community direct action to defend public services in the teeth of the vicious attacks being unleashed by the ConDem government.

"If this government attacks jobs, pensions, public services and agreements built up over decades there are going to be protests.

"This ConDem administration is trying to force workers to pay for a crisis that was created by the bankers.

"Trade unions must form alliances with community groups, campaigns and pensioners organisations in the biggest show of united resistance since the success of the anti-poll tax movement," he said.

A Tolpuddle event in Parliament at the same time organised by Trade Union Co-ordinating

Group welcomed Labour MP John McDonnell's proposed Bill to prevent bosses overturning strike ballots over minor technicalities.

RMT president Alex Gordon told the meeting that RMT would be submitting a motion to the TUC Congress calling on unions to back the initiative and John McDonnell urged unions to "raise people's confidence so they can fight back". MPs will debate McDonnell's Lawful Industrial Action (Minor Errors) Bill on October 22 and a lobby of Parliament will be held on October 13 in support of the Bill to restore the right to strike. Following the Con-Dem government imposing a pay freeze and announcing 600,000 public-sector job losses, representatives from Unison, PCS and the FBU were also in an uncompromising mood at Tolpuddle.

Unison head of health Tanya Palmer said the Con-Dem proposals would tear up national pay bargaining and "open up the doors of competition' in the NHS. She said that, if the trade union movement did not stop the assault "there will be no more health service".

FBU south-west regional secretary Tam McFarland said that, on top of the 40 per cent cuts to the Fire Service, there would be devastating consequences for workers in the private sector.

"Thirty-eight per cent of small firms rely on the public sector," he said.

PCS assistant general secretary Chris Baugh said the cuts facing the working people was on scale far larger than under "Thatcher or Blair".

Teaching unions also urged a campaign against a "direct assault on the education system" by the government. UCU general secretary Sally



Descendants of James Hammet with Tony Benn



Hunt said that the trade union movement had to speak "with a single voice.

"We can learn some lessons from the CBI, they only have one interest - business.

"We should have a voice that speaks consistently on behalf of all trade unions," she said.

NUT general secretary Christine Blower attacked the education white paper, adding that ministers were using primary legislation to push it through

quickly.

"Primary legislation is reserved for terrorism or issues of national emergency," she said.

She pointed out that public-sector workers in Ireland have endured a 15 per cent pay cut.

"That hasn't stopped the downturn there.

"The only real solution is to spend your way out of recession, using a more progressive tax system to cut the deficit," she said. ■

IT'S YOUR HISTORY

Film project will celebrate centenary of NUR and create a unique RMT archive for the future – and YOUR stories will make it happen

On a bright spring morning in 1913, some 50,000 rail workers marched on London's Hyde Park – the biggest demonstration of rail workers ever held in Britain.

They were celebrating the creation the day before, March 29, of the National Union of Railwaymen, an industrial union with 180,000 members, the result of the merger of three unions – the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, the General Railway Workers' Union and the United Pointsmen's and Signallers' Society.

It was an historic day, not just for the industry, but for the whole labour movement, for it heralded a new model of industrial trade unionism – as relevant today as it was a century ago.

The labour historian GDH Cole described the new union – whose seeds germinated in the great rail strike of 1911 – as “a new model as influential for the 20th century as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers had been for the Victorian age”.

Labour movement pioneers Sidney and Beatrice Webb hailed the NUR's rejection of localism and sectionalism and its aim “to enrol into one union ... all who are employed by any railway undertaking”.

Our union has travelled a great distance since that great moment – not least the equally historic mergers between the NUR and the National Union of Seamen 20 years ago, and with the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee.

To mark the 2013 centenary, RMT has commissioned a film project that will not only chronicle the union's history, but build a wider archive of



filmed interviews, artefacts and pictures.

Platform Films, a labour-movement collective that has charted many of Britain's industrial struggles over three decades, has been recruited to make the film and conduct interviews that will form a permanent archive.

Director Chris Reeves has already made a number of films for RMT and has a back-catalogue that includes the great dockers' dispute of the mid 1970s, the Shrewsbury Pickets, the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders occupation and the miners' strike of 1984-85.

The film will be called *Pulling Together* – the slogan of the NUS and the title of the popular history the union published last year.

2013 may seem a long way off, but it gives the union just two years to pull together the strands of a century of history.

And that is where YOU come in.

A key element of the project will be the input of RMT members and branches, and it is YOUR stories that will bring the project to life.

In attics and albums and on bookshelves around the country there are books, documents,

pictures and scraps of film that tell the NUR and NUS story.

Artefacts from the union are being found all the time – from NUR branch sashes to the magnificent NUS London branch banner found in a cupboard only a few weeks ago, and it is these, together with branch histories, anecdotes and reminiscences that will bring the film to life.

“The story of RMT and the NUR and the NUS is central to the history of the British labour movement, and this is an important film to make,” says Chris Reeves.

“We have already begun

collecting interviews and archive footage, but what makes this project more exciting is the knowledge that RMT members and branches have important material hidden away that will give it an added dimension," he said.

- If you or your branch have documents, photos, films or any artefacts that will help piece together the history of our union, please get in touch. The union can arrange to collect materials, which will be handled with great care and returned after copying.
- Tell us who to talk to: over the next year or so, Chris Reeves will be travelling the country collecting interviews. If there is someone you think Chris should interview, let us know.
- If you have materials or suggestions for the film project, please contact Derek Kotz at RMT Communications, on 020 7529 8803 or at dkotz@rmt.org.uk.

TELL US YOUR BRANCH STORY

Every RMT branch has a story to tell – and to encourage branches and members to share them, there will be a prize awarded for the item judged by a panel headed by Chris Reeves to be the best.

Extracts will also be published in RMT News or on RMTv – and if you need any pointers the RMT Learning team is happy to help with research advice – just give Andrew Brattle a call on 020 7529 8820 or email him at a.brattle@rmt.org.uk

In Dover, for example, RMT activist and RMT Learning project worker Mike Sergant is tracing the history of the involvement of rail workers in the cross-channel bombardment of Nazi positions, using the long-range, rail-mounted 'Bosch Buster' gun.

So whether it's a branch history, a filmed interview, an essay, individual reminiscences, or the local story of a dispute, get it written or in the can and submit it. ■



TUC, GET OFF YOUR KNEES!

In January's RMT News I said our movement's response to attacks on public services will be critical. If trade union leaders bow to demands of bankers and politicians for belt-tightening by our class and collude in appeasement of the super-rich, we will fail.

As if on cue, the TUC invited Prime Minister David Cameron to address the 2010 Congress. When 'Dave' snubbed them, Tory stooge Vince Cable, the 'ConDem' coalition Business Secretary was asked. I am glad his invitation has finally been withdrawn.

A TUC leadership in the habit of obsequiousness to the powerful may find it impossible to adjust to current reality. Having bailed out banks, bounced through the reviled Lisbon Treaty and cobbled together a new coalition government no one voted for, the ruling class in Britain and Europe have embarked on an all-out assault on the welfare state, the NHS and workers' rights and living standards. Class war is alive and well and being taught at some of Britain's finest public schools.

Workers have never needed their trade union movement more. That's why it is the responsibility of every RMT member to recruit and organise workers. Whether you are a rep, branch officer, or a member, if you care about your family and fellow workers, please make sure the worker alongside you is an RMT member too.

To join RMT complete the application form inside the front cover of RMT News, or from your branch secretary, online at <http://www.rmt.org.uk/> or call our freephone hotline on 0800 376 3706.

RMT's delegation to this September's TUC Congress in Manchester promises to be lively. Together with sister unions in the Trade Union Coordinating Group, RMT will demand the TUC calls a national demonstration in response to Tory Chancellor, George Osborne's announcement of massive cuts to public services in his 'comprehensive spending review' in October.

I am delighted to confirm that RMT's group of MPs has grown to

over 10 per cent of the Parliamentary Labour Party since the general election with Gerald Kaufman (Manchester Gorton), Alex Cunningham (Stockport North), Austin Mitchell (Grimsby), Bryan Donohoe (Central Ayrshire), Chris Williamson (Derby North), Ian Lavery (Wansbeck) and Mike Wood (Batley & Spen) joining us.

Our Parliamentary Bus seminar later this year offers the chance to meet MPs. The 'ConDem' attacks on public transport fall heavily on rural bus services and threaten free bus travel for pensioners. A Parliamentary seminar is part of the commitment made at this year's RMT Bus Workers' Conference to raise the profile of Bus workers' issues and the political demand for public ownership of the bus industry.

RMT's parliamentary convenor, John McDonnell, MP is also calling for release without charge of Iranian Bus workers' union leader, Reza Shehabi. Reza was arrested on 12 June this year and is being held in solitary confinement in the torture section of Tehran's notorious Evin prison. Please encourage your MP to sign John McDonnell's Early Day Motion 633 'Arrest of Reza Shahabi'.

RMT is already organising to join the demonstration against European Union austerity measures, called by the European TUC in Brussels on September 29. It is essential in our view that a noisy, highly visible and militant delegation of trade unionists from Britain is present to show our current government that their plan has been rumbled.

The European Central Bank and EU political leaders, including the 'ConDems' here, are pursuing a class war aimed at rolling back social and economic achievements of the post-war era. Their policies from Athens to London are to make the working class pay for the crisis of capitalism.

A defeat for the EU's attack on democracy and workers' rights in Greece will be a victory for workers across Europe and the world. I look forward to seeing you there.

Alex Gordon



ADULT LEARNER'S WEEK 2010

RMT Learning Project Manager Teresa Williams looks at how Union Learning Reps get members interested in ever more different types of learning

Adult Learners' Week is the UK's largest and longest running learning campaign which encourages thousands of adults, whatever their age and background, to give learning a go.

From learning Pilates to gaining a PhD, Adult Learners' Week celebrates learning and learners in all their diversity, inspiring thousands of people each year to try something new.

The campaign promotes the benefits of all kinds of learning, whether it is for fun or leading to a qualification.

For Union Learning Reps (ULRs) it is chance to get members trying something new and getting them involved. RMT Learning supported ULRs

across the country to put in bids for funding to put on events and tasters throughout the week.

Events included Network Rail running a series of events in Retford and Barnetby with great success. ULR Lee Moore said that local colleges and Open University were on hand to speak to learners about Literacy, Maths and IT qualifications.

"I was pleased to have three managers visit and help out and the event has helped build rapport with managers and colleagues and I look forward to building on my event next year," Lee Moore said.

Network Rail lead ULR Tony Hutton organised motor cycle safety talks from the police, car

maintenance tasters, engineering course information, an ITQ taster, Wii and interactive learning games, language tasters, Makaton (sign language) tasters and Grimsby Institute not only promoted cooking courses but show how to make fresh nutritious food.

Members came in looking for a variety of information on a variety of courses varying from Spanish to sound engineering.

The ULRs from across Merseytravel, including from Mersey Rail, as well as an RMT ULR from Northern Rail, hosted a learning event at St Georges Hall, opposite Lime Street Station. This was a major event organised in partnership with

Merseylearn and the Merseytravel PTE. Local education providers were there to provide information and guidance to adults about learning and courses available locally.

ULRs, Trish Morgan and Geoff Hutchinson, from East Coast Trains and Mohammed Ilyas from Northern Rail held a joint event for rail workers based at Leeds station. Tasters were offered in sign language. The ULRs set up laptops so that learners could have a go at testing their skills at literacy and numeracy with prize draws taking place.

Penny Calcutt, Northern Rail ULR, and Sheffield College



offered information and advice in the mess room at Sheffield station. Members from Northern Rail and Trans Pennine Express had a go at checking out their numeracy and literacy skills, with numeracy being particularly popular. Certificates were presented to learners who had completed the computer/literacy course at Sheffield station recently.

Events at East Coast had a theme of 'health and well-being'. Another successful Adult Learners' Week event was held at Kings Cross station – following on from last year's successful event. Local ULRs, including RMT's George Paish, organised the event with local education providers to give advice and information to adults.

RMT ULRs Ken Sharpe and

Trish Morgan helped support a learning event at the East Coast offices at York station with lots of activities such as massage, yoga and even York's Board Game Club where there. Daniel Ngugi and Neno Holton, held an event at Bounds Green depot with a lot of interest in various courses.

Local ULRs, Paul Thompson from Northern Rail and Dave Kennedy from First Transpennine Express, held an event in Barrow in Furness, with local education providers giving advice and information to members. There were also taster sessions for sign language.

The new Lead ULR at Stagecoach East Midlands, Sarah Gill, hosted an event in the mess room of the Mansfield bus depot. With a large RMT membership, a number of local

college providers came in to talk to the members about educational opportunities.

High on the agenda was IT development with Skills for Life also at the forefront. One driver said: "I never knew that my RMT membership would offer the way back into education with the support of ULR's".

Lead ULR at East Midlands Trains Sarah Lloyd ran a Skills for Life themed quiz night at a canal side bar in the centre of Nottingham. Over 50 people attended the evening with the Skills for Life tutor taking up the mantle of quiz master. Great prizes were on offer for the best teams and a rather nice buffet went down well.

A completely different take on informal adult learning but a very successful one in relation to raising understanding of

Skills for Life, the profile of the ULR and how RMT can support the members back into learning.

ULRs at Stagecoach South West took the opportunity to organise awareness events in Exeter and Torquay in order to inspire members to take up new activities. ULRs at Southeastern put on sign language tasters at Chatham and Ashford.

RMT Dover office held IT drop-ins while lead ULR at London Underground Bjorn Bradshaw set up language tasters. The list goes on, but what all the events showed that there is something for everyone and everyone has something to learn.

Adult Learners' Week is such a fantastic time to get members involved and in such a positive way.



STAGECOACH EAST MIDLANDS LEARNING AGREEMENT

RMT and Unite have signed a Joint Learning Agreement with Stagecoach East Midlands Bus Company. The Agreement was signed by the managing director Gary Nolan and by the RMT regional organiser Dave Collinson and Unite.

The Learning Agreement outlines facilities and release arrangements for ULRs and agreement for formal meetings with senior managers to discuss learning and development. RMT has elected new Union Learning Reps at all the company's bus depots where we have recognition. All of the ULRs and Branch Secretaries from RMT and Unite attended the signing event. Across the Stagecoach East Midlands area, there are nine depots with 1400 employees.

RMT Learning Development Worker Graham Chesters said: "At all of the Stagecoach East

Midlands depots, bus workers now have access to a Union Learning Rep, this will improve the learning and development opportunities for our members".

National education officer

Andy Gilchrist said: "This learning agreement offers great education and training opportunities for all East Midlands Stagecoach employees.

"RMT is very happy to have

been involved in the development and delivery of this agreement and all the RMT ULR's will be working hard to make it a long term success," he said. ■



RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

If you have suffered an avoidable injury or illness, our team of expert lawyers can help you

The law says you're entitled to compensation for illnesses or injuries caused by the negligence of others. And because the RMT only uses expert personal injury lawyers, you can be sure of a service that is second to none.

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YOUNG TRADE UNIONISTS MEET

Adrian Rowe reports on the TUC young members conference in Birmingham

Conference was chaired by TUCs Youth Member on the General Council John Walsh.

Around 80 delegates from 18 unions attended this year's young members' conference and I was elected by the RMT executive to represent the union.

Each union can submit two motions which are then composited into three key statements.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE RECESSION

Youth unemployment rates for 16-24 year olds is increasing and conference agreed that the trade union movement must campaign for decent jobs for young people.

Instead of bailing out the bankers, money should be spent on investing on our public services and creating jobs and affordable homes for all.

Conference called on the TUC to use the media and public demonstrations as part of the campaign, working with trade unions, trades councils, service users and communities.

Delegates also called for a campaign to equalise the National Minimum Wage for all workers from the age of 16.

ORGANISING YOUNG WORKERS

RMT made clear that the organisation young people into trade unions was crucial.

"Trade unionism should be seriously discussed in schools and young people should know their rights and are issued with a TUC Contact card.

"Trade unions should play their part by ensuring that young people are fully involved in their union and organise and develop young members' structures," the motion said.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND LOW PAY

Delegates recognised that many companies have apprenticeship schemes that have given young people excellent opportunities to develop skills and career opportunities.

However, conference was disappointed that TUC general council had still not campaigned for the adult rate of the minimum wage to start from 18.

Conference noted that apprentices earn £2.50 an hour and agreed that the minimum wage should be just that, and the adult rate should be applied from 16.

DEMOCRACY WORKS

Last year, RMT Central Line West branch submitted a motion to RMT's young members conference calling for the TUC young members conference to submit a motion to the TUC in line with other equality conferences.

This motion was passed and sent to our annual general meeting. I witnessed the debate at the AGM and was amazed at the support it was given. The motion was sent to the TUC Congress in Liverpool last year and was backed by delegates. If you ever wanted to see how democracy works that this is a very good example, underlining how democracy is the lifeblood



of the whole trade union movement.

So, in short, the one young RMT member changed TUC policy using democratic RMT structures.

Confernece discussed whether unions continue to submit two motions to be made into key statements or whether to have motion based conferences.

As the RMT delegate, I argued that motion based conferences are the only truly democratic way of making sure

that voices are heard.

I believe that the TUC should make time in their conference to organise and educate young members how to efficiently recruit through workshops.

If there are any young people in your workplace, who are not in the union, use this article to persuade them to join.

For further information, you can email the National Young Members Committee at youngmembers@rmtmail.org.uk

Win 4 tickets to the UK's Top attractions!

Two lucky RMT members can win their choice of either 4 tickets to Madame Tussauds London or 4 tickets to a SEA LIFE centre or Sanctuary in a FREE prize draw. Just email corporate.feedback@merlinentertainments.biz with the title 'RMT Competition' in the subject line and the answer to the following question:

How many wax figures does Madame Tussauds have?

- A – Over 100
- B – Over 200
- C – Over 300

We would like to keep you up to date with the latest offers for the UK's Top attractions, if you do NOT want to receive this information please add 'UNSUBSCRIBE' to the body of your email.

As an RMT member you can enjoy savings of up to 55% off entry for you, your family and friends to the UK's top attractions including The Alton Towers Resort, Chessington World of Adventures, THORPE PARK, LEGOLAND® Windsor, Warwick Castle, the Dungeons, Madame Tussauds London and 11 SEA LIFE centres & Sanctuaries across the UK.

To book your discounted tickets call 0871 222 4001 and quote RMT.

For full terms, latest offers and special events please visit merlincorporatediscounts.com

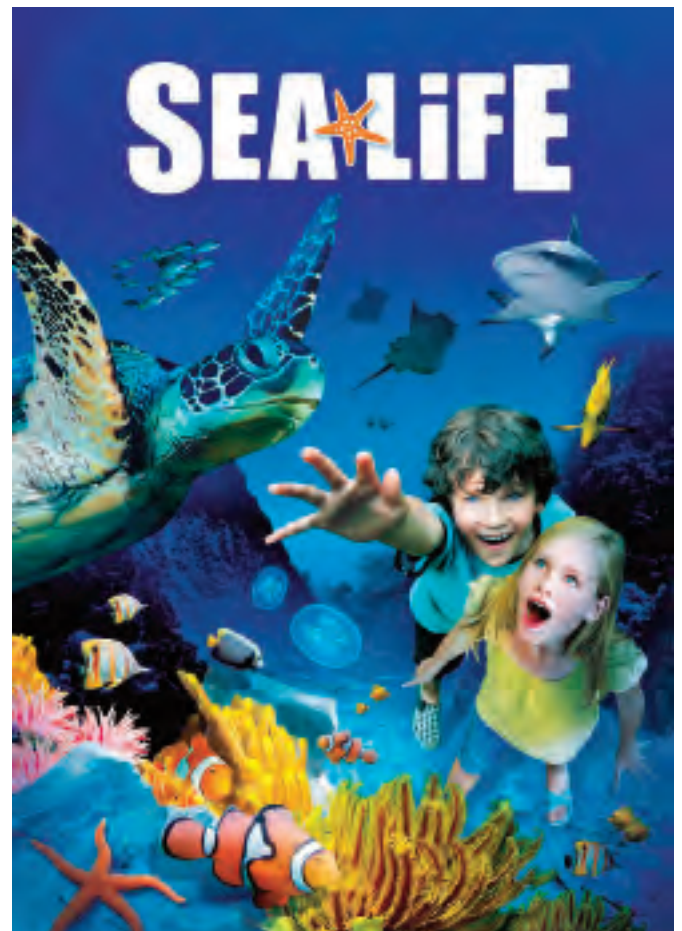
Prize Terms and Conditions:

There will be 2 prizes, the prize consists of 4 tickets to Madame Tussauds London or 4 tickets to one of the SEA LIFE centres or Sanctuaries which can be used for either adult or child entry, valid for one day entry during the 2010 season only (excluding any dates shown on the reverse of the ticket). Tickets do not guarantee entry during exceptionally busy periods so please arrive early on the day of your visit.

Closing date for entries is 31st August and the winner will be notified by email by 3rd September.

Entries are limited to one per person.

The editors decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



The images shown depict wax figures created and owned by Madame Tussauds

letters



STOP THE BLOODY JOB!

I'm getting well and truly fed up of the ridiculous amount of disciplinary hearings that the RMT Offshore Energy branch has had to deal with lately relating to breaches of safety procedures.

A lot of these hearings end up with final written warnings and an increasing number as terminations of employment.

Outcomes like this could really have been avoided, if the individual concerned had just stopped the job. All too often the member thinks he is doing the company a favour, or maybe saving the company or themselves time or man-hours on the job. We also get the line - 'well I've done it like that loads of times before and nothing was said'.

Yeah, you're probably right, the thing is though it only becomes a problem when it all goes wrong - right!

The fact is the only thing the member has been doing is putting himself, and sometimes others, at RISK. Don't do it!

A simple example is the manpower one; the Offshore Energy Branch has had two cases lately where a lack of manpower on the job has led to two members being sacked off different jobs.

If our members had stopped the job before it even got started, instead of doing what they thought was best for company, they would still be in a job today. Where a procedure or permit requires a certain number of people, stick to it, because if you don't our Regional

Organiser and legal team won't be able to offer much help.

Clear breaches of procedure cannot be defended, even if you were stressed at the time! In fact that's not a defence, that's another failure because you should have stopped the job because you were suffering with stress!

These situations are becoming more and more common; we therefore implore members to STOP this practice. Before work commences on any task that you are assigned to, please look at the work pack and at the Permit very closely. If the permit states that you have to have two persons for a task, then you should adhere to that at all times. Do not cut corners and do not let some bully of a supervisor push you to cut corners. Even if the supervisor is a 'reasonable guy' the fact is, if something goes wrong the first person who is going to get it in the neck is you. And the outcome, even for a 'first offence' could well mean that your job is no more.

Offshore Energy branch secretary

(This letter first appeared in the magazine of RMT's Offshore Energy branch Blowout)

THANK YOU RMT

Dear editor,

I have been a member of RMT/NUR for 32 years. Last year I was struck down with ill health while employed at Feltham on the Network Rail Wessex route as a relief mobile operating manager.

Management treated me very badly, trying to terminate my employment before my pension had been set up, not visiting me during my illness and many more issues too numerous to mention. If it had not been for my Wessex rep Paul Kemp's support and guidance I feel I would have ended up in a mental institution from the strain of it all.

Paul kept in close contact with me at all times of the day and negotiating on my behalf with Network rail and pointing me in the right direction.

Paul has many qualities which he used to win a successful outcome for me. I would like to express my gratitude to Paul and all in the RMT network for all the professional help and assistance to myself and my wife during such a difficult period which has ended with me retiring early from the rail industry.

Many thanks to RMT for looking after me during the past 32 years.

Kind regards

Les Chapman

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PEOPLE'S PUBS - Words by Mike Pentelow, Pictures by Peter Arkell

ROBERT KETT

The Robert Kett, Lime Tree Avenue, Wymondham, Norfolk
Kett's Tavern, Kett's Hill, Norwich

The stealing of common land by the gentry (a process known as the enclosures) took place over many centuries. It was bitterly resented by commoners who needed this land to graze their animals on.

An early example of their resistance to this theft of their livelihood was Kett's Rebellion in 1549.

It was led by a tanner, Robert Kett (1492-1549), who lived in Wymondham and was executed in Norwich.

It all started when, after drinking plentifully at Wymondham's annual summer fair, the locals tore down fences which had been put up around the local common land. The following day they set off to pull down more fences erected in nearby Hethersett by landowner John Flowerdew. He told them that Kett had also fenced off land in Wymondham and offered them cash to pull his fences down instead of his own.

Kett surprised everybody when he offered to help pull down his own fences and lead their protests wider afield.

He promised to subdue the power of the "importunate lords" who had seized the common pastures.

"Whatever lands I have enclosed shall again be made common unto ye and all men, and my own hand shall first perform it," he declared. "Never shall I be wanting where your good is concerned. Your shall have me if you will, not only as a companion, but as a captain, and in doing of so great a work before us, not only as a fellow, but for a general standard bearer and chief."

A server in the local church he had bought a small amount of land in 1540 which became available through the dissolution of the abbey. But his religious convictions were outraged by the callous disregard of many large landowners for the plight of the poor commoners.

After pulling down his own fences, he and his followers uprooted Flowerdew's fences in Hethersett, where Kett urged the crowd to act "in defence of their common liberty."

Later a large crowd assembled under an oak on the common near Hethersett. A tree now marked "Kett's Oak" in a lay-by just

south of the village on the B1172 is said to be where this meeting took place.

At this meeting Kett echoed the words of John Ball during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, demanding "thatt all bonde men may be ffree for god made all ffree with his precious blode sheddingyng."

They then marched towards Norwich and settled on the outskirts at Mousehold Heath, by another oak tree. This one was known as the "Oak of Reformation", where Kett asserted: "What we want is liberty, and the power, in common with our so called superiors, of enjoying the gifts of nature."

It was under this oak that he held councils, administered people's justice, issued edicts, and appointed 25 governors for the surrounding areas.

They drew up a charter of 29 complaints, mainly against economic exploitation, and concluded: "We pray that all bond men may be made free."

From the gentry the rebels commandeered 3,000 bullocks, 20,000 sheep and immense quantities of corn, which they shared out publicly under the Oak of Reformation.

The landowners who had enclosed the land were tried, convicted and imprisoned under people's justice, but none were executed.

No such mercy was shown to the rebels when they were finally beaten by vast numbers of professional soldiers including foreign mercenaries after seven long weeks. A total of 3,000 rebels were slaughtered in the battle by the army of over 13,000, and the remaining 300 were later captured and executed.

These included Kett and his brother William, a butcher, who was hanged in chains, a slow painful death, from Wymonham church.

Kett himself was executed on the same day at Norwich Castle. Both their heads were displayed on the walls of Warwick Castle as a warning to others.

The role of Robert as "a noble and courageous leader" was finally recognised in 1949 on a plaque placed at the entrance to Norwich Castle. The town sign of Wymondham (outside Becket's Chapel at the



end of Damgate) also proudly depicts him rallying the peasantry under an oak tree.

His name also lives on through these two pubs, plus Robert Kett Junior School in Hewitts Lane, Wymondham, and a play called "Kett the Tanner" written in 1909 by G Colman Green.

More recently, unemployed workers on the People's March for Jobs in the 1970s rallied under Kett's Oak, and were addressed by Jack Boddie, the then general secretary of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers. ■

* *A Pub Crawl Through History*, by Mike Pentelow and Peter Arkell, is published by Janus, price £16.99 (ISBN 978-1-85756-701-4).

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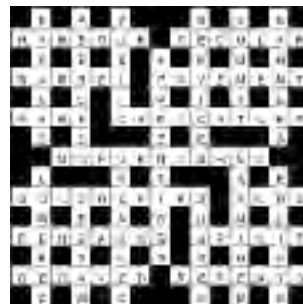
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£25 PRIZE CROSSWORD

No. 62. Set by Elk

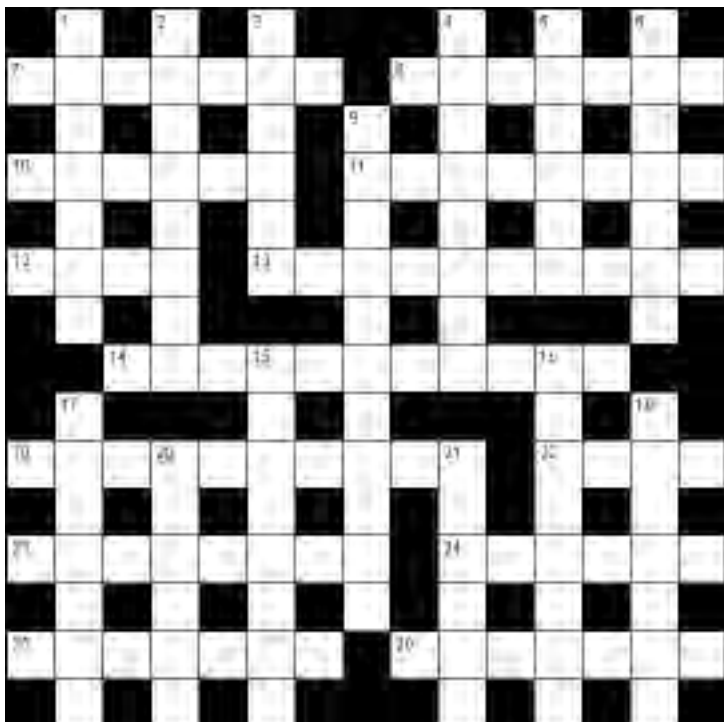
No. 61 solution...



The winner of prize crossword no. 61 is Kevin Mutton, Redruth, Cornwall.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by August 31 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



ACROSS

- 7,10 Little green steam train of the Merioneth and Llantysilly Railway (4,3,6)
- 8 Rotted (7)
- 10 See 7
- 11 Jones __, one of 7, 10's friends (8)
- 12 Against (4)
- 13 Printing method (10)
- 14 In a raw, natural state (11)
- 19 One of 7, 10's friends (3,7)
- 22 See 23
- 23,22 One of 7, 10's friends (5,3,4)
- 24 Essential canteen kit (6)
- 25 Spanish pub (7)
- 26 Young hare (7)

DOWN

- 1 Between afternoon and night (7)
- 2 Come to __ - become reality (8)
- 3 English for Skol, prosit, santé etc (6)
- 4 Lets go or out (8)
- 5 Between trot and gallop (6)
- 6 Discussed or argued the point (7)
- 9 They come down, from cave roof (11)
- 15 Cooking in oven (8)
- 16 Subjugated; made chattel of person (8)
- 17 Citizen of Baltic republic (7)
- 18 Indoor game played with 22 balls (7)
- 20 Made smooth, with rough paper (6)
- 21 Spice (sent through the legs?) (6)

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

SAVE FOR CHRISTMAS THE EASY AND SAFE WAY WITH THE RMT CREDIT UNION

Saving for Christmas can be a real headache. Take some of the stress away by saving over the course of the year with the RMT Christmas Club. We'll add a little extra to your savings and pay out the money ready for your Christmas shopping spree. This account is designed for people who want a secure savings account that helps them to save for their Christmas spending.

It's based on the traditional Christmas Club principle of saving a fixed amount each month that is not accessible until the payout date. Many people like the discipline of a regular savings programme where they are not able to access the cash!

Even a small amount saved each month soon adds up. Saving is made easy by Direct Debit either monthly or 4-weekly to suit your pay cycle.

For our Christmas Club, the maturity date will be 14th November each year. We will add a bonus dividend at the maturity date and pay the money direct to your bank account. There are no vouchers or

hampers or anything of that kind – you decide how you want to spend your money.

The bonus will be added to your savings if you complete all of your regular payments. Last years bonus was 2%, and we hope to improve this in subsequent years as the Christmas Club grows.

As all of your Christmas Club money will be paid out each year it will be kept separately from your regular credit union savings and cannot be used against credit union loans.

There is also a summer savings club account on the same basis and principle with a payout date of mid-June, so that you can have ready access to summer holiday spending money.

If you want to open a Christmas Club account and are already a credit union member simply complete the form below. If you are not already a credit union member you will have to complete the form below and the credit union membership application opposite.

Completed forms should be returned to our freepost address.

TERMS & CONDITIONS – IMPORTANT INFORMATION - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB

- You need to be an RMT Credit Union member to open an RMT Christmas Club Account.
- You have to save at least £5 per month into a regular RMT CU account in addition to your RMT Christmas Club Account.
- You pay a monthly or 4-weekly Direct Debit consisting of your nominated Christmas Club payment (min. £10) plus at least £5 per month to your main RMT CU account.
- Christmas Club accounts have to be opened by the end of April. Late applications commence the following November.
- As an RMT CU member you build up regular savings with a yearly dividend (3.75% in 2008) and you can apply for low interest rate loans.
- Your Christmas Club money is separate from your regular savings account. That means you will have a guaranteed sum available for Christmas maturing every 14th November, plus a savings account growing with time.
- The Christmas Club secures your money so it's there for the Christmas period. This means that your money is locked-in and you can make no withdrawals until 14th November when all of your money, plus dividend will be paid out.
- If you make all of your payments we will endeavour to add a dividend bonus of 2% p.a. as accrued through the year
- All of your money will be paid to your bank account on the first working day after 14th November.
- If you cancel your payments the 2% dividend is not applied and you cannot withdraw your money until after 14th November. If you think you will need access to your money before 14th November, this account is not suitable for you.
- The Christmas Club will continue year-on-year, so payments after 14th November start the next year's account. Of course if you wish to cancel your payments you are free to do so at any time.

Your savings are fully protected for up to £50,000 by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme

Cut here

RMT CHRISTMAS CLUB APPLICATION

RMT Credit Union Account Number (if known)			
Surname	Address		
Forename(s)			
Home phone			
Mobile			
email	Postcode		
Date of birth	NI Numbr		
Employer	RMT Branch		

Do you save monthly on 28th?	Or 4 - weekly (Fri)?	You can save by calendar month or 4-weekly	
How much do you save in your RMT Credit Union Account?		£	min. £5 per month
How much do you wish to save in your Christmas Club Account?		£	min £10 per month in £5 multiples
The total each period for both accounts on my Direct Debit is		£	the total month/4-weekly
This is the total amount you wish to save by Direct Debit monthly on the 28th or 4-weekly			

Remember that if you have a loan with us your regular Direct Debit will also include that repayment

DECLARATION

I understand the Terms & Conditions of the RMT Christmas Club Account and that membership of the RMT Credit Union is a condition of holding an RMT Christmas Club Account. I understand that my monthly savings into the RMT Christmas Club cannot be withdrawn until the maturity date which is on or after 14th November each year.

Your Signature		Date			/		/				
----------------	--	------	--	--	---	--	---	--	--	--	--



RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

Finance Department, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

RMT CREDIT UNION APPLICATION FORM – please complete your application along with the attached Direct Debit.

Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**.

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

Surname	<input type="text"/>	Address	<input type="text"/>
Forename(s)	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Home phone	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Mobile phone	<input type="text"/>	Postcode	<input type="text"/>
Email address	<input type="text"/>		
Date of Birth	<input type="text"/>	National Insurance Number	<input type="text"/>

2 **Marrital Status** married partner single divorced **Drivers Licence No.**

3 Your Employment.

Employer	<input type="text"/>	RMT Branch	<input type="text"/>
Job Description	<input type="text"/>		

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

5 Membership Status

RMT TU Member Retired RMT TU Member RMT Family Member

6 **How much do you wish to save £** This is the amount you wish to save by Direct Debit monthly on the 28th or date you next get paid weekly if 4 weekly (Fri) date here.....

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

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....

.....

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

Your signature

We are checking new member identification electronically. To do this, we now carry out searches with credit reference agencies who supply us with relevant detail including information from the Electoral Register. The searches will not be used by other lenders to assess your ability to obtain credit.

I agree to my identity being checked electronically

If we cannot verify your identity and address by this method, we will ask you to provide paper documentation instead. Full details of these can be supplied to you by calling 020 7529 8835.

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 Credit Union Ltd., 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
<input type="text"/>	
Postcode	
<input type="text"/>	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

FOR RMT CREDIT UNION LTD OFFICIAL USE ONLY
This is not part of the the instruction to your Bank or Building Society.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.
Please pay RMT Credit Union Ltd 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 Credit Union Ltd, 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 take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amounts to be paid or the payment date changes, RMT Credit Union Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed
- If an error is made by RMT Credit Union Ltd or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.





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