

HOW LONG BEFORE SOMEONE DIES?

Two recent ‘wrong-side door openings’ by drivers on the Victoria line have highlighted a potentially lethal anomaly concerning that line. Trains on all lines have a ‘correct side door enable’ (CSDE) system built in, a system which prevents drivers from accidentally opening train doors on the wrong side. All lines, that is, except the Vic! Yes, believe it or not, the Victoria line does NOT have CSDE, despite the potentially lethal consequences of a wrong-side door opening event. So how did this come to be?

X marks the spot!

The story starts a few years ago when HMRI carried out an assessment of the Victoria line and instructed LUL to ‘make physical changes to the Platform-Train Interface (PTI) to bring it up to the level of all other lines’ on the combine. However, because there was no explicit mention of CSDE in the instruction, LUL managers

decided to bring in a somewhat cheaper option; they painted the letter ‘X’ on tunnel walls to inform drivers not to open on that side! Hardly a failsafe system.

Lives at risk

Local RMT rep, Glenroy Watson, took an active interest in the issue at the time. He argued for the introduction of CSDE. He also suggested two other possible technical solutions to make it difficult for drivers to open on the wrong side, but all three ideas were rejected by management who preferred instead to impose their own high tech solution, the painted ‘X’s. The truth is that the company has been holding out for the introduction of the new rolling stock which, of course, will have some form of CSDE. In the meantime, the company has been perfectly content to put passengers’ lives and drivers’ jobs at risk every time a train arrives in a platform on the Victoria line. It’s quite amazing to think that the same company which tells everyone

about their ‘world-class tube for a world-class city’ can avoid the expense of a basic safety feature whilst spending £6 million on the current ‘Wasting Time’ extravaganza. The lunatics have taken over this asylum!

Jobs on the line

Glenroy was able to wring one solitary concession from LUL; it was agreed that drivers involved in a wrong-side door opening would no longer be charged with gross misconduct. However, the company added that ‘each case would be looked at on its merits’, which means that they still reserve the right to do whatever they want with any driver who makes this unfortunate mistake. Of the drivers involved in the two most recent wrong-side openings, one has been sacked and the other faces a Company Disciplinary Interview. When a passenger falls from a train and dies, will the cheapskate managers who made this possible hold their hands up and take their share of responsibility? Let’s just hope we never have to find out.

BAH HUMBUG!



Following the recent breakdown of the rest room tea and coffee machine at Arnos Grove depot, the local reps asked management if free tea/coffee could be provided while the machine was out of action. The Train Operations Manager, Ebenezer Walder (pictured left), said ‘no’ and claimed that the company ‘couldn’t afford it’. Our reps have been arguing for newer, better machines for a number of years, but all to no avail, presumably because the company is so poor. So poor, in fact, that it could only afford to spend £6 million on Valuing Time, the somewhat pointless exercise better described as ‘Wasting Time’. So while we work hard to deliver a ‘world-class tube for a world-class city’, our Scrooge bosses are too mean to buy us the occasional cup of tea. Monthly News would like to hear from anyone out there who has suffered from Scrooge managers – just email us at monthlynews@tiscali.co.uk and we’ll name and shame.

Racism at Arnos Grove

At the request of the reps at Arnos Grove depot, management has agreed to investigate the original source of the racist “alleged” joke which has caused so much ill-feeling at the depot throughout the year. One

of our members has suffered, not only from having been present when the ‘joke’ was read out aloud, but also from the company’s failure to deal properly with the issue in accordance with its own policies

on racist behaviour at work. Is it too much to hope that managers might at last start doing their jobs properly? Look out for a fuller report on this whole issue in the next Monthly News.

SICKNESS REVIEWS YOU’RE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION

If you are off sick and are called in by management for a ‘Sickness Review’, please be aware that you are entitled to be accompanied by a union rep of your choosing. It doesn’t matter how long anyone thinks you might be off work for, you are always entitled to union representation at such interviews, and we would always advise it. All you need to do is contact one of your reps and let them know the details of the meeting. Your rep will then discuss your case with you and accompany you to the meeting.

WRITE TO MONTHLY NEWS

Monthly News is a newsletter written by and for RMT members in Finsbury Park branch. We welcome articles on all work-related matters from any member with something they wish to share. Please feel free to email us with anything you would like to see published. We won’t divulge your name unless you give us permission. All articles to be sent to:

monthlynews@tiscali.co.uk

RMT's Pay Claim 2009

From Circular No. IR 283, November 27 2008

Dear Colleagues,

RATES OF PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE 2009:

- **LONDON UNDERGROUND LTD**
- **EDF ENERGY POWERLINK**
- **METRONET (BCV AND SSL)**
- **TfL**
- **ALSTOM METRO TRAINS**

I write to confirm that a common claim for improvements to rates of pay and conditions of service in 2009 was formally lodged with all of the above employers last week. The basis of the claim is as follows:

- A substantial increase in rates of pay for all grades and additional protection for the lowest paid grades in the form of a minimum salary of £26,000
- Improved travel facilities for non-safeguarded employees
- A reduction in working hours without loss of pay
- A 'London Living Wage' as a starting wage for all contract staff
- A guaranteed job offer on medical redeployment
- Abolition of performance related pay
- Progressive 'family-friendly' policies

All of the above employers are now in possession of our detailed written submission. A full copy of our submission is available to download [here](#).

I am hopeful that negotiations will begin early in respect of all companies. At this time, I am able to confirm that initial talks with LUL will take place on 16th December 2008. You will of course be kept advised of all developments.

Yours sincerely

Bob Crow
GENERAL SECRETARY

CLEANERS THANK BRANCH FOR SUPPORT

London Underground cleaners who recently fought for and secured the London living wage of £7.45 an hour would like to thank Finsbury Park RMT for all the hardship payments which helped sustain their strike action for better working conditions. *Thanks to everyone at Arnos Grove who contributed to the total of over £4,500 raised by the fund.* Your contributions helped ensure a big step forward for a section of the workforce which has, for so long, been forced to accept appalling pay and working conditions. Once again, our union has shown what can be achieved when all grades unite in a common cause.

A Message from our new Women's Officer

Dear Sisters,

My name is Tracy Fitzpatrick and I am the Women's officer for the Finsbury Park Branch of the RMT. I have worked for London Underground since March 2005 as both a Station Assistant and most recently as a Train Operator on the Victoria Line. I am writing just to introduce myself and to let you know about some of the things you can expect from me.

I have a 7 year old son and, until I recently got married, brought him up alone. I found this a struggle at times with the shift work we are required to do. I have also had a long-term illness lately that has kept me from performing my duties as a Train Operator. I have had dealings with Management on both of these issues and more, and feel that sometimes there are extenuating circumstances for women on the Underground.

My role as Women's Officer is to be there in times of need to help you to deal with the issues we face as women when you do not feel that a male rep is appropriate. I have many ideas and issues that I would like to see raised and dealt with within TFL including: domestic violence; invasive personal surgery; childcare issues, and

many more. These I feel are some of the most pressing issues we deal with as women working within a predominantly male workplace.

I would love to see more women at our branch meetings which are held on the 1st and 2nd Thursdays of every month at the Twelve Pins Public House in Finsbury Park. These are a great place to raise any issues you have or just to find out what is happening within the Union at that particular time. It can be quite daunting when you first come down but you will soon realise that we are a friendly and welcoming bunch and are all there to help and support each other.

Also if you have any issues or ideas of how to make things better and more accessible for women within our workplace or indeed in our Union, please feel free to contact me on the details below and I will be happy to chat with you.

Thank you for your time

T. Fitzpatrick.

Email: tracydeane0612@hotmail.com

Mobile: 07890 515 780

Obituary: Pippa Sheane

It is with sadness that we report the premature passing away of RMT member Pippa Sheane following a bout of pneumonia which led to heart failure. Pippa was a train operator at Arnos Grove, having joined the depot only a few months ago. She had previously worked as a CSA on the Finsbury Park Group. She was a bubbly person and was well liked by all the people she worked with on London Underground.

Pippa had raised money in the past to pay for specialist equipment for her 12-year old cousin, Jake, who suffers from cerebral palsy, and intended to do a sponsored swim this year to raise money to send him to China for a course of stem cell injections. It is the wish of her closest family and her boyfriend, Jonathan that the best way for friends and colleagues to remember Pippa would be by making a donation to Jake's fund in order that he can get to China and receive the treatment that will hopefully provide him with a better quality of life. Such was Pippa's hopes for Jake. Local rep, Frank Curtis, is currently taking donations for this endeavor. However, you can also make a direct donation via the website: <http://www.justjake.me.uk>. Finsbury Park branch will also be considering holding a fund-raising social to help raise funds for Jake's China trip. Look out for further details.

Pippa Sheane, rest in peace.



Bernie Grant

“The Struggle continues”

On the 16th and 17th March 2009, the RMT’s National Black and Ethnic members will re-establish our historical association with one of those names which is synonymous with the struggle for equality both national and international. Ancestor **Bernie Grant**, former Tottenham MP, is known alongside those such as Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King to name but a few. He was known for never giving up. Bernie had no illusions about being a government minister, knowing that fighting the establishment, even from within Westminster, must be done from outside.

This year’s National Black and Ethnic Minority Members Advisory Committee annual conference held at The Bernie Grant Centre. London Underground’s BEM (Black and Ethnic Members) are extremely honoured to be hosting the event, and holding the event in Tottenham in North London, an area of London synonymous with the struggle of ethnic minority workers and

communities, and in a venue named after Bernie Grant, one of our ancestors whose very name speaks to the still to be completed work of fighting against racism and for equality..

All Branches are reminded to start electing your Black and Ethnic Minority delegates and visitors for the conference. Each branch can send up to four (4) delegates and as many visitors as they like. BEM is currently working on setting the agenda for the conference and are holding regular planning meetings and are inviting all activists to join and help make this event one that Bernie would be proud of.

Bernie Grant was the first ever speaker at our founding conference over 15 years ago, and we have not given up.

For More Information contact:
Secretary LTRC’s BEM
Frank Murray **079563127407**
frankie_murray@hotmail.com

RMT’s National Black & Ethnic
Minority Members Advisory Committee
(B&EMMAC)

Annual Conference

**Monday 16th & Tuesday 17th March
2009**

**The Bernie Grant Centre (TBGC)
Tottenham London N.15**

Nearest tube Seven Sisters Victoria Line
SOCIAL, 16TH: 1930Hrs at TBGC.

Next Branch Meetings

**Feb 5th and 12th 1600 Hours 12 Pins
Public House, Nr Finsbury Park Station**

Vacancies

**Brixton Group – Industrial and Health
and Safety Rep**

Seven Sisters Depot – Industrial rep

Branch Political Officer

Branch Secretary – Dean O’Hanlon, 69 Merrick Close, Great Ashby, Stevenage, SG1 6GH. Tel - 07956 342235. Email - Finsburypark@rmt.org.uk

**JOIN RMT – THE UNION FOR ALL TRANSPORT WORKERS!
UNITY IS STRENGTH**