

## OCA AND COTA... THE LATEST

### Offshore Unions to Recommend New OCA Offer

Officials representing the GMB, Unite and RMT have recommended that their members accept a revised offer from the Offshore Contractors' Association (OCA).

Paul Atkinson, OCA Chief Executive said: "Constructive and positive negotiations with the unions have resulted in the joint development of this new offer, which we believe to be in the best interests of everyone involved."

Tommy Campbell on behalf of the Trade Unions GMB, UNITE and RMT said: "All the Trade Unions have worked hard to deliver the best deal for our Union members. We are therefore recommending that they vote "Yes" to this new OCA offer. We continue to approach our negotiations in the best interests of offshore workers in the Oil and Gas industry. The Trade Unions are committed to doing all we can to support maximum economic recovery so as to protect jobs and create future employment opportunities for those who lost their jobs in the past few years."

A consultative ballot will now take place with the Unions offshore membership on the new OCA offer taking the agreement through until April 1st 2018.

Going forward, all of the Trade Unions and offshore reps will participate in a series of meetings with the OCA employers during the coming months to discuss the potential for a new model of the OCA. Any proposals for change will of course be subject to consideration of members and will likely form the foundation of any offer being made for 2018 and beyond. All trade union members will be kept informed of any developments as the talks progress over the coming months. We would also welcome any ideas or proposals you may have as members for inclusion in those talks.

We can also confirm that a survey of all workers employed by OCA companies will be launched in the coming weeks looking at the effects of 3:3 working, rota's in general and fatigue. We would like all members to actively participate in the survey which will be managed in a way that will make all findings completely confidential. The full details of how the survey will be operated and take place will be circulated during the first couple of weeks in September.

As members of the OCA trade unions we welcome your feedback as always and you can do this through your respective trade union or through the OCG. If you are not a member of a trade union you can find out more about what we do and the services we provide by contacting OCG on [ocg.project.coord@gmail.com](mailto:ocg.project.coord@gmail.com)

### COTA ballots deliver a mixed bag

The Unite and RMT negotiated COTA agreement has been out to ballot for industrial action since mid-July. This ballot was initiated after the respective members voted overwhelmingly to reject the employer's proposals for a pay freeze covering the 2016/17 period.



The recently introduced Tory Government thresholds of a minimum 50% turnout of members voting were always going to be a major hurdle for the Trade Unions, as historically in the offshore sector we have rarely achieved this level of turnout. We cannot be sure why this happens, it could be the

nature of the employment, being away from home or just the pressures of the job. Regrettably the outcomes were a reflection of what we have seen down the years.

The Unite ballots met the 50% thresholds with 3 of the 5 member companies. This means that strike action is still a possibility with those COTA employers which are, Aramark, Compass and Trinity. Unfortunately, the thresholds were not achieved with the remaining two COTA employers, Sodexo and Entier, although in the case of Sodexo it was a very narrow margin. It should also be noted that in each case the vast majority of those voting, on average 80%, voted to support industrial action.

Disappointingly, the RMT ballots failed to meet the thresholds with four out of the five COTA companies. With Aramark there was a 47% turnout, Sodexo was 40.5%, Entier just 27.3% and RMT did not have members participating in the ballot with Trinity. Only the Compass ballot was successful in achieving the minimum 50% turnout with the vast majority voting for strike action. The RMT ballots that didn't meet the thresholds did however show the vast majority of those voting supported a move to industrial action. Regrettably industrial action is not an option we can pursue with those employers where thresholds were not met.

As this issue of OCG News is being produced the Trade Unions are discussing options prior to seeking an early meeting with all of the employers to discuss the ballot outcomes. As and when any meetings take place further information will be shared with members of the Trade Unions.

## Contribution recognised Oil & Gas Safety Awards

The annual awards event staged jointly by Step Change in Safety and Oil & Gas UK was held on August 23rd in Aberdeen and there was a surprise for one of our own when RMT Regional Organiser, Jake Molloy, was recognised with an award for "Outstanding Contribution". An even bigger surprise was that Jake didn't make the event, he was at a meeting with other OCG trade unions as well as Norwegian and Danish trade unions discussing helicopter safety.

Step Change in Safety Chief, Les Linklater announced the award saying; *"As some of you will be aware this year signifies the twentieth anniversary of the creation of Step Change in Safety. Over the years of the safety awards, we have, on occasion, awarded a special award for a significant contribution to safety. To mark our anniversary, we have decided to once again recognise an individual who, has made an outstanding contribution to safety."*

Les went on to say: *"The individual chosen this year, has throughout his career always championed safety. As an offshore worker, he was an elected safety representative from the establishment of the regulations, going on to work in the trades union movement with OILC advocating workforce engagement in safety. During his ten-year tenure on the Step Change leadership team, and I can certainly testify during my time here, never hidden in the pack, even when many wished he had. Always outspoken, often challenging and frequently challenged by his own peers about being in the pockets of industry, he remains fundamentally committed to safety and workforce engagement having played his part in our Helicopter Safety work, Asset Integrity and Hydrocarbon Release prevention, Workforce Engagement and most recently Simplification."*

*This years Outstanding Contribution goes to Jake Molloy, Regional Office, RMT."*

As indicated Jake couldn't be there but he asked Bob Egan from the HSE Workforce Engagement Team to accept the award and say a few words on his behalf. In his acceptance statement Jake told of how he had been awarded a dinner for two in 1994 but had never actually received it so this was his first award. He went on to say: *"I have however been recognised by the industry a couple of times for things I've done in the past; the first recognition was a writ alleging libel, the second one was threatening contempt of court! There are a few senior people in the room today who will likely remember those letters!*

*I'm pleased to say those recognition efforts failed. So this is the first time I've actually received an award and I would like to thank the organisers of the event and those who nominated me, it is both*

*flattering and humbling. I'd also like to congratulate all of the winners, well done to all of you, without question you are all more worthy than me."*

All of us at OCG would like to extend our congratulations to Jake, well done brother!

## Government drops new laws on dangerous laser pens

Despite "dangerously high" figures on laser attacks on aircraft, the new Government has dropped plans to introduce tougher laws; a move which the UK pilots' association says is "infuriating and dangerous".

Before the general election, the British Airline Pilots' Association (BALPA) was pleased to see a specific laser offence included in the Vehicle Technology and Aviation Bill.

BALPA had been campaigning for the tougher laws in response to consistently high reports of laser attacks on planes year on year. Last year's figures stood at **more than 1,200 reported attacks!**

The new offence proposed that offenders could face up to five years in prison if they shone a laser at an aircraft.

## However, BALPA has now learned that the Bill will not now include the laser regulations.

The association has constantly warned that shining a laser at aircraft is extremely dangerous, particularly in critical phases of flight such as take-off and landing, putting the lives of passengers at risk.

BALPA General Secretary, Brian Strutton, said: *"It is infuriating to see the changes we'd hoped for appear to have been discarded."*

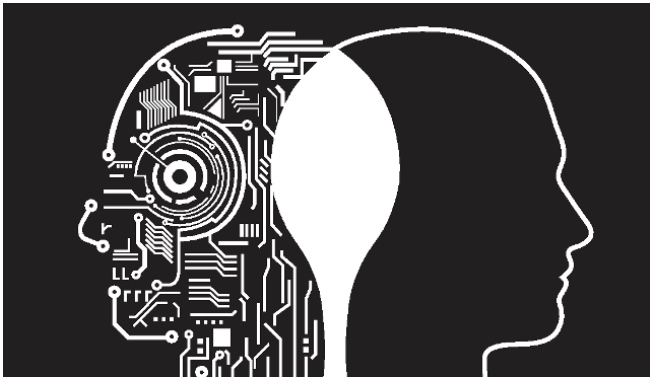
*"Not having this legislation is dangerous and puts the lives of passengers and crew at risk."*

*"The proposed tougher laws received cross-party support so it's baffling that they have been dropped."*

*"When a laser pen is pointed at an aircraft it can dazzle and distract the pilot, and has the potential to cause a crash."*

*"Last year's incident figures remain dangerously high, with the equivalent of more than three laser attacks a day across the UK."*

# Is your job at risk from a robot?



The marine industry has the offshore sector in its sights as it starts to wheel out automated ships – with trials of a crewless cargo ship already underway in Norway and forecasts that a ‘drone’ supply ship could come into service by the end of this decade.

The IT revolution is transforming not just work, but also society, in the same way that the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions did in the 18th and 19th centuries. It’s happening now, from self-service checkouts in supermarkets to high-frequency trading programmes on Wall Street which have cut the workforce there by around a third in the past 15 years.

In shipping, we’ve already witnessed automation more than halving average crew numbers over the past 30 years - and seafarers are by no means alone in facing the threat of being displaced by drones.

*So, do we all become 21st century Ned Ludds and start smashing up the modern equivalents of the weaving machines?*

The lessons of history suggest that resistance is futile, but equally we should not be sitting back while the droids march in. The union movement needs to rise to the challenges posed by the rise

of the robots – because there’s not just a danger that jobs will go, but also that inequality will increase as a result of redundancies and widening skills gaps.

We used to be promised that labour-saving devices would transform our lives, giving us all more leisure time than we knew what to do with. The reality, sadly, has been those of us lucky enough to have jobs being placed under increasing pressure, with problems of stress, fatigue and burnout being some of the most common health and safety problems in the workplace.

We urgently need to develop strategies to deal with these developments. Proactive policies could help us to make positive use of technology in the workplace – getting the robots to do all the boring, dirty and dangerous jobs and ensuring that human workers either work less, or work smarter, or work in more rewarding and quality positions.

In shipping, we have successfully navigated the changes from sail to steam and from coal to oil – undoubtedly making the lives of seafarers safer in the process. The drone ships will still need to be designed, maintained and controlled by those with knowledge and expertise about the complexities of ship handling and seamanship – and it is essential that we find ways to make sure those skills and experiences are not lost in the scramble to autonomous ships.

Nautilus is trying to tackle these issues now. We took a motion to the TUC last year and we are staging a special seminar on automation at our UK branch conference in October.

We have to seize the opportunity to make technology work in the interests of workers, rather than against them. Automation could be a liberating force, but it’s up to us to make sure that it’s used to the best effect.

*Nautilus*





# Mark Your Calendar



» UPCOMING EVENTS

2017 SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

www.free-printable-calendar.com

2017 OCTOBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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**We're running webinars again and have arranged numerous dates so register, log on and engage! Ask full time Trade Union officials ANY questions and get a response live**

**7:00pm starting time**

2017 OCTOBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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2017 DECEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

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Details on how to register available from [ocg.project.coord@gmail.com](mailto:ocg.project.coord@gmail.com)  
 Log on from the comfort of your sofa, your kitchen, offshore cabin, even from the tea shack! YES, it really is that easy!