

MORDEN & OVAL BRANCH



There was standing room only in the large function room at Ganleys in Morden. A packed branch / strike meeting kicked off the campaign to defend long standing RMT activist Arwyn Thomas from disciplinary charges following allegations made against him by strike breakers. Morden train operator Arwyn Thomas has been a NUR/RMT member for over 29 years. In that time he has been a rep and a branch secretary. He has organised many successful campaigns against unfair dismissals of Northern Line train and station staff members. He has taken part in many others. He and the branch committee had to reorganise the branch and re-recruit its membership virtually from scratch after the RMT was kicked off the company's check off system. He then played a key role in making Morden depot an RMT stronghold, which it remains today.

At the mass meeting Arwyn said that he was glad to see so many Morden drivers there and just as pleased to see how many had turned up from the Oval group. He explained that there was currently an unprecedented witch hunt of union activists going on with RMT members being sent to CDI for the most flimsy of reasons. He was overwhelmed by the expressions of support he had received from his depot, from his branch and across the underground. He had not been able to set foot in Morden depot to explain his case but he had many friends working tirelessly on his behalf. He had been made aware that members of both unions at Morden were solidly behind him. He thanked all present for the fantastic support he had received.

RMT Assistant General Secretary **Pat Sikorski** assured the meeting that the RMT was fully behind Arwyn. He outlined Arwyn's contribution to the union over many years. He made it clear that the union would not resolve the current dispute if any of its members were being victimised for taking part in it.

Janine Booth secretary of London Transport Regional Council RMT expressed the region's support. She suggested that the meeting send an emergency resolution to the regional meeting the next day. This resolution was passed unanimously by all branches present.

Lewis Peacock from the Signal, Electrical and Track branch came to give the support of the Underground's infrastructure workers. Many drivers and station staff then spoke up in support of Arwyn.

The meeting agreed that the union should not delay in organising action to defend Arwyn. A resolution was passed requesting an immediate ballot for strike action as soon as he gets his notice for CDI. Members of Camden No3 branch who were present said that they were very keen that this ballot should include all RMT members at all depots on the Northern Line. Regional Organiser Steve Hedley was confident that this request would be agreed by the RMT executive. Messages of support for Arwyn from across the Underground were then read out to the meeting. **Finn Brennan** Aslef Trains Functional Council rep from East Finchley sent the following message:

"Please pass on my best wishes to Arwyn at your meeting. He is a principled trade unionist who has always supported others. I hope he will get the support he deserves in return."

The meeting then went about the business of organising the third strike day in defence of jobs and safety. All present were confident that the strike would be solidly supported at Morden depot and by the Oval and Morden station groups.