

Bakerloo News



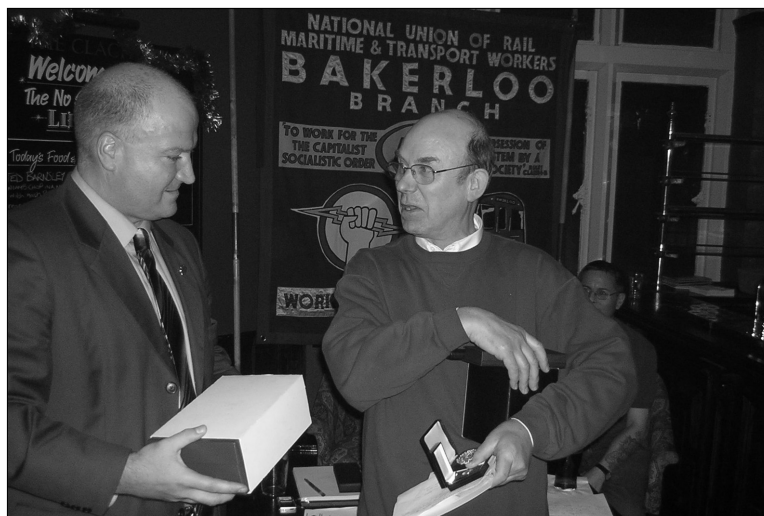
National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers

January 2006

Tom Scott 47 years RMT membership

A jam packed Annual General Meeting saw General Secretary, Bob Crow make a presentation to Tom Scott for 47 years membership of the RMT.

Bob informed those present that not only was Tom the most senior member of staff on LUL but he was also in the top 30 senior members of the entire union.



Strike on the 8th and 9th!

Management got a shock on New Year's Eve when a strike they thought would be a damp squib turned out to be the most successful station grades walkout the underground has ever seen.

With a few disgraceful exceptions RMT members on stations solidly supported the strike as did some TSSA members. Bosses were forced to draft in non-union revenue staff and clueless pen pushers from all over London in an attempt to keep staff levels up, but in the end failed and decided to keep stations open regardless. Nevertheless, over fifty stations closed on New Year's Eve and over sixty on New Year's Day and many drivers on the District and Piccadilly lines refused to drive trains.

We can draw two lessons from the strike, firstly, opposition to management's half-baked rosters and the displacement of over 800 station staff is stronger than any of us realised and secondly, that management holds the safety of staff and passengers in utter contempt. The fact that our bosses were prepared to keep stations open below minimum numbers and to allow people to work on stations who wouldn't know the Section 12 regulations from a copy of the Beano, gives us some idea of how they would run the Tube if they had their way.

And this is exactly what they will do if we allow them a victory over the 35-hour rosters. At some point this year the government plans to repeal Section 12 of the 1971 Fire Precautions Act introduced after

the King's Cross fire in 1987. This would allow management to slash station staffing, and the few left will be the same kind of half-wits and overtime-greedy toadies who came in on New Year's Eve. Forget twelve hours' rest between shifts, a maximum of seven days on duty and promotion on the grounds of ability, management are looking to a future where you work until you drop and where to get on you have to kiss arse.

This is why the strike on the 8th and 9th is so important, we need to show management that they should stop believing their own propaganda and start negotiating with the RMT in good faith. A report detailing the many safety infringements of New Year's Eve is already being compiled for HMRI, but don't hold your breath, it took them almost 4 years to do exactly nothing over the Potter's Bar train

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crash. Instead we must look to our own strength to bring management to their senses, or failing that, to their knees.

RMT members should not book on for duty between 18:30hrs on Sunday 8th January and 18:29hrs on Monday 9th January. Again we call on all TSSA members and non-union staff to support this strike; we've all got a lot to win and also a lot to lose in this dispute. RMT reps and activists on the Bakerloo line will also be organising picket lines at Queen's Park and Elephant & Castle stations for Monday morning, we will also remind drivers of their right to refuse to work on the grounds of health and safety. Speak to your local reps if you want to come along to a picket line, or go to one near your home. Remember, this is about a decent working week for station staff and a safe Underground for all staff and passengers - something we all must fight for.

Strike Meeting
Upstairs at The Clachan,
Kingly Street.
Near Oxford Circus tube.
Thursday
January 5
16.00hrs

ALL GRADES UNITED IN ONE COMMON OBJECT

Thousands strike

LUL, the media and others portrayed the strike on new years eve as a failure. A member of station staff from the Bakerloo Line bites back.

Our bosses got a nasty surprise when thousands of RMT station staff struck on New Year's Eve to defend the deal for a 35 hour week.

Our strike started at noon, and by 2pm the stations were starting to close. Managers cancelled their leave, (sorry about your parties, lads - maybe next year eh?); paper-shufflers and pencil-squeezers were drafted in to keep the numbers up, and legal safety requirements went the way of Auld Lang Syne.

Our union jumped through every legal hoop placed in front of us. However the minute we struck, untrained, unqualified staff were brought in because the only thought in the minds of our bosses was to keep the service going at all cost, safe in the knowledge that Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate always turns a blind eye.

Nearly fifty stations were shut on New Year's Eve, nearly sixty the following morning. The ones that were open were either unstaffed or dangerously, and illegally, understaffed. Whole chunks of the Northern line were left open with no staff. Managers were being ferried from station to station in an effort to keep them open, and where they couldn't staff them, they simply didn't.

Are they surprised we walked out? For one thing, there are now more than 100 staff at TFL on more than £100,000 per year, which is a wee bit more than we get; but there's this too: the government's policies in Iraq and Afghanistan have made our job a target for the terrorists, and the proposed staffing levels compromise safety and security.

Moreover, as the strike started, news got round that the GSM at King's Cross had been given an MBE in the New Year's Honours List.

Staff were furious. Why was recognition for the efforts during and after the bombs being given to one person? King's Cross staff had dealt with the dead and dying for nearly thirty minutes till the rescue services arrived. One RMT member from the station, who preferred not to be knighted, er... named, said, "In WW2, the George Cross medal was given to the people of Malta as a whole. Why couldn't the staff of London Underground be recognised in the same way?"

Well, not long after that, the Northern, Victoria and Piccadilly lines shut down at King's Cross. Weird eh?

But what next? If the company doesn't move we'll strike from Sunday evening for 24 hours. However, it's important all stations and revenue staff know just how successful the strike was: there's a danger that stations being open on New Year's Eve is interpreted as the strike not being a success. Certainly that's LUL's spin; Livingstone called the strike a 'non-event'.

This time round there will also be a serious focus on the drivers, with RMT members out leafleting all the depots, up to and including the morning of 9th January.

Livingstone and LUL bosses are clearly up for a fight. All their efforts are now focussed on taming the union in the run-up to 2012. With the attacks on the Section 12 laws to come, now is the time to make sure we win over staffing levels.

So what's this strike about?

The long delayed 35 hour week for station staff.

I thought the 35 hour week for station staff was already agreed?

It was. But during the negotiations it became evident that management intend to displace 850 station staff.

What else?

The wholesale closure of ticket offices, the de-staffing of stations and the remote booking on of contractors.

What about safety?

The strike on new years eve showed what management think of safety: keeping stations open without adequate numbers; without properly trained staff; and complete disregard for safety critical operational procedures.

So what about the section 12 regulations?

LUL management and the government are out to ditch the section 12 regs this year. That is why they are planning whole scale reduction of station staff now. If LUL win this they will be coming for the remainder of station staff and critical safety procedures later.

JOIN THE STRIKE

Do not book on for duty between 18:30hrs on Sunday 8th January and 18:29hrs on Monday 9th January.
Pickets will be at Elephant and Queens Park.
Call 07947 316259 for details.

STRIKE HQ

RMT head office will be fully staffed and the help line operational from 13:00 hours Sunday through to the end of the strike.
Call 0800 376 3706.

**Branch Secretary: Brian Munro, 48C Bonner Road, London E2 9JS
Telephone: 07947 316 259**

