



UNION VICTORY ON JOBS

BUT PAY DISPUTE CONTINUES

Following intense negotiations and backed up by RMT's excellent two-day strike in June, LUL has finally agreed to abide by the agreement made with the unions at the time of the introduction of PPP: **no compulsory redundancies**. This is a terrific achievement, only made possible by the determination of you and your fellow members to actively defend an agreement and to save jobs from the company's axe. Make no mistake about it; the company was ready to shed over a thousand jobs, many of them operational. However, by going into dispute with the company and demonstrating through solid strike action our determination to defend the livelihoods of all our members, we have forced them to retreat. There are now a mere 24 mainly management jobs at risk, with each affected member being guaranteed an alternative job offer. Once again, RMT's strong and principled actions have been vindicated.

Regarding the widespread misuse and abuse by

management of the Attendance at Work Policy, talks are still ongoing within various forums. There are indications that the company has listened to our complaints and are prepared to ensure that local managers abide by the letter and spirit of the Policy which has now been thrashed out and agreed (ask your rep for full details).

As a result of the progress made on the above two issues, management recently put out a circular stating that the dispute between the company and RMT was now settled. ***This is emphatically not the case.*** We have not agreed to the company's so-called 'final offer' pay award because, frankly, it is poor (see *Scrooge!* for comparison of pay awards in other rail companies). In fact, it is so poor that the other three rail unions, ASLEF, TSSA and UNITE, have also rejected it.

It's worth remembering that this offer is an improvement on the company's original offer of RPI + 0.5% this year and absolutely nothing for the next four years; but this improved offer only came about because of our determination to reject

something better described as an insult than a deal. Again, our strategy of negotiation backed up with action has proved itself. But the job on pay is not yet done, unless we are prepared to accept this latest inferior offering. To win the settlement our hard work deserves, we need to pursue the fight. Hopefully, the other unions will realise that merely voicing their opposition to the company's deal is not going to bring about a better one, and that they need to join our fight if they want to achieve their members' aspirations. **There is a reps meeting on 6th October. Let your rep know what you think of the deal. UNITY IS STRENGTH.**

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BLACKHORSE ROAD MANAGEMENT TREAT SAFETY AS OPTIONAL EXTRA – AGAIN!

Readers will remember that in the May edition of Monthly News we reported on a serious breach of safety at Blackhorse Road when the station was left open at the insistence of a DSM despite both escalators being out of action and contrary to the Congestion Control Emergency Plan (CCEP). Alarming, the CCEP was broken again recently, this time at Tottenham Hale.

The Supervisor at Tottenham Hale was contacted by the Service Controller and asked to ride with a driver to investigate a reported loud banging noise on the track between Tottenham Hale and Blackhorse Road. The Supervisor told the Controller that he was the only Supervisor on duty at Tottenham Hale, a section 12 station, but the Controller insisted he carry out his request. The Supervisor then informed his DSM of this situation and advised him that according to the CCEP he could not leave the station open without a Supervisor; the DSM ignored this advice and told him to put a CSA in the control room and carry out the Service Controller's instructions. The

station remained open while the Supervisor travelled with a driver under protest.

The incident raises a number of questions. Why did they insist on the Tottenham Hale Supervisor doing the track check when a DMT, a Technical Officer, a DSM or even a Supervisor from Seven Sisters could have been used? Why was the train upon which the Supervisor travelled told to check the area *at line speed*? And the biggest question of all: why do management on the Blackhorse Road Group seem to think that safety is some kind of optional luxury rather than an issue of overarching importance?

Local Health and Safety Rep, Amarjit Chumber, and his TSSA counterpart have both requested a Formal Investigation into the incident. The GSM's response so far has been to say that she is 'content' with how the issue was dealt with by management. This is the kind of 'couldn't care less' attitude which could lead to a fatality. Safety rules are not there to be used when convenient – they are mandatory.

Carl Campbell Employment Tribunal

Sacked Seven Sisters driver, Carl Campbell, is taking his case for unfair dismissal to an Employment Tribunal (ET). The ET will begin on 26th October and last for 5 days. Supporters can watch proceedings at Victory House, Central London Employment Tribunal, Kingsway near Holborn tube.

SCROOGE!

How LUL's pay offer compares

Take a close look at the following list of Train Operating Companies and the pay rises that have been awarded to their train drivers this year:

- Arriva Cross Country: 3.5%
- Arriva Trains Wales Drivers: 4.75%
- Chiltern Railways: 3.5%
- DRS: 3.5%
- DB Schenker: 4.06%
- East Midlands Trains: 3.5%
- Island Line: 4.8%
- Gatwick Express: 3.3%
- GB Railfreight: 3.27%
- London Midland: 3.5%
- Merseyrail drivers: 4.55%
- National Express East Coast: 3.5%
- Serco: 3%
- Southern: 3.3%

[Sources: RMT pay bulletin; ASLEF website]

These pay awards range between 3% and 4.8%. So why does our company think that we should accept their pathetic offer of 1.5% this year and a totally insulting 0.5% next? Remember, we are not an under-performing company; we continue to carry record numbers of passengers and, *thanks to our hard work*, LUL is currently 'Metro of the Year!'

FIVE ROUNDERS? YOU'RE HAVING A LAUGH!

By a majority of 3 to 1 on a high turnout, RMT drivers on the Victoria line have voted for strike action and action short of a strike against local management's attempt to impose 5-rounder duties on the line.

The unions had an agreement with the company that there would be no more than four rounders in any duty because of the hot and noisy conditions on the line and the detrimental effect on morale that these turns have on a line with no daylight. It was accepted by all that the air cooling systems fitted to Vic line trains is hopelessly inadequate, hence the agreement that all duties would have no more than four rounders and for this to stay in place at least until the new stock is fully in service.

5-rounder turns imposed

Despite this local agreement, management is now trying to impose 5-rounder turns on the line. But our members will not stand idly by while the company tears up yet another agreement, hence the strong vote for industrial action which prompted a directors meeting and the setting up of a Joint Working Party (JWP).

Fightback

At a recent meeting of the branch, the following motion was passed to go to head office:

1. **Work to rule by refusing to do the fifth rounder of any 5-rounder turn from 29th September;**
2. **Strike for 24 hours on 6th October if management fail to honour the original agreement.**

ASLEF do a deal without assurances

So what about ASLEF, the "train driver's union"? After initially threatening to ballot members they have signed up to proposals in the JWP that offer no guarantees in the short term and have heard management say that there is no intention to improve the situation by the next timetable change in January (i.e. management could roster more 5 rounder turns).

For this reason your union remains in dispute with the company and once again we will be calling for unity among drivers on the Victoria Line to improve and defend your conditions against a management that treat their staff with casual disdain and contempt.

Safety rep has pay deducted for doing union duty

Local trains health and safety rep, Gary Fitzpatrick, was recently deducted a day's pay in a case which demonstrates the warped priorities of our management at the moment. Safety continues to be ignored in favour of keeping the service running at all costs, and union reps continue to be harassed and bullied for trying to protect their members.

Safety ignored after lift failure

On 10th July, Gary received a call from the local health and

safety rep at Holloway Road and was told that the lifts had failed but that management were insisting the station remain open. Gary went immediately to Holloway Road and asked the GSM why the station was still open in contravention of the Congestion Control Evacuation Plan (CCEP). The GSM refused to explain himself so Gary informed him that he wanted to begin his own investigation of the incident as is his right under health and safety law. He was refused this right and was unable to get anywhere with line

management, despite repeated attempts throughout the day. Management seemed quite content with their flagrant violation of the CCEP and with the fact that passengers' safety was being put at risk.

Victimised for doing his duty

When Gary called his own DMT at Arnos Grove to explain that he was unavailable for his train driving duty due to his being involved in the safety incident at Holloway Road, he was asked to report for a later duty – this being yet another

potential safety breach! Gary declined the offer to do what would have amounted to a 16-hour day and instead returned to Arnos Grove the next day only to find that he had been deducted a day's pay. It gets worse. Gary then put in a grievance to get his pay reinstated. The grievance was

dealt with by Train Ops Manager, Oliver Monahan, despite the fact that he was the one who deducted Gary's pay in the first place! You couldn't make it up. No surprise, then, that Mr Monahan found nothing wrong with the deduction. Gary is now appealing this decision to Performance Manager, Nick

Shaw, and is preparing to go to an Employment Tribunal should this prove necessary. *With managers so frequently breaking agreements, flouting health and safety regulations and victimising staff, it's small wonder we're still in dispute with them.*

Obituary: RMT stalwart John Knight passes away



Over 40 people turned up at Clacton to attend John Knight's funeral and to celebrate his life. Comrades from Arnos Depot where joined by retired friends and other people from different areas of LUL. Special thanks to RMT Acton & District branch who gave a large donation towards the travel costs on the day. Over £500 was collected at Arnos and gratefully received by John's widow.

Photo: ex-colleagues, branch members and friends say 'farewell' to lifelong NUR and RMT activist, John Knight

John Knight a lifelong union rep, activist and officer of Finsbury Park Branch has died after being diagnosed with throat cancer only 6 weeks ago. John spent most of his working life as a guard and driver both at Oakwood and Arnos Grove and was known for the integrity and unshakeable principles that characterise all that is good about our union. He was kind and compassionate and was well respected by all who knew him; even in his retirement years that were so tragically cut short, he still gave his time without reward to help youngsters in his local RAF cadet company. His sudden departure was a big shock to all who knew him.

John's funeral took place in Clacton on Monday, 7th September. Many friends and colleagues from Arnos Grove travelled to the funeral in a coach organized by our branch. Together with workers from the rail industry, John's family and the local community, there was a huge turnout of people wishing to pay their last respects and to say a final 'farewell'. It was a fitting tribute to a great man. Steps are in hand to make a permanent memorial to John at Arnos Grove. He will always be remembered.

Dean O'Hanlon
Finsbury Park Branch Secretary

Next Branch Meetings

October 1st, 8th

November 5th, 12th, 20th (AGM – starts 1700)

Starting at 1600hrs, at Twelve Pins Public House (near Finsbury Park Station)

