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General Secretary's Report to the Annual General Meeting

Isle of Man 2009





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Introduction



It is a pleasure to present this report of the work of the last 12 months for the seventh time as general secretary.

The last year has been the most politically and economically turbulent period in living memory. This has meant that the union has had to increase its efforts to make sure that employers don't make transport workers pay for the economic crisis.

In the coming 12 months we intend to go in an even higher gear to give our members an even better service. With unions' own web-based TV station RMTv just starting and the introduction of our new social networking structures, you can be assured that we will strive to keep you informed.

On the political and industrial fronts we will continue to punch above our weight. On that basis I would like to place on record my thanks to all the hard work that staff, executive members, branch officials, lay reps and activists have put in over the last year and best wishes to all your families.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Crow". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

All the best

Bob Crow

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

GENERAL GRADES

RAILWAYS

CLEANING

ISS Swansea Carriage Cleaners

After submitting our pay claim for 2008 ISS informed us that they were not in a position to offer any pay rise in 2008 for our Cleaning members in Swansea. This is quite clearly a disgraceful state of affairs where the company blatantly refused to offer employees any cost of living increase. The General Grades Committee called for a ballot of members for strike action.

Our members voted magnificently 100% in favour of strike action. With this mandate the General Grades Committee authorised strike action on 12th and 13th September and 26th and 27th September. Following an outstanding display of solidarity and determination in taking strike action in pursuit of a pay increase, ISS management made an improved pay offer of 3% increase on rates of pay backdated to the anniversary date of early April 2008, which was accepted by the General Grades Committee as a resolution to this dispute.

Carlisle Cleaning Services – St Pancras International

I was informed by my cleaner's Shop Steward at St Pancras International in April that Carlisle Cleaning Services have installed new finger printing machines which have replaced the clocking on/clocking off machines. I wrote to Carlisle Cleaning Services demanding that they immediately withdraw all finger printing machines from St Pancras International. I have also written to Eurostar who contract out their cleaning services to Carlisle asking them to exert pressure on the company and have these machines removed from their premises. At the time of writing we are balloting our members Cleaning Members at St Pancras International for action short of a strike.

ENGINEERING & INFRASTRUCTURE (INCLUDING NETWORK RAIL)

NETWORK RAIL MAINTENANCE

Harmonisation of Terms & Conditions – Maintenance Grades

As I said in my report to the 2006 AGM, the harmonisation process was always going to be a complex task, covering as it does over 50 sets of terms and conditions and affecting around 16,000 employees. From a policy set out by the Special Engineering Grades Conference in 2006 and endorsed by the Executive Committee shortly afterwards, the union was able to set out on the harmonisation process with a clear set of priorities. However, in the past year, the process has been riddled with failures emanating from the employer's side. Timetables for producing documents were never reached, management issued false information with regard to what was or wasn't agreed in discussions and any packages and proposals which had been tabled were deemed so unsatisfactory that they were not fit to be put to our members in a vote. At each significant turn of events, Area Council Representatives were consulted, with meetings having taken place both in Doncaster and at Unity House. Personal letters, circulars and texts and e-mails were all issued when developments dictated that information had to be issued to the wider membership, with bulletins being issued on our website also. At the time of writing, no final documents for the majority of staff in either the IM or Supervisory Grades have been produced, despite deadlines having already been well past. Additionally, management have attempted to brief staff in the Professional and Technical and Administrative Grades on new terms and conditions despite having no agreement from the union to do so.

Rates of Pay and Conditions of Service – Maintenance Grades

At the time of writing, no agreement has yet been reached on the 2009 pay deal, the anniversary of which was on 1st January. The company had tabled a two-year deal, but, due to the current uncertainties in the economy, this has been rejected. Additionally, the company attempted to attach strings to the pay offer which were considered unacceptable to the union as they should have been dealt with through the harmonisation process.

ENGINEERING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Thales

Our members at Thales have experienced huge changes over the last few months, with a series of TUPE transfers taking place. The vast majority of the transfers saw staff move from Thales to Network Rail as a result of the latter's decision to take the telecoms works back in-house. Other staff were transferred to various other telecoms companies, such as Siemens, Global Crossing and Telent. I have to say that a number of employers fell way short of their legal responsibilities in consulting with the union over these transfers and consideration has been given on whether potential Employment Tribunal claims should be pursued in this regard. Following the TUPE transfers of staff took place, Thales itself announced that it was making a number of redundancies. So sudden was this announcement that, within days of it being made, the company had already given the staff concerned a termination date and that payments would be made in lieu of notice. In many cases, staff were given only 48 hours notice that their jobs had been lost. Both industrial and legal action have been considered in order to have had the situation resolved.

On Track Machines and Track Renewals

Network Rail announced a massive 28% deferral of its renewals work as a result of the Office of Rail Regulator's financial restrictions and changes to its on-track machine contracts, both of which are having a huge knock-on effect at the companies which carry such work out – Jarvis, Amey, Colas, Balfour Beatty, Babcock Rail and VolkerRail. In terms of the renewals work, this not only raised alarm bells about safety in the industry but also raised the spectre over the jobs of many of our members. This fear became a reality when Jarvis announced that hundreds of jobs were to go in all grades. The company refused to give assurances on both no compulsory redundancies and for a 90-day consultation period, which put this union into dispute with them and a subsequent ballot produced a majority in favour of taking industrial action in order to stop the jobs cull. Following Jarvis's announcement, the other renewals companies also announced redundancies and again they offered no assurances that there would be no compulsory redundancies or full and proper consultations with this union. A dispute situation was then entered into and a ballot for industrial action commenced.

With the on-track machine contract changes announced by Network Rail, it was the belief of the union that a potential TUPE situation existed. The union therefore sought assurances from the various companies that carry out such work that they would honour all TUPE obligations and that no compulsory redundancies would take place as a result of the changes. No assurances were received on either of the points the union made and therefore a dispute situation was entered and this is what the union also balloted our members on.

FREIGHT

Freightliner

At the time of writing we have yet to reach an agreement with Freightliner over the 2009 pay claim. The company has offered a 0% pay rise as a result of their 'considerable financial constraints' under which they are suffering, none of which they say was their fault. These include the withdrawal of 100 contract wagons a day, customers taking vessels out of service because of the lack of traffic and a 20% fall in the Deepsea market.

However, as we are painfully aware, it is not just employers who are suffering from economic uncertainty at this time. Therefore, Freightliner members are quite right not to have to accept a pay freeze and I will be writing to the company expressing our rejection of their proposal.



We are seeking urgent talks with the company to discuss improvements to pay and conditions for our members in Freightliner. A failure from the company to respond will lead to a dispute situation.

As a result of Freightliner's intention to impose a new roster upon Ground Staff members at Coatbridge after just 28 days notice, the decision was taken to ballot all Ground Staff members at Coatbridge Depot. The result was a unanimous vote (14-0) for strike action by members and three 24 hour strikes were called. The vote by all members to take action sent a clear message to management that this union will not tolerate rosters being imposed on our members.

Following a dispute resolution meeting with the company, Freightliner completely withdrew the imposed roster, agreed to compensate members who lost out on earnings and set up a Joint Working Party for all future matters. Management also accepted that imposing changes on our members is not the way to conduct positive industrial relations.

Last year I reported that Freightliner was introducing a new computer system. The computerised operating system was trialled in the Cardiff Depot and a site visit was arranged for our Company Council Representatives to view the system in operation. Discussions with the company in Cardiff lead to the decision to run extended trials in Felixstowe and Liverpool. These extended trials will enable us and the company to get a more accurate picture and will aid in the decision as to whether the computerised operating system is suitable to be rolled out and what the implications will be to our members.

At the time of writing these notes the Union was giving its attention to resolving issues at Freightliner Southampton Terminal where Representatives have described the industrial relations situation as being at an all time low.

DB Schenker Rail (UK) Ltd – Formerly English Welsh & Scottish Railway

Last year in my report I was optimistic that the takeover of the EWS by Deutsche Bahn would lead to an improvement in industrial relations, unfortunately my optimism was misplaced and the situation at the company has deteriorated since this time last year.

In the 2008 report much was made of the difficulties with the recognition agreement between EWS and RMT. At the time of writing little progress has been made on this issue and a formal recognition arrangement has still not been endorsed by either the company or RMT.

To make matters worse the company has colluded with the other trade unions to squeeze RMT out. For example TSSA and EWS signed an agreement which gave TSSA sole recognition for the TS5 grade, despite the fact that TSSA only had a handful of members in that grade compared with the majority of staff in that grade who were RMT members. I believe that this was a deliberate ploy by the company to freeze RMT out of negotiations. It was not just TSSA that were doing deals behind our back with the company but also ASLEF and Unite which I will describe later.

English Welsh & Scottish Railways notified us in January that the company will now be known as DB Schenker Rail (UK) Ltd. It was at this time that we were informed that DB Schenker Rail were planning to reduce the national workforce over all grades by approximately 15%. We immediately sought an urgent meeting with Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon, as we believed that the government should intervene to stop rail freight sector job losses that would inflict lasting damage on the economy and the environment.

The union was, and still is, totally opposed to any compulsory redundancies and I sought assurances from the company that all redundancies would be on a voluntary basis. However the company wrote to me again in February informing me that due to the economic downturn they forecast a further reduction in their projected traffic volumes during 2009/10, and subsequently they would be implementing additional redundancies on top of the 15% reduction. These cuts amounted to approximately 530 job losses across the entire company.

In January the company informed us that they were holding a 30 day redundancy consultation period. The legal minimum redundancy consultation period is 90 days, therefore we were certain that DB Schenker Rail were evading their legal responsibilities. After notifying the company of this fact they explained that they only having a 30 day consultation period on the basis that there were not any more than 100 employees employed at any one depot wrote to the company noting that the length of consultation required depends on the number of employees being made redundant at an 'establishment'.

I wrote back to the company stating that we believed that the DB Schenker's organisation constitutes one 'establishment' for reasons such as that each depot does not have key central functions such as payroll and HR or an overall organisational structure to constitute a separate establishment and that employees can be moved between depots if the employer chooses to make them do so and on this basis this would of course mean DB Schenker Rail should be holding a 90 day consultation period.

With this in mind RMT lodged an Employment Tribunal claim on behalf of our members because of the company's refusal to allow a full 90 day consultation period. I can inform you that the Employment Tribunal Services have now accepted a case on behalf of this union against DB Schenker Rail. The Employment Tribunal Services have ruled that the company have a case to answer for and has summoned them to an industrial tribunal. At the time of writing we are still awaiting correspondence from the Employment Tribunal Services informing us of the notice of the hearing.

To make matters worse DB Schenker in some depots, such as Margam in South Wales, was refusing to talk to RMT during the redundancy consultation period, but would only speak to Unite.

It was clear that we needed a coordinated approach to fighting redundancies at the company so I wrote to the General Secretaries of ASLEF and TSSA, as well as writing to our French sister union CGT; however it was clear from their responses and subsequent meetings that the other unions were uninterested in taking this issue forward. It also came to our attention that ASLEF had accepted the 30 day consultation period.

We received further correspondence from DB Schenker Rail that as well as job cuts they were exploring other methods cut costs. These included a regrading exercise with their remaining staff, the possible introduction of zero hours contracts, a pay freeze and possible pay cuts for their staff.

Having exhausted legal and political avenues it was decided that industrial action was the only approach left to defend jobs, pay, terms and conditions for our members at DB Schenker Rail. The General Grades Committee decided to ballot all RMT members employed by the company for strike action.

RMT unfortunately lost the ballot. The general grades committee noted the result and the many reports of intimidation by management of our members in an attempt to influence their votes. We restated this union's policy of opposition to the redundancies in DB Schenker Rail in any form and we will now

have to explore further legal and political avenues in our campaign to defend jobs, pay, terms and conditions for our members.

Northern Rail informed us that they will welcome applications from DB Schenker Rail members who may be made redundant in Northern England. Obviously, this will not impact on any of our members currently employed by Northern, with regard to their promotion prospects.

As I indicated last year as a consequence of the Deutsche Bahn takeover RMT were allowed to field a candidate for the UK seat on the Deutsche Bahn (AG) European Works Council; RMT nominated Paul Walker. The ballot closed on 14th November 2008 and Paul came an impressive 2nd out of 42 candidates. He was also the only other nominee to receive over 200 votes. Paul's time spent campaigning during the election period is commendable and also a great advert for existing and potential members of the high standard of RMT representatives.

NETWORK RAIL (OPERATIONS)

Pay & Conditions

This year members have received the second part of last year's 2 year pay deal which resulted in an increase of 3.5% from 1st January 2009.

Scotland Dispute

For the second year running the union successfully balloted signalling and supervisory members following a further breakdown in industrial relations, this time over the issues of management's application of the National Rostering Principles, the re-arranging of Cognisco testing days and breaches of the PTR&R arrangements.

Two 24 hour stoppages were called but these were suspended following talks that resolved the first two issues. The issues relating to the PTR&R arrangements were referred to national level and these remain under discussion.

Abuse of 'Additional Hour Agreement' - Glasgow Central Signalling Centre

A dispute arose at Glasgow Central Signalling Centre over management's interpretation and application of Section 8 of the 1994 Signallers Restructuring Agreement as amended by the 2001 JWP agreement. Management were invoking the agreement to require staff to work the "additional hour" in circumstances that our members did not believe could be considered "exceptional or unforeseen" and therefore fell outside of the agreement.

Our members voting overwhelmingly in support of taking action on the issue but following talks with the company, the dispute was resolved to our satisfaction.

However, arising from a resolution carried at the Signalling Grades conference, we have written to the company seeking a discussion on the general application of the additional hour agreement.

Abuses of the PTR&R Arrangements

Last year I reported on several abuses of the PTR&R by Network Rail and regrettably the situation has not improved. The company continues to seek to chip away at the agreement through various means including:-

- the use of their own "People Process" (which has never been agreed with this union)
- refusing to allow displaced individuals to take up positions more than one grade below their substantive grade
- the use of suitability rather than seniority in dealing with displaced staff,
- redundancy notices being issued prematurely
- refusal to seek volunteers for severance to avoid compulsory redundancies.
- Failure to issue common displacement dates

In addition to the Scotland dispute, the union has also been in dispute with Network Rail over the Colchester to Clacton re-signalling scheme.

Signalling Staff Cost Management Initiative

Over the past 12 months signaller members have faced attacks on pay and conditions arising from the company's "Signalling Staff Cost Management Initiative" which has identified areas in which the company believes it can make efficiencies. This includes, amongst other things, cutting back on meal relief, changing flexibility premium areas/coverage and not filling vacancies.

The matter has been raised at the National Operations Council at which the union's representatives sought assurances that none of these initiatives would break national agreements and that appropriate consultation should take place on any local/Area proposals. However, in the current financial climate, it does not look like this is an issue that will go away.

Managed Stations

Discussions have continued following last year's dispute over the re-organisation of managed stations. However, members remain on a variety of terms and conditions and the company has regrettably shown a marked reluctance to seriously discuss a harmonisation process.

Electrical Control Room Operators

Discussions continue to take place with Network Rail over various ECRO issues including a revised grading structure, unplanned periods of single staffing and payment for annual leave in accordance with the Working Time regulations.

TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Redundancies

The majority of the Train Operating Companies have used the current economic climate to implement large scale redundancies. This is despite an overall increase in profits for the "big five" train operators.

National Express Group has sought to cut 750 jobs across its East Anglia and East Coast franchises. Stagecoach announced redundancies in both of its two major franchises. South West Trains announced plans to cut at least 660 jobs, including ticket-office and platform staff, despite the partial rejection by the Department for Transport of its plans to reduce ticket-office opening times, and East Midlands Trains proposed 162 job cuts across their network.

Southeastern announced 300 redundancies and there were plans to get rid of 40 unspecified jobs at First Scotrail. Proposed cuts to ticket office opening times at First Capital Connect left over 20 posts at risk.

We balloted all our members at FCC, NXEA, and SWT and latterly at EMT, NXEC and Southeastern for strike action over their proposed redundancies. We also demanded a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies from each TOC that was proposing job cuts.

The threat of a ballot forced NXEC to offer us a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies, and after healthy majorities in the strike ballots both NXEA and FCC offered us a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies.

However the two Stagecoach franchises, SWT and EMT, refused to give us a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies. Unfortunately the ballot at SWT was lost and therefore we have not been able to pursue an industrial solution to the job cuts there. At the time of writing EMT members produced a decisive yes vote in their ballot and members will be taking strike action in early May.

Breakdown in Industrial Relations – Northern Rail

After long discussions between our Representatives, Lead Officer and the General Grades Committee it was clear that Northern Rail Ltd was treating its workforce with contempt. The General Grades Committee decided to ballot for industrial action at which stage management finally sat down and negotiated seriously on the following issues which were causing the most concern.

Breach of Chain of Care Policy

The Chain of Care Policy dated November 2005 allows for payment of average earnings to staff following assaults on duty. Northern have attempted to impose an amended policy which has left any such payment to the discretion of the local manager. After several arguments at various locations, Northern appeared to agree to withdraw the amended policy. However, it has become apparent that some, if not all, local managers were continuing to use the amended policy.

Management has attempted to consult with us on a new policy, but have taken it off the table on at least two occasions. We believe this was done because of our protests regarding the company's attempt to water down the original policy. In spite of this, it was obvious that Northern were instructing their local managers to work the amended policy.

The Company has now acknowledged the importance of applying the correct and up to date policy in all situations and will re-brief all its managers regarding the importance of applying the correct 2005 Chain of Care Policy.

Victimisation of RMT Representatives and Activists

Two recent cases have made it very clear that Northern are intent on attacking and getting rid of our representatives and activists. Representatives David Hughes of York and Andy Budds from Leeds Travel Centre have both been dismissed in the last three months.

David Hughes was charged with some thirteen offences. However the main thrust of the majority of the charges against David was breaching Northern's ICT Usage policy, a policy which was imposed without any consultation with the trade unions. Andy Budds was dismissed for sending out an email highlighting Health & Safety problems in his workplace.

As a result of our negotiations David Hughes will receive a confidential compensation payment for unfair dismissal from the company. Andy Budds was re-instated.

Breach of Disciplinary Procedures

In the case of Andy Budds, Northern has manipulated the Disciplinary Procedure. Andy was allowed to continue working in his position at Leeds Travel Centre right up to the day of his dismissal. Northern informed Andy that he had been dismissed under clause 9, Gross Misconduct. This was the first time that clause 9 has ever been mentioned in regards to Andy's case. It is fair to say that it is unprecedented for an individual to be allowed to continue in his or her position, if charged under clause 9 of the procedure. The simple fact is that, our member had never been charged under clause 9, but this was an afterthought following his dismissal.

The new disciplinary procedure is in its final stage of being agreed and the Company has assured us that all disciplinary cases, whether in the current or new procedure, once implemented, will be strictly adhered to in terms of the agreed process. The Company recognises the importance of adhering to the agreed disciplinary procedure in all cases.

Imposition of ICT Policy

As I mentioned above in the case of David Hughes, Northern are now disciplining our members for breaches of the company's Information Communication Technology Policy. This policy as I have stated was imposed without any consultation or negotiation. In spite of this Northern have dismissed David Hughes and, Andy Budds was also guilty in Northern's eyes, of breaching this policy.

Northern has acknowledged that the current ICT policy was never fully consulted with the trade unions prior to it being implemented. It has therefore been agreed that the ICT policy needs to be updated to reflect modern ICT issues within the workplace and this will be tabled at Joint Committee, including wording regarding trade union representatives' obligations under the new ICT.

To help facilitate this we have agreed with Northern that a special staff side for all Joint Committee members will be arranged to discuss the current ICT policy and the outcome of the staff side meeting will be fed into the joint meeting.

It was also agreed that training on the new ICT policy will be arranged so that all managers and employees understand the new policy and their responsibilities within it.

We have also secured an explicit agreement from Northern Rail that no employee would be disciplined under the current policy prior to a discussion between the Head of Employee Relations and the RMT.

Breach of Guards Agreement (Introduction of Tram Trains)

At a meeting with Northern held several months ago, the company gave assurances regarding the manning of the new Tram Trains, which will be introduced on the Penistone-Huddersfield line. RMT was promised that throughout the trials on this service a Guard would be situ and would be given the same duties/responsibilities as at present. However, in spite of assurances that this would be confirmed in writing, no such assurances were forthcoming.

It has now been confirmed by the Company that during the Tram Train trials there will be a conductor/guard on every train with door operational responsibilities at all times. It was agreed that at times there may be the need for technical or safety related testing where drivers may be required to operate the doors.

There is an agreement that if this applies, a meeting with the relevant RMT representatives will be arranged where we will meet and agree the change to the door operations for the specific technical or safety door testing arrangements. Under the normal operating environment the conductor/guard will have full operational control of the doors and anything outside this will be subject to the meeting.

Breach of PT&R Agreement

Although it has yet to be confirmed, we believe that Northern are in discussions with ASLEF regarding redundant drivers from EWS/DB Schenker. This follows a request that our Lead Officer made to the company regarding freezing of vacancies in line with recent General Grades Committee decisions. The company refused to freeze vacancies, but did admit they were discussing accommodating some EWS/DB Schenker staff. They did not mention that these discussions involved any other union, but we understand that some kind of agreement may have been reached to find jobs for redundant EWS/DB Schenker drivers. The effect on the promotion prospects of our members, if this is the case will be obvious.

It was agreed that a RMT representative would be present at any further discussions regarding recruiting redundant employees from another train operator (train or freight) where it has an impact on the grades represented by RMT.

It has also been agreed that a meeting will take place between the RMT and the Company to review the redundancy profile of the DB Schenker/EWS ground staff and engineering employees with a view to understand where redundant employees are located and if this can be matched against the vacancy profile of Northern.

It was acknowledged that any redundant employee who applies for a role within the Company will need to go through the normal Northern recruitment process for external applicants.

The General Grades Committee and I hope that these agreements will help to improve the long term industrial relations between Northern Rail and the RMT. I would like to place on record our congratulations to the Lead Officer and negotiating team for the positive progress achieved on this occasion, as well as congratulating our members on their steadfast resolve and solidarity.

Imposition of Terms and Conditions, RPOs – Southern

Southern Management have imposed new terms and conditions on Revenue Protection Officers (RPOs) that substantially alter the way our members currently work and also have an adverse effect on the payments they receive.

On Southern the specific issues are as follows:-

New Rosters

The company intend are introducing new rosters to create more flexible arrangements. What they really mean is they are going to introduce rosters that will have RPOs working even more unsocial hours than they currently do.

Lone Working

At present RPOs work in pairs which is necessary to ensure their safety. The work they undertake, as anyone knows, leaves them open to both verbal and physical abuse and working in pairs gives them at least some security. It is management's intention to dilute this agreement so that RPOs can work with other members of staff. When terms are compromised like this eventually so is members' security – how long before the "other member of staff" is not available and the RPO will be asked to work alone?

Annual Leave Entitlement

It is becoming increasingly difficult for RPOs to take annual leave because of management's insistence on a certain number of staff being available at all times. The new proposals make it even more difficult and there is a real fear that staff will be unable to take their full yearly entitlement.

Loss of Commission

Where RPOs are asked to assist retail staff – queue busting – they will not receive commission payments.

Barrier Working

It is the company's intention to utilise RPOs on barrier duties, work that should be undertaken by gateline staff.

We balloted our members for industrial action in March however we received a legal challenge from the company resulting in us having to re-ballot our members. At the time of writing this is currently being undertaken.

Sunday Working, Conductors – London Midland

10 years ago RMT agreed with Silverlink, as part of the restructuring package, that Conductors had the right not to work on Sundays provided they gave their unavailability 7 days in advance.

Now London Midland is refusing to honour the original agreement and is forcing all their Conductors to work on Sundays. This has now led to a situation where former Silverlink Conductors are required to work up to 60 hours a week. To rub salt into the wound London Midland has now begun to discipline Conductors for failing to attend on their rostered Sundays.

Appallingly London Midland refused to recognise that there are problems surrounding these issues and had ceased to engage RMT in meaningful talks. Therefore we balloted all our Conductor members at Bletchley, Northampton and Watford Junction employed by London Midland for strike action. Our members returned an overwhelming yes vote for strike action.

Our London Midland Conductor members have now taken five days of strike action throughout March and April 2009 to try and win back their right to opt out of Sunday working, showing that our members are wholeheartedly determined to win this dispute.

During the stoppages throughout March and April London Midland used managers to carry out the duties of striking Conductors. Safety breaches believed to have taken place include a train delayed at Northampton because a retail platform manager doing the conductor's duties did not know where to insert the key to activate the door controls.

Another reports suggests that a manager on a train departing from Euston gave a dispatcher at Euston a green flag, (safe to proceed), despite the driver's cab door still being open – indicating that the signal had been given without knowledge that all doors were shut. Another suggests that a manager in charge of a train from Bletchley gave a 'ready to start' signal at Hemel Hempstead while the signal was on red.

We also understands that stand-in managers involved in incidents have not been tested for drugs or alcohol as normal procedure demands, and that at least one staff member who witnessed a safety breach was asked not to submit a report.

During the dispute the company tabled two proposed agreements aimed at trying to resolve this dispute. However both agreements made little headway on the issue of Sunday working and both agreements were rejected overwhelmingly by the representatives and by the members.

As we have still not been able to resolve this dispute at the time of writing it has been agreed that RMT conductors at the three London Midland depots of Bletchley, Northampton and Watford will strike on consecutive Sundays from the 3rd May through to 21st June.

Members Workplace Conditions, Welfare & Pay – London Overground Rail Operations Ltd

As a result of LOROL's persistent refusal to negotiate restructuring proposals with the Lead Officer and Company Council Representatives, their failure to improve facilities and progress on welfare issues and

a complete breakdown in industrial relations, we balloted all LOROL members for industrial action.

LOROL had constantly ignored complaints raised by our members and despite their promises of new facilities, proper toilets, mess rooms and good communications, management continue to delay and obstruct at every opportunity. They also continue to change restructuring plans without any consultation with the representatives.

Another important issue is over the past three months we have been unable to get assurances, previously given verbally, that all the new rolling stock to be delivered between now and 2010 would continue to be staffed by Guards with their full operational safety role and continuation of the operation of the power operated doors.

The ballot returned a massive yes vote for industrial action. As a result we received an enhanced offer from the Company. The offer addressed all our members concerns and was subsequently accepted by a referendum of members.

Annual Leave Arrangements – Retail Grades, c2c

RMT and our sister union TSSA demanded 28 days per annum paid annual leave for all members working in the retail grades for c2c. c2c, who are owned by the National Express Group, only offered the bare legal minimum of annual leave entitlements to their Retail Grades Employees, where as equivalent grades in NXEA and NXEC received 28 days per annum. Members of RMT and TSSA took joint strike action in February and have since been on continuous action short of a strike since.

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

Rates of Pay & Conditions of Service 2009, Redundancies, Breaches of Agreements, London Underground Ltd

At the time of writing these notes RMT again found itself having to withdraw from a ballot for industrial action on legal grounds. The tragedy here is that we had a massive vote in favour of both strike action (3,165 for and only 619 against) and action short of a strike (3,495 to 266) delivered by our members.

Sadly, LUL seriously questioned the legality of the ballot in relation to the information we sent them as set out in the anti-trade union laws. Instead of sitting down and negotiating on the important issues of dispute, they went running to their lawyers trying to find any loop-hole they could to ensure members' rights to take industrial action against them was thwarted.

The Matrix we sent to them setting out members' workplaces and grades had a number of anomalies, which is inevitable when you consider the amount of members employed by LUL. I would also point out that this was also the first time we have attempted an all LUL ballot since some 2,000 former Metronet employees were brought back into the fold. But the cruel truth of the situation was that the Union's Solicitors advised us that it would be very likely a court would side with the employer as usual.

If we had gone ahead with a decision to take any industrial action as a result of our ballot, and an injunction was granted as would almost certainly have been the case, then we would have found ourselves in the undesirable position of not being able to ballot members again for a several months on the extremely important issues of dispute. It was decided that it would be unacceptable to put members in this position and to instead re-ballot on the same issues as soon as possible.

I continue to very much share our members' disappointment that the union was not able to use this magnificent mandate but the anti-trade union laws had again achieved their aim which is to stop working people defending their pay, terms and conditions. But hopefully by the time the AGM meets, I shall be in a position to report that RMT successfully conducted a re-ballot and again members voted overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action.

If so, this will come as no surprise. This was not a good time to be working on the Underground. LUL had been breaching their own disciplinary and attendance procedures for some time and had encouraged aggressive and punitive behaviour by local managers. For example, members being given 52 week warnings for a first attendance warning, maximum attendance warnings given as standard, members regularly subjected to unreasonable pressure and being refused representation for interviews

while they are ill as well as being refused representation at other interviews where these could lead to disciplinary action.

Even worse, like a lot of other employers, LUL were trying to use the economic situation to their advantage to convince staff that there needs to be a large degree of cost cutting. They were attempting to push through the Organisational Change policy which meant compulsory redundancies despite the agreement made between management and RMT in the PPP Code of Conduct. We could not accept any dilution to the agreement for these members nor could we accept compulsory redundancies for any other LUL employee.

And how were LUL proposing to reward staff for all this stress? Not very highly. LUL not only failed to respond to our claim for a one-year pay deal and other improvements, but their multi-year offer of RPI plus 1% and flat RPI for the next 4 years is simply unacceptable.

But as I said I hope to be in a position to report more positively at this AGM.

Rates of Pay & Conditions of Service 2009, Redundancies – TfL

In tandem with the above ballot, RMT also balloted members directly employed by the TfL authority itself where we have around 350 members.

The issues were largely the same. TfL too were seeking compulsory redundancies using the credit crunch as a front. But another problem was the complete lack of meaningful consultations. TfL wouldn't even tell us at Company Council level which jobs were to be cut in their "moving feast" of over £2.4 billion worth of cuts within the next eighteen months. To make matters worse, it appeared that they hadn't even factored in the loss of revenue due to income dropping or the lost money from the abandonment of the western congestion charge zone.

Regretfully, this ballot had to go the same way as the LUL ballot. Despite returning a magnificent "YES" vote for both Strike Action and Action Short of a Strike the General Grades Committee decided not to use the mandate for strike action.

However as a result of the challenge we received on the LUL ballot, the General Grades Committee decided that we needed to take a further look at matrices that are sent to a company prior to any ballot. The matrix is the number of workplaces and grades that the union holds on its computer system.

At the time of writing these notes, we were in the process of undertaking an urgent, comprehensive look at how the information we hold on members' grades and workplaces is maintained and in conjunction with the Union's Solicitors will be drawing up a policy that will, hopefully, stop companies contesting ballots on legal technicalities.

The anti-trade union laws are in place to make it easy for an employer to challenge any ballot and to claim extensive damages should any breach be found. This was not the end of the line on this and other disputes. As with LUL, we intended to re-ballot TfL members on the same timetable and we again anticipate that the result of the re-ballot will be even more impressive.

Breach of Disciplinary Procedures Drivers – Piccadilly Line

I again find myself having to report on a withdrawal on a ballot by RMT in response to legal challenge by LUL. In this case the ballot was of Train Operators employed on the Piccadilly Line. However, I am pleased to report that successfully re-balloted our members concerned and went on to resolve the dispute.

The reasons for the ballot were serious ones. At both depots on the Line (Acton Town and Arnos Grove) management were using punitive measures for both performance and attendance. Members had been interviewed at short notice and denied representation even though these meetings could be later used against them for disciplinary purposes. They were also in the habit of applying the procedures for long term sickness to short term absence cases.

In addition there is a tendency for Ash House management to use emergency phone numbers to call Drivers who are off sick as well as a tendency for unannounced home visits. And at Bollo House members were regularly asked to submit memos for small items and management were adding items to our members' records without informing them.

The whole situation was an extremely sorry one which was highlighted by the sacking of one of our Driver members, Zak Khan, a situation that management handled atrociously.

But as I said, the re-ballot was a success and I would like to take the opportunity to use these pages to personally thank our Piccadilly Line Driver members for their determination and resolve. Strike action was called but suspended due to management agreeing that Zak Khan could go back to his driver's job later this year. With regard to the other issues, it was felt that these would be dealt with as part of the wider dispute with LUL (see above).

Imposition of Rosters in the Control Room of SERCO Docklands

Towards the end of 2008, members working in the DLR Control Room for Serco Docklands were balloted for strike action and industrial action short of strike due to management's insistence on imposing new rosters.

Management had taken the decision to implement new rosters which will remove the 12 hour weekend shifts replacing them with 8 hour shifts. This would have created a situation where members in the Control Room would lose 24 rest days per annum. Management were looking to implement the new roster on 5th January 2009.

RMT could not accept such a blatant attack on our DLR member's conditions and a ballot for both strike action and industrial action short of strike was called for. Not surprisingly, we achieved almost unanimous mandates for both on a huge turnout and a continuous overtime ban and strict adherence to procedures commenced on 5th January 2008.

This action followed by a decision to hold a 24 hour stoppage seemed enough to make the company cave in. The agreed to maintain the current roster allowing our members to both book and take leave in the current year while talks continued under the auspices of ACAS.

Regretfully I received a report from the Regional Organiser several months later informing me that the talks were unsuccessful and that another ballot was required. At the time of writing these notes, I was giving my attention to this.

Other Disputes on TfL

There appears to be a determination by LUL members to stand up to bullying by management. Following a successful ballot a 24 hour strike by Station Staff members on the **Willesden Green Group** was held over 8th and 9th April. The members in the group were seeking the removal of a particular management bully who had already been removed from a previous location following strike action by Drivers.

In addition strike action had been called amongst **Driver members at Seven Sisters Depot on the Victoria Line**, again following a successful ballot. Their demands were the reinstatement of a colleague who had been dismissed, an end to the misuse of attendance and disciplinary procedures, the provision of proper Correct Side Door Enable equipment as provided on all other lines and an end to the victimisation of RMT activist Glenroy Watson.



NEXUS TYNE & WEAR

The Metro unions have been involved in a protracted series of talks regarding a management agenda item they called "Proposed Reinvigoration of Tyne and Wear Metro". These talks were nothing more than an attempt by management to prepare the Tyne & Wear Metro for privatisation.

We of course have considerable experience of such initiatives elsewhere. The privatisation and fragmentation of the national railways and London Underground resulted in a widespread assault on members' pension benefits, travel concessions, job security, pay staffing levels and safety.

And so while management prattled on about reinvigorating the Metro in time for the private bidders to put in their bids, we tabled our own set of minimum demands. These were:

1. A guarantee of no compulsory redundancies now and in the event of any subsequent change of ownership
2. That there will be one collective bargaining arrangement for all workers working on Tyne & Wear Metro (NEXUS) now and with any subsequent employer
3. That staff will remain in one pension scheme which will not worsen now or in the future. New entrants will continue to be part of that scheme and have no worsening of pension entitlement
4. That staff will continue to get reduced travel costs arrangements now and in the future
5. That all staff will remain working with NEXUS / Tyne & Wear Metro and the contracts will remain with Nexus / Tyne & Wear Metro
6. That staffing levels will remain the same unless there is an agreement with all trade unions

These demands were put to management as long ago as last August but as at March of this year we had had no satisfactory response and the decision was taken to proceed with a ballot for industrial action. We hoped that even at this late stage Nexus would see sense and drop its completely unnecessary tendering process. But we had already learned the bitter lesson that rail workers, like service and safety, come a poor second when profit is involved.

But as RMT has spent the last dozen years resisting attacks on rail workers' jobs, pensions and conditions that are the direct result of privatisation, and without firm assurances from Nexus we had no option other than to proceed with our ballot.

I am sorry to say that this is yet another case of an employer running to the courts rather than trying to deal with the issues being put to them. A legal challenge was made by Nexus against the ballot which our solicitors advised us would have a very good chance of being successful. With deep reluctance, the General Grades Committee agreed to suspend the dispute.

I can only apologise for this situation but would point out that the company would have known that members would be voting YES in favour of strike action and so, being unable to convince their employees otherwise, they instead went running to their legal team. In addition to this, approaches by RMT for all of the issues to be subject to further negotiations were refused.

I would nevertheless like to thank our Tyne & Wear members for their resolve and loyalty throughout all this. At the time of writing this I had arranged to meet personally with our local Tyne & Wear representatives and full time officers to take stock and discuss the next steps.

ROAD TRANSPORT

Lynx Express/UPS

Last year I was able to report that we had successfully regained recognition at Lynx UPS and had secured a compensation payment of 4 weeks pay for each and every member. This was a major achievement and I want to thank our members at Lynx for their commitment to the union.

But one of the ongoing problems we are experiencing arises from the period when we were derecognised. Changes to our members' terms and conditions were agreed by another union during the period of de-recognition that we are attempting to unravel

City Link

RMT has been giving its attention to getting to grips with its organisation with City Link. Last year I reported how the company had completed the project of taking all their franchised companies back in-house. The next steps in our view were to complete the harmonisation of terms and pay conditions and improving on these where possible. We were also looking to improve upon our procedural arrangements with increased representation and improved facilities for our representatives once elected. At the same time, our energies into recruitment continued.

However, like most employers, the company are complaining of extremely hard times and the need to make major redundancies. At the time of writing these notes the Union was in talks with City Links over the redundancies issue as well as our own expectations.

RMT opposed the redundancies and questioned why they were not consulting with the Union nationally and just doing it piece meal at local level. They replied that their large turnover of staff allowed most of the reduction in staffing levels to occur through natural wastage. Actual redundancies were few when done at a local depot level so they did not have to consult the Union. We pointed out that by their own figures 1400 jobs had gone of which 400 of them were compulsory redundancies. They again replied that they were doing it on a local depot basis and the law was unclear on whether they had to consult with the Union.

As a result of our representations they eventually agreed that they would accept voluntary applicants and would use Last in First Out (LIFO) with an appeals procedure. Furthermore, they agreed that there would be a halt on any further redundancies due to depot integration. However, there would also be a blanket freeze on all recruitment.

In response to our pay claim, as feared, the company stated that there would be no increase for 2009 due to losses of around £40 million. Similarly any aspirations towards harmonisation would also have to be put on hold due to financial restraints. We insisted that a timetable should be drawn up which would make it clear to employees exactly when we can expect to complete harmonisation.

The company's response to our concerns regarding procedural arrangements was more positive with them agreeing to favourably consider a machinery we submitted that would enable issues to be dealt with locally and regionally rather than being dealt with at a national level only. They are also considering a greater degree of Regional meetings.

In addition, they are also considering improvements to the grievance procedure. We had made known complaints from our members that they seem to be able to get a 1st stage hearing then it gets lost in the regional offices. They are also considering our request for Representatives' Meetings to take place four times a year as well as an agreement for training of representatives. In the meantime, the company are happy for us to continue with our recruitment activities and are fully cooperative in giving RMT site access and the like.

BUSES

A revamped Busworkers' Charter was launched at this year's grades' conference. The charter, produced by Busworkers for Busworkers, sets out proposals that will help us to win the pay and conditions that these members deserve in the 21st century.

Through our charter we will be focussing on a campaign which sets minimum demands for one rate of pay, overtime payments, unsocial hours payments, progressive reduction in the working week without loss of pay, 10 hours maximum daily driving, 4 hours maximum continuous driving, paid breaks, improved sick pay, increased annual leave and final salary pension schemes.

I am also pleased to announce that RMT signed off a brand new recognition agreement in March of this year. The company is called Veolia Transport UK and we now have sole recognition rights for employees at their depots in Nottingham, Heanor, Tuxford and Anston.

RMT has also created a new Branch for all of these members viz the Nottingham and Derbyshire Bus Branch. I would wish this new Branch and all of its members all the best for the future.

SHIPPING GRADES

Wightlink

Breaches of Procedures

Arising from a resolution from Portsmouth Branch regarding a considerable decline in management's adherence to established procedures, the GGC considered the matter and a meeting of Representatives was held at Unity House which concluded that a meeting should be arranged with the Company. This issue was raised at a meeting with the Company where the Regional Organiser and the General Grades Committee agreed that the formulation of a Working Party was the best way to achieve our best aims. The Company were reluctant to adhere to our suggestion and a further meeting was called between all Representatives and the GGC. We continued to press the Company for a working party to discuss the issues raised at the latest meeting and they have now agreed. The first meeting was very constructive where RMT Representatives were able to discuss many issues with the Company. The Company agreed to take away our comments and proposals and produce a revised set of agreements and procedures ready to present back to us at a further meeting. This can be seen as an important step forward in resolving the problems encountered with the Company over recent years.

Stena Line

Paid Leave Claim

For a number of years now we have been addressing the issue that our members believe they are not receiving their four weeks paid annual leave entitlement. The test case for this claim was submitted to a tribunal where we were informed by the Employment Judge that a UK Employment Tribunal is restricted in the law from hearing cases relating to the paid annual leave of seafarers.

From the hearing summary, the most crucial points relating to this matter are:-

"In summary it does not appear to this Tribunal possible to interpret the Working Time Regulations whether by implication, or by the addition of any form of words... in a manner which gives the Tribunal jurisdiction to hear a claim which is specifically excluded by the regulations themselves."

"Similarly, it is not possible for the Tribunal to create a jurisdiction to hear a claim under the 'Seafarers Regulations' which Parliament has not given it."

From the reasons above, our legal advisers found no means by which we can appeal this decision. At this stage, we continue to lobby government to allow seafarers the right to take working time cases to tribunal. If and when the legislation changes, we will be reevaluating our position.

Stena Europe – Late Running

The Company have now agreed to increase the compliment of Deck Crew by two AB's, one per crew in line with our original request. Discussion between management and Local Representatives took place and all parties have also agreed on all the points relating to a new roster. This was implemented in July 2008 subject to a 6 month trial period. Any minor changes to the roster that became apparent during the trial period would have been dealt with locally on-board and this matter is now resolved.

Proposed Reduction in Manning Levels – Stena Europe

Stena Line informed RMT late last year that they required to reduce the OBS Manning Level on their Fishguard route due to the economic situation and a decline in passenger numbers.

Discussions were held with the Company where they agreed to revise their original plan resulting in the addition of two flexible positions. This would mean a total of 4 redundancies. The Company informed RMT at this point that they had in fact received in excess of 4 voluntary redundancy applications.

The Company have recently informed us that despite on-going negotiations and the fact that no final agreement has been reached they intend to implement the new arrangements.

There is obvious concern among the membership regarding the extra pressure this proposal would lay on existing staff members. Following local consultation with route representatives, members have requested a ballot for industrial action to reject these proposals.

Therefore, a referendum is currently underway of all members concerned asking if they wish to be balloted for industrial action should the Company continue with or implement their current proposal.

Reorganisation – Stena Line – Irish Sea

The Company have confirmed that the current trippage of the HSS Stena Explorer will reduce from 12th February 2009. The Company reiterated that the introduction of the Stena Nordica would create redeployment opportunities and that no staff member would be required to leave the business.

- The following assurances have also been received from the company:-
- The Company plans to change the Stena Nordica to the UK flag in due course.
- The proposed manning in the deck and engine room department for the Stena Nordica will be advised during the consultation process and will be sufficient to absorb any displaced Explorer crew members.
- The issue of agency personnel, if required and how they will be used will also be dealt with during the consultation process.
- The terms and conditions of staff transferring from the Explorer to the Nordica will be those that apply on our conventional ferries.
- The completion of the preference form will not prejudice any staff member's current employment.

Reorganisation – Stena Line – North Sea

The Company have informed us that they plan to make 38 UK ratings redundant. There are concerns that if we lose these 38 ratings, they will be immediately replaced by Filipino Ratings on much worse terms and conditions.

We have written to all members concerned urging them not to volunteer for redundancy and have also written to the company informing them in the strongest terms that their proposals are totally unacceptable.

A further meeting was held with the company where they reiterated that there would be no compulsory redundancies and UK voluntary redundancies were being sought to enable a lower personnel cost base. The Company also confirmed that any successful applicants for voluntary redundancy would remain in employment until 30th April 2009.

The Company stated that the timescale of this proposal is that consultation began with RMT from 28th January 2009 and will be concluded by the end of April. The Company have also sent out 'preference forms' to members including a redundancy formula on 2nd February and analysis of the forms returned would allow for firm decisions to be made.

We have also written to the Chief Executive Officer of Stena AB in line with the above and to request that the company do not engage in social dumping.

The Union recently tabled counter proposals to the Company which will be subject to further discussion. RMT have informed the Company that we are now in dispute over this issue but that we are prepared to temporarily suspend the referendum ballot of whether our members wish to be balloted for industrial action to allow these discussions to take place.

The Company had an opportunity to comment on our counter proposals at the meeting. After the opportunity to reconsider their original proposal, the Company agreed to revise the plans giving an overall increase in core ratings positions by 11. RMT were at this point prepared to recommend the acceptance of the revised company proposals to the membership and seek feedback.

Consultation has since concluded and the Company have been advised of our official acceptance of the revised reorganisation plans. Any further manning issues will also be dealt with jointly between RMT and the Company.

P&O FERRIES

Paid leave – P&O Hull and Portsmouth

As with their colleagues at Stena Line, we have for some time been pursuing a four weeks paid leave claims with P&O. The test case for this claim was submitted to a tribunal where we were informed by the Employment Judge that a UK Employment Tribunal is restricted in the law from hearing cases relating to the paid annual leave of seafarers.

From the hearing summary, the most crucial points relating to this matter are:-

“In summary it does not appear to this Tribunal possible to interpret the Working Time Regulations whether by implication, or by the addition of any form of words... in a manner which gives the Tribunal jurisdiction to hear a claim which is specifically excluded by the regulations themselves.”

“Similarly, it is not possible for the Tribunal to create a jurisdiction to hear a claim under the ‘Seafarers Regulations’ which Parliament has not given it.”

From the reasons for the case failing our legal advisers found no means by which we can appeal this decision. At this stage, we continue to lobby government to allow seafarers the right to take working time cases to tribunal. If and when the legislation changes, we will be reevaluating our position.

Redundancies – P&O Dover – Deck and Technical Department

All Quartermasters and SG1As were written to by the Company asking them to identify whether or not they wish to be considered for voluntary redundancy. The Company attached an estimate of voluntary redundancy payments, subject to a Compromise Agreement. Additionally, Quartermasters will be asked to indicate whether or not they wish to re-rank to SG1A.

To date, the responses received indicate that members’ preferences closely match the agreed restructuring proposals. Individual interviews have been postponed and the situation will be re-assessed when all responses have been received.

It has also been agreed that any issues arising during the implementation of these proposals will be the subject of further discussion between RMT and management.

Drugs and Alcohol Policy – P&O North Sea Ferries

Last year we received a revised Drugs and Alcohol Policy from the Company. We sought legal advice on the changes where it was advised that on the whole, the policy is lawful and complied with the Information Commissioners Employment Practices Code of Practice.



We wrote to the Company in line with some specific points the Solicitor had highlighted asking that they note the points and provide their own comments.

The Company replied that in the passage of time the policy had been finalised by the Company's Health, Safety and Environment Committee after comments and feedback from the staff representatives.

The Company replied to our letter noting the comments raised and we have asked our Regional Organiser to keep us informed of any further concerns that arise in relation to this policy.

Job Security, Non Domiciled Seafarers – P&O North Sea Ferries

The Company is in possession of a draft Job Security Agreement from April 2008, which was the basis for discussion to achieve job security for UK ratings in line with the ITF agreement for the non-UK ratings employed on P&O North Sea Ferries.

The initial meeting was not very progressive as the agreement states that we want the Company to be profitable and healthy and the Company's argument is that they are not and have made substantial losses. They also continually mentioned the threat from other low cost operators.

The initial meeting ended with the Company's position that they do not currently support a Job Security Agreement but they understood what we wanted and why. They agreed to take the matter back to the Board for further discussion.

We will also be referring this matter to the International Transport Federation for the issues to be progressed.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary

Rates of Pay and Conditions of Service 2008 – Royal Fleet Auxiliary

The pay offer for our RFA members for 2008 also experienced a delay. Negotiations began promptly but the Treasury had not tabled a pay remit, therefore not allowing the RFA to table a formal offer. By February 2009, we had reached the 3rd and final stage of the dispute procedure over this matter when the final offer was made.

This offer was a 3-year deal consisting of a 1.9% consolidated and pensionable uplift to basic pay in each year and a complicated system of bonus/lump sum payments.

The offer was immediately subject to a referendum of our members where it was accepted by a majority.

We have written to the RFA advising them of our acceptance and that this delay in the pay offer would not be tolerated by RMT or our members in the future.

Maersk (Norfolkline)

Norfolkline – Maersk Marine Services Contract

Norfolkline have informed Maersk Marine Services that they wish to terminate the present Crew and Safety Management Contract provided for Norfolkline Channel and Irish Sea Ro-PAX and Ro-RO services. The intended transfer date is the 26th April 2009.

This is due to the substantial increase in the fleet in the last four years and Norfolkline should become more directly involved in the day-to-day management of the vessels. Also, by simplifying management responsibility and control they can achieve economies of scale and become more cost competitive in the current market.

As a consequence, Maersk will also cease to provide sea staff to Norfolkline but Norfolkline will offer employment to all sea staff under the same terms and conditions via their own offshore employment company. Continuity of service for seniority and employment purposes will be deemed to be continuous. Shore staff employed by Maersk in Dover and Birkenhead associated with providing services to Norfolkline will be offered positions with either company dependant on their area of responsibility and expertise.

The Company have confirmed that the transfer of services will take place under UK TUPE legislation.

We have written to members about the above expressing our concern over the lack of notice and consultation with RMT. We are arranging to meet the company at the earliest opportunity so we can answer any questions and seek to allay any fears or reservations of our members.

OILC – RMT Divers

New RMT Aberdeen Office

Late last year the former OILC Offshore union became part of the RMT family as a result of a transfer of engagements. This gave RMT another office in Aberdeen with another Regional Organiser, Jake Malloy who is primarily responsible for offshore and diving matters.

Rates of Pay and Conditions of Service 2009 – Divers

Following negotiations with RMT, the seven signatories to the Offshore Diving Agreement have tabled the following final offer to our members. This is currently subject to a referendum of all RMT members on whether they wish to accept the offer:-

- An increase to basic rates of pay of RPI plus 1.5% (or 1.5%, whichever is greater) effective 1st November 2009 to 31st October 2012. The RPI rate to be used will be September's rate for each year of the agreement.
- Improvements to insurance benefits. The approximated value is an additional 6% on divers' day rates, 5% for non-divers and 3% for supervisors and superintendents. The rates quoted are based on Year 3 improvements, assumptions about age, health and other individual factors. Actual rates will depend on individual circumstances and subject to underwriting.
- A revision of insurance payments, subject to an annual review of claims, of the following points:-
 - Year One** – Death at work to increase to 80,000 and increase sick pay to cover 7 weeks.
 - Year Two** – Death at work to increase to 90,000 and increase sick pay to cover 8 weeks.
 - Year Three** – Death at work to increase to 100,000 and increase sick pay to cover 9 weeks.
- 100% increase to sat bonus for the 8 public holidays.
- A standby payment for delayed mobilisation to specialist skills projects. Acceptance is subject to working out the details, e.g. which specialist skills are covered. To this end, a working party is to be set up to investigate and develop a form of words.
- The existing arrangements covering PPE boots provision shall continue unless the HSE direct otherwise.

Replacement of UK Riggers with Filipino Labour – Subsea 7

It was recently brought to our attention by members that Subsea 7 were intending to replace UK riggers with Filipino labour once the vessels were back in UK waters. We immediately wrote to the Company expressing our concern and requested that an urgent meeting be arranged.

The Company replied with an assurance that there was no intention to do this at any location where the Offshore Diving Agreement has jurisdiction. They did however mention that they were embarked on a 'phased change' of the North Sea sector but they would do their best to deploy any personnel within other operational areas of the business.

RMT and affected members still have concerns over the future manning at Subsea 7. A meeting is due to be arranged with the Company and the Coordinator to discuss any outstanding planned changes.

NATIONAL POLICY

POLITICAL REPORT

2009 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Despite the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by Irish voters, the EU is still seeking to impose the treaty and its neo-liberal and privatisation agenda onto member states.

It was against this background that the Council of Executives unanimously agreed to support the No2EU:Yes to Democracy electoral platform in the 2009 euro elections. The coalition was formed after it became clear that the three main parties supported the EU's privatisation agenda and European Court of Justice rulings that have undermined trade union rights as well as ratifying the Lisbon Treaty without the referendum the government promised to hold on the issue in its 2005 election manifesto. This shared right-wing agenda has alienated millions of voters and led to the rise of the British National Party and UKIP.

In the event of winning seats, No2EU:Yes to Democracy agreed a policy of taking the title MEP but maintaining an 'empty chair' policy in protest at the undemocratic nature of EU structures and the notorious EU gravy train which allows MEPs to collect £1 million over a five year period despite the fact that the European 'parliament' has no legislative powers.



The union donated £45,000 from the Political Fund to the campaign and I was leader of the No2EU platform as a temporary political party. The union announced a full list of candidates in every electoral area, excluding Northern Ireland and at the time of writing the campaign was increasingly being able to promote its key messages. These included,

- Rejection of the Lisbon Treaty
- No to EU directives that privatise our public services
- Defending and developing British manufacturing
- Repealing anti-trade union rulings and social dumping laws
- No to racism and fascism, Yes to international solidarity
- No to EU militarisation
- Restoring democracy to EU member states
- Replacing unequal EU trade deals with fair trade that benefits developing nations
- Scraping EU rules designed to stop member states from implementing reflationary economic policies
- Keeping Britain out of the Eurozone

RMT PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The RMT Parliamentary Group has grown to twenty MPs and continues to pursue the union's agenda and a detailed written report will be distributed to delegates and branches. The union is also now taken practical steps to re-establish parliamentary groups in Scotland and Wales.

TRADE UNION COORDINATING GROUP

Together with NUJ, PCS and FBU the RMT launched the Trade Union Coordinating Group at the 2008 TUC. Since then the group has been joined by BAFWU, NAPO, POA and URTU and enjoyed a successful launch in Parliament attended by numerous MPs and Peers. The group has been established to give trade unions a new and stronger voice in parliament in recognition that as many unions increasingly co-ordinate industrial and political campaigning outside of parliament there is an urgent need to co-ordinate their representation within parliament. The group is seeking to set the political agenda on the following issues and respond forcefully to developments in Government and in Parliament.

- Opposition to the privatisation of public services and support for public ownership,
- The promotion of trade union rights, in particular the enactment of the Trade Union Freedom Bill,
- The eradication of low pay and the protection of working people's living standards by opposition to cuts in pay and pensions, the securing of a decent minimum wage and properly negotiated wage settlements,
- The promotion of equalities legislation to eliminate discrimination in pay, and conditions of employment,
- The setting of a new legislative framework for health and safety to ensure laws and resources are available to secure quality of life at work.
- The promotion of global justice and internationalism.

CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS THE CRISIS IN WORKING CLASS POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

As a result of an AGM decision this conference was held in January 2009. Despite and unavoidable clash with an emergency demonstrations against Israel's invasion of Gaza the conference was attended by 150 people who on the whole were able to debate the issues involved in a comradely manner.

RMT POLITICAL SCHOOL

Since the last AGM two more week long RMT Political Schools were held in July and October. With the assistance of guest speakers and our parliamentary group the purpose of the week long school was for participants to be equipped with a sound understanding of the political role of trade unions, the RMT's political activity, our international work and how Branches and Regions can effectively support RMT national campaigns and develop local campaigning initiatives.

The feed-back from the students who attended continues to be very positive and it is the intention that further schools will be advertised and scheduled so that all members who wish to participate in the school will be allowed to do so.

PEOPLE'S CHARTER

The union was instrumental in the launch of the Peoples Charter in March at Parliament on 11th March. I was joined by other trade unionists, celebrities, academics and activists, and the convenor of our Parliamentary Group, John McDonnell MP. It is important to build on this highly successful launch and I would therefore urge Branches and Regions to be proactive in building support for the Peoples Charter.

A STATED IN THE EARLY DAY MOTION WHICH ACCOMPANIED ITS LAUNCH THE CHARTER

“sets out a programme for challenging the economic crisis and providing hope for a fairer society; notes that this programme includes public ownership of the main banks, public utilities and transport and ending the privatisation of public services, a progressive tax system, investment for full employment, increasing the minimum wage, the restoration of the earnings link for state pensions, an end to home repossessions, empowerment of local authorities to provide affordable quality housing for all, the ending of child poverty, enforced equal pay for women, the restoration of trades’ union rights, halting new nuclear weapons and investment for a greener and safer world free of poverty and famine; further notes that the Charter is already supported by the general secretaries of some of Britain’s biggest trades’ unions as well as numerous national trades’ unions, campaigning organisations and prominent people from all walks of life; further welcomes the Charter’s declared ambition of collecting one million signatures; and calls upon the Government to respond positively to the demands of this campaign and begin putting people first before the interests of big business and corporate finance”

Members are urged to build the support for the charter in their workplaces and communities. Visit www.thepeoplescharter.com.

ATTACK ON JOBS: RAILWAYS AND LONDON UNDERGROUND.

Rail bosses are using the recession as an excuse to attack jobs and conditions and cut back on services and essential rail works. At the same time rail fat cats are raking in big profits and bonuses on the back of the most expensive fares in Europe. Unless action is taken the recession will result in more attacks on rail workers and rail services.

There is a real fear that ‘efficiency saving’ cuts will have a serious consequence on the industry’s health and safety, therefore placing the workforce and passengers at risk. Network Rail is reducing the frequency of track inspections and routine signals maintenance and combined with the reduction in renewals work this could lead to another Hatfield, Potters Bar or Grayrigg. Specific attacks include

NETWORK RAIL

Network Rail is deferring 28 percent of rail renewals (e.g. laying new track, installing new signals) meaning at least a 1000 jobs are at risk. Network Rail admits in its 2009-10 business plan that a “huge reduction in track renewals expenditure” will have a “major impact on the supply chain” with “20% - 30% less heavy materials” resulting in “supply chain redundancies”. This decision will have a significant knock-on effect on the rail freight industry and in addition a whole range of other industries such as quarrying and steel.

It is important to note that this deferral of work is not as a result of falling passenger numbers caused by the recession. It stems from a requirement for 22 per cent efficiency savings for the period 2009 – 2014 determined by the Office of Rail Regulation last October. Network Rail is seeking in part to achieve these efficiencies by deferring renewals work.

The job cuts will of course impact on services and significantly raise safety risks. The rail unions wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport in January 2009 warning that:

“... in the name of efficiency savings Network Rail is cutting the frequency of track inspections and routine signals maintenance. We are now deeply concerned that combined with the reduction in renewals work the cumulative effect will be to significantly raise safety risks to passengers and workers. We fear conditions are being created which could lead to another Hatfield, Potters Bar or Grayrigg.”

RAIL FREIGHT

The rail freight industry has and continues to enjoy the benefit of considerable indirect Government subsidy and track access concessions to encourage freight on rail to assist in the battle to reduce carbon emissions. It must surely then be completely unacceptable for the UK largest rail freight company, DB Schenker Rail, owned by German State railways, to announce the loss of over 500 skilled jobs. This again not only flies in the face of the Government's aim to protect jobs but also raises serious concerns that the United Kingdom Government's rail freight policy is being undermined by overseas and commercial interests. DB Schenker Rail has announced that further significant numbers are likely to be at risk due Network Rail announcing a deferral in renewals work.

TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Despite being heavily subsidised and posting dividend increases of between ten and thirty-three per cent in 2008, the Train Operating Companies have already announced almost 2000 job losses allegedly in response to predictions of falling passenger growth. Train Operating Companies who have announced job losses include, South West Trains, South Eastern Trains, First Capital Connect, Eurostar, First ScotRail National Express East Anglia, National Express East Coast, East Midlands Trains, Merseyrail. The union has mounted a number of campaigns in these companies including defending ticket offices, station and catering staff.

TRAIN MANUFACTURING

Even where the Government has made apparently positive attempts to boost the industry by bringing forward the order to manufacture 200 extra carriages, the chances of this going to the UK will be reduced, if the UK's only train manufacturing, Bombardier in Derby, continues to suffer from its suppliers closing down as a result of the recession. The future of UK train manufacture was also dealt a serious blow by the decision to award the contract for the manufacture of new trains for the East Coast mainline and First Great Western to Hitachi in Japan.

Eurostar

Jobs are under threat through the restructuring of Eurostar which the union is linking up with our French and Belgium counterparts to resist. Astonishingly the government is also willing to waste billions of pounds by writing off the debts of Eurostar in preparation for privatisation and restructuring.

London Underground

Announcing his TfL business policy on 6th November 2008, Mr Johnson announced that £2.4bn would be saved over the next ten years by a programme of massive job cuts and scrapping transport projects proposed by the previous Mayor. The number of jobs under threat across London Underground and TfL could be as high as 3,000. Management are ripping up no compulsory redundancy and staffing agreements.

The economic crisis demands concerted and coordinated action to protect jobs. The rail industry should be a powerhouse for protecting “green jobs.” Yet the main components of our fragmented railway industry have proved themselves incapable of meeting this challenge. For months the unions have been imploring the Government to intervene and defend these rail jobs. Despite for all the talk of bringing forward transport projects and green projects to help beat the recession the fact is the Government is standing aside while skilled rail workers are being thrown on the dole.

Through the Parliamentary Group, Transport Select Committees, production of research, the media and meetings with Ministers and a lobby of Parliament the Union has been demanding:

- An end to cuts in rail jobs and services. No more big fare hikes. A freeze in shareholder dividends with all profits instead invested to protect services and jobs and for fairer fares.
- An urgent industry-wide programme so our railways can provide a green stimulus to the economy to help fight the economic downturn.
- A wholly integrated, publicly-owned and accountable People's Railway and London Underground which puts people before profit and where passengers and workers have a real voice.

RAILWAY FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS

April 2009 saw the introduction of new regulations which saw key regulations introduced after the 1989 Kings Cross Fire will be retained representing a huge victory for RMT campaigning.

LONDON UNDERGROUND CLEANERS CAMPAIGN

In a magnificent demonstration of solidarity, 700 cleaners working for contractors on London Underground voted by a margin of 125-to-one to take strike action for the London Living Wage of £7.45 per hour and improved working conditions.

RMT cleaners working for ISS, ITS, ICS and GMB took two periods of strike action in July 2008 and the Union held a rally of Parliament and Lobby of City Hall to publicise their cause. Fifty MPs signed an Early Day Motion tabled by the Parliamentary Group in support of the cleaners' actions and the RMT released a dossier documenting the scandalous working conditions cleaners were forced to endure. Information was also gathered on the cleaning companies' large profits.

Further strike action was suspended after the cleaning companies undertook to pay the London Living Wage by April 2009.

RMT also organised a meeting between our cleaners and the Low Pay Commission which was gathering evidence for its report into the setting the level of the National Minimum Wage.

The Union's campaign for improved working conditions and against the disgraceful practice of third-party sackings will continue.



TYNE & WEAR METRO

The Tyne and Wear Metro is a successful, integrated, publicly-owned and accountable railway providing transportation to 40 million passengers every year. With over 96% of its trains running on time, it is the UK's most punctual railway.

In spite of this high level of performance and success, incredibly the service is threatened with fragmentation and privatisation. The UK Government has decreed that £300 million of essential funding for the next decade to operate the service and upgrade the infrastructure worth is dependent on the "market testing" of its operations.

This means that bids will be invited from the private sector to run the operations including stations, tram cars and fleet maintenance. Employees would transfer to the private sector. A seven year contract (plus an additional two years depending on performance) will be awarded in January 2010. The successful bidder will start work on 1 April 2010. A public sector bid will also be allowed and will be submitted by an in house management team.

The fragmentation of the Metro is being pursued even though the original business case proposed by Nexus Tyne & Wear Metro said that in order to provide best value there should be a "vertically integrated railway within the whole of the Metro."

The Union has been campaigning to keep the Metro public through leafleting meetings with Ministers and MPs, and the TUC. An opinion poll conducted by ICM Omnibus for RMT in September 2008 surveyed a representative sample of 549 people in Tyne and Wear, Cleveland County Durham and Northumberland. It found that only 1 in 5 of those asked supported the Tyne & Wear Metro being operated by the private sector.

BUS INDUSTRY

The Local Transport Bill received Royal Assent in November 2008.

The Bill contained proposal to make it easier for local authorities to regulate buses through the introduction of what are known as "Quality Contracts." Quality Contracts are basically where a local authority invites operators to run services and only the operator who wins the bid can operate services in that area.

The Bill presented challenges for bus workers security of employment and pensions. This is because when the Bill was first published last autumn it contained no provisions for TUPE or pension protection in the event that a local authority decided to introduce a Quality Contract.

Together with our Parliamentary Group and working with the TUC and other unions in the bus industry, the union campaigned for changes to the Bill including submissions to the Transport Select Committee; persuading government to set up a working group; meetings with MPs, Lords, Ministers and Civil Servants, ensuring amendments were tabled in the Lords and House of Commons and supporting a parliamentary motion.

The result of this campaign has meant the union was able to make progress in a number of areas. Significantly the government agreed to introduce amendments to the face of Bill that will ensure full pension protection for bus workers who transfer to a Quality Contract. It has also been confirmed that bus workers who transfer to a Quality Contract will be eligible to join the Local Government Pension scheme, but whether they actually join will be a matter for the bus operator and local authority in negotiation with the trade union.

The Government also introduced amendments providing for TUPE transfer for all workers in the Quality Contract area when the contract comes into force and also TUPE transfer for bus workers who were employed by an operator which pulls out before a Quality Contract comes into force. Minister have also said they will introduce regulations that will increase the deregistration notice period, from 56 to 112 days, a bus operator is required to give if they decide to deregister as the result of a Quality Contract.

The Government has also confirmed that the guidance for local authorities on Quality Contracts will contain provisions that the trade unions have to be consulted on whether a contract is introduced and what form the contract should take.

There will now be more discussions with unions on the detailed TUPE and pension issues before further legislation, in the form of regulations, are introduced.

TRADE UNION FREEDOM BILL

The 2008 Employment Act was a very significant lost opportunity to address the failures of UK law to meet international human rights standards on collective and individual work place issues.

In October 2008, despite a widespread campaign from the United Campaign's supporters and constant pressing from MPs, the Minister for Employment Relations, Pat McFadden, refused to offer even a consultation to address the weaknesses in the law. A vote was forced and 45 Labour MPs voted for a key clause taken from the Trade Union Rights and Freedoms Bill. This led to Gordon Brown suffering his biggest rebellion in the Commons since taking office, although the amendment was not passed.

NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS NETWORK

The National Shop Stewards Network, initiated by the RMT has grown from strength to strength and has now developed networks in most regions and in Scotland and Wales. The third National Shop Stewards Network national conference was due to on Saturday 27th June in London.

TUC

The RMT has continued to play an active role in the TUC, STUC and Wales TUC.

At the 2008 TUC Congress Peter Hall was re-elected unopposed, along with representatives of the big four unions to the General Purposes Committee.

At the STUC, the union was again highly visible and congratulations go to Regional Organiser Phil McGarry who was President of the STUC Regional Organiser Brendan Kelly is the new RMT representatives on the Wales TUC General Council.

I will also be representing the union at this year's Irish Congress of Trade unions Biennial Conference.

GENERAL POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING

As well as campaigning in our specialised spheres of transport and employment rights, RMT has continued to play a full part in the progressive political agenda either affiliated to or support directly the following organisations:

- No2EU - Yes to Democracy**
- Trade Unionists Against the EU Constitution**
- Campaign Against Euro Federalism**
- Public services not Private Profit**
- Campaign for Better Transport**
- Freight on Rail**
- United Campaign to repeal the anti trade union laws**
- Institute of employment rights**
- Unite Against Fascism**
- Labour Representation Committee**
- Trade Union Friends of Searchlight**
- Campaign for Corporate Accountability**
- Defend Council Housing**
- No Sweat Campaign**
- Marx Memorial Library**
- Peoples Press**
- London Hazards Centre**
- Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**
- Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom**
- Trustees of the Working Class Movement Library**
- The Mechanics Institute**
- Searchlight**
- Labour Land Campaign**
- 150TH anniversary of birth of George Lansbury events**

INTERNATIONAL

International Transport Workers Federation

The Union has continued to play an active international role, including a prominent part in the International Transport Workers Federation where I have continued to serve on its Executive Committee. I have also continued to be Secretary of the UK ITF Coordinating Committee.

This year's ITF Rail day of action in March coincided with workers memorial day and used to campaign against staff assaults worldwide.

The union also played an active part in the ITF Rail Section conference in Brazil and was the only affiliate to submit resolutions.

European Transport Workers Federation

The union also continued to play an active role in the European Transport Workers Federation participating in a number of European wide seminars discussing European Rail policy and strategies for coordinating European wide collective bargaining.

European Rail Policy

Following the decision to hold a conference of European rail trade unionists in June to discuss European rail privatisation and liberalisation, the union sent a huge delegation to the ETF demonstration against rail liberalisation in Paris in November and is supporting a conference in Cologne to establish a European Coalition against rail privatisation

European Labour Law

The union has continued to campaign against the anti trade union European Court of Justice rulings through our membership of the ETF and through the United Campaign, our parliamentary group and, of course, the No2EU platform.

International Solidarity

We have continued to forge links with our sister unions abroad and important solidarity links were have again been made including the US AFL- CIO, Egyptian Rail workers, and Transnet in Germany. Justice for Colombia continues to provide speakers for the RMT political school.



We have once again prioritised the defence of Cuba as one of our lead international campaign sending a delegation to Cuba for the 50 year anniversary and helping members with sponsorship for the Cuba Cycle Ride. In the week before the 2009 AGM will witness the 7th annual Garden Party for Cuba which is now a established and highly popular event in the Labour Movement Calendar.

The Union has supported a numbers of international campaigns, including:

Stop the War Coalition

International Centre for Trade Union Rights

Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Justice for Colombia Campaign

Amnesty International

War on Want

Cuba Solidarity Campaign

Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign

The People's Movement

SHIPPING POLICY

UK Shipping Industry Campaign

In the last year my campaigning in the UK Shipping Industry has mainly focused on the application of the National Minimum Wage to ships in UK territorial waters.

In the forthcoming year I expect to be leading the campaign to end the seafarers' exemption on the Race Relations Act. Reform has been promised in the Single Equality legislation which will be going through Parliament in the next year.

Many of the campaigning issues will of course be familiar to RMT members. It is unfortunate that we have not resolved the issues to our satisfaction but our lobbying has raised the profile of many of the issues on social standards in UK shipping. We are now pushing hard for a Government decision on the National Minimum Wage. We have also succeeded in winning our campaign for implementation of work permits in the one-port sector

Joint Training Proposals

I have continued to directly make the case for enhanced ratings training funding to Government Ministers. You will recall that a joint document from all sides of the UK Shipping Industry had been presented to the Department for Transport. The agreement seeks enhanced training support for companies that agree on a voluntary basis to train and employ UK seafarers, for a minimum period, extended beyond training time. In return companies would receive increased SMART training funds.

Significantly it has also been proposed that companies now have an equal option to train ratings as well as officers to fulfil their tonnage tax training commitment. This has arisen following pressure from the Union for concessions relating to the tonnage tax.

The Industry has not been able to make progress with these proposals. However, in light of the new Government funding for apprenticeships, the union has recently drafted a revised document alongside Nautilus UK and the Chamber of Shipping. This has now been presented to Ministers and we await their response.

RACE RELATIONS ACT

RMT has continued to press for reform of the legislation which allows foreign national seafarers to be discriminated against in respect of their pay and conditions when working on UK flagged ships. Following pressure from RMT, and the fact that the UK legislation breaches the EU Free Movement of Workers provisions, the Department for Transport consulted on changes to the existing legislation.

Subsequent proposals to reform the legislation have been expected within the Single Equality Bill proposed legislation. However, it is now anticipated that the actual legislation will not pass through Parliament for several months as the Single Equality Bill has been published as an enabling piece of legislation that will facilitate reform of the existing seafarers' exemption under the 1976 Race Relations Act.

We would hope that in order to achieve compliance with the legislation, the UK Government as a minimum will outlaw discrimination against EU nationals. However, we cannot take anything for granted and I will therefore be seeking to keep the issue of discrimination on seafarers pay firmly on the agenda.

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

Regrettably I was unsuccessful in amending the Employment Bill to include proper coverage of the National Minimum Wage for seafarers of all nationalities employed on vessels in UK territorial waters.

Unfortunately we have been informed by our legal advisors that shipping companies can claim under the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention the Right to Innocent and Free Passage where they are trading to ports outside the UK. However there is no reason why the National Minimum Wage could not be implemented on ships trading between UK Ports or in the UK sector of the offshore industry. I have now been assured that a Government decision will be forthcoming on this matter very soon and we will continue to raise it at every opportunity. It is a national scandal that such appalling low pay continues.

I have presented detailed evidence to the Department for Transport of below National Minimum Wage rates of pay existing on ships, including some trading between two UK Ports. At the moment ship-owners have to pay the National Minimum Wage for UK nationals on UK flagged ships, but for foreign nationals the seafarer has to be employed on a UK flagged ship and the ship has to be within UK Internal Waters.

In addition, I have worked with the TUC and the RMT Parliamentary Group on both the National Minimum Wage and the Race Relations Act. They have both written to Ministers and pressed them to take action in face to face meetings.

SCOTTISH FERRY SERVICES

I have continued to work alongside the STUC to promote the case for publicly run ferry services and to advance the case against any further tendering or fragmentation of ferry services.

Despite previous statements there is no sign that the Executive intend to reverse the tendering process for the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services. It is also of major concern that the European Commission intend to hold an Investigation into the subsidies currently paid by the Scottish Executive for the operation of ferry services in the Northern Isles and Clyde and Hebrides.

I have therefore raised this issue in the European Parliament with Scottish MEPs and will continue to work with the STUC to lobby politicians in Scotland and Europe. The worst possible scenario which must be avoided is a possible breakup of the existing ferry networks.

The Scottish Executive is also carrying out a review of Scottish ferry services. The STUC is pressing for trade union involvement in the review process. I hope that the review by Scottish Government will lead to enhanced ferry services, greater integration and public control.

Offshore Industry

Recent news from the North Sea has sadly been dominated by the recent helicopter tragedy which killed 16 workers on board a Super Puma helicopter that crashed into the sea.

Air accident investigators have published an initial report that states that the crash was killed by a catastrophic gearbox failure. The report recommended an improved regime of safety checks.

An initial series of safety checks have taken place but I have called for the grounding of all similar Super Puma helicopters. I believe this is the only safe course of action until the reasons for the gearbox failure are fully understood. I have also advised members that if they do not feel safe flying in one of these helicopters then they should refuse to fly.

In the year since my last report we have also seen the twentieth anniversary of the Piper Alpha oil platform disaster in July 2008 which killed 167 workers. The offshore industry must not forget the lessons of this disaster. However the union has still had to warn operators of the dangers of inadequate safety regimes on certain oil rigs and workers must be free to raise safety concerns without fear of repercussions.

Seafarers Earnings Deductions

The Inland Revenue have introduced changes to Seafarers Earnings Deductions (SED) for those employed in the offshore industry. Despite amendments made to the initial proposals I remain concerned that there are likely to be seafarers engaged to work on vessels (not classified as ships) who could be disqualified from SED.

The Union, together with Nautilus UK and the Chamber of Shipping have made representations to the Inland Revenue on a number of other issues in order to try and reduce the negative impact on RMT members. Arising from this we have succeeded in persuading the Inland Revenue to adopt a more pragmatic view on certain areas.

Initially the Treasury stated that construction, construction support, well service and dive support vessels would automatically be disqualified from SED. Following our representations they were persuaded to move away from this position. The Treasury has instead referred to the statutory definition of an offshore installation which is that of a vessel engaged in exploiting mineral resources and is not mobile whilst doing so. They have stated that vessels that do not meet both of these conditions will continue to be classified as ships and workers on these vessels will still qualify for SED. However they have insisted that they are still obliged to implement changes to SED Guidance on eligibility arising from the *Pride of South America* judgment.

Given the fact that some members are likely to find that their entitlement to SED will be withdrawn I am currently considering the possibility of a Judicial Review.

Managed Migration

I am pleased to report that following several years of representations to the Department for Transport I have been advised that implementation of the work permit system (now under Managed Migration) is to take place in the one-port sector of the offshore industry. This was due in April 2009 but has been delayed.

Working Time

The union believes that seafarers in all sectors of the Industry should receive four weeks annual leave in addition to rest periods taken after long and intensive periods of work.

Unfortunately a recent Judgment in the Employment Appeal Tribunal has set back the prospects of any success. In the recent case of *Craig and ors v Transocean International Resources Ltd and ors*, the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) held that rostered time off could be designated by the employer as annual leave as it was time when the employees would not be working, nor was it compensatory rest. The case was taken under the general 1998 Working Time regulations as extended to the offshore sector.

I can however report that as a result of consistent RMT lobbying the Government have brought forward proposals to amend the sector specific maritime UK regulations on working time to enable seafarers to take a claim to an Employment Tribunal for failure by an employer to properly implement the regulations. The four weeks' statutory annual leave will also be increased as a result of minimum leave provisions as provided for under the ILO Seafarers Convention and the Government commitment to increase leave to take into account bank holidays.

European Transport Workers Federation

I have continued to press for the European Transport Workers Federation (ETF) to bring forward a sustained programme of campaigning against social dumping and to outlaw discriminatory practices that still exist within the European Union.

RMT held a successful demonstration in Brussels. Many other ETF affiliates also demonstrated against seafaring job losses as a result of RMT lobbying within the maritime section of the ETF.

The union also continues to work alongside other North West European affiliates within the IIF to tackle sub-standard shipping in waters close to the UK.

ILO Seafarers Convention

I have continued to ensure RMT representation on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) working party which is considering implementation in the UK of the consolidated ILO Convention on Seafarers' Rights. A number of submissions have already been made by the union in response to consultation from the MCA.

I want to ensure that seafarers serving on UK flagged vessels benefit in full from any new rights under the new Convention, and also that existing UK entitlements are not devalued where they are higher than the minimum standards outlined in the new Convention.

Rates of Pay and Conditions of Service 2009

Pay submissions in 2009 have reflected the Union's policy to seek a substantial increase in rates of pay and improved conditions of service. All claims have been supported by a comprehensive analysis of economic conditions and the cost of living for our members.

Wherever relevant, pay submissions have sought to secure a minimum flat rate increase for the lowest paid members with particular attention being paid to companies where there are engineers on salaries of £16,000 or less.

Since RPI started falling in October 2008, all pay submissions have been revised to reiterate the point that lower inflation does not necessarily mean lower living costs for our members. The submissions have highlighted how in reality the poorest sectors of society face a higher rate of inflation than the wealthiest sectors. Reference has also been made to the fact that the downward pressure on RPI from the VAT cut at the end of 2008 is only temporary as this is due to be reversed in January 2010. Furthermore, the pay submissions make the point that although food prices and fuel prices are falling, they are still staggeringly high as prices rose so steeply last year. The submissions also offer evidence of the rising cost of childcare which impacts upon members with young families. All pay submissions continue to emphasize that our members' financial commitments have increased at a much greater rate than inflation and living standards have suffered as a result.

As the threat of deflation became apparent towards the end of 2008, all Officers with responsibility for pay negotiations were advised to avoid any pay deals linked to RPI.

Key settlements already agreed in 2009 include Balfour Beatty Rail Plant (Electrification) which saw a 3.9% increase to pay and London Allowance, Island Line which saw a 4.8% increase to pay, Newhaven Ports which saw an increase of 4% and Arriva Trains Wales Drivers where there was a basic rate increase of 3.0% or RPI plus 0.25%, whichever is the greater.



Deals Agreed 2008

Company	Award	Effective
	Bus	
Damory Coaches	2-stage deal Stage 1: increase in the hourly rate to £7.50 Stage 2: increase in the hourly rate to £7.75 Holiday pay based on an average working week. Additional day's leave for staff with 3 years' service or more upon completing 12 months free of sickness absence. Overnight allowance to be increased from £15 to £20	April 08 October 08
First Hampshire & Dorset (Weybridge & Bridport)	2 nd year, 2-year deal 3.6% on basic rates, overtime and premiums	September 08
First Devon and Cornwall	DRIVERS – NAT EX AND SOUTH DEVON 30 th March 2008 29 th March 2009 BASIC £7.70 £7.95 OVERTIME £8.89 £9.15 DRIVERS – CORNWALL AND NORTH DEVON 30 th March 2008 29 th March 2009 BASIC £7.50 £7.85 OVERTIME £8.71 £8.97 If February 2010 RPI is greater than 4.25%, the difference between RPI and 4.25% will be applied to harmonised rates from 28 th March. ROP harmonised across the company from April 2010. Agreement to work towards revised schedules agreement, components, including sign on/sign off times and duty break times. ENGINEERING STAFF 3.5% from March, 2008, 4% from March, 2009, and 4% from March 2010. Separate discussions to harmonise company cleaners' rates of pay. CLERICAL STAFF 3% from March 2008, 3% from March 2009 and 3.25% from March 2010. Minimum payment increase of 21p per hour; based on a 39 hour week, full time position. Also applicable to NVQ Assessor allowance, Leading Driver Allowance, Driving Instructor Allowance, Relief SDO Allowance and Buddy Driver Allowance.	March 08 28 th March 2010 £8.20 £9.35 28 th March 2010 £8.20 £9.35
First Somerset & Avon	2 nd year, 2-year deal - 4.6%	April 08
Solent Blue Line	2-stage increase Stage 1: Driver basic increased to £8.85 ph. O/T rate to £9.85 ph Stage 2: Driver basic increased to £9 ph. O/T rate to £10 ph • Plus £300 lump sum to Marchwood services Drivers as compensation for delaying the pay review from 1 st September 07 to 24 th February 08 • Evening and weekend hrly premium increased to £0.35 ph • Nightstar driving rates remain unchanged, but all other grades' increase equivalent to the Drivers increase.	January 08 July 08
Southern Vectis	2 nd year, 2-year deal 5.1% (Increase equivalent to January 2008 RPI figure + 1%) on basic rates of pay • Guaranteed Driver minimum of £8.20ph • Cleaner O/T rate to be 50% above the new basic	February 08 Engineers, Clerical & Supervisory staff, June 08 for Drivers
Stagecoach Devon	3 rd year, 3-year deal 3.3% or RPI, whichever is greater(over 8 months)	September 08
Stagecoach East Midlands (former Lincs Road Car depots)	2 nd stage, 3-stage deal 2.65% for all grades (taking Big Bus rate £7.75 ph) Stage 3: 3.22% for all grades (taking Big Bus rate £8.00 ph)	June 08 January 09
Stagecoach Hampshire Basingstoke Engineers	2-year deal Year 1: 4.8% Year 2: 3% or RPI, whichever is greater	May 08 May 09
Wilts & Dorset	4%	March/April 08(weekly/monthly)
	Road Transport	
City Link	2.5% (imposed)	January 08
DHL Boots Chester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Immediate introduction of a 5-day week ▪ 3.75% increase for shifts starting between 00:00 and 03:59 ▪ extra 2 rest days per month. 	April 08
DHL Enfield	2 year deal; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4% ▪ 4% ▪ Sick waiting days reduced from 3 to 2 days ▪ Paternity pay increased to mirror average earnings calculated for holiday pay for the first week. Second week remains at Statutory Paternity Pay. ▪ Introduction of incentive bonus based on reduction in fuel consumption; £250 for achieving a target of 5% reduction against fuel efficiency versus budget ▪ Commitment to discuss reducing hours of drivers on the 42.5 hours contract ▪ Commitment to discuss paid meal breaks, plus parity of annual leave across both contracts 	April 08 April 09
DHL Coventry	3.75% for 39-hour warehouse staff 3.25% plus half an hour reduction in working week for 42.5 hour warehouse staff 4% for drivers	April 08

Company	Award	Effective
	3.5% on higher grade duty payments	
DHL Enfield (Warehouse)	3.5%	April 08
DHL Middleton	4% Bereavement leave increased from 3 to 4 days Commitment to discuss greater rostering flexibility	January 08
DHL Prudhoe	A 3% increase in pay, effective 1 st July 2008. An additional day of annual leave.	July 08
DHL Logistics IMI contract (Sheffield)	2 year deal: 3.8% increase to rates of pay and allowances for 2008. 3.8% increase to rates of pay and allowances for 2009.	June 08
UPS/Lynx Express	2 nd year of 2-year deal Year 2: Majority of Lynx employees to be harmonised onto the UPS pay schedule by July 2008. Increase of 3.6% on all ROP and allowances for those not harmonised by that date.	July 08
Wincanton Castleton & Mossend	3.85% on basic rates delivering an the hourly rate to £9.20 1.7% on the overtime rate to £11.52 ph 3.95% on minimum annual leave guarantee to £79.42	May 08
Wincanton Swindon	3.43% inc to basic hourly rate. All other items remain unchanged. Paternity leave increased to 1 week at basic rate and 1 week at statutory rate (£112.75). Explore the possibility of a salaried pay framework for drivers.	May 2008
Shipping		
Forth Ports (Tug Drivers)	3-year deal : Year 2: 3% Year 3: 3% Protection for inflation for years 2 and 3 be based on the RPI figure published in January 2009 and 2010 respectively i.e. if inflation falls between the below ranges, additional percentages will be added to the pay increase: - 3.1%-3.5% - a further 0.5% will be added making 3.5% 3.6% and 4% - a further 0.5% will be added making 4% 4.1% and 4.5% - a further 0.5% will be added making 4.5% 4.6% and 5% - a further 0.5% will be added making a max of 5% Call-out payments made where out-going crews are delayed due to normal operations. Long Service Awards - One-off bonus payment on the anniversary of achieving 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years service. Payment may be in the form of an extra week's leave.	January 09 January 10
Gulf Offshore	2-year offer as follows:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A 5.1% increase in basic pay, effective 1st July 2008. ▪ A 2% increase in basic pay, effective 1st January 2009. ▪ A 3% (plus 1% for those entitled to seniority payments), effective 1st July 2009. ▪ Mileage allowance at 40p per mile as per Inland Revenue guidelines for use of private cars company business. 	July 08 January 09 July 09
Hovertravel	4.5% increase in basic rates with lowest paid staff receiving a £600 lump sum. Paternity pay enhanced to two weeks at full pay and Maternity Pay increased to 8 weeks at 90% pay. Overtime amended - staff taking leave or lieu days within the working week receive payment for extra duties worked within that week over and above their normal duties at the current overtime rate. Pension contribution for new joiners or staff new to the pension scheme will be 5%.	Dec 08
Manchester Canal Ship	4.2%	1 st June 2008
Maersk Supply Ships	2 nd year, 2-year deal Increase to basic rates of pay equivalent to RPI (June 2008)	July 08
NERC	Year One Pay scales compressed from 9 years to 5 years and include consolidation of Deck Skills Ratings Allowance (DRSA) and an additional 2.5% added to the scale, giving a percentage increase of just below 3%. Interim one off payment to small number of staff disadvantaged by scale changes. Year Two Increase of 3% on pay scales effective 1 st July 2009. Role of CPO Scientific and CPO combined into one scale. DRSA consolidated into the roles as set by the new skill grades developed by the Deck Ratings Department Working Group. Proposal to formalise Ratings periods of appointment on board the vessels from four month appointments and replacing this with 2 or 3 months or 2 scientific cruises. Harmonisation of notice period for Ratings to 2 months.	July 08 July 09
Northlink	3 year deal: 5% pay increase backdated to 1 st October 2008. September RPI figure (published in October) increase for 2009 and 2010. Additional two weeks' leave rostered for the year commencing 1 st January 2010, subject to, to conclusion of revised employment Terms & Conditions and working practices (see below). Bonus scheme wef July 2010 based on the NorthLink Ferries Limited contract and financial performance using an appropriate measure such as profit before tax. Discussions on looking at changes to employment terms and conditions including:- Pay Scales, Sickness, Working Practices, Travel to Work Expenses, Length of Working Day, Rostering.	October 08 October 09 October 10
Orkney Ferries	2 nd year, 2-year deal 2.5% (lump sum of £300 consolidated into basic pay)	April 08
Offshore Divers	3 rd year, 3-year deal	November 08

Company	Award	Effective
Jarvis Rail	4.1%	April 08
Jarvis (former Grant Rail)	A 4.1% increase in pay, effective 1 st April 2008. An extra day of annual leave in line with a previous commitment in 2007 with Grant Rail, effective 1 st January 2009.	1 st April 08
Network Rail Maintenance Grades	2 nd year, 21-month deal 4.8% or a minimum of £700, if greater, on basic rates Travel subsidy increased to 50% in April 2008 (plus corresponding increase in the maximum travel subsidy loan to £2,750)	January 08
Signalling Solutions	Reference salaries, London & SE Allowances increased by 3.9%. Movement to April anniversary date giving a 4.875% increase. The next anniversary date to be 1 st April 2010. Overnight Allowance to increase from £5.94 to £6.23 Increases effective 28 th December 2008.	December 2008
Telent	4.1% to employees TUPed from Thales. Pay anniversary to move to July.	March 08
Workshop, Supplies & Train Maintenance		
Alstom Transport West Coast	4.1% or £800, if greater (other than the red circled staff 2%) Increase in the London Weighting of 1% Reduction in working week from 38 to 37, with reduction taken as banked hours, subject to rosters agreed at local level. Extension of Company bonus scheme until September 2008	April 08
Alstom Chester	3% Increase to shift allowance of 2%	April 08
Bombardier Derby	2-year deal Year 2: 4% Greater flexibility on annual leave entitlement.	January 09
Bombardier Chart Leacon	Two-stage, one year deal Stage 1: 3% Stage 2: Further 1% (calculated on rates pre April 08 rates). Allowances and overtime rates applicable to staff under Electrostar terms increased in line with the staged increases.	April 08 October 08
Unipart Rail, Doncaster	4%	April 08
VAE UK	4% on basic rates of pay, overtime and pension	April 08
Cleaning		
ISS Arriva Cross Country	A 4.5% increase	Apr 2008
ISS Northern Rail	2-stage deal for those on station and fleet contracts Stage 1: 3% Stage 2: 1%	April 08 November 08
ISS Advance (Northern Rail)	A one year offer comprising of a 3.5% increase, no strings attached	April 08
ISS Swansea Carriage Cleaners	3%	April 2008
OCS Eurostar	0.25p per hour increase WEF 1 st October 2008 to all staff. Cleaning operative increase from £6.37 to £6.62. 0.38p per hour increase WEF 1 st January 2009 to all staff. Cleaning operative increase from £6.62 to £7.00. Back pay: £100 back pay to all staff employed continuously as at 1 st April 2008 (amount paid pro-rata for staff commencing employment from 2 nd April to 31 st August 2008). 0.25p per hour increase paid to staff for hours worked from 1 st October 08 through the date the pay increase is activated on the payroll system.	October 2008 January 2009
Wettons (Southeastern contract)	2 nd year, 2-year deal Increase of 25p per hour to basic rates of all staff 28 days annual leave, including bank holidays (effective April 08)	October 08
Catering		
At Seat Catering (Arriva Trains Wales)	2-year award Year 1: 5.7% delivering an hourly rate of £6ph Year 2: 4% or RPI, whichever is greater	April 08 April 09
Rail Freight Operating Company		
Freightliner	4%	April 08
Train Operating Company		
Arriva Cross Country	Two Year deal: Train Managers: 4.5% increase in basic rates, plus amendment to the Sunday Hourly rate to basic rate plus 17.5% of basic. 1 st Class Hosts and Retail Service Managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4.5% increase in basic rates ▪ Hourly payable rate payable for weekly hours from 36th to 41st hour equalised to the hourly rate payable for the first 35 hours. Senior Conductors: Basic increase of 5% Establishment of joint working party on harmonisation of commission payments and use of Avantix equipment. Station Staff, RPIs, and Cleaners: Basic increase of 5% All associated allowances increased by 4.5% Year Two increase based on RPI + 0.75%. (RPI figure being the last figure published before	1 st April 08

Company	Award	Effective
	the pay anniversary date) All allowances increased by RPI + 0.75%	1 st April 09
Arriva Trains Wales Drivers	A 2 year deal: Basic rate increase of 4.75%. Basic rate increase of 3.0% or RPI plus 0.25%, if greater, (RPI figure being that published during the month of June 2009). Basic rate increase will apply to pay enhancements. Additional floating day's leave, from 2009 holiday year, plus a further floating day's leave, from the 2010 holiday year, bringing total entitlement up to 28 days per year. Increase of basic rate pay for Year One and Year Two probationary drivers, up from 85% to 87.5% of the fully productive drivers rate from 1 st July 2008 and a further increase from 87.5% to 90% from 1 st July 2009.	July 08 July 09
Arriva Trains Wales Drivers	Year One Basic rate increase of 4.75%, effective 1 st July 2008. Additional payment of 0.35% on basic pay in exchange for moving pay anniversary 1 st July 2010 to 1 st August 2010. Increase in basic pay for year one and year two probationary drivers from 85% to 87.5% of the fully productive drivers rate, effective 1 st July 2008. Additional day's floating leave from 2009 holiday year. Year Two Basic rate increase of 3.0% or RPI plus 0.25%, if greater, effective 1 st July 2009. (RPI figure to be that published during June 2009). An additional day's floating leave effective from 2010 holiday year. Increase in basic rate pay for year one and year two probationary drivers from 87.5% to 90% of the fully productive drivers rate, effective 1 st July 2009.	July 2008 July 2009
Chiltern Railways	2 nd stage, 28 month deal (ending August 2009) 0.76% on basic rates of pay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the working week from 37 hours to 36 hours for ticket office staff and catering staff (stewards and senior stewards) Stage 3 July 2008 RPI + 1% or £750, if greater on basic pay rates. Outer and Inner London Allowance increased by July 08 RPI + 1%. For depot staff, the July 2008 RPI + 1% applied to the non-pensionable shift supplement and annualised hours allowance. This uplift also applied to pensionable rate of pay as a pension tier in order to close the gap between non-pensionable and pensionable pay. Subject to costs from the pension actuaries. Train Host's early booking on payment increased from July 2008 by RPI plus 1%. Payment for working Sunday/Rest Days (DVR unsocial hours payment) increased by the July 2008 RPI plus 1%.	April 08 July 08 September 08
C2C	4.6% on basic rates and dynamic allowances from 7 th July 2008, plus, commitment to restart discussions on terms and conditions.	July 08
Island Line (SWT Franchise)	A 4.8% increase to basic rates of pay	6 th October 2008
First Capital Connect	4.6% on basic rates and dynamic allowances, including London and Associated Allowances. Maternity benefits increased for staff with less than 1 year's service to 12 weeks at full pay and 27 weeks at SMP, staff with 1 year or more service, 22 weeks at full pay and 17 weeks at SMP. Paternity leave amended to permit staff to take the first week at full pay in blocks of one or more days to be taken over a 3-month period from the date of the first leave. Extension of the right to seek flexible working to parents of children up to the age of 16. Plus introduction of an appeals facility in respect of applications for flexible working.	April 08
First Capital Connect Engineering Grades	An increase of 4.6% effective 6 th April 2008, to pay and any salary-related dynamic allowances. Full pensionable pay will be implemented for maintenance staff at Cauldwell depot via a PRP, effective 5 th April 2009. Engineering Staff required to drive maintenance road vehicles to attend units in traffic to receive £15 per 4 week period. Consolidation of SQMS bonus payment into salary levels for engineering grades at Hornsey Depot by way of a PRP from 5 th April 2009. Family Friendly Policies Maternity Benefits increased as follows: Staff with less than 1 years service 12 weeks at full pay and 27 weeks at SMP. Staff with 1 year or more service 22 weeks at fully pay and 17 weeks at SMP. Amendments to Paternity Leave arrangements. FCC will extend the right to seek flexible Establishment of a working party to consider harmonising terms and conditions of employment for engineering maintenance grades.	April 08
First Great Western, Drivers	5.1% on basic rates of pay and allowances Commitment to enter further restructuring talks	April 08
First Great Western (excluding drivers)	2 nd year, 2-year deal: RPI plus 1% on basic rates of pay and allowances	May 08
Heathrow Express Service Proposition Managers (Trains)	Basic salary of the new role of Service Proposition Manager (Trains) increased to £42,000. Bonus linked to both Heathrow Express' EBITDA achievement for the year ending 31 st December 08 and the completion of personal objectives, split as follows: 50% (3.5% of basic salary) paid against EBITDA performance	1 st October 08

Company	Award	Effective
	50% (3.5% of basic) paid against personal objectives completion Increase effective for the period 1 st October to 31 st December 2008 in the current bonus year and for all subsequent years.	
Heathrow Express Service Proposition Managers (Stations)	An increase of pay to £35,523 with the bonus 3.5% Performance Related and 3.5% EBITDA	1 st October 08
Hull Trains	On Board Hospitality Staff Increase in base salary of £1,000, representing a 7.41% increase, plus Salary Sacrifice scheme and Non-contributory Healthcare benefits scheme. 13 th December 2009 Increase in base salary of RPI +0.5% or 4% if greater. Train Managers 5.1% increase in base salary, plus Salary Sacrifice scheme. Non-contributory Healthcare benefits scheme 17 th May 2009 Increase on base salary of 17% to reflect the introduction of revised Terms and Conditions and Job Description. 13 th December 2009 Increase of RPI +0.5% or 4% whichever is the greater. In addition for all staff, the company will seek to undertake: A joint initiative with P&O Ferries at Hull for a joint venture in reciprocal reduced travel arrangements. Work towards an improved method of PNB roster allocations for short turnarounds due to company timetable restrictions.	December 08 December 09 December 08 May 09 December 09
London Midland	5% or £800, if greater Commitment to commencement of harmonisation talks with each grade and identifying a target end date. Commitment to give specific consideration to holiday entitlements for depot based colleagues as part of the forthcoming harmonisation discussions. Provision of retired non-safeguarded travel facilities on LM services for former employees from 11 th November 2007 on the understanding that this is only granted during the current franchise	April 08
Merseyrail	2-year deal Year 1: 4.6% or £800, if greater. Year 2: February RPI + 0.25% or £800, if greater, plus reduction in overtime divisor for carriage cleaners from 39 to 36 hours. Fully paid Maternity leave increasing to 26 weeks. Further 26 weeks at Statutory Maternity Pay. Agreement to support the principle of universal travel facilities to be raised at Joint Venture level.	April 08 April 09
National Express East Anglia (Retail and Train Crews only – Harmonised Revenue grades	4.6% or £600, if greater, on basic rates, 4.6% on dynamic allowances	April 08
Northern Rail	4.7%	April 08
Southeastern Guards	2 nd stage, 18-month deal giving new anniversary date of April 09 50% of August 08 RPI plus 0.25%	October 08
Southeastern Drivers	Three year deal: Year Two (March 2008) 4% increase or RPI plus 0.5%, if greater. Year Three (March 2009) 3% increase or RPI plus 0.5%, if greater. Regional allowances increased by 1% above the standard pay increase in each year. Increase in Driver instructor pensionable allowance s- £3100.00 HS1 Driver pensionable allowance - £3100.00 1 hour reduction in the working week from May/June 2008 5 additional Free days per 52 weeks (Matrix line 52 = 130) from May/June 2008 (Average working week of 4.5 days) Rosters to average 36 hours 30mins	March 08 March 09
Southeastern Retail and Engineering Grades	A 4.3% increase or £750.00, if greater, from April 2008. Joint Working parties established on the shorter working week and an attendance procedure.	April 08
Southeastern, Revenue Protection staff	2-stage, 15-month deal Stage 2: 0.25% of the November 2008 RPI plus 0.13% (based on the recent Conductors' calculation) New anniversary of April 2009, to realign this group's pay anniversary date with all other groups of grades Working party on commission and the hours in the working week	January 09
Southeastern Shunter Drivers	Increase of 4.8% on basic salaries and associated allowances, effective 12 th October 2008.	October 08
Southern (Gatwick Express Operations)	4.75% increase to basic salaries (including night rates) pro-rated up and including 4 th April 2009. RPI + 0.25% (Based on February 2009) increase to basic salaries (including night rates): Standardisation of agreements with Southern staff. Removal of UNAM insurance scheme.	September 08 5 th April 09
Southern, Drivers	3-year deal Year 2: 3.5% or August 2008 RPI + 0.5% Year 3: 3.3% or August RPI + 0.25% A limit of 8 hours 30 minutes maximum length on turns booking on between 2200 and 0459	October 08 October 09

Company	Award	Effective
	15 weeks maternity leave at full pay on acceptance of this deal and 18 weeks from April 09. 1 week paternity leave at full pay	
South West Trains, Drivers	Two-year deal. Year 2: RPI for August 2008, minus ½% Half-hour reduction to the maximum diagram length from December 2008	October 08
South West Trains	A 4.8% increase	Oct 2008
TransPennine Express	2-year deal Year 1: 4.8% or £800, if greater, for Conductors, Drivers and Station grades. Year 2: RPI + 0.4% or £800 or 3.5%, if greater. RPI is the February 2009 figure. Payment for employees on maternity leave increased: - Effective 1 st August 2008, 26 weeks maternity pay at basic pay or 90% of average earnings, whichever is great, plus 13 weeks at 50% of average earnings. Effective 1 st April 2009, 39 weeks maternity pay at basic pay or 90% of average earnings, whichever is greater Provision of a suite of family friendly policies including Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and time off for dependents Explore reciprocal First Group travel facilities with ScotRail. M-health policy for all FTPE employees. Review SME for Conductors and capability agreement covering safety of the line and poor performance. Exploration of harmonisation for Conductors. Close the issue of harmonisation for Station grades	April 08 April 09
Virgin Trains West Coast	4 year deal: Salaries and Dynamic Allowances From 1 April 2008 salaries increased by 5.1% or £750, if greater. Dynamic allowances also increased by 5.1%. From 1 April 2009, 1 April 2010 and 1 April 2011, salaries increased by a percentage representing the Retail Price Index (RPI) as published in February plus 0.5%, or £750 increased by the same percentage, if greater. Dynamic allowances similarly. From 1 April 2009, sick pay for those with 5 years and over continuous service with Virgin Trains increased to Normal Salary for 12 months. From 2009 Annual Leave year, Leave for those with 6 years and over continuous service with Virgin Trains increased to 36 days. From 2011 Annual Leave year, Leave for those with 7 years and over continuous service with Virgin Trains increased to 37 days. Contractual Maternity Pay, inclusive of Statutory Entitlements, extended to 20 weeks at Normal Salary from 1 April 2009. After 1 April 2010, contractual Maternity Pay, inclusive of Statutory Entitlements, extended to 28 weeks at Normal Salary. From 1 April 2011, contractual Maternity Pay, inclusive of Statutory Entitlements, extended to 39 weeks at half Normal Salary i.e half Normal Salary paid for weeks 29 to 39 inclusive.	1 st April 08
Miscellaneous		
Britannia Adelphi	Increase to the National Minimum Wage of £5.73 (excluding maintenance and supervisory staff) A 3.8% increase for maintenance and supervisory staff	October 08
Turnberry Hotel	3% increase	April 08
Serco Integrated Service (Turnberry Hotel)	3.5% increase	April 08

Deals Agreed 2009

Company	Award	Effective
Bus		
Bournemouth Transport	3 rd year, 3-year deal Drivers rates increased by RPI	April 09
Stagecoach East Midlands, Engineering staff (Mansfield & Worksop)	As per deal at Stagecoach Yorkshire Engineering staff (Chesterfield depot) 3 rd stage, 4-stage, 2-year deal Increase to basic pay equivalent to RPI (ave. Jan-March 2009). Stage 4: 1.25% for all grades.	April 09 October 09
Stagecoach Lancashire	3 rd and 4 th stages, in 2 nd year, 2-year deal Stage 3: £8.25 (conventional), £7.86 (minibus), £6.68 (trainee) Stage 4: £8.45 (conventional), £8.08 (minibus), £6.87 (trainee)	January 09 July 09
Stagecoach Yorkshire, Drivers (Chesterfield depot)	3 rd -stage, 3-stage, 2-year deal. Increase in basic rates equivalent to RPI (ave of Jan-March 2009) plus greater of 0.5% or 3.75%. 3 rd May 2009, hourly rates increased by 50p Commitment to consider Mentor allowances.	May 09
Stagecoach Yorkshire, Engineering staff (Chesterfield depot)	3 rd stage, 4-stage, 2-year deal Increase to basic rates of pay equivalent to RPI (average of January-March 2009). Stage 4: 1.25% for all grades.	April 09 October 09
Shipping		
Heysham Ports & HP Security	3% increase in basic rates plus consolidation of overtime payments	January 09
P&O Dover, Portsmouth, North Sea and Irish Ferries	Company imposed a 2% increase on all basic rates of pay, supplements, and premiums.	1 st January 2009
Newhaven Ports	4% pay rise	1 st January 2009
Maersk Marine Services Norfolkline	2.5% increase to basic pay and increments. Maternity and Paternity Leave	January 09

Company	Award	Effective
Dover	increased in line with current UK statutory entitlements.	
Maersk Offshore Deep Sea Ratings	Increase in pay of 3%, plus introduction of statutory Maternity and Paternity Leave for Rating on tankers.	February 2009
Northern Marine Meridian Dive Support	3 rd year, 33-month deal 6% on basic rates of pay	January 09
Wightlink Ltd	A two year deal. Year 1 - 4.2% increase in rates of pay Year 2 - greater of 2.5% or RPI+0.5%	January 09 January 10
Windermere Lake Cruises	2 nd year, 2-year deal 4% or December RPI, whichever is greater	February 09
Yarmouth Harbour	A 3.5% increase to basic rates	January 09
London Transport & other Metro		
Serco Docklands	3 rd year, 3-year deal RPI + 0.8% or a minimum of 3.5%, whichever is the greater, on basic rates of pay and 1 further additional day annual leave	January 09
Infrastructure		
Amey	2% increase on basic rates and allowances. Commence discussions on work patterns and potential terms and conditions changes.	April 2009
Balfour Beatty Rail Plant	2 year deal: 3.7% increase to basic rates & Regional Allowances. Other allowances remain at current levels. Basic pay rates increased by the greater of RPI +0.5% or 2%. RPI rate calculated as average RPI for September, October and November 2009.	Jan 2009 Jan 2010
Balfour Beatty Rail Projects (Electrification Unit)	3.9% increase to salaries, London/SE, Flexibility and Production Incentive Allowances.	Jan 09
Balfour Beatty Rail Infrastructure Services	2 year deal: 3.7% on basic rates and Regional Allowances. 1 st January 2010 basic rates increased by greater of RPI +0.5% or 2%. RPI rate to be average RPI in September, October and November 2009.	Jan 2009 Jan 2010
Colas Rail	2% - Staff with 1 st April anniversary date. 2% Staff with 1 st Jan anniversary date, plus lump sum equal to 2% of basic as at 1/1/09 to cover the period 1/1/09-31/03/09 as compensation for changing anniversary date change to 1 st April.	Apr 09
Network Rail (Operations & Customer Services, Project & Engineering Support staff)	2 nd year, 2-year deal RPI + 0.5% Travel subsidy increased to 60% and max season ticket loan subsidy raised to £2,850 Increase in Inner London Allowance to £2,400; Outer London Allowance to £1,323 and South East Allowance to £859	January 09 April 09 April 09
Unipart Crewe	A 2.5% increase to basic rates of pay	April 2009
Train Operating Companies		
London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL)	2 nd year, 2-year deal Increase of RPI + 0.5% for all grades, including Scale Allowances and London Allowance (based on March 09 RPI)	April 09
North Yorkshire Moors Railway	Pay freeze: reviewed if profits increase. Reduction in working week to 36.5hrs Additional day's annual leave.	January 2009
National Express East Coast	2 nd year, 2-year deal Increase of RPI February 2009 plus 0.6% or 3.5%, if greater	March 09
ScotRail	2 nd year, 2-year deal 3% or February 2009 RPI, whichever is greater on basic rates plus Operations Sunday and Rest Day minimum payments	April 09
Southern	3 rd year, 3-year deal Increase on basic rates of pay and allowances equivalent to February 2009 RPI plus 0.25%. Maternity leave increased to 18 weeks full pay.	April 09
Cleaning and Catering		
Carlisle Cleaning (TPE Contract)	3% increase backdated to 1/1/09 with further pay talks in February 09 to discuss the April 2009 pay increase	Jan 2009

LEGAL SERVICES

The Union's service of legal advice and representation is of key importance and benefit to our members and their families. Legal advice is provided on all matters via the Union's helplines. In accordance with Rule many cases receive a written opinion on the merits of the case from our solicitors. Legal representation is provided primarily for employment tribunal or personal injury claims although other types of claim can also be considered appropriate.

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

In 2008 the Union received 401 applications for legal assistance to Employment Tribunals. All cases are assessed by our solicitors and if they advise that the claim has prospects of success, legal representation is provided. The Annual Reports of the Tribunals service consistently show that only 10% of all unfair dismissal claims are successful at a Tribunal. The figure is even worse for discrimination cases, around a 3% success rate. Therefore I am glad to report the following examples of the Union's victories:

Unfairly dismissed and discriminated against by London Underground

A disabled member who was sacked on medical grounds by a new manager after shift arrangements designed to accommodate his disability were reviewed was awarded £166,990 by an Employment Tribunal.

The tribunal agreed that the member had been unfairly dismissed and discriminated against under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The award is one of the highest for a DDA claim.

The level of the member's sick leave was also accepted due to his medical condition. But a new manager removed those adjustments, insisting that he work shifts on the normal duty roster, and bullied him. The member was eventually dismissed on medical grounds which took into account his previous level of sickness absence.

The tribunal concluded that the Claimant's previous fixed day shift in the ticket office with toleration of a higher level of sickness absence were reasonable adjustments that should have been maintained. They also concluded that further alternative reasonable adjustments would have been allowing the Claimant a trial period on the new shift system and/or finding him suitable alternative work without the need to attend interview.

London Underground has given notice that it intends to appeal this decision. The Union will be defending this victory.

Right to be accompanied by own choice of union rep:

The Employment Relations Act 1999 says that employees have the right to be accompanied at discipline and grievance proceedings by their chosen representative. The Union secured compensation for a member who was denied her choice of union rep to accompany her to a capability review hearing because the representative was not on the "approved list". The ET awarded the member £660, the maximum award for a breach by the employer of this type.

The ruling by the Employment Tribunal that Transport for London failed or threaten to fail to comply with section 10(2A) of the Employment Relations Act 1999 was an important blow for the union against TfL's strategy of trying to dictate which Union reps can represent them.

Arriva Trains sacks injured member after having her filmed:

A member who was filmed by Arriva while on sick leave with a knee injury and then sacked on her return to work was unfairly dismissed, an employment tribunal found. The member had been told by her GP to exercise the knee.

Interim relief and reinstatement:

A member who served two three year terms on the RMT Executive was dismissed on his return to work after failing a medical. He claimed automatic unfair dismissal and applied for interim relief. The interim relief hearing was successful and he was immediately re-instated.

Other cases in brief:

Health and safety rep denied right to attend a TUC H & S course

Involvement by RMT lawyers resulted in the employer agreeing to extend a leave of absence, with pay, to enable the member to attend the course. The employer also agreed to review its training structure and is in talks with the Union on this.

Discrimination and unfair dismissal

Various awards, including one notable one of £44,000, were awarded to members for cases where the Tribunal found the case proven that our members had suffered some kind of discrimination and unfair dismissal.

PERSONAL INJURY

RMT has continued to fight personal injury cases for members and their families in the face of attempts by employers and other defendants to deny and delay claims. A total of 701 new personal injury claims were received by the Union's solicitors in 2008 as well as 71 Criminal Injury Compensation Scheme applications.

Below are a few examples:

London Bombing

A tube train driver member who helped seriously injured passengers following the London bombings won a three-year fight for compensation with the backing of the RMT.

The member, from Cheshunt was driving a train in the underground when the attacks happened. He drove his train to Russell Square where he helped passengers injured from the bomb which had exploded on the southbound Piccadilly Line train.

Despite being psychologically traumatised by the event and being forced to go on sick leave for nearly a year he was denied compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Association (CICA). The RMT supported the case to appeal and the member was awarded £4,400.

Thompsons has dealt with over 25 claims for RMT members arising from the July 2005 terrorist attacks on London transport.



Network Rail

A member who broke his knee when trying to undertake emergency repairs to a train track received £20,000 in compensation. Although he was working on a raised platform there was no side protection, no safety policy and no adequate risk assessment had been undertaken. He slipped and fell, catching his right foot in the rails. He needed surgery and was subsequently on sick leave for six months.

Eurostar: A Eurostar train engineer from Essex, whose finger was crushed by a heavy and cumbersome microwave which he was asked to lift and manoeuvre into place on a train without assistance, was awarded £17,000.

RMT lawyers Thompsons had to issue court proceedings when the other side's insurers refused to negotiate a settlement.

Virgin Rail's Pendolino fracture's wrist: A customer services assistance whose wrist was fractured when the coach doors of a Pendolino closed on and trapped her arm as the train jolted over points received £15,250 in compensation.

The member was off work for six months after the accident and had to have an operation. She also lost pay as a result.

London Underground

A member asked to carry a large and heavy water bottle from Kentish Town station to Camden Station received £4,800 after he hurt his back as a result. The member, a Customer Services Agent, did not have manual handling responsibilities and had not been trained in manual handling. No risk assessment was done and his employers had not considered if there was any way that manual handling could be avoided in transporting the bottle.

Food poisoning

An Essex member received £25,000 in compensation after he contracted salmonella and became gravely ill following serious food poisoning at a Chinese restaurant in July 2004. As a result of the infection he was off work for more than a year. He developed reactive arthritis and was bed ridden for three months. The condition has left him physically disabled and able only to undertake an office-based job.

The case highlights how the RMT's free legal services can support members outside the work place and not just those injured at work.

In total, £2,450,698.16 was recovered for our members last year through personal injury claims.

Driving cases

This year 41 members with driving cases were assisted by the Union, including defending their Taxi or PCV licence with the relevant authorities.

Asbestos and Mobile Phone Register

Both these registers are being held by the Union's solicitors should the details ever be necessary in a future claim.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

BLACK & MINORITY ETHNIC ISSUES

BLACK & ETHNIC SURVEY

Mention was made in last year's report of the survey of our black and minority ethnic members. The purpose of the survey was to test the anecdotal evidence of lack of promotion with the experience of all our black and minority ethnic members. The opportunity was also taken to gather information on racial discrimination and harassment in the workplace. A full report of the data was presented to the Council of Executives last August.

The strategy to make use of the survey results to promote the interests of our black and minority ethnic members was developed in consultation with our National Black & Ethnic Minority Members' Committee. Copies of the survey have been sent to companies highlighting our members' perception that race discrimination does creep into selection and secondment procedures. We have also asked companies to allow a union rep to sit as an observer on selection panels to ensure fair play and importantly that companies monitor in accordance with the CRE Code of Practice.

CLEANING GRADE MEMBERS – THIRD PARTY PRESSURE

The anger and frustration of our cleaning members who witness their colleagues being unfairly sacked at the whim of a third party is shared by all those who believe in natural justice. The resolution carried at last year's AGM clearly expressed the frustration of the lack of success at Employment Tribunals when we have sought justice for members treated in such a way.

I have since sought the advice of one of the country's top QCs, John Hendy, who has worked tirelessly for workers throughout his legal career. Crucially, the advice obtained was that under the present law, it is almost certainly not possible to challenge such dismissals in an Employment Tribunal. John went on to say that:-

“There is no legal pathway for an unfair dismissal claim to be laid at the door of any entity other than the ex-employer of the worker sacked. The fact of third party pressure may in fact absolve the actual employer from responsibility since the latter is permitted to claim that it has ‘some other substantial reason’ for sacking the worker, namely that a third party with economic power over it required it to dismiss the worker.”

I also asked that if dismissals could not be effectively challenged in tribunals, what changes would be required in employment law to achieve justice for our members. John helpfully provided the example of where trade unions can be cited as a third party in tribunal proceedings where a worker is alleging discrimination for joining or refusing to join a union. Importantly in this example, the third party can be made to pay compensation. It should not be impossible to have a suitable provision drafted which would apply in third party pressure cases.

We recognise that for the law to be changed will necessitate a political campaign. This will inevitably involve the TUC and other unions if maximum publicity is to be achieved. Arrangements have been made at the time of writing for a preliminary meeting with RMT's Parliamentary Panel to discuss the best way forward.

IMMIGRATION CHECKS AT WORK

I am pleased that a guidance booklet has been distributed to assist reps and individual members who are faced with the nightmare of trying to understand what their rights are in relation to immigration checks at work. Throughout last year, there was an unprecedented number of phone calls received from members and reps wanting to know what an employer could legitimately ask. It has not been lost on us that since the successful cleaners' strike, employers have made use of such checks to sack effective reps. In this climate, no matter how much we may dislike the law, it is essential we give proper advice to members - this booklet was a start.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Pregnant Women and Nursing Mothers – Rest Facilities

The lack of suitable rest facilities for pregnant women and nursing mothers was fully aired during the debate at last year's AGM. As a result of the resolution carried, I wrote to all lead officers instructing them to raise the points of the resolution to ensure all companies are complying with their legal obligations under health and safety laws.

Copies of the HSE's guidance on the provision of rest facilities were given to lead officers to assist them. However, I was clear that we should be aiming to build on the guidance which only sets out minimum standards. To date, not one company has admitted to not complying with the legal requirements; in some companies the matter is being looked at by joint safety committees; some companies are still to respond. Once all the information is in, consideration will have to be given as to how best to check that the companies comply. The most effective way is for women to complain if they do not. The information will be posted on our website.

Anti-Social Hours, Shifts & Short Notice Duty Changes

Juggling the responsibilities of childcare and work is difficult, especially for those who work rosters. For those who work as reserve/cover/pool staff and are subject to late-notice duty changes, combining these responsibilities can be a nightmare. An agreement with London Underground means that management are supposed to ask the individual before changing shifts.

I have asked all lead Officers to raise this issue with companies to ensure that suitable agreements are in place to ensure some degree of certainty for the members affected. A progress report will be placed before the Council of Executives to monitor the situation.

Abortion Rights Campaign

We continue to support the Abortion Rights Campaign and have been pleased to circulate information about events organised to counter the threats that have increasingly emerged to restrict abortion. A speaker from the campaign addressed our National Women's Conference this year to encourage our activists to get involved in local campaigning.

One of our resolutions to the STUC Women's Conference sought to extend a woman's right to choose by the repeal of the legal requirement to have two doctors' signatures before an abortion can take place. The resolution also wished to add support to any campaign by our sisters in Northern Ireland to extend the Abortion Act to Northern Ireland.

Menopause Policies

The lack of workplace policies to assist those women who are adversely affected by the menopause is something we are trying to redress. We have used a TUC report to glean best practice and ask companies to incorporate it within their policies. When asking lead Officers to raise this matter, it was suggested that they would wish to discuss this subject with women reps within each company or women activists to ensure any policy is acceptable to those that it is supposed to assist. Again, this is a matter that will be reviewed by the Council of Executives to ensure progress is made.

Women's Safety

The issue of women's safety formed the basis of a resolution moved by our delegates to both the STUC and Wales TUC Women's Conferences. We asked that railway stations should be re-staffed, especially in the evenings. We recognised that women should not be deterred from travelling at any time of day because of lack of staff. The re-staffing of stations would create a better environment for passengers but importantly for our members.

Flexible Working

High on the list of queries received on equality issues is that of flexible working. It is clear that the transport industry has not embraced the concept of flexible working. Many members, especially women see their applications turned down without proper consideration. Unfortunately the law does not provide a remedy in most cases. The right to request to work flexibly has been extended over the past few years, initially for those with child under six or children with a disability, then to those defined as carers. This year saw the age limit applying to children raised to 16 years, which means that more people will be exercising their right to request. Research shows that flexible working can be accommodated and that where it is not restricted to those who have the statutory right to apply, it is more widely accepted in principle. We will continue to pursue the Union's policy of flexible working both industrially and more widely politically through our political group

LGBT ISSUES

The Committee continues to support the London Pride event each summer and is always pleased for other activists to take part. They are keen to participate at the other Pride events outside of London working with local LGBT activists.

It was unfortunately necessary to cancel the training for LGBT union reps scheduled for last year. Renewed interest means that it will now take place at the end of June.

I am pleased that we are submitting a resolution to this year's TUC LGBT Conference arguing against the deportation of LGBT people to countries such as Iran, where someone's sexual orientation can lead to torture or in some instances, death.

Equality Advisory Committees

The National Women's, Black & Ethnic Minority and LGBT Members' Advisory Committees continue to meet three times a year. In addition each holds an annual conference. All conferences have seen increased attendance over the past few years. As the major role of the conferences and advisory committees is to deal with resolutions submitted by Branches and Regional Councils in order to advise the Council of Executives, I am always keen to encourage the submission of these. By doing so, we ensure the issues of interest to ordinary members are addressed.

I am pleased that Regional Women's Stewards and Advisory Committees are now becoming established throughout the country. The South East, Wessex, Yorkshire & Lincolnshire to name just three have all made strides over the past year. The aim is to have activity at Regional and local level throughout the country. The same principles apply to our Black & Ethnic and LGBT structures.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Three significant anniversaries of relevance to the RMT membership occur during 2009, and these serve as a reminder of the critical nature of our campaigning work on health and safety. The fifth anniversary of the Tebay accident occurred on 15th February 2009; 5th October 2009 marks the 10th anniversary of the train crash at Ladbroke Grove and 28th September 2009 sees the fifteenth anniversary of the sinking of the MS Estonia.

The disaster onboard the Estonia led to a whole host of safety recommendations including special training requirements for crew on all passenger ships in crowd and crisis management and human behaviour, amended watch keeping standards, automatically deployable emergency distress beacons, compulsory Voyage Data Recorders and new IMO SOLAS life-raft regulations.

The record of improvements for rail workers as a result of railway accidents remains patchier. While the recommendations from Ladbroke Grove are largely implemented, we are still waiting for proper fail-safe signaling protection. Although work on trials of ERTMS is well advanced in some areas of Europe it will be many years before we have a true train control system nationally in the UK. In the meantime, RMT is involved in working groups at both national and European level for developing effective rules for ERTMS operation.

With regard to the aftermath of the Tebay disaster, when four RMT members were killed, the RMT's demands for effective secondary protection for trackworkers from runaway vehicles are still waiting

fulfillment five years after the tragedy. RMT action on secondary protection has been documented elsewhere but there is still no sure way to give adequate safeguards to track workers and, since last reported in the 2008 report, there has been a further runaway at Cambridge Heath bringing the total number of runaways post-Tebay to 16. Further trials of a potential device will have taken place by the time of the AGM, at which the RMT will have been fully represented, and branches will be informed of further developments.

Regrettably, since the last annual report there have been an increasing number of workforce fatalities:

- On 11 June, 2008, three men were injured when the metal basket of a hoist fell away from its hydraulic arm whilst working on the overhead line at Margaretting. Regrettably on 1 July, one RMT member died in hospital as a result of his injuries.
- On 24 June, in Brigg, a member was trapped and fatally injured by two machines. He was working as a Banksman when he was crushed between a JCB and a dumper truck.
- On 12 July, a crane controller, working at a worksite south of Rugby station was struck and fatally injured by a road-rail vehicle.
- On 1 April 2009 16 offshore workers (including two RMT members) were killed when the Super Puma helicopter they were travelling in crashed in the North Sea just off Peterhead.

As a result of the Peterhead disaster RMT submitted an emergency resolution to the Scottish TUC. The motion which was carried, called for the particular model of Puma helicopter involved in the tragedy to be removed from service until the full causes of the accident are known. It also called for the industry to put safety before profit and urged the STUC to work with affiliates to hold a campaigning week of action, including events at the Scottish & Westminster Parliaments, to raise awareness and campaign for improved safety in the North Sea. Further the Motion called for the trade unions to be directly involved in sharing the conclusions and ensuring the industry learns the lessons of the tragedy and paid tribute to the brave men and women who work in the North Sea to supply the UK with oil and gas and also to those of the North Sea emergency services. Support has also been provided to the families of the RMT members killed in the accident.

Incidents such as these serve to once again remind us of the high hazard work RMT members engage in on a daily basis and the risks that employers are prepared to take which can go so tragically wrong and all too often result in workers not returning home safely at the end of their working day. Whether it is working on the mainline railway, the Underground, for Bus or Road Transport companies or in the Shipping and Offshore industries, workers rightly expect safety at work to be a priority. RMT will not tolerate situations where the employer is cutting corners on safety matters.



One of RMT's principle concerns with safety on Britain's railways is addressed to the very highest level and our concerns are a matter of record. On one hand we have the economic regulator of the rail industry placing stringent financial thresholds on the rail operators while at the same time demanding the industry improves its safety record. RMT continue to express to the authorities, including the Board of the Office of Railway Regulation, the Board of the Railway Safety and Standards Board, senior directors of Network Rail and the Infrastructure Companies and to the Government that this position of conflict will inevitably lead to more accidents and a deteriorating safety record.

While the RMT continues to fight to defend the jobs of rail workers RMT are also calling for the industry to open its eyes to the risks posed to safety if there are large numbers of job cuts within the rail industry. In particular, we have questioned Network Rail's decision to defer track renewal work and have demanded a copy of Network Rail's risk assessment in this matter

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

Workers Memorial Day which is commemorated on 28 April every year has the motto "remember the dead – fight for the living" and that is a commitment that the RMT continue to share. This year's day continued to build on the RMT's campaign to eradicate workplace violence from all industries where we have membership, when RMT members and activists picketed mainline rail stations across the country getting across the message from the RMT and the ITF that violence at work is never acceptable. This message is being co-ordinated across Europe.

As part of the kick off of last year's work place violence campaign 125 MPs signed EDM 901 which called for a concerted effort by the authorities in the transport industry to ensure workers in the industry are treated with dignity and respect. This success has been followed up with EDM 1136 which has so far been signed by 58 MPs. Postcards are being sent to Branches with the request that all members' send a postcard to their constituency MP. The text of the EDM is available via the following link: <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=38248&SESSION=899>

FIRE REGULATIONS – UNDERGROUND RAILWAYS

I am pleased to report that RMT's campaign to retain the 'section 12' regulations, which provide much needed worker protection from the risk of fire to those whose job involves working on underground railways, has finally reached a successful conclusion. On the 6 April 2009 the Fire Precautions (Sub-surface Railway Stations) (England) Regulations 2009 were laid before Parliament and will come into force in October 2009. It is only as a result of RMT's concerted effort that these vital protections for underground workers have been updated and retained. RMT have been a central partner with the Government in producing specific guidance for preventing fire in transport premises, re-writing and updating the Sub-surface legislation and developing the guidance to the legislation. The new Regulations are available at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/uksi_20090782_en_1 and the guidance at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/subsurfacetrainsafety>

HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

RMT accredited Health and Safety Representatives continue to be our 'font line' troops in our efforts to improve safe working conditions for the membership. RMT is committed to supporting its health and safety reps and assisting them to develop their skills so that they are fully equipped to represent our members in the field of workplace health and safety. As part of this support all RMT safety reps have been re-issued an updated Health and Safety Handbook. The handbook is a valuable guide to common health and safety legislation and has been updated to take account of recent changes in health and safety legislation. For the first time a separate guide for on-board safety reps in the maritime industry has also been produced and will be ready for distribution to all Shipping Health and Safety Representatives shortly.

Research shows that RMT Health and Safety Reps continue to have a positive effect on safety management in the industries in which we are organised. As part of the 30th anniversary of the publication of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations (SRSCR) the TUC published a Charter for Change, a trade union strategy for health and safety in the 21st century. As this document was specifically aimed at the Health and Safety Executive, the RMT have amended the Charter to make it relevant to the rail industry. A copy has been presented to the ORR and further discussions are planned on implementing the Charter. A copy of both versions of the Charter is available on the RMT website at: www.rmt.org.uk/healthandsafety

To further support the work of Health and Safety Reps, RMT has also recently published the latest version of the SRSCR which has been distributed to all Safety Reps and Branches.

RULE BOOK REVIEW

As reported last year RSSB have begun to review the way the railway rule book is written. While we agree that the current Rule Book is too large, too complex and not fit for purpose the RMT have expressed very real concerns about the proposal which is being led by RSSB and Network Rail. As a result of representations made to the RSSB Board by the RMT the proposals have been changed with RSSB planning to retain more of the rules as core central rules. RMT remain to be convinced however that this approach will continue to give adequate protection to workers in all spheres of the rail industry.

Of even greater concern to the RMT are proposals to re-write the T3 rules for possessions of the railway. The proposals which would see the end of detonators and possession limit boards as a means of protection for the majority of large scale possessions and see protection provided by means of signals only are being strongly resisted by the RMT. We have written to the safety authorities that we believe these proposals are driven not by the needs of worker safety but as a result of the economic squeeze being put on the rail industry by the Government. We have obtained a copy of Network Rail's risk assessment and have submitted it to rigorous scrutiny by a group of experienced safety representatives and the Head Office Safety Team. This group concluded that it did not believe that Network Rail had taken in to account all the possible risks arising from the changes and therefore the risk assessment is not 'suitable or sufficient'. As a result of this report we have written to HMRI saying asking them to intervene on our behalf. RMT will continue to monitor these proposals and unless they are radically changed we will take every effort to protect the membership from harm.

HEALTH & SAFETY CONFERENCE

The RMT Health and Safety Conference was held in Doncaster again, for the third year in a row; this year in the newly re-opened Doncaster Trades Club. With a record number of over 140 delegates attending this is now the best attended of all of the RMT's annual conferences. This year's theme was risk assessment and saw the launch of the RMT's new campaign to secure voluntary agreement with companies where we have membership for safety reps to be involved in the risk assessment process. As well as a record number of delegates, a record number of Branch motions were debated at Conference with a range of resolutions from asbestos and assaults to chemicals in cleaning substances and the carriage of flammable and explosive goods.

In addition to speakers on risk assessment and the debates on the motions, for the first time Conference was able to offer a training course in risk assessment for all delegates and this option was taken up by the majority of delegates. Six separate courses were put on the day before and the day after Conference.

Work is already underway on preparations for next year's conference with the National Health and Safety Advisory Committee agreeing to return to Doncaster once again and they have adopted Conference theme for 2010 as 'fatigue'. This is an issue which has been raised by members from the Bus and Road Transport industries, diving and shipping and rail as a recurrent problem. We aim to look at associated issues such as linking low pay with the long hours' culture as well as occupational health matters.

Finally, 31 December 2009 sees the end of the current term of office of the delegates to the National Health and Safety Advisory Committee. Nomination forms for the new term of office will be sent to Branches in early autumn and although the current delegates are entitled to stand again, new nominations are always welcomed. I would like to take the opportunity of thanking the current delegates for all their efforts over the last three years.

Education

DONCASTER

Numerous courses have been organised throughout the period, ranging from general representatives, and membership training - detailing how to use the new membership system - to Pensions and Health & Safety.

The Doncaster School is an extremely valuable resource in ensuring our representatives are as well trained as their managers. During the forthcoming period it is intend to continue to use Doncaster's resources to the full in order to broaden members' knowledge and understanding of essential aspects of their working environment and the our Unions' efforts on their behalf.

UNION LEARNING FUND

England

The RMT Learning project continues to support Union Learning Reps (ULRs), and the signing of Learning Agreements. In the first year of the project 40 new ULRs were recruited and trained. Five new Learning Agreements were signed off with many more on the table. This has enabled members to access learning, often for the first time, and sometimes with paid release.

RMT Learning is helping to embed ULRs into their branch, and there are now some branches where this is working really well. ULRs are starting to get real support from their branches and branches are seeing ULRs as valuable activists. RMT Learning are helping to recruit new activists, people who would not have come forward for other roles and would otherwise not have got involved in union activity. We are also seeing people join the RMT due to the Learning Agenda.

The RMT Learning project attracted nearly half a million pounds in funding, directly, in its first year. The RMT Learning team also supported many smaller bids for funding that for promoting learning to RMT members.

Wales

During February 2009, the RMT were informed by the Welsh Assembly Government that we had been unsuccessful in securing a following bid for 2009/2011 (The Learning Journey). A proposal was put to the Welsh Assembly for a project extension with a commitment from the RMT to contribute towards the project costs in order to keep the project going until the next round of bidding in 2010. The proposal focused on working with the organisations, learners and providers to submit a bid for 2010/2012. While this was initially accepted it subsequently transpired that owing to First Group charging VAT on Mandy Evans's salary insufficient funds were available for the project to continue. I have requested the Welsh Assembly should make a further contribution in respect of the VAT element and at the time of writing am awaiting a response. However, it is doubtful the additional funds will be forthcoming, which would be very disappointing as all but one of the project's targets have been met and apart from the VAT element the project has come in under budget due to the diligence and hard work of the project worker, Mandy Evans and the commitment of the network of Union Learning Reps.

The 'Transporting Skills' project has raised the profile of the RMT as the lead transport union in Wales. The project has recruited and retained members, as well as giving existing members the opportunity to return to learning. Without the project, many of these members would never have received the opportunity to develop their skills in IT, Basic Skills and Languages, which are just a few of the many courses on offer.

The project has provided an excellent example in Wales of how the union is promoting members' interests, fighting to build better working conditions, better pay deals and equality.

Scotland

The Scottish Union Learning Funded project, led by project worker Fred Potter, has created a wide range of new learning opportunities for RMT members in Scotland over the last year.

At CalMac in the western Isles the project has continued to support learners engaged in various learning initiatives and work closely with the employer in encouraging take up of the training

programs which will enhance the employability of catering staff - many of whom are employed on a seasonal basis.

Northlink were encouraged to follow the CalMac model of offering enhanced training to all staff and to date 257 people in total have benefited from the initiative.

Fred Potter has also made inroads at Northlink ferries in Aberdeen by holding awareness raising meetings with the crews and management at the Jamieson Quay facility to further raise the profile of the project and opportunities available through trade union education.

Funding has been secured from the CalMac to supply computing equipment for the Caledonian Isles where space for a learning centre has been identified. The onboard ULR is offering tutoring in his own time to assist his colleagues.

Approaches have also been made to Gulf Offshore. The SULF project worker has met with the company at their Aberdeen office in order to discuss conducting a learning needs assessment across their fleet.

Fred Potter retired in May 2009, and at the time of writing the recruitment process for a successor is being undertaken by the RMT's Glasgow office and I would therefore take this opportunity to thank Fred for his hard work on the project.

Young Members Conference

This year's Young Members Conference, held in Birmingham on 28th February and 1st March was well attended and provided interesting debate on a number of wide ranging issues. This Conference is essential in the development of workplace representatives and future generations of union activists. We want to give our young members all the support they require to help them as activists which includes organising the best possible Young Members Conference. Accordingly, delegates have been asked for 'feedback' on the 2009 Conference so that this may be taken into account as we plan for the 2010 Conference.

Pensions

RAILWAY PENSIONS COMMISSION

Arising from publication of the Railway Pensions Commission's final report in January 2008, separate working parties were established for the different sectors, namely; Network Rail, TOCs, Freight, Engineering and Others as a means of evaluating the Report's proposals. Members will recall that the Commission had recommended closing the RPS and introducing a CARE scheme for the whole industry.

Several meetings of the TOC Group were held where a detailed examination of the cost of providing benefits was undertaken. Whilst management immediately indicated there was no intention to introduce a CARE scheme they endeavoured to persuade the unions to agree an increase in retirement age. This was of course strongly resisted by all Unions. Meetings of the Engineering and other Section Groups were held but proved to be inconclusive as employers are effectively in completion with each other. Network Rail used their meetings to push through the introduction of a Career Average Earnings Scheme (CARE), with effect from 1st November 2008, despite opposition from RMT and our sister unions.

The new CARE Scheme is contracted-out of the State second earnings related pension scheme, with contributions at 7.2% of basic pay and retirement at age 65. Whilst CARE contributions appear lower than the RPS rate, the headline rate of 7.2% is calculated on a higher base than RPS contributions. Also the CARE pension does not contain a 1/40th pa lump sum. The entitlement is also very sensitive to pay increases and inflation. When circulating details to employees Management's examples used inflation at 2.5% - half the rate at the time of introduction.

Another important benefit where the CARE scheme is inferior to the RPS is index-linking when pensions are in payment. In the RPS pensions are increased annually by RPI, regardless of whether inflation is 2% or 10%, whereas CARE increases are RPI but capped at 5%.

RMT is concerned that the way the CARE scheme has been structured and introduced will undermine the RPS and make it more costly in the future, thus resulting in a further increase in contributions. Siphoning off potential RPS members will increase the age profile of those remaining members. It will also result in contributions, which would otherwise have been invested through the RPS, being diverted elsewhere with a consequent loss in economies of scale. I am pleased to say that so far there seems to be little enthusiasm for the scheme amongst Network Rail employees.

However, there is no doubt that a CARE scheme is likely to be more beneficial than a DC scheme as it provides benefits based on earnings whereas the DC scheme provides only a pot of money which is dependent on the level of contributions and the vagaries of financial markets. However, RMT believes Network Rail should offer all new recruits the opportunity of joining the Railways Scheme and we will continue to argue on that basis.

RAILWAYS PENSION SCHEME – VALUATION

This year saw the finalisation of the Fund's valuation as at 31st December 2007. The unprecedented turmoil in the world's financial markets and the introduction of new solvency criteria for employers resulted in this valuation being the most complicated and lengthy to date. Fortunately the RPS was valued at a time before the world's stock markets crashed, but that effectively meant the results were out of date. Consequently there is concern that the next valuation would reveal massive deficits and as a result the trustees decided to establish separate reserves for each section as a cushion against the 2010 valuation results. The delay in finalising the results and the introduction of new consultation regulations meant the normally leisurely process of discussing individual section result had to be compressed into a very tight timescale.

Whilst at the valuation date many of the TOCs revealed reasonable funding positions the introduction of the reserve had a significant impact. However, the impact was greater for the smaller companies and in particular the Infracos. In the circumstances, for many sections it was important to find ways of reducing fund costs without damaging benefits unduly. In the light of potentially unaffordable contribution rates, RMT's GGC carried the following policy:

1. **Oppose the introduction of a CARE Scheme.**
2. **Apply cost neutral reduction factors to early leavers to age 60.**
3. **The Actuary should assume future pay increase to be RPI+1% instead of RPI+1.5%.**
4. **Deficit recovery payments, where necessary, should be payable over nine years**

Sections were therefore encouraged to reduce their pay future pay settlement assumptions from 1.5% pa to 1.0% pa, and also to reduce the salary promotion assumption from 0.7% to 0.4%. These minor adjustments reduced costs by approximately 1.5%. Amending early retirement reduction factors, for future service, from the very favourable factors agreed in 1989 to cost neutral factors, also provided an additional reduction of around 1.5%, giving a possible reduction of 3% - 1.2% for member and 1.8% for employers.

While many sections have now agreed acceptable contribution rates based on the above changes, some proposed that where early retirement factors changed, Protected employees should pay a higher rate than Unprotected. Management argued that it was unfair for Protected staff to retain favourable factors when Unprotected staff could not and therefore that they should not enjoy lower contributions. RMT argued that just because someone had the right to retire before age 60 did not mean they would; pointing out that there was no rush for the exit before age 60, that the overriding majority worked past age 60 and that those taking early retirement were more likely to be higher paid managers moving on promotion, members transferring following TUPE transfers, or leaving as a result of ill health. As a result the majority of employers where early retirement factors were changed introduced a composite rate for all and to RMT's knowledge only two TOCs have forced through differential rates.

Some members have expressed concern at these changes. Whilst understanding that concern, it is essential to appreciate the importance of protecting the RPS for the long term. Unless world financial markets make a dramatic recovery between now and the end of 2010 the next valuation will reveal significant deficits. This in turn will present further challenges to the RPS's long term viability and any action taken now, however, small, which assists in keeping future costs to an acceptable level could prove to be very important when the 2010 valuation is revealed.

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

Missing Years

Following an investigation prompted by RMT's pension committee representatives and pursued by the Union through the TfL Pensions Working Group, TfL admitted that thousands of current and former employees have periods of employment which had not been counted as pensionable. The missing periods concern:

1. Periods of Training – where the date of pension fund entry erroneously excluded the period of training upon entering employment; ie. the date of entry to the pension fund is the date of completing training not the actual date of employment commenced.
2. Fixed Term Contracts – where employees were initially employed on a fixed term contract prior to becoming a permanent employee and the date of entry into the pension fund does not coincide with the date of moving from fixed term contractor to permanent employee, either because they were mistakenly issued with a fixed term contracts or because of an administrative error.

During discussions at the PWG, Management indicated that 5,698 members had missing periods of pensionable service during training. The missing service varies between one day and 147 days. The number of former fixed term contractors with missing pensionable service is 3036. For this group the missing service varies between one-hundred and fifty days to over a thousand days. Members can obtain credit for missing Periods of Training individuals on payment of an amount calculated by the Fund Office. The amount payable by each individual varies according to the size of the missing period. For former fixed term contractors individuals are required to provide any piece of evidence of the date they moved to full time employment; such as the offer letter to move to permanent employment.

Management estimate the cost of rectifying the situation is £28m; although they have allowed for the possibility of this rising to nearer £50m. This agreement represents a significant victory the Union, and of course for the individuals concerned as it provided an opportunity to include pensionable service which has wrongly been denied.

Ill Health Pensions

After battling for nearly four years, TfL has finally abandoned its proposal to restrict ill health pensions to those unable to work in any job. The current arrangement is based on an 'own job' test rather than an 'all work' test. TfLPF has also abandoned monitoring of ill health pensions following our objections.

This represents a significant victory for RMT's perseverance and dedication. We had no support from any of the other unions on this issue and, but for our involvement, the benefits enjoyed by current and former TfLPF members suffering from ill-health would have been significantly worsened.

London Overground

One welcome by-product of the creation of London Overground is that employees are eligible for membership of the TfL Pension Fund. This offer was agreed following representations by RMT during franchise reorganisation discussions. LOROL employees have been contacted to ask if they wish to transfer. At 5%, contributions to the TfLPF are more than half the rate payable to LOROL Section of the RPS with little difference in the benefits offered by the two funds.

BUSES

RMT is currently entering into a dispute with Go Ahead Group over their decision to close the Southern Vectis and Wilts & Dorset pension schemes. Members employed by Southern Vectis, Bluestar (formerly Solent Blue Line) and Wilts & Dorset will be allowed to stay in their schemes, as will current employees waiting to go in the funds. However, the funds will be closed to future new recruits. The Southern Vectis scheme has been in deficit for some time and previously as part of a deal to resolve the financial situation members agreed to increase their contributions. However, following the company's sale to Go Ahead, the new employers want to close the scheme rather than honour previous management commitments to retain the scheme.

The old Wilts & Dorset management had tried to close the scheme in 2003 but when RMT threaten strike action on the back of a 93% 'yes vote' from members, management relented. Now the fund is in

deficit again management want to close it new recruits. In 2001 member were persuaded to reduce future benefit and increase contributions on the back of a promise to keep the fund open. Management had previously reduced their own contributions and it seems their promises on pensions only last as long as they can make money out of them! Go Ahead's actions are completely unacceptable and I hope the forthcoming ballot will result in an overwhelming vote in favour of strike action because in reality that's the only message these people understand.

RETIRED MEMBERS BRANCHES

Once again our Retired Members Branches have undertaken sterling work on behalf of the Union. These Branches perform a wide variety of valuable tasks from solving local problems, not just on pensions and travel, to lobbying Parliament for improvements in the State Pension and in some areas assisting in the recruitment of new Union members. RMT is represented on the National Pensioners Convention, the TUC Pensioners Committee and at Brussels through involvement with FERPA.

At the time of writing the Annual Conference has just been held with representatives from nine different regions. A number of interesting resolutions were carried, but as with all organisations a lot of work goes on behind the scenes. This year celebrated the Centenary of the introduction of the Old Age Pension and Conference highlighted the necessity not only of celebrating that event but lobbying against Government plans to increase retirement age and retain the real value of pension payments. There is understandable concern that State finances will not permit a return to index-linking in 2012 and that the real value of State pensions will gradually reduce when in fact the opposite should be the case as the majority of employers no longer offer decent pensions. It is astonishing that Governments can find the billions to spend on wars and gambling bankers but claim to be unable to afford a state pension which would allow pensioners to live the rest of their lives without fear of hardship.

As in last year, two main problems exist, firstly; that the Branches need new blood to keep them flourishing and secondly; additional Branches need to be established in areas where currently none exist.

INDIVIDUAL CASES

Every year RMT deals with hundreds of individual cases where members are seeking guidance on their pension entitlement, whether as a result of impending retirement, redundancy or arising from ill health. There are also many cases of former members seeking assistance with their pension. Individual cases are often very time-consuming but I am pleased that RMT is able to provide this very valuable service to our current and former members.

The value of RMT membership and its advice on pension issues is highlighted by the case of Test Train Technicians at Ashford whereby the employer claimed a restructuring deal was for future service only, despite the new jobs clearly having been introduced prior to the signed agreement with staff representatives. The TTTs pay was increased from £23,000 to £31,000 as part of an arrangement to introduce a new grade. The employer, obviously after discovering the increased pension cost, claimed it was restructuring and should only apply for future service. Head Office advised the member that based on the documentation the new rate should be pensionable for all service not just future service. The member submitted a claim accordingly and following a prolonged wrangle between the employer and the Trustees, the Trustees eventually paid a pension based on the new rate. As a result one of our members retired on a pension based on a final salary of £34,000 instead of £25,000. The other members of the team will have similar increase in their pensions when they reach retirement age.

Communications

The last year has seen major developments in RMT's communications work, particularly greater use of electronic communications to speed the delivery of information to members and the world at large.

During the year the decision was made to formalise campaigns and communications as a department and, in order to co-ordinate the growing use of new communications tools and to oversee the growing work of the department as a whole, the new post of campaigns and communications manager was created and filled in January 2009.

The sustained high level of industrial and campaigning activity by the union has increased demands on a relatively small communications team that works constantly at full capacity, and in March 2009 its complement was increased to four, with a new media officer recruited following the appointment of the previous incumbent as campaigns and communications manager.

Over the year the department has maintained its high level output of printed and electronic materials for members and the media.

RMT PUBLICATIONS

The flagship RMT News has continued to produce ten editions per year, sustaining a regular 40-page format of news and in-depth features. RMT News direct mailings have also been used effectively to target 'insert' materials, including DVDs, at specific member groups, as well as the traditional RMT diary.

A steady stream of dispute leaflets and posters, campaign materials, newsletters, stickers, postcards and a series of charter booklets have also been produced as required.

NEW COMMUNICATIONS

The union has begun to make greater use of direct emailing and SMS texting to members, particularly during industrial disputes, in order to bring key messages to RMT members speedily. In this way decisions on industrial action, ballot results and other key messages can be brought to members by the union before they appear in the media or employer communications.

MEDIA OFFICE

RMT maintains a high media profile vastly disproportionate to its relative size among trade unions. The media office has continued to promote the union's industrial, political and campaigning interests in the print and broadcast media, producing a steady high volume of media releases, organising press conferences and interviews and placing letters and articles, reflecting the union's sustained level of industrial and wider campaigning.

WWW.RMT.ORG.UK

The RMT website continues to grow as a valuable resource for RMT members, media and the general public. The members-only area continues to offer a variety of information, including subscription to circulars, conference webcasts, ballot results, the pay and conditions database, as well as access for members to edit their own details and contact information, and access to Credit Union accounts.

Subscription to the 'latest news' media updates has proved immensely popular, with each release now circulated to some 3,000 email accounts, depending on subject, in addition to the correspondents and news desks targeted by the media office.

RMTV

In April RMTv, the union's own online video channel, was launched, bringing video features and news updates to members via the internet. RMTv already hosts weekly video updates on industrial and campaigning issues at the heart of the union's activities, and it is intended gradually to increase the frequency of bulletins.

Feature episodes will be used to take more in-depth looks at specific issues and industries, with interviews and footage of union activity from around the country.

RMTv will also host wider Labour movement films and music, building into what should be an impressive archive of contemporary and historic video material.

RMTSHARE

A social networking website, provisionally called RMTShare is also now in the final stages of development, a facility intended further to improve the flow of information and ideas communications between and among RMT members, and further to facilitate the dissemination of key messages.

The RMTShare network will be open only RMT members who will be able to communicate directly with each other and with common-interest groups, similar to other social networking sites.

RMTShare will also be able to deliver key union messages nationally, regionally and locally, as well as on specific interest topics.

The network will also provide a personal 'RMTShare' email address to every RMT member who wants or needs one – avoiding the need to use workplace email addresses by those who do not have personal accounts.

Organising Unit



Organising and Education

Both our Organising and Education activities have made a big difference to the continuing strengthening of our union. Better organised workplaces with properly trained RMT representatives make us stronger and more capable of improving terms and conditions and providing job security.

Organising

For the seventh year in a row our organisation efforts have recorded a tangible increase in the number of members we have coupled with improved organisation in many workplaces. Our strategy is constantly evolving but will continue to rely on our main strength – the active participation of our activists, reps and officers.

However, whilst we have grown during very difficult times we must recognise that there are huge areas where we are not properly organised and as such must turn things around.

I want to really stress the importance of our aspirations when it comes to organising:

We can no longer tolerate poor organisation due to circumstances within our control

For example, we know we have branches that either fail to meet or meet without a quorum. If some of our branches do not function properly then we will let our members down. As a rank and file led union, our strength comes from our local organisation. Without that we suffer and our members are denied a proper service and representation.

So we have started a national campaign with all our Regional Councils to ensure all of our branches are as strong as possible. Every region has to carry out a 'health check' and help those branches who are toiling. Our Regional Organisers have been instructed to carry out branch visits to ensure that every branch 'in their patch' is visited and measures are taken to support and build our branch structures. We are also calling on our better organised branches to reach out and give a helping hand to neighbouring branches that are in trouble. There's no point saying 'we're alright so this doesn't involve us'. We are a national union!

That's the spirit of real solidarity and it's in everyone's interest that we succeed here. After all, how can we sustain national strikes when we have areas that are poorly organised with low density of members in the workplaces? Strong areas may wish to increase the pressure on management by escalating industrial action whilst weak areas report they cannot sustain the dispute. It's much better if all areas are strong and capable of exerting maximum pressure against rogue employers.

I hope everyone will agree with these sentiments.

Agreeing is one thing; we now need to do something about this!

ORGANISING WEEKS

Regional Councils are now responsible for organising and running their own organising weeks. Many regions run numerous weeks of intense activity. We really need all regions doing this on a regular basis so we can kick start activity and campaigns that can be sustained throughout the months and years to come. We can give a cast iron guarantee that the more effort and activities that are held in the region, the more members we get and the union's strength and influence in the workplace grows.

So we anticipate that our greater focus on the regions will see increased activity.

BRANCH PLANS – THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

We have over two hundred and thirty branches and we should also have over two hundred and thirty branch plans. A branch plan should be relatively simple and should identify non RMT members at the workplaces that the branch is responsible for organising. To quote the union's rule book – the sphere of influence. Once the 'nons' have been identified – we need the branch to devise a plan of action to get the 'nons' in the RMT and to ensure all our members are represented by an RMT rep.

AN RMT REP IN EVERY WORKPLACE

Part of the Regional Council's 'health check' will be to ensure that we have trained RMT reps in every workplace. We have just carried out an organising drive in the Wessex region at Network Rail depots and we found many workplaces without local reps. Our organising teams were pleasantly surprised by the number of workers who readily agreed to stand as RMT rep and fill the vacancy. Hopefully, by the time you read this these new reps will now have been trained and will have started to improve matters within their workplaces.

EVERY RMT REP: AN RMT ORGANISER

Up and down the country RMT reps are meeting with management arguing for the best possible deal on behalf of our members. Whether they are arguing for better pay, improved terms & conditions or concerns over Health & Safety, our reps are the lifeblood of our union.

Of course, without members we would have no reps. So, it is vitally important that every single one of our reps realises just how important they are to the union. They also need to realise that they themselves are the best recruiters we have. They know the issues at the workplace and the victories the union has achieved over the years. The local rep is the RMT's ambassador in the workplace and as such should be ensuring that every single worker is approached and encouraged to join the RMT.

GRADES CONFERENCES

Grades conferences were created to provide the union with a focus that would ensure the complete organisation of the grades covered by the conference. As such, every Grades Conference has the responsibility to organise the grade written into its constitution. Members of our Organising Unit used to make a short contribution at the Grades Conference to underline the importance of organising.

The message was understood loud and clear so it's now up to our conferences to ensure that all measures are taken by the union to 'secure the complete organisation of the grades'.

A few Grades Conferences are rising to the challenge and are attempting to turn around poor organisation, and in doing so, setting a good example for the others to follow.

EDUCATION

Unfortunately, our Education Officer, Ray Spry-Shute suffered serious health problems at the start of this year and we wish Ray well and hope he regains his health.

I'm glad to say that everyone pitched in to keep our education programme on track with Alistair Gittins taking up the reins until passing over responsibility for our Education programme to Head of Organising, Alan Pottage.

Organising and Education go hand in hand so it makes sense that this fusion took place.

We have continued to train many RMT reps at our Doncaster Education facility and demand continues to grow. We have recently announced new General Reps courses that will allow our activists and reps to be trained in our own education centre at Doncaster. We are also encouraging our twelve Regional Councils to organise more regionalised education and training courses. Those Regional Councils who do this always get positive results with our activists grateful for the efforts that were made on their behalf.

I would also encourage our branches to organise local courses. Courses of a one day or two day duration can provide an important boost to our activists and reps.

There is enough money out there in the regions and branches to afford this and it's this type of activity that our money should be used for. There is absolutely no point having branches sitting with thousands of pounds in their BMFs whilst we have a need to carry out education courses and organise the unorganised. I appreciate some branches are 'skint' due to carrying out branch activities but we have over £500,000 sitting idle in branch funds and it's about time we started to invest this cash into our members – because that is exactly what the funding is for!

Our education system relies heavily on our lay tutors and I would like to thank them for all their hard work and dedication over the last twelve months.

YOUNG MEMBER ACTIVISTS

I am also glad to report that we have had a healthy interest from our Young Members this year and hope to have a well attended Young Members AGM course here in the Isle of Man.

Our Young Members conference held in Birmingham at the end of March had sixteen delegates. I am sure we can improve on this but nonetheless this was double the number who attended in 2007.

So we are moving in the right direction but again, more thought and effort needs to be made to ensure we mobilise and build our organisation amongst the 11,500 members we have who are 30 years of age or younger. Our comrades in our Norwegian sister union – Industri Energi (i.e.) have managed to build their young members organisation in a short period of time and we would hope to do the same. There is no reason why RMT cannot have the best organised Young Members section in the trade union movement. That's got to be our aim.

It's no coincidence that the more energy and effort our young activists put into organising themselves – the better results we see. So once again, I would like to thank all of our young activists who have contributed to this success and I hope to see even more improvements over the next year.

**It's our future
and it's yours too!**

**IN THE RMT UNION
we're stronger together**

RMT

www.rmt.org.uk freephone 0800 376 3766

**IT'S A WORRYING TIME
FOR OUR INDUSTRY**

**YOU ARE VULNERABLE
ON YOUR OWN**

**SO GET THE STRONGEST PROTECTION
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RAILWAY UNION
AND YOU LOSE YOUR
JOB YOU COULD BE
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JOIN RMT TODAY**

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**WORRIED ABOUT
YOUR FUTURE?**

The RMT union declares:
"job security is our priority"

"We intend to fight job losses and defend our industry, which is vital to the long-term health of our economy and the environment. There has never been a more crucial time to be a member of RMT."

Bob Green
RMT General Secretary

RMT

www.rmt.org.uk freephone 0800 376 3766

THE RIGHT PROFILE

From day one of our Organising Strategy we have set out to improve our profile.

We have made basic recruitment materials readily available to those who are helping us build our union. Thousands of badges, pens, lanyards and keyrings are distributed every month along with membership packs, leaflets and posters

Various initiatives have been carried out – hi-vi vests, flags, banners, coats, hats and t-shirts..and much more!

We also design a new advert that is placed in both the Railnews and Railstaff every month. We take this opportunity to promote the positive aspects of RMT membership. It's unfortunate to see the UNITE union seeking to mislead workers with their advert so it's important that our activists get the true message out to the workforce. The best way to deal with anti-RMT activities is for us to get properly organised and prove to our members that we are by far the best union for transport workers. That's why we are the fastest growing union in the country.

ETHICAL NATION

...‘from the picket line to the cat walk’

(Cof E member Malcolm Dunning)

We now have a hugely popular range of RMT clothing available through our ‘web shop’. So much so, that we struggle sometimes to cope with the demand. Branches can also have their own merchandise produced with their branch name on the various items. This all helps increase our profile and gets the message across in an effective way.

‘REBELUTION’ RMT HELY HANSEN WATERPROOF JACKET

We use a company called ‘Ethical Nation’ because, unlike many other unions and organisations, we believe it's important not only to advocate ethical standards for those who produce RMT merchandise – but we also want to see that put into practice. Most items are subsidised so our members can rest assured they are getting a bargain without anyone being exploited in the process!

Hely Hansen
jacket & fleece
special price
only £60

new
RMT
Hely
Hansen
jacket
with
fleece
100%
waterproof!

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100% waterproof jacket with quality fleece for only £60
(RRP = £110 so that's a saving of £50!) Order by RMT freephone 0800 376 3766
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Personnel and Constitution

Staffing

With the continuing success we are having in increasing the Union's Membership and with the rapid advances in new technology and resultant need to provide the membership with up to the minute information, including by email & text messaging, particularly dispute situations, I have again looked at the Union's staffing requirements so that we can provide the support and service that our members deserve.

In this respect, with the increased use of emails and the web, the delivery of information by the union in the various forms and by the different Departments at Unity House, requires a much higher degree of co-ordination. I have consequently appointed a Campaigns & Communications Manager to cover the dissemination of information on campaigns the Union is running and information being sent out from the Office via RMT Web, RMT Circulars Newsletters and emails etc. In addition to coordinating the Union's campaigns and communications, this Manager heads the newly created Campaigns & Communications Department and has the Press Officer, Communications Officer and Web Editor/Journalist reporting to them.

We also have the Wessex Office up and running in Southampton and have appointed a Clerical Assistant to provide the Office based support to the Wessex Regional Organiser and I am sure our Members in that area are already benefitting from this change to the Union's regional structure.

I take this opportunity to thank the Staff for their hard work and dedication over the past year in playing their part in providing a first class service to the membership in what has been another challenging year.

Constitution Item

In line with the decision of the 2008 AGM to change the principles of the electoral areas for the election of AGM delegates to Regional Council Areas from the old District Council Areas, this year's Conference will be debating the Council of Executives proposals to modernise the electoral structure whilst maintain the level of representation from the Union's grass root membership.

As mentioned earlier, the Wessex Regional Council Area now has a Regional Office in Southampton to serve the members in that area and I am sure this will prove to be a major boost for our members and representatives in the Wessex Region.

Property

MARITIME HOUSE, CLAPHAM

A rent review earlier this year increased the rents of protected tenancies by 10% and we have achieved an increase in excess of 100% with Orange communications. All flats continue to be let and, together with our commercial tenants, provide us with a steady income stream. Furthermore, apart from general internal decorations due to commence shortly, only minor maintenance works have been required on Maritime House again this year.

Slater Mews is continuing to be a popular venue for members whilst visiting London.

NORTH EAST REGIONAL OFFICE

Our Regional Office at the rear of the Education Centre in Doncaster was officially opened last October and all staff have settled in the new surroundings. It has proved to be a light and airy welcome addition to the Union's portfolio.

WESSEX REGIONAL OFFICE

Despite a thorough search of the area, it was impossible to purchase a suitable property in Southampton to house the newly formed Wessex Regional Office. Consequently we are in serviced offices in Ocean Village. We are still mindful of the need to have premises on a long term basis and the search is ongoing.

ABERDEEN

Consequent upon the merger with OILC we now have another office in Aberdeen. The premises, which are in Carmelite Street, are currently on a lease which expires on 30 November, 2010.

SOUTH SHIELDS

We had to vacate the Coronation Street premises in April this year as the landlords intended to use the property themselves. Our attempt to purchase a property nearby was unsuccessful and consequently we are now renting office space within the town centre which is only a short distance from Coronation Street and is in fact more convenient for the Metro station and bus station.

CRAVEN ARMS, LUDLOW

Although this matter is still ongoing, we have now reached agreement with the Labour Party and the property is to be demolished and the land sold, the proceeds to be divided. Hopefully this will be concluded in the not too distant future.

PETERBOROUGH

Some progress has been made in that the Land Registry Adjudicator has made a ruling which allows for the members of Peterborough Branch to direct the trustees of the property to transfer the interest to the Trustees of R.M.T. I have therefore written to the Branch Secretary in this respect and he has confirmed that the Unity Hall trustees will be discussing the matter shortly whereupon he will inform me of their decision.

Membership

MEMBERSHIP RECORDS SYSTEM ('REMOTE ACCESS DATABASE')

Since the system went live in September 2007 there has been continued progress each year. Having cleared previous backlogs as a result of the original implementation, the Membership Department has been able to deal with the day to day processes in an efficient and effective manner.

The success of the system and its continued development has enabled the Department to carry out additional tasks and development work, which under our previous database would have been impossible. Overall this has ensured that we continue to improve the accuracy of our records and therefore the service to our members.



RMT MEMBERS AREA/JOIN ONLINE

Secure access to the Members area of the RMT website is now fully validated by the membership system, so that membership is checked and membership detail displayed. Access will soon be extended to retired members. The next step is to fully integrate the system with the website meaning members will see a customised page that will present them with options dependent on the detail on their membership record. In 'Membership Detail', they will see a Branch specific page including contact and meeting detail plus areas for news and information that can be posted and edited by the Branch Secretary. Web subscription lists will be maintained on the system.

For over a year, members have had the ability to update their own details in real-time via the 'Members Area' on the RMT website, ensuring they receive all the relevant Union correspondence and are included in the appropriate industrial action and election ballots.

Since January, the Join Online facility has been fully integrated with the membership system. Once again this has improved the efficiency within the Department, enabling staff to check the application for its validity and process it within hours.

BRANCH/REGIONAL COUNCIL SECRETARY ACCESS ('WEB RESOURCE')

The "Web Resource" becomes available to any member accessing 'Membership Detail' recognised by the Membership System as a Branch or Regional Council Secretary.

This is a powerful tool for the Secretary for maintaining records, organising and communicating with members.

By the time of the AGM, the Union will have trained in the region of 80 Branch/Regional Council Secretaries on the new programme of training at Doncaster, commenced in August last year and by the end of the year, that figure should have reached 150.

Feedback from attendees has been really positive and many ideas for improvements have been flagged up. The Resource will continue to develop to best suit the needs of our Secretaries.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

The Department is currently developing a report writer that will work with the system to provide more regular and flexible information to officials to help keep track of membership levels. It will provide the ability to drill down by region, branch, employer, workplace, job etc so that officials can accurately monitor where the Union is successfully maintaining or improving membership and those where some attention, extra effort and/or additional resource is required.

COMMUNICATIONS

Jointly, the Membership and Communications Departments have successfully used an SMS messaging and bulk email service for over a year which has been invaluable in all areas of the Union. Whether it is welcoming members to the RMT, or advising members of industrial action, the underlying message is that the Union is keeping our members informed.

Full integration of this service with the Membership System is imminent. This will mean that all Union correspondence is managed from and recorded on system.

ORGANISATION

The Department continues to work closely with the Organising Unit in terms of providing information and on a number of initiatives to persuade lapsed members to rejoin, such as the running of the 'London Calling' call centre, which has produced impressive results.

Attempts to make inroads into our membership base by other Unions are still being closely fought. The Union continues to successfully thwart such attempts where the Department is made aware.

Information Technology

We remain committed to using Information Technology effectively to ensure that we continue to operate as a modern union and provide the best possible support to members in the workplace. We have endeavoured to do this on a cost effective basis to ensure that our resources are used to optimum effect. I detail below some of the projects initiated over the past year together with a note of some of our equipment to give a flavour of the activity that has taken place.

Headquarters

Our new servers have proved extremely robust with almost zero down time. With our near total reliance on IT, outages could be both damaging and costly in respect of lost working hours. To ensure this service is maintained the servers are monitored 24/7 and regularly updated.

Our “disaster recovery” plan is now in full operation with our data now backed up securely to a centre in the North of England. In the event of major IT failure or building damage / destruction we would aim to have the union up and running again within 24 hours with our records intact and able to provide a service to members.

All desk top machines have been renewed in Headquarters which should provide a stable platform for the next few years. In addition we have now provided each of the Council of Executives with a desk top machine enabling better communication with members.

The use of Blackberrys continues to be a vital tool for officers and the Executive enabling them to receive emails on the move and improve communication within the union.

We have introduced the facility to send bulk voice mail messages and text messages to members to keep them informed with usage increasing.

Projects Undertaken

REGIONAL OFFICES GENERAL

We have renewed desk top machines in all Regional Offices which have all been set up in a uniform manner. The equipment is regularly maintained and visited by an engineer and ourselves annually to ensure that we operate efficiently and our assets are updated. The offices are also provided with telephoned IT support with engineers available in case of need.

NEW NORTH EAST REGIONAL OFFICE

This new office officially opened on the 17th October in newly built premises at the rear of Doncaster Education Centre. We have networked the building and equipped new offices with IT for the Region, Thompsons lawyers and Organisation Unit. The building also enjoys a wireless network for visiting Branch and Regional Council officials.

OFFSHORE INDUSTRY LIAISON COMMITTEE ABERDEEN OFFICE

With the merger of OILC we have reviewed their existing premises and infrastructure in Aberdeen. We have connected the office IT to our Headquarters so that they have access to the membership system showing the newly merged records. Existing services and equipment are also being reviewed so that they are added to our contracts at optimum cost. A new high speed printer has been installed and other equipment will be progressively changed so that all offices have the same resources.

WESSEX OFFICE

This new office serving the newly created Wessex Region officially opened in March. We have equipped this office with IT and linked it with HQ. We have also installed a wireless network for visiting Branch and Regional Council officials

GLASGOW OFFICE

Following the success of video conferencing we have installed this facility in our Glasgow office. This will enable up to four offices to conference together thereby improving union communications. It will also be available to local officials who can conference with headquarters for example on industrial issues thereby saving valuable time and costs.

SOUTH SHIELDS OFFICE

We are currently looking at equipping new offices in South Shields following our move of premises.

Summary of some of our equipment

- Over 300 desktops and laptops (in 2001 we had 35 desktops)
- High-speed printers / scanners / copiers to handle volume mailings including personal referenda thus saving expensive out sourcing
- Numbering machine to maintain security of referenda
- Colour copiers / printers to improve professionalism and presentation of work
- Wireless networks now in all offices
- Video conferencing equipment now in 6 locations
- Membership card and new health and safety card printing machine again saving outsourcing and most importantly improving speed of issue
- Blackberrys used by senior officials and members of the Council of Executives to receive emails on the move
- Data cards used by senior officials to connect laptops from any location
- Mobile printers for organisers to print on the move
- Palm top organisers to assist recruiters in the workplace
- Cameras including DVD to enable us to film extracts for web streaming through our web site
- Our telephone system has a low cost routing system, which has substantially reduced our telephony charges over the past few years.

As highlighted in previous reports these systems require careful management and are subject to continuous review to ensure we operate safely and compliantly in this fast moving environment. As well as providing IT support to all our offices we continue to assist branch and regional council secretaries by telephone and through annual IT surgeries held at each Regional Office.



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