

October 2011



Branch Website

www.RMT-LUEngineering.co.uk



Engineering News

Branch Officials

Branch Secretary	Paul Jackson 07810 643 681
Branch Chair	Andy Littlechild 07734 911 427
Asst Secretary	Lewis Peacock 07764 688 363
Asst Chair	Paul O'Reilly 07866 481 962
Equality Officer	Jackie Darby 07826 746 733
Young Members Officer	Phil McClusker 07753 879 123
Political Officer	Frank Murray 07973 127 407
H&S Officer	Gary Vincent 07515 330 821
Membership	Peter Ashley 07742 110 712

PAY: LUL, TLL, Cubic & Powerlink

There are a few companies in our branch where pay is still being negotiated:

LUL have offered a 4 year deal back dated to April 2011. The first year is 5% and the next 3 years are RPI + 0.5% (minimum 2% if PRI negative). This offer is going out to referendum with a recommendation to accept.

Cubic have offered an initial 3% that was rejected by our union and have now increased that to 3.5%. This has been put to consultation with our members as to what they wish to do next.

Tubelines are in the last year of a multiyear deal and the company are offering talks on extending this deal for another 2 years of RPI + 0.5%. This has been discussed with our reps and the RMT are happy to enter into talks. However, it needs to be said that Tube Lines need to honour deals done already

regarding Performance Related Pay (PRP).

UK POWER NETWORKS SERVICES are also after a multi-year deal. They have offered:

5% this year

Year 2: June RPI+0.5%, minimum 1%

Year 3: June RPI+0.5%, minimum 1%

Year 4: June RPI+0.5%, minimum 1%

Year 5: June RPI+0.25%, minimum 1%

The offer does lag the April anniversary date each year however our reps believe that this offer gives members security for the coming years.

This offer is to be placed before our members in a referendum with a recommendation to accept

Future stories

If any of you are budding authors and fancy keeping the various members of our branch informed of events or issues that are occurring in your work place, then please email Paul Jackson at:

LUEngineering@rmt.org.uk

Tubelines PRP

The RMT and TSSA are launching a joint campaign to fight the low pay rise issue among members on Tube Lines that are on Performance Related Pay (PRP).

Despite several agreements in the past and present, Tube Lines have still failed to bring PRP awards to the level of the negotiated settlement. This is long overdue and it's time to bring these people fully inside the negotiated arena for pay

Emcor Facilities Management and Civil Liberties

The contract manager for Canary Wharf has decided to bring in finger print technology for booking in and out and also was increasingly using tracker devices in vehicles to spy on staff. Our members there were rightly aghast that their civil liberties and rights are being trampled over. In response the branch has unanimously carried the following resolution:

"We note Emcor Facilities Management determination to undermine our members civil liberties and introduce a booking in and out device that uses finger print technology and surveillance of our members' by vehicle trackers. We ask the General Secretary demands Emcor withdraw their threats to introduce finger print technology for any uses and reach agreement

over the use of vehicle trackers with this union within 7 days. Should they fail to do so, we request a ballot for action short of strike of our affected members to refuse to participate in the use of these technologies"

The company have, for the time being, placed matters on hold until talks take place with the RMT in the next week.

“Less People, doing less work, less often for less money”

We have all heard the rumours that once the Olympics are over, then the axe will be out! Well to be honest the axe has always hung over workers heads and many people in our branch have already felt the full force of the recession brought about by the acts of irresponsible bankers and capitalists that were prepared to ruin the world economy providing they got a good bonus for doing so.

We've already seen many contracts being squeezed and workers jobs and conditions pressured to maintain profits for companies. But are these cuts necessary? This is not a matter of trimming the fat, this is wholesale Tory Thatcherite Dogma to destroy working class conditions and public services. For flexible they mean compliant, for efficient, they mean pay cut and as for being organized and resisting the cuts, they tell us there is no other choice.

There is a choice, there is always a choice. This union's motto is Unity is Strength and it's time now to stand together and tell the bosses to stick their cuts where the sun doesn't shine.

The RMT are aware of an exercise called benchmarking where LUL have been compared to Tube Lines and other railways across the world. What this document basically means is the bosses wish to start a race to the bottom, a race where you are intended to be the losers. The basic premise is easy to summerise, it's less people, doing less work and less often

This means that standards will be changed, for example track inspections, so that patrols are done less often. Signal and other asset maintenance will be touched less often and that will ultimately mean less staff

The trouble is the document (readily available on the internet by googling 'benchmarking') is based on data and false premises. A lot of work is about making sure assets are safe and efficient. We have seen what cutting back on work can lead to with disasters at Hatfield and Potters Bar and a major crash on the underground does not bear thinking about.

We already have had a warning with the derailment at Earls Court on the Piccadilly where the road spread, so we need to be careful that we make sure that any changes are safe for our members and safe for the travelling public.

Some of the planned changes that we already know that LUL want to bring about are:

- Splitting Maintenance and Incident up on Signals
- Reducing Track Patrolling with potentially 30% Job Losses
- Reducing overtime and trying to bring in full weekend working rosters
- Reducing scheduled changing of equipment
- Reducing maintenance frequencies and therefore need less staff to maintain them



These changes have and will be fully discussed with the RMT and we may well have to defend our conditions if we are forced to.

New technology may well bring changes to working practices and the need to change. This management mantra has been heard for years. Many of our members have been working on the railway for decades, not the few years some of the new wave of management have under their belts. Do they really believe that any of their proposals are new and never tried before? The truth is change has been perpetual on the Railways but what is unacceptable to this union, is change for change's sake and change for the worse.

They talk above moving from a 'find and fix' to a 'predict and prevent' strategy, this can easily become a 'bodge it and leg it' attitude too.

Interesting times ahead but as ever we hold our heads high and will not be found wanting if necessary.

Organising on Mitie Technical Facilities Management

In April 2011, many of our members were being transferred into Mitie Technical Facilities Management. These staff maintain buildings on behalf of Transport for London, such as 55 Broadway. They have numerous trades such as air conditioning engineers, electricians etc etc. Initially the company planned to make approximately a quarter of them redundant and the rest

put on the type of flexible rosters that make many people shudder. Cuts in pay looked inevitable and it was hard for these workers to feel they had any way to fight.

The RMT had previously had a good relationship with their previous employers, going back to the original times when they was employed by Dalkia. We immediately got involved and started to put

forward arguments against reducing job numbers and changing rosters. Simultaneously we started to organise and build our membership. We offered hope, but not a fool's hope, we made it clear there may not be a happy ending but that we would help and organise them to the best of our ability.

These job cuts have now been ended in the face of over-

whelming arguments and roster changes are on hold. We have also lodged a formal recognition petition with the CAC and we are now formally recognised under the law.

We have elected four representatives, two union and two health and safety representatives and hope that we will now move forward and have a profitable relationship with their bosses in the future

LU Engineering Branch support Bob Crow for re-election as General Secretary

LU Engineering Branch is supporting Bro Bob Crow for the position of General Secretary of the RMT.

Our branch firmly believes that Bob should continue to use his knowledge and experience that he has obtained in being a full time official for the last 20 years to defend us by fighting the McNulty Report, privatization of our ferries and attacks on tube, rail, road freight and offshore members.

He also holds many positions within the Trade Union and Labour movement, for example:

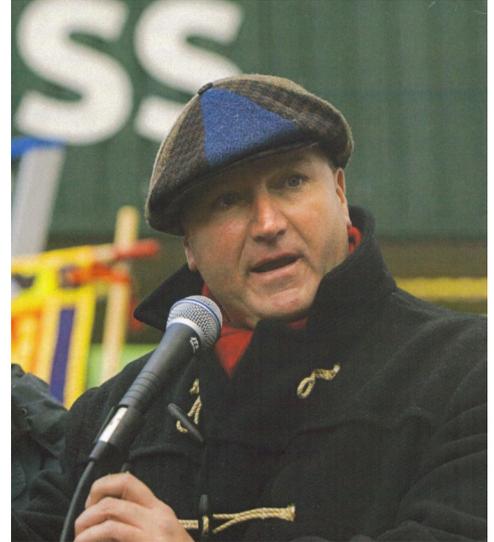
Chairman of the Campaign to Repeal the Anti-Trade Union Legislation

TUC General Council Member

Trustee of the Jimmy Knapp Cancer Fund

Patron of the Transport Benevolent Fund

Before Bob held the position of a national officer, he was our Branch Secretary and Branch Chairman, Regional Council Officers positions and a local representative for both union and health and safety. He has also been an AGM Delegate and TUC delegate on many occasions. At a time when further recession looms and we will have to come out of the existing one, we believe that Bob has the experience to fight on and negotiate for our membership



Balfour Beatty Rail (LT Contracts)

Over the years, the RMT have had a mixed but improving relationship with the management at Balfour Beatty Rail based at Ruislip and undertaking some of the track renewals across London Underground. We have gone from be-

Balfour Beatty
Rail

ing banned from the workplace to having early discussions with the company regarding issues affecting our members such as the TUPE to London Underground of the Deep Tube Renewal Area.

Over the last few months we have been trying to gain formal recognition for this company which would mean that we could negotiate on issues such as pay and be involved in talks such as redundancies etc where we were kept on the periphery. Informal talks with the company have failed without agreement,

mainly on the issue of pay talks, but we are still pushing ahead with recognition.

To achieve this we need to follow a legal process involving the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) and we are currently at the first stage of this. We need to ensure our membership remains above 50% and push onwards and upwards towards 100%.

That way we can force Balfour Beatty to the table and have proper talks rather than let them impose the derisory 17p an hour they paid this year for Platelayers

Olympics

You would never have thought that the Olympics were agreed quite a few years ago now when it comes to companies in our region having discussions regarding changes necessary to facilitate its success. It's either that or some companies are so arrogant that they believe they do not have to talk to our union!

That aside, early talks are taking place on LUL and

Tubelines, though the latter seems to think these talks are a given judging from their ill advised bulletins on annual leave.

The truth of the matter is there will need to be some alterations not least if LUL do run a third peak service during the 16 days of the main Olympics and engineering hours are massively restricted. However, we do not intend to see our

members hard fought for conditions given away for a lousy few hundred quid or less by setting a short term precedent. Some companies are already in the process of looking at things such as banning annual leave, forcing people to work weekends etc.

However, we will need to stay strong to make sure our member are not sold out





RMT and TSSA in Merger talks

The RMT and TSSA Trade Unions are currently in high level talks regarding merging the two unions .

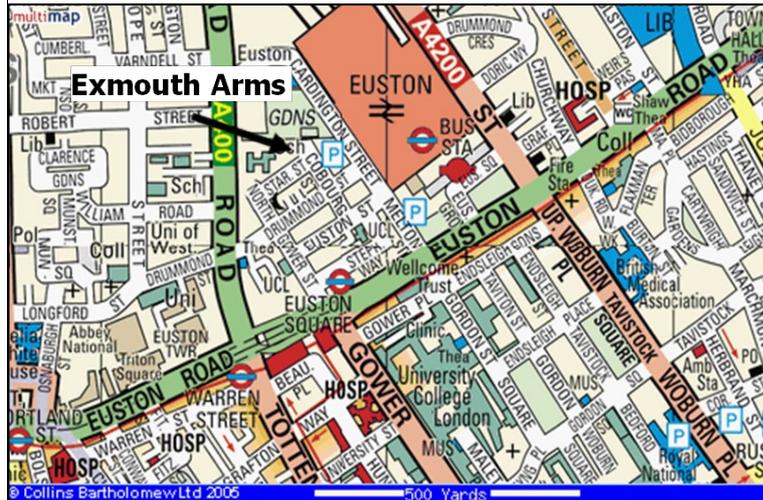
These talks are bound to be long and difficult and may not end successfully, however, the need for a uniform approach to fighting the bosses in these current times cannot be ignored.

The talks are ongoing and updates are coming out regularly from both unions and are currently focusing on looking at how each organisation functions, what we have in common and what differences exist and are likely to take many months to reach a conclusion

BRANCH

The LU Engineering Branch meets on a Tuesday at 17:00 until 19:00, every first and third Tuesday of the month.

We meet in the upstairs meeting room of the Exmouth Arms, near Euston station. Attending the branch meetings is the best way of finding out what is going on, hear special reports, take part in the democracy of the union and how we can improve things for the future.



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Contractors Charter: A better deal for ALL

OVER 15 YEARS of SUB-CONTRACTING has caused havoc in the rail industry, and not least for the people who work in it.

Where once we had central bargaining for standard pay and conditions for all track workers employed on London Underground; there are now many track contractor agencies across the tube who currently want to get as much as they can out of their staff for as little pay and work conditions as possible in return, having no dealing with the RMT.

The break-up of full time unionised employment for track workers, like the break-up of the industry itself, was a deliberate act, calculated to push wages and conditions down and profits up. For subcontracting track workers themselves the fragmentation has resulted in vastly differing and often poor pay, conditions with no security of employment

whatsoever.

The worse case scenario which is faced by many subcontractors on LUL and Tube Lines, is where the agency employing them outsources the pay and personnel aspects of their employment to an accountancy firm, rendering the track worker nominally self-employed but in reality treated as an employee, unable to work out if they're employed by the agency or the accountancy firm?!

If we are to set the negotiating agenda and improve pay, terms and conditions, safety and welfare, our response must be across all contract and sub-contract companies and agencies on London Underground: and that is the purpose of this charter.

RMT's strength, alongside the experience of more than a century of organising railway workers, is that it is an indus-

trial union uniting those people in all grades from all employers, on every worksite, in every depot: from permanent way platelayers to site supervisors, SPC's, PMEH's, HBT's, track welders, technicians and track cleaners,

To combat this, the idea for Charter were sown at a meeting of RMT LU Engineering Branch in 2009, followed by unanimous agreement at the RMT London Transport Regional Council later that same month. A document is being drawn up as a result of consultation with track contractor workers and RMT track reps working for several companies across London Underground and Tube Lines.



It will set out the aim of a improving standards for pay, conditions, security of employment, pensions, health & safety, welfare - in short to bring and end to the current severe exploitative conditions faced by track workers and replace them with work conditions fit for the 21st century!

It is not a wish list: our experience tells us that wishing will get us nowhere, and if we are to achieve the aspiration set out in this charter, for all our members in track companies and agencies, we must organise to achieve it.

The first step towards bringing this charter to reality is to ensure that every track contractor becomes an RMT member with solid organisation in every workplace, so that if it comes to a fight, we are ready for it.

Our unity is our strength, and together we can win a better deal for all!