

# RMT up front



*The newsletter for London Underground drivers*

Issue 22, October 2012

## DRIVERLESS TRAINS? RMT SAY NO THANKS AND TAKE A STAND FOR ALL DRIVERS

Earlier in the year the RMT leaked a secret report on LUL's plans for the future of the Underground. This made pretty grim reading and effectively read as the death warrant for London Underground drivers with wide scale destaffing plans. A key plank of these proposals is for the operation of driverless trains. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to work out that this means the end of your job.

At the time LUL vigorously rebutted this report and said it was merely "blue sky" thinking but these plans are real. Backed by a Tory Mayor who is more interested in being seen as tough on organised workers, LU looked at testing driverless tests on the Jubilee Line. In response to this the RMT is currently balloting our Test Train Drivers alongside those of our Sister Union ASLEF. A strong mandate is expected to this ballot calling for our members not to cooperate with any trials of driverless trains up to and including strike action.

At a recent Trains Health & Safety Council meeting the issue of the proposed NOPO trial on the Jubilee line, due to commence this month, was raised and the response from the management chair (Peter Tollington) was that he had heard of no plans to do this so couldn't give any further information. Asked again on this the response was that sometime back Thales, urged by Tubelines had approached LUL with a proposal to run a

### RMT DEMANDS

1. Every new train built has a drivers cab with manual controls for emergencies and degraded operations.
2. The core responsibility of the driver while the train is moving will be to observe the road ahead and avert any fatalities or other issue such as obstructions or broken rails.
3. The core responsibility of the driver once in a station will be to safely manage the PTI and depart the station safely.
4. No member of the RMT will be used to actively test or operate any equipment designed to run the Underground in a driverless way.

trial of NOPO on the Jubilee line in October at a cost of £1 million.

LUL stated that they wouldn't be taking up this offer. The reasons offered by LUL were that the cost was prohibitive and that currently LUL remains miles away from being in a position to use this technology. The chair went on to acknowledge however that the technology to bring about NOPO exists and may be revisited in the future.

The RMT has also since learned that Thales has now made a bid for the contract of "obstruction detection"

a key component of NOPO and driverless trains.

It has also been brought to the attention of the union that LU have added a rulebook entry without agreement giving carte blanche for all drivers to assist in driverless train operation. This has serious consequences and is one that we cannot tolerate both on a safety level and as a threat to our terms and conditions.

Be in no doubt that if LUL roll this out your job will be under threat. RMT has no problem with new technology being used and developed but it should not be used with the purpose of undermining your job, trying to break trade unionism or risking safety.

Therefore a key demand was agreed by the RMT: "every train must have a driver to ensure the safe and effective running of the Underground." This is now union policy which means that the RMT has key positions on this (see box).

The Union will be seeking a cast iron commitment from LUL on these issues or we will be entering into dispute. This will affect every driver on LUL and it is our belief that every driver has to be united in this fight and we will be seeking the cooperation of ASLEF in this campaign at the very highest level.

Every driver needs to be vigilant to defend our grade and to defend our future. The RMT will defend the driver grade on London Underground.

## Northern Line Upgrade

**The Northern line upgrade has caused huge problems for management. The necessary training and practical handling required for the introduction of TBTC working means that the line is seriously stretched.**

Local reps on the line met with Trains Health & Safety Council and Trains Functional Council representatives and RMT head office to formulate RMT concerns over training and delivery of any agreed training.

We have currently agreed on the initial course, made up of three day classroom/simulator training, one day scenario assessments and a fifth day visiting the Jubilee line for a go, look see.

We will be seeking that a minimum of 6 trips practical handling, a trip being West Finchley to High Barnet, covering both PM operation and Automatic operation crossing the migration boundaries in both directions.

The RMT also expects that extra support will be made available for any T/op's requiring it and that this be done using I/O's on a 1:1 basis. I/O support will also be required to cover working in and out of depots using RM mode.

A big concern for us with this training is that there is no live area to practically operate the train until February 17th. This time lag may mean that some T/op's complete their initial course and do not get an opportunity to practically put in practice what they have been taught. In these circumstances we will be requesting that any T/op's who have passed 6 months since their training revisit the first three days of the initial course.

We will also be seeking a sensible approach from management on any operational errors that may occur over the bedding in period.

LUL will also be reminded that we expect this training package to be delivered within existing framework agreements and that we will not accept any breaches to these procedures.

### Join RMT

online at [www.rmt.org.uk/join](http://www.rmt.org.uk/join)  
phone 0800 376 3706

See our website:

[www.rmtupfront.org.uk](http://www.rmtupfront.org.uk)

email: [drivers@rmtlondoncalling.org.uk](mailto:drivers@rmtlondoncalling.org.uk)

## RMT Trains Safety Council report

### Insect bites Northern line

Sometime back we wrote on the issue of insect bites on the Northern line. These incidents started occurring back in July 2011 and resulted in a number of T/op's sustaining nasty injuries including one having to spend time in hospital. This was not good enough and the THSC insisted that a programme of cab spraying was put in place. LUL agreed to do this and initially cabs were sprayed on a 21 daily basis however incidents are still occurring. We have now asked that the spraying programme is stepped up again and from 7/10/12 cabs will be sprayed on a 14 daily basis. If anyone does have an incident it is important that they report this and generate an eirf.

### Manual Boarding ramps

Following the successful use of manual boarding ramps during the Olympics and Paralympics LUL have decided to retain them at 16 locations, with a couple of others being used for contingency only. The THSC campaigned to retain the MBR's and fully supports their retention. We would hope that in time they are made more widely available and that the Underground will become more accessible to more users. One issue that we have raised is that we believe that the T/op should be informed when a MBR is going to be used on their train, currently this is not the case. We will update any progress on this.

### S stock trains on Metropolitan line

As T/op's on the Metropolitan line will know the much lauded S stock train has been in operational service for two years. To see some of the press and self publicity afforded to this train by LUL and others, yes you Boris, anyone would be forgiven for believing that this was a true miracle of modern design. The harsh realities of course are that whilst the S stock train has delivered some improvements on the A stock train, hardly surprising considering that the A stock was 50 years old, it has failed to provide for T/op's on a number of levels. The continued issues with the HVAC (air con) system, the flashing white lights in the cab, the loud cab radio volume, the degrading T/op seat, the problematic TCMS etc have gone on for too long. We have reminded LUL that our patience is wearing thin on these issues and that they must be resolved.

### SOO Senior Operating Official

LUL recently introduced a new grade called Senior Operating Official (SOO) supported by a team of Network Incident Response Managers (NIRMs). The main role of the SOO is to issue "waivers" in degraded operational situations that are not covered by the rule book. This is done by a remote "dynamic risk assessment" with information passed to the SOO from the incident site. We have raised concerns about the use of waivers and the reasons given for granting them. We have raised concerns that the SOO has been involved in incidents where Rules have been wrongly applied but no record exists. To this end a meeting with Directors has been arranged for 5th October.

### OSN 101 being wrongly implemented

The THSC have found a number of examples of OSN101 being wrongly implemented. As you will recall OSN101 consisted of three Rule changes one of which was reversing a train by up to one car's length. On at least three occasions this Rule has been wrongly implemented, once reversing by a car and a half, once with no involvement of Service Control and the other with the train moving forwards rather than reversing. Clearly, we have always believed that this Rule change would create problems and so it is proving. Could we remind all T/op's that the RMT still has an action 'short of' in place and that they should refuse to carry out these Rule changes?