

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

FIGHTING FOR NORTHERN RAIL SERVICES



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www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP – please complete your application along with either the attached Direct Debit or a separate paybill mandate form.

Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**. * Information that must be provided.

BRANCH NUMBER

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

Surname*		Address*	
Forename(s)*			
Home phone			
Mobile phone		Postcode	
Email address			
Date of Birth*		National Insurance Number*	

2 Your Employment. Employer*	Location
Job Description*	Part Time YES NO

3 Sex. Male Female

4 Ethnic Group. (Please specify. This information is used as part of our equal opportunities policy)

A. White	English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	Irish	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	Any other White background	
B. Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	White and Black Caribbean	White and Black African	White and Asian	Other mixed/multiple ethnic background	
C. Asian/Asian British	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other Asian background
D. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	African	Caribbean	Other Black/African/Caribbean background		
E. Other ethnic group	Arab	Other ethnic group, please specify			

5 Sexual orientation (This information will be used for monitoring purposes as part of our equal opportunities policy)

Sexuality	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Bisexual	Prefer not to say
Do you identify as transgender?	Yes	No	If you wish to be contacted with information about union activities for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender members please tick here	

6 How do you wish to pay.	Your Pay Number
Direct Debit (you must complete form below)	Paybill Deduction (complete separate form)
I confirm my paybill mandate has been sent to my pay office. Phone Freephone 0800 376 3706 to confirm your company offers paybill facility.	

7 I undertake to abide by the rules now in force or those that are adopted.

Your signature	Date
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Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in the whole form including official use box using a ball point pen and Send to: RMT, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

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Branch Sort Code

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Normally your payments are made once a month to RMT. If you prefer to pay 4 weekly instead please tick

Originator's Identification Number

9	7	1	7	4	5
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Reference Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Your National Insurance Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

FOR RMT OFFICIAL USE ONLY
This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society. Please pay RMT Direct Debits for the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with RMT, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions from some types of account
This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit RMT Credit Union Ltd will notify you seven working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If you request RMT Credit Union Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by RMT Credit Union Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when RMT Credit Union Ltd asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.



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EDITORIAL



END PRIVATISATION

RMT has been at the forefront of fighting transport cuts recently including the battle for the future of rail services in the north and on the new huge Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise (TSGN).

RMT activists have been handing out postcards across the country to passengers warning of plans to introduce driver-only operated trains (DOO), axe all guards, de-staff stations on TSGN and the Northern and Trans-Pennine franchises which will make a dire situation even worse.

Axing ticket offices, sacking guards and removing station staff makes essential transport services no-go areas for older people, women travelling at night and people with disabilities regardless of where they live.

Your union has led the fight to end the racketeering of the privatised franchise system. And, as the government's McNulty Rail Review report is being rolled out, everything that RMT has warned of is coming at us with a vengeance.

Northern Rail and TPE are just the latest franchises to expand DOO, increasing fares, reducing ticket office opening times, cutting jobs and flagging up possible "alliancing" between franchisees and Network Rail.

On top of this rolling stock and investment is being shipped south to maximise profits on other lucrative franchises that are closer to the homes of the political elite driving this rail-austerity programme.

Meanwhile the north is being systematically robbed of capacity despite surging demand.

The government's message to the public is clear – 'pay more to travel on overcrowded, unstaffed trains where your safety is reduced to a lottery'.

It is clear that the full force of the McNulty cuts programme is being unleashed in an exercise that would slash jobs and destroy safety while allowing fares and profits to soar through the roof.

This scandal was compounded by the news that the Scottish sleeper service

had been handed to SERCO on a 15-year franchise worth £800 million.

This is despite the fact that SERCO is currently under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office in relation to public contracts and were once banned by the government from being awarded any further work.

RMT has long-argued that lack of investment in transport impacts unfairly on the poorest and most vulnerable, cutting them off from assistance and society in general.

Now a new report from the Commons Transport Committee has revealed that this isolation has spread from the rural communities hammered by attacks on bus services to our towns and cities as well.

This damning report shows that savage cuts to bus services, and the high costs of other forms of transport, are condemning some of the most vulnerable members of our society to lives of total isolation and misery.

It highlights once again the huge gulf between the lives of the well-heeled political elite and those who are the real victims of their policies.

The only answer to this continuing transport chaos is public ownership and an end to the greed and profiteering of these parasites.

Immediate plans should be put in place for a public takeover of Northern Rail, similar to the public rescue of East Coast Mainline, as the only way of preventing a total collapse and providing a decent public service.

Finally, as we mark the centenary of the First World War, RMT News looks at the history of rail workers during that dreadful period and how our predecessors continued to fight for workers' rights under very difficult circumstances. This struggle led to the introduction of collective bargaining and the entry of women into the union.

This shows however difficult the fight we can win.

Mick Cash

When you have finished with this magazine give it to a workmate who is not in your union. Even better, ask them to join RMT by filling in the application form opposite



EUROSTAR CLEANERS STRIKE AGAINST 30 PER CENT JOB CUTS

Cleaners working on St Pancras station and Eurostar contracts for high-profile facilities company Interserve took 48-hour strike action last month in a fight over massive job cuts and workplace justice.

It was the second phase of strike action following a rock-solid and determined walk out earlier in the month which was marked by a large, angry and noisy picket line right outside the main entrance to the Eurostar terminal building.

Like many contract cleaners, the Eurostar contract is subject to regular tender with cut-throat

cleaning contractors competing to win the work. Staff get transferred from one contractor to another as companies hack back on pay and conditions to maximise profit.

This is how Interserve won the St Pancras/Eurostar contract from Network Rail imposing 30 per cent job cuts on their cleaning workers and increasing pressure on the staff making up for the people who have been cut.

There is also a workplace culture of aggression and bullying from the employers who expect the same standards of

work and output, but with a third less staff.

The workforce already suffer from low pay, no sick pay and get only the statutory minimum from our employer, but they are not prepared to be intimidated anymore.

RMT is demanding an agreement on staffing levels, fair and reasonable workload s, and for staff to be treated with dignity and respect.

Acting general secretary Mick Cash said that the treatment of members working for Interserve on the Eurostar and St Pancras was “a disgusting stain on

London’s reputation as a world-class city.

“This clearly highlights the shady and dangerous world that those who keep London clean are forced by greed and bullying to inhabit while ostentatious wealth is paraded all around them.

“RMT will not tolerate a situation where these cleaners are kicked from pillar to post behind closed doors.

“Remain available for talks aimed at resolving this shocking injustice which is another example of the gap between rich and poor in this wealthy City,” he said. ■

ISS EAST COAST CLEANER'S STRIKE FOR PAY JUSTICE



RMT cleaners working for ISS on the East Coast contract took further strike action last month in their continuing fight for pay justice.

SS workers have been battling for decent levels of pay in a long running campaign, with the wealthy company refusing to grant any increase since 2011, a position the union has described

as “simply disgraceful and based on nothing but pure greed”.

Picket lines were mounted at stations along the route, including Scotland and Newcastle, as RMT takes its campaign for a fair deal on pay and working conditions for the ISS cleaners direct to the passengers who use the East Coast services. ■

RMT MEMBER WINS UNFAIR DISMISSAL RULING

An employment tribunal has ruled that a customer services assistant was unfairly dismissed from her job after her employers failed to follow their own sickness absence procedure.

East Coast Main Line Company Limited sacked Anita McGlen citing a poor attendance record after she was off sick on over 40 occasions over the course of nearly six years. However, the employer's own rules - as stated in their 'Irregular Attendance Procedure' - says that an employee in this situation can only be dismissed if they fail a four stage process of meetings and warnings. This procedure was not followed.

Anita, from Newcastle upon Tyne, was employed to look after train passengers, including serving them food and drink, offering trolley services and clearing and setting up tables.

Thompsons Solicitors successfully argued at tribunal that Anita's complaint of unfair dismissal was well-founded and that she should never have been sacked. East Coast Main Line Company Limited had not given her the required warnings about her sickness absence. They had

failed to follow their own procedure and treat her in the same way as they had other employees.

In fact, the RMT member had rules imposed on her that were much stricter than her employer's own guidelines. At one meeting Anita was told that she must not have any sickness absence in the next six months and then only two instances of sickness in the next twelve months whereas their own rules specified that, following a meeting, an employee must not be off sick for more than two instances in the following six months.

Sickness absence procedures such as the Irregular Attendance Procedure exist to ensure that an employee clearly knows the number of permitted absences over a set period of time and what the consequences will be if they exceed this number.

In contrast, Anita was left shocked and devastated when her employers announced that she would be sacked. She has struggled to find employment since and misses a job that she enjoyed and was committed to.

Ranjit O' Mahony at

Thompsons Solicitors said that workers like Anita cannot help being ill.

"In this case Anita was unfortunately let down by her employer and unfairly

dismissed.

"She had no choice but to fight against this decision and we were proud to support her with RMT," he said.



RMT members cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats to raise funds for the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK and Saint Francis Hospice make it to Donny. For more information about how to donate go to web links below.
http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/LEJOG_2014





UBER CAB SERVICE BANNED IN GERMANY

Union calls on London mayor to halt big-business-backed Uber app in the capital

A German court has issued an injunction barring ridesharing service Uber from operating in Germany, the latest shot in the company's fight with taxi drivers.

Frankfurt state court spokesman Arne Hasse said that the decision that Uber cannot offer its services without a specific permit under German

transport laws applies nationwide.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that the injunction should serve as a wake-up call to London Mayor Boris Johnson and others who seem to be beholden to Uber's financial and corporate power.

"The undermining of the Private Hire Laws by apps such

as Uber is just another attempt to casualise and weaken the professional and safe licensed taxi trade and the long-established regulations around the right to ply for hire, coming after the exposure of the illegal ranks around London and the drive to destroy the airport services.

"Huge and wealthy multinational corporations are now trying to use their financial clout to bully their way into areas that have been governed by Private Hire Laws in London and other cities around the globe for decades and which have delivered safe, reliable and efficient services for passengers

down the years," he said.

The injunction applies pending a full hearing of a suit brought against Uber by Taxi Deutschland, a German cab association that also offers its own taxi-ordering app.

The ruling comes after Berlin authorities barred Uber from operating in the capital because of safety concerns.

Taxi Deutschland's arguments were in line with those of established cab companies that claim Uber's app-based services, which offer limousines and pick-ups by private drivers, dodge rules that ordinary taxi firms have to abide by. ■

LEICESTER COUNCIL UNDERMINES LICENSED CABS

RMT has slammed a campaign to undermine and harass the licensed taxi trade in Leicester which can be tracked all the way to the City Council."

The union identified two key areas which have sparked anger amongst black taxi driver members including allowing private mini-cabs to ply for hire illegally and pick up customers without being pre booked.

RMT Leicester taxi branch has reported to the council many times that this is risking the lives of the public as the drivers are uninsured. The union argues that public safety should be absolutely paramount yet the council has refused to act.

The lack of ranking provisions for licensed taxis also means that the council's parking enforcement team is

consistently harassing members.

However private hire mini-cabs continuously park illegally all over the city but the council mainly focuses on putting pressure on the black cab drivers.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that it was clear that the council was targeting the black cabs.

"RMT is launching a

campaign to end the abuse of the 'plying for hire' regulations, the proliferation of bogus mini-cab touts and the shocking lack of ranking provisions for the legal and licensed trade which encourages the dangerous abuses of the system.

"RMT will stage protests in Leicester if the council continues to take our members concerns seriously," he said. ■

NO TO WATERING DOWN MARITIME SAFETY

RMT will oppose the scrapping of ferry safety measures imposed after the Herald of Free Enterprise sank in 1987 killing 193 people (right).

A consultation document put forward by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) proposes revoking the requirement for watertight emergency lockers on the open deck, as well as the weighing of cargo to make sure ships are not overloaded.

They would be removed as part of the government's so-called Red Tape Challenge initiative to save just £360,000 per year across all UK operators and ports.

The Chamber of Shipping has also seconded at least one official to the Department of Transport to cut maritime regulations in order to save shipping companies over £3 million over the next decade.

RMT is strongly opposed to all four revocations, which have never been raised by industry with the maritime unions, as they will undermine safety in ports and on-board ships and represent a threat to passenger,



seafarer and dock safety, particularly in the short sea ro-ro ferry industry.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that the MCA propose to remove the legal requirement to provide emergency equipment lockers on the open deck which is a clear diminution of maritime

safety standards.

"The removal of the requirement for recording the load on passenger ferries will have a disproportionate effect on Scottish Ferries, where six out of the 12 UK ports found by the MCA to operate weighbridges are located.

"There are around 100 non-UK and 20 non-EU ferries licensed to operate in the UK ferry industry and removing this regulation is a threat to the safety of seafarers and passengers working and travelling on them respectively," he said. ■

FIRST GREAT WESTERN'S NATO HYPOCRISY

FGW lays on travelling chef service for NATO summit in Wales weeks before they plan to scrap it

RMT attacked the "sickening hypocrisy" of train company First Great Western for laying on additional travelling chef services for politicians and dignitaries attending the NATO summit in Newport just weeks before axing the service for the travelling public in November.

Earlier this month FGW provided a travelling chef and an additional first class carriage on their regular 13.15 intercity

service from London Paddington to Cardiff.

Travelling chef is one of the last full in-train meal services available and provides breakfasts and other meals, served at the seat in first class and available at the café for other passengers.

Although this train does not normally have a travelling chef provided, it appears that FGW were expecting 'VIP customers'

travelling to the NATO summit in Newport, South Wales.

The union has launched a public and political campaign aimed at saving the service. Postcards in support of the RMT campaign have been flooding in, urging MPs to sign Early Day Motion 270.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that the double standards of FGW directors, who intend to scrap the entire meal service but wish to make a good impression on visiting NATO dignitaries, will be lost on no one.

"If the service is good enough for NATO and Western

leaders, it is good enough for the rest of us.

"RMT has made it clear that we will fight to defend these services with every means at our disposal, that means an all-out publicity, political and industrial campaign that nobody will be able to ignore.

"The union wants these plans withdrawn and assurances from the company and the government that catering services, guards and in-house maintenance arrangements will be protected when the new fleet of Intercity trains is introduced," he said. ■

NOW RENATIONALISE THE LOT



Union calls for the whole rail network to be taken back into public ownership as government finally recognises Network Rail as a public body

Unions and campaigners gathered at the headquarters of Network Rail last month to mark the day that the organisation was effectively recognised as a nationalised public body by the government.

Instead of being a 'not for dividend' company in the private sector, the government has stated that Network Rail will be a "central government body in the public sector".

The government has been forced to reclassify Network Rail as a public sector body following a decision taken by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

This significant move comes

because the ONS has said that because of the government, close relationship with Network Rail it has to be treated as being in the public sector.

This represents an important moment in the campaign for the renationalisation of the railway. The decision supports the union's belief that as the railways are a public service, reliant on public funding, they should be under public ownership.

However RMT is fully aware that the move into the public sector may be used as an opportunity by the Tories to argue for the break-up of Network Rail and its privatisation into Railtrack

Two – ignoring the lethal failures that followed the last experiment in the private operation of rail infrastructure.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that Network Rail moving into the public sector should be the start of the process to return the entire rail network to public ownership and create a wholly integrated, nationalised and democratically accountable railway run for the benefit of the whole of society.

"The recognition of Network Rail as a fully-fledged public body, under public control and ownership, should be seen as the spring-board for taking the entire rail network back into

the public fold.

"Any attempt by the right to use this as an opportunity to argue for dragging us back to the lethal days of privatised rail infrastructure under Railtrack will be fiercely resisted.

"The truth is that if the vast sums sucked out of our railways by the private train companies were reinvested in infrastructure, capacity and staffing under a publicly-controlled body we could end the two decades of private profiteering, fragmentation and under-investment which has dragged our railways into the slow lane while charging some of the most extortionate fares in Europe," he said. ■



SAVE OUR RAIL IN THE NORTH

I was proud to be a sponsor of the parliamentary motion to support the campaign to save rail services in the North. Early Day Motion 174 rightly expresses dismay at the consultation document for the Northern Rail and TransPennine Express rail franchises which if enacted will result in fare rises, service and timetable cuts and the loss of thousands of much needed, decent, skilled jobs in the north.

The motion also draws attention to the fact that passenger service and safety will be worsened by the introduction of driver-only operation, the sacking of train guards and conductors, station de-staffing and ticket office closures.

It is very concerning that the proposals would leave only the driver in operational charge of the train. It is essential for the conductor to be there to protect the operational safety of the train, so it seems to be absolute madness to introduce a way of working which would leave

the train completely unprotected in the unfortunate event that the driver became incapacitated for any reason.

On top of this, cuts to staff on stations, trains and in ticket offices will mean a worsening service that will disproportionately impact on disabled, older and women passengers.

Having already endured four years of the coalition government, this latest assault on our public services comes as little surprise but what is of particular concern is that the proposals have been jointly put forward by "Rail North", a conglomerate of 30 local transport authorities in the North of England.

It appears that Rail North's consultation with local authorities before producing its proposals has been totally inadequate and it is still unclear to what extent councillors on these local authorities supported Rail North's plan and whether they endorsed enforcing

massive service cuts and job losses - I suspect they didn't.

I am all in favour of devolving some powers over rail - so long as these powers are alongside a unified and integrated structure - but this is rail degradation, not rail devolution. I hope the strength of opposition will bring Rail North to its senses and they will realise that devolution at any price is not a price worth paying.

Opposition to these changes is gathering momentum. RMT and the Campaign for Better Transport have been fantastic in pushing the issue in parliament. After convening and circulating a parliamentary briefing on the issue almost 50 MPs signed the EDM opposing the proposals, a number of questions have been asked in Parliament and colleagues and I are urgently seeking to get a parliamentary debate on the issue.

I have to congratulate RMT members on their great work. Thanks to their campaigning over 10,000 passengers have

taken the trouble to write and send postcards to the government during the consultation period. I recently handed out campaign postcards in my constituency along with fellow Labour Party members and councillors and we had a wonderful response from passengers. This shows us that commuters are dead against the proposals, which is why I believe we can win this campaign. It's still all left to play for.

We now need to keep up the momentum between now and when the Invitation to Tenders are issued in December. And that includes a major mobilisation for the RMT demonstration and lobby of Parliament on November 4. MPs do respond to pressure and we need a big turnout if we want to make sure our demands are heeded. I hope to see you there.

Grahame Morris is the Labour MP for Easington and a member of the RMT Parliamentary Group

LOBBY PARLIAMENT NOVEMBER 4!

Union lobby and rally in Parliament to protect services and jobs on Northern and Transpennine Express franchises

RMT has organised a demonstration outside parliament from 12:30pm in Old Palace Yard, followed by a rally in Committee Room 11 from

2pm and a lobby of MPs from 3.30pm onwards. Participation is a legitimate use of branch expenditure.

Members attending are

encouraged to lobby their MP. The union will also provide a briefing document to assist members when lobbying. The best way of doing this is to write to them in advance and you can use the link to assist: www.rmt.org.uk/letter/northern-and-tpe-franchise-email-your-mp/

If you cannot attend but still wish to lobby your MP you are encouraged to make an appointment to meet them in

the constituency which can be just as effective.

Members are also encouraged to continue to use the facility where you can still write to your MP directly asking them to sign the Early Day Motion. Please visit bit.ly/1pdd0jy to request that your MP supports RMT demands. Even if your MP has already signed the EDM please use this tool to show the strength of feeling about the proposals. ■



BUSES NEED SUPPORT



MPs call for action to stop increasing numbers of people being cut off from public transport

MPs have called for "total transport" which would involve pooling transport resources to deliver a range of services, including combining hospital transport with local bus services.

The report from the House of Commons Transport Committee also said that the government and local councils were being unrealistic if they expect voluntary projects to compensate for decreased bus services.

The report, *Passenger Transport In Isolated Communities*, said: "Policy makers sometimes equate 'isolated communities' with 'rural communities', but we

found that isolated communities also exist in urban and suburban areas.

"We recommend that the DfT drafts a definition of 'isolated communities' for use across central and local government, which should be used to target scarce resources."

"We recognise the importance of community transport, but believe that central government and local authorities are being unrealistic if they expect voluntary community transport projects to compensate for decreased bus services," it said.

The report went on that a new approach could revolutionise transport provision

in isolated communities by making more efficient use of existing resources.

"We recommend that the Department for Transport initiates a large-scale pilot to test the concept in practice," it said.

Acting RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the damning report revealed that savage cuts to bus services, and the high costs of other forms of transport, are condemning some of the most vulnerable members of our society to lives of total isolation and misery.

"The report highlights once again the huge gulf between the lives of the well-heeled, political elite and those who are the real victims of their policies.

"Transport poverty is just another shocking indictment of the reality of life in Britain in 2014," he said.

Launching the report, the committee's chairman Louise Ellman said: "Old and young, unemployed people, those on low incomes and disabled people who live in isolated communities rely on passenger

transport.

"For example, two out of every five job seekers cite lack of transport as a barrier to finding work.

"All these groups are disproportionately affected by inadequate or reduced services. It is vital that all ministers recognise the fundamental importance of passenger transport in providing access to education, healthcare and employment.

"We reiterate our long-held concern that subsidised bus services continue to disappear as funding is cut.

"The bus industry must work with local authorities to deliver essential local services through the development of quality contracts similar to arrangements that operate in London," she said.

The Local Government Association's economy and transport board chair Peter Box said that the committee rightly saw how important subsidised travel was to some people.

"Our ageing population means demand for the

concessionary fares scheme in particular is increasing while government funding for the scheme has reduced by 39 per cent in the past four years.

"It's impossible for councils to keep subsidising free travel while having to find billions of pounds worth of savings and protect other vital services like caring for the elderly, filling potholes and collecting bins.

"The government must

commit to fully funding subsidised bus travel to keep up with growing demand and cost."

Shadow transport secretary Mary Creagh said that under the Tories, bus fares were up, passenger numbers were down and communities had been left isolated.

"Older, younger, disabled and unemployed people in particular have borne the brunt of this unfair government," she said. ■



JOIN US AT THE MARCH AND RALLY SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

Britain needs a pay rise, or at least 99 per cent of working people do. That's why RMT, through our Political Fund is supporting the Trade Union Congress National demonstration on Saturday October 18 which will begin with a march through central London, culminating in a rally in Hyde Park.

Today, in one of the most developed economies in the world, there are working people have their wages topped up by in-work benefits, visit food banks and have to choose between which household bills to let go into the red. Workers juggling two or three, even four insecure, zero hours contracts to make just enough to get by.

We demand:

- **Higher wages for all**
- **A proper living wage for all**
- **A crackdown on excessive executive pay**

The union calls on all branches to mobilise to ensure a strong and united RMT presence on the day.

More details are available on the TUC website at <http://britainneedsapayrise.org/>

RMT MEMBER 'UNFAIRLY DISMISSED'

Thompsons solicitors outlines a recent tribunal victory, winning a member over £30,000 for unfair dismissal

The London Central Employment Tribunal has found that RMT activist and representative Petrit Mihaj, had been automatically unfairly dismissed in 2013 and 2014 by his employer, Sodexo Ltd, due to his trade union activities under s.152 of the Trade Union & Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ("the 1992 Act").

Section 152 renders a dismissal automatically unfair in a number of circumstances including if the principal reason was that the employee had taken part or proposed to take part in the activities of an independent trade union at an appropriate time.

Mr Mihaj worked for Sodexo for over a decade, progressing from a Commis Chef to become General Manager. He became active within the union, successfully organising canteen workers, increasing membership and seeking recognition.

At the time of his second dismissal in January 2014, he was the industrial relations and health and safety representative for members employed by Sodexo.

Mr Mihaj was demoted in 2013 to the role of Chef Supervisor and issued with a final written warning following allegations of bullying and harassment. He was summarily dismissed in January 2014 on the stated substantive grounds that he sent an "inappropriate" WhatsApp message to approximately 20 colleagues and secondly that he behaved inappropriately towards a colleague he was representing. In relation to the former, there was in fact nothing abnormal or inappropriate about the



message. It was sent for the sole purpose of garnering support for a colleague he was representing who was facing disciplinary action. Regarding the latter charge, at no stage did the colleague in question raise a grievance or make a formal complaint against Mr Mihaj.

Both of the above matters arose in the course of representation by Mr Mihaj of RMT members. Nonetheless an investigation ensued culminating in the termination of Mr Mihaj's contract of employment.

Mr Mihaj's legal representatives firstly had to establish that his demotion in 2013 was in fact a dismissal, and the tribunal agreed it was. Interim relief under s.161 of the 1992 Act was sought. In order for such an application to be successful, and thereby securing an order for the continuation of Mr Mihaj's contract of employment until the final hearing, the Employment Tribunal must be convinced that success at the final hearing was probable i.e. more than a 51% chance of success.

The case put forward by Mr

Mihaj's legal representative included the argument that the very acts on which Sodexo relied as the reason for dismissal were the activities of an independent trade union. Thus, on Sodexo's own admission Mr Mihaj's dismissal was due to trade union activities.

This application was refused. The Employment Judge held that it was not likely that the Tribunal would find that the true reason for dismissal was the trade union activity of Mr Mihaj, as opposed to the way in which it was carried out.

The Union fully supported an appeal against this refusal and were successful in overturning it at the Employment Appeal Tribunal ("EAT"). The EAT held that the Employment Judge erred in his reasoning and that, subject to extremes of behaviour, the way in which an individual carried out a trade union activity is not relevant to the issue as to whether a dismissal was for carrying out trade union activities.

The EAT reiterated the judgement in *Bass Taverns v Burgess* [1995] in that the way in which trade union activities

are carried out is immaterial to the decision as to whether they are in fact trade union activities unless the way in which they are carried out is dishonest, in bad faith, or carried out for another cause so as to remove it from trade union activities.

Thus the appeal succeeded and the interim relief application was remitted to a differently constituted employment tribunal. However, at the remitted hearing the judge did not agree that Mr Mihaj's claim was likely to succeed and the application was unsuccessful.

Following a ten-day final hearing Mr Mihaj's claim was successful and he was awarded damages of £31,290.07. Unfortunately the Tribunal did not order Mr Mihaj's reinstatement or reengagement. The Tribunal found that Sodexo did not assist with the issues he raised regarding difficulties with team members. It found that Sodexo's investigations into the allegations made against Mr Mihaj were inadequate and the independence of one of the investigating officers was called into question. ■

GET £4,000 PER APPRENTICE!

The Maritime Educational Foundation (MEF) has been established to promote excellence in education and training in maritime skills

The MEF strategy is threefold, to promote UK rating training; to support UK officer trainees; and to encourage maritime activities that encourage consideration of a career in British shipping.

In addressing the first part of the strategy, the MEF is offering support and guidance as well as a £4,000 bursary per apprentice to shipping companies taking on eligible rating apprentices. Simply complete the application form on our website at www.meftraining.org

RMT national secretary and

MEF Trustee Steve Todd said "We are trying to make it more straight forward and simpler for companies and employers to take on young UK rating apprentices.

"The bureaucracy and administration surrounding the funding mechanism for apprentices can often be complicated and overwhelming. It is not surprising that busy ship operators can be deterred from taking on UK rating apprentices.

"However, the MEF believes

that our young people should be encouraged to seek a career in the Merchant Navy, and that the shipping companies of the UK should be encouraged and supported in taking on rating apprentices," he said.

CASE STUDY

Chris Burton joined CalMac in 2013 as an apprentice engine room rating. He was recruited by CalMac in a joint initiative with the RMT Learning Project.

Chris said: "When I went to the interview I thought it had gone well. I was told shortly afterwards that I had been chosen as one of the ten from over 1,200 people who had applied!

When I complete my training my job will involve keeping watch in the engine room, general cleaning and maintenance of the ship and assisting the engineers. I will

also achieve the Engine Watch Rating and Able Seafarer (Engine) SCTW Certificate."

"At present I'm on-board MV Lord of the Isles, which operates out of Oban to the Western Isles. I get loads of support from all my colleagues in my training, they help me with my Task Record Book, teach me new skills, give me projects and steer me in the right direction if I need help."

"Working at sea was and is a dream job for me, I guess what appealed to me most about a maritime apprenticeship was the job based training and good conditions in CalMac.

"My family are proud of me, happy and amazed at the opportunity I have.

"I hope to be a Chief Engineer one day but for now I'm aiming to be a 3rd Engineer and then I'll see where I want to go from there," he said. ■



PROTEST: Several hundred activists gathered outside the Dept for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the London base of the European Parliament and Commission to protest against highly secretive government negotiations forming the US/EU TTIP trade deal.



STOP CORPORATE TRADE DEALS

RMT backs campaign against trade deals which threaten the existence of the National Health Service

The proposed so-called 'trade' agreement' between the world's two biggest economies, the EU and US, will grant permanent legal rights to transnational corporations while undermining the ability of governments to regulate those corporations, all in the name of 'free trade'.

Thus the US/EU Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) will be a charter for effectively corporate rule.

These agreements build on existing World Trade Organisation provisions that have already entrenched corporate power and reduced public policy space.

They are being used to construct, layer upon layer, investment regimes that enforce the right of corporations to pursue maximum profit while removing restrictions that regulate corporate activities in the areas of public health, workers' and consumers' health

and safety, public services, and the environment.

Some of these agreements are misleadingly packaged as free-trade agreements. TTIP is the latest proposed treaty instrument to enshrine these investor ambitions.

TTIP was launched by the US President Barack Obama and the EU Commission President Manuel Barossa, at the G8 meeting in June 2013, although it had been in preparation for much longer and health care had been identified as a target some years before.

TTIP is an attempt by transnational capital to deregulate markets on both sides of the Atlantic. The primary aim of it is not stimulating trade but 'regulatory harmonisation' - the removal of regulatory "barriers" that restrict the potential profits to be made by transnational corporations.

Yet these "barriers" are in reality some of our most prized social standards and environmental regulations, such as food safety rules, regulations on the use of toxic chemicals, labour rights, privacy laws and banking safeguards introduced to prevent a repeat of the 2008 financial crisis.

An ongoing mechanism, a Regulatory Cooperation Committee (RCC), will ensure that new regulation is harmonised, with a major role for transnational corporations from when new regulation is first being considered.

This effective deregulation will be backed by 'investor state dispute settlement' (ISDS), a new right for foreign investors to sue governments for the loss of future corporate profits resulting from public policy decisions. These cases would be heard not in national courts but by ad hoc arbitration tribunals making binding judgements only on the basis of 'free trade', without the social considerations that we expect in a legal system.

This ISDS mechanism elevates transnational capital to a status virtually equivalent to that of a sovereign state, and threatens to undermine the most basic principles of democracy in

EU member-states.

A major TTIP aim is transnational corporate access to all government spending, which includes spending on public services.

A further stated aim is to establish TTIP trade provisions as global rules, to be imposed on the rest of the world. The stakes therefore could not be higher.

The treaty is being negotiated by the EU Trade Commission under conditions of strictest secrecy. While corporations draft and share the negotiating texts, citizens and elected politicians are denied access to them. We only know the dangers inherent in TTIP from leaked documents.

Another agreement, the Transatlantic Partnership (TPP), being negotiated between 12 Pacific countries including the US, appears to have similar aims. TPP negotiations were begun in 2005, but are still not finalised.

TTIP threatens democracy

The negotiating texts for TTIP are officially secret and documents relating to the negotiations will be kept under government protection for decades. Neither elected lawmakers nor the public have access to the draft texts, which are, however, shared among corporate leaders and lobbyists. Therefore people in the EU are denied information on both the demands and offers being made on their behalf, even though their present and future governments will be committed to these, with penalties from the public purse for any perceived breaches.

A few MEPs - the Chair and Vice Chairs of the European Parliament's International Trade Committee - and some trade officials may be able to view documents in designated reading rooms, but the documents may not be removed or copied.

The Commission's particular spin strategy for TTIP has been leaked. In it is the expectation that member state governments will engage with the same communications strategy to attempt to convince people that TTIP will be of benefit to them.

STOP TTIP! STOP CETA!

These so-called trade deals would:

- Give rights to corporations to write the rules
- Threaten democracy
- Erode social standards and environmental regulations
- Dilute food safety rules
- Undermine regulations on the use of toxic chemicals
- Attack workers' rights
- Strangle developing economies.

The central aspects of TTIP combine to expand the already considerable power of transnational investors by restricting the regulatory power of governments, in effect locking in a system that prevents new regulatory initiatives or any reversal of privatisations, and tying future governments to this as trade agreements are intended to be permanent.

After negotiations on TTIP are completed, the European Parliament will have the right of assent, that is, the right only to say yes or no to the agreement, with no possibility of amendments. Few MEPs will have had sight of any of the documents during the negotiating period.

But it is the case that European Parliamentary dissent would throw out the whole agreement.

However no national parliament MPs will have seen the negotiating documents during the negotiating period. In Britain this will only be as secondary legislation, with no parliamentary debate.

At the point when member state parliaments do have a vote, the TTIP agreement will already have been provisionally implemented by the European Commission.

OUR NHS

Until recently, the provision of NHS services has been a social rather than an economic activity. At its heart has been a

commitment to a publicly-funded, publicly-provided service offering universal access to health care on the basis of need and not the ability to pay.

In terms of procuring the services to provide this universal care, the state was originally purchasing health care services from itself - at least until fairly recently.

However, in the 1980s the Tories introduced an internal market within the NHS where different bodies became either purchasers or providers of services and had to behave like businesses in a marketplace. This internal market was further developed by every other government by encouraging the outsourcing of NHS services.

The current Coalition government has since intensified this creeping marketisation of the NHS and created ambiguity about whether the provision of NHS services remains a social activity or has become a commercial activity.

Unless specifically excluded from provisions covering government procurement, the TTIP will include the NHS. If so, under the 'National Treatment' rule of trade-in-services, US providers would come to be on an equal footing with those in Britain, including having equal access to government subsidies.

For more information got to:
Stop TTIP <http://stopttip.net/>
38 Degrees www.38degrees.org.uk
Campaign Against Euro-Federalism www.caeef.org.uk

FIGHTING FOR NORTHERN RAIL SERVICES

Mass public support for RMT campaign against Northern and Trans-Pennine Express rail carve-up

RMT has delivered thousands of postcards to the Department of Transport in protest at future plans for the Northern and Trans-Pennine Express franchises as off-peak fares are axed.

The post cards have been collected from angry members of the public at over a hundred events organised by the RMT region during the consultation period.

The government, and their front organisation Rail North, have organised a pitiful five “listening” events across the vast area affected without a single event in Cumbria which is hard-hit by the plans. RMT is demanding to know how many responses the shadowy and low-profile ‘official’ consultation has managed to generate.

The main thrust of the plans out to consultation is:

- Driver Only Operation introduced on the Northern franchise
- Driver Only Operation left at the discretion of the franchisee on the TPE
- Reduced ticket office opening times
- Cuts to “back room and support functions” staff
- Possible “alliancing” between franchisees and Network Rail
- Encouraging “local delivery models” and community rail (especially in the North East of Northern franchise)
- Increasing fares
- the promotion of third party funding of services

In fact, the plans are already being smuggled in before the consultation has even closed. RMT has revealed that the government and Northern Rail have colluded to axe off-peak fares in the name of private profit in what the union describes as “a kick in the teeth for the travelling public and a taste of what’s to come under the new Northern and Trans-Pennine Express franchises which are currently out to public consultation”.

Northern Rail has confirmed in an internal circular that the axing of the off-peak fares is simply about money:

“The changes are being made after the Department of Transport asked Northern to look at several options to generate additional revenue as part of its new franchise agreement”.

The abolition of the off-peak evening fares will apply to the following areas:

- Travel South Yorkshire
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- Metro West Yorkshire
- Routes radiating out of the above areas
- The Hexham-Newcastle line

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash said that the axing of off-peak fares was a savage kick in the teeth for people already struggling with the burden of low pay and austerity.

“RMT is giving the people who use the rail services an opportunity to have their say.

“Let’s not forget that the core



of the government's future plans for Northern and TPE is to axe jobs, throw the guards off the trains and jack up fares while capacity to meet surging rail demand in the area is left to stagnate.

"That attack on the fare-paying public has already begun and only an all-out and coordinated fight can stop the savage assault on rail in the North," he said.

A new postcard, following on from the 10,000 cards collected in opposition to the plans under the franchise consultation, is now be distributed urging the public to pressure MPs to sign EDM 174, opposing the Northern and Trans-Pennine Express proposals, and calling for councillors and Local Authorities to register their opposition.

"RMT is now launching the next phase of the fight to both

inform the public and fight the savage cuts being lined up for these Northern rail franchises and to get MPs signed up to EDM 174 opposing this carve-up," said local RMT regional organiser Craig Johnson.

"We're still hearing numerous reports from passengers that they were totally unaware of the DfT and Rail North's disastrous proposals before the RMT campaign raised their awareness of the threat.

"After contacting over 3,500 local councillors across the North, RMT now knows that many local councillors do not support the proposals that have been jointly put forward by the DfT and Rail North - even though their councils are supposedly part of Rail North.

"It is absolutely essential now that we keep up the pressure," he said.



Early day motion 174

NORTHERN AND TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS RAIL SERVICES

That this House is concerned at the contents of the consultation document for the Northern Rail and TransPennine Express rail franchises; is dismayed that the proposals will result in fare rises, service and timetable cuts and the loss of hundreds of essential rail jobs; is further concerned that not only will there be the loss of hundreds of decent, relatively well-paid, skilled jobs in the north but also that passenger service and safety will be worsened by the introduction of driver-only operation, the sacking of train guards, conductors, station staffing and ticket office closures; is also concerned that these type of cuts will particularly impact on disabled, older and women passengers; supports the numerous passenger surveys and research which demonstrate that passengers value highly proper staffing of trains and stations; and calls on the Government and local authorities, including those that constitute Rail North, to stop these cuts and protect the interests of passengers and the communities who rely on these rail services.

Alex Cunningham Labour MP Stockton North

HALT TSGN CUTS!

Union launches postcard campaign against mass job cuts at new Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise

RMT activists have been handing out postcards to passengers warning of plans to introduce driver-only operated trains (DOO), axe all guards, de-staff stations and remove train repair staff on the new Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise (TSGN).

Rail privateer Govia has won the contract to run the new franchise sparking protests as the public will be put at risk, with clear implications for those with disabilities, the elderly and women travelling at night.

The new franchise will operate under the name Govia Thameslink Railway.

The government also has declined to comment as to whether the new franchisee is legally bound to honour

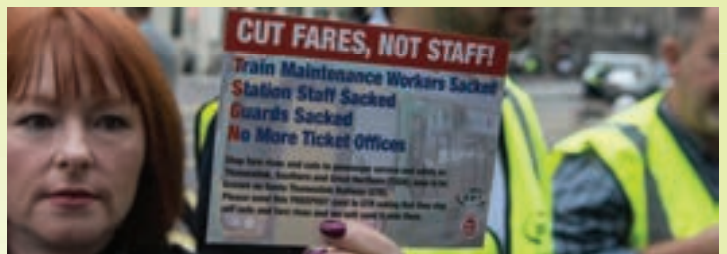
members' terms and conditions.

RMT acting general secretary Mick Cash announced a rolling campaign opposing the new franchise's proposals.

"Passengers can now expect to see fares go up and a less safe service as the franchisee tries to squeeze as much profit as it can from the operation," he said.

The invitation to tender states that the franchisee must maintain DOO on services on First Capital Connect and roll it out on Southeastern and Southern and "implement DOO on all services that operate on the Core Thameslink Route.

Under this agreement Govia can meet 'key staffing challenges' by outsourcing and use of agency staff and station



staffing can be maintained at 'such hours to be proposed by bidders'.

Rail campaigners staged protests at stations along passenger routes that the government plans to bring into a new super rail franchise covering London, as well as areas of the south and east which charge some of the highest fares and are some of the busiest in Britain.

Govia was formed in November 1996 as a joint venture between Go-Ahead and Keolis - an arm of French state railways - to bid for rail franchises during the privatisation of British Rail.

"In handing this franchise over to a consortium involving

the French state operator SNCF, the government is allowing fares in London will subsidise fares in Paris.

"It seems that this government is quite happy to have state ownership of our railways as long as it isn't the British state.

"The full force of the McNulty cuts programme is to be unleashed on all these services and well as on the infrastructure side at a time when what is required is increased capacity.

"We need a publicly-owned railway system that provides a quality service, protects jobs and gives a fair deal to taxpayers and passengers," Mick Cash said.





Finsbury Park branch delegate John Stack reports from RMT's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) advisory committee

This year's LGBT conference was opened by the Bristol branch secretary Gary Abbot who warmly welcomed us to Bristol, a City well known for diversity and inclusion.

Acting general secretary Mick Cash paid a full and emotional tribute to Bob Crow and said that he hadn't expected to be travelling the country addressing the various RMT conferences.

Mick explained that in 2002 when he and Bob were elected, the equality conferences didn't exist. Conference chair Roger Hackett reported on committee activity over the last year, noting some of the excellent hard work done and outlined plans for organising across the regions. RMT members had held protests outside several embassies of countries where LGBT people are discriminated against.

EC member Nick Quirk gave a report on the progress of motions from the previous

LGBT conference and reported some positive news that Network Rail and TOCs were finally realising the importance of equality reps, a welcome development that branches need to build on.

Nick reported that he will be asking the union to write to the International Transport Federation after the ITF reported that it would not set up an LGBT group.

TUC LGBT committee chair Maria Exall outlined the work of her committee and the role of its conference and how it takes up LGBT issues that cross industrial sectors.

Maria said she was disgusted that the current government is using LGBT issues as a pretense of 'liberal' policies pointing to the stark change in Tory leader David Cameron who voted against LGBT rights until he got into office.

Bruce Robin from union solicitors Thompsons discussed many aspects of employment

law and rammed home the point that there has been an 80 per cent drop off in tribunal claims since the introduction of tribunal fees by the government as working people are priced out of the workplace justice system.

Bruce also covered subjects including TUPE and redundancy law among other areas of interest.

Alan Pottage of RMT's organising unit spoke about recruitment and said that the union's strategy only worked because it was led directly by the members.

RMT equalities officer Jess Webb said that the union needs to think about education and suggested that all the advisory groups hold a weekend of empowerment, focusing on how to write resolutions and understand the union structures.

Conference passed four resolutions to be sent to the union for discussion. Motions

agreed included affiliation to Rainbow International LGBT Activist Solidarity Fund and to International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

Conference also called on the union to campaign against local authority councillors encouraging anti-gay propaganda and called on the union to map the profile of LGBT reps and advisory members to allow the committee to target areas of under-representation.

Out Stories Bristol collects and preserves stories of LGBT history in the city. Co-chair Cheryl Morgan explained that trans people essentially didn't fit into the traditional views of gender.

Brighton was the chosen venue for conference next year and conference concluded with Barry Weldon being elected as chair, Paul Penny as vice chair and Roger Hackett as liaison committee member. ■

DISABLED VOICES

RMT delegate Janine Booth reports from the Trade Union Congress' disabled workers' conference

Trade unions and disabled people are determined to resist attacks on disabled people's rights and living standards – that was the clear and unanimously message from the Trade Union Congress' disabled

workers' conference.

RMT representatives joined over 200 delegates from twenty-five trade unions at the conference, which heard speakers, debated resolutions and elected a new Committee.

The conference focused on the way that government cuts are hitting services that disabled people need, and expressed anger at the way that media scapegoating unfairly portrays disabled people as scroungers.

RMT submitted a motion opposing ticket office closures and other staffing cuts in the transport industry, highlighting the way that these make travel even more difficult for disabled passengers. Conference strongly agreed, passing the resolution unanimously. I also spoke to conference about disabled access to public transport, calling for public ownership in order to facilitate a major programme of access

improvements that would create jobs as well as enabling disabled people to have equal rights to travel.

Other issues discussed included zero-hours contracts; attendance policies; mental health; and the government's scrapping of support such as the Independent Living Fund and the Disabled Students' Allowance. With a General Election less than a year away, conference delegates called on the Labour Party to pledge to reverse the Tory-Liberal Coalition's attacks on disabled people's rights.

RMT's Janine Booth was re-elected to the TUC disabled workers' committee. ■

WHAT RMT DELEGATES THOUGHT:

LEW TORRINGTON:

"I found the conference interesting and at times upsetting, with some the delegates' stories of how they have been affected and treated by their companies and the state. But it was also uplifting in the way they fought back with the help of unions, friends and families – it certainly shows the value of being in the union. This should be highlighted more in recruitment.

We need more equality reps with appropriate training, and more appropriate training for reps and union officials in mental health, autism and dyslexia in the workplace.

If everyone showed the caring and the need for equality shown at this conference, the government and employers would have be more pro workers' rights and not so profit-driven and greedy.

If possible I may come again. I will be raising and keeping these issues high on the agenda at my branch and area council".

MIKE REID:

"I spoke in support of a resolution on digitalisation and how it can exclude disabled people. RMT had submitted an amendment, adding to the motion a line that explained how transport companies are using ticket automation as a pretext to close ticket offices and that this would make travel more difficult for many disabled people.

RMT delegate Anna proposed our

union's motion about cuts across the transport industries and how these will make transport less accessible to disabled people.

After these speeches, delegates told us they now understand, and fully support, our Every Job Matters and Hands Off London Transport campaigns.

It was my first time representing the RMT at a conference and I left knowing that our fight has the support of other unions, some of which have no (direct) transport links. Solidarity was a key word often heard. Together we can win!"

JOHN STANFORD:

"This was my second time at this conference and I came away a lot wiser. When you look around the hall, you get inspiration from the people that surround you.

I left the conference quite agitated at the injustice of the disabled person's lot.

Janine's and Mike's speeches are the ones I remember most. The context of Mike's speech was simple but easy to understand and empathise with; and Janine was successful in getting her points across in the talk she gave. Personally, this was what I want our union leaders to be saying.

ANNA GICHAGA:

"It was an amazing conference, I was inspired by all those around me to take a more active role in the union".

SUPPORTING HERITAGE RAILWAYS



RMT News meets the volunteers that run the Mid-Norfolk Railway, a heritage line that runs from Dereham to Wymondham

A line of grim-faced German Wehrmacht soldiers line the platform as our train steams into the station and the mood darkens.

Just one stop back passengers had been waving at the friendly French resistance forces holding the territory around Yaxham station.

There is nothing quite like one of Mid-Norfolk Railway's World War Two weekends to recreate the bygone age of steam which holds such a fascination for many.

This re-enactment weekend is created with the help of local enthusiasts in characters ranging from spivs selling nylons, suspicious policemen, soldiers on leave, swaggering yanks and, of course, vintage hardware from jeeps to staff cars.

It is enjoyable and fun events like this and others like the beer

festival, jazz trains as well as the Halloween and Santa specials that won the MNR Heritage Railway of the Year 2013.

The railway's headquarters at Dereham is a fine Victorian railway station restored to the way it would have looked just after the war complete with period ticket office, tearoom and displays of local railway artefacts.

The stations at Yaxham, Thuxton, Hardingham and Kimberley are all being tastefully restored and retain many original features.

Train rides on steam or diesel units offer extensive views of the surprisingly rolling and evocative countryside for a generally flat East Anglia. At the other end of the 11.5 mile run is Wymondham Abbey station located close to the beautiful Abbey Church and the

friendly Green Dragon Inn. If all this sounds idyllic, well, it is.

The railway is entirely staffed by volunteers who are happy to answer any questions about the line.

These volunteers, organised in the Mid-Norfolk Railway Preservation Trust, are understandably proud of what they have achieved through sheer determination and a lot of hard word work. Many are also RMT members including Josh Quirk who works full-time at a ticket office in a far-flung corner of Essex.

Despite his youth Josh, originally from Dereham, has been an MNR volunteer for nearly ten years, starting at the tender age of 14 as one of Santa's elves on a Christmas special and he has never looked back.

"MNR volunteers are a real community and some end up

working on the mainline railway after gaining valuable experience here.

"Most of us either work on the railways or are retired railway people," he says.

He explains that the MNR in a 'new generation' heritage railway in that it has been operating for less than 20 years following decades of torturous trials and tribulations.

This is surprising as, following the infamous 1963 'Beeching Report that butchered Britain's railways, passenger services between Dereham and Wells ceased way back in 1964.

Dereham became an intermediate station between Norwich and King's Lynn, as the line from Wroxham to County School had lost its passenger service as early as 1952.

After that sidings were taken up and signal boxes demolished as part of an attempt to reduce



MNR
volunteer
Richard
Barber



operating costs. With the withdrawal of the passenger service from King's Lynn in 1968 followed by the service between Wymondham and Dereham in 1969, a century of railway history had been brought to an end.

Or it would have been but for a great deal of time, effort and sweat that has been put into making the Mid-Norfolk Railway the success that it undoubtedly is.

Volunteer Richard Barber, the proud owner of a Class 50 diesel locomotive, cheerfully expects the line to be extended to County School station six miles to the north.

"The MNR has a good future, we are connected to the mainline which is a big advantage for a heritage railway and I expect to spend my retirement being part of that expansion," he says proudly.

Our guard for the hazardous World War Two journey to Wymondham Abbey is Leslie Dale who is not only a volunteer but an MNR director as well.

A retired engineer, Leslie

explains that that the Mid-Norfolk Railway is a registered charity dependent upon its customers and charitable donations for its income.

"MNR is trying to develop its business in a way which will bring more tourism revenues into the local economies along its line to Wymondham," he says.

RMT has long-argued that the heritage rail sector deserves government support in order to develop local economies in exactly the way MNR is endeavouring to maintain.

The union represents full-time and volunteer workers up and down the country in this unusual and dynamic sector.

A few years ago annual general meeting delegates unanimously backed a political campaign to win government support to ensure that heritage railways can prosper and develop as part of a national integrated transport system.

For Mid-Norfolk Railway train times ring 01362 690633 or 01362 851723 for talking timetable or visit the website www.mnr.org.uk ■

OUT AND ABOUT



I have been out and about visiting branches covering many grades including rail, bus and shipping as well as Wessex Regional Council.

All these were very well attended, with the exception of one (which shall remain nameless), but even that was well attended, albeit with retired members who are vital in our union. You can never get too much experience.

All the meetings were vibrant and full of discussions and debate on every subject imaginable. Every debate, even where there was disagreement, was carried out in good spirit with no dissent against the democratic decisions that were taken.

This is really refreshing to see, and gives the truth to our union's motto 'unity is strength', something that we should remember when we elect a new general secretary. We will have to get behind whoever it is 100 per cent and continue to move the movement forward.

Two subjects of discussion that stood out were the on-going events and demonstrations around the McNulty report, and the forthcoming ballot on the political fund ballot.

It is vital that we keep up the pressure on McNulty, especially as we are now seeing part of it being enacted now. Ticket office closures on London Underground and the continued attempts by TOCs to introduce driver only trains everywhere. I know that we have the public on our side and we must carrying fighting this with every weapon that we have. We also need to remember that it was a Labour government who commissioned McNulty so we can expect no help from them if they win the next election.

I was especially pleased to see the issue of the political fund ballot being debated. It is essential that we get a yes vote. It is not about donating money to political parties

it is about having a fund that can be used for campaigning. Campaigns against McNulty, DOO, fight against zero hours, closure of booking offices, the continuing fight for renationalisation of our railways, regulation of buses, end of flags of convenience, and safer conditions in the offshore industry. So it's over to you to make sure everyone votes and votes yes.

All these visits have reminded me of the importance of branches. Nothing can beat face to face meetings and human interaction. Social media may have a place, but they can never replace branch meetings. In our upcoming reorganisation of the union, I am certain that branches will continue to be allowed to carry on the sterling work that they do.

Finally I want to talk about a visit I paid to Northampton. It was in connection to an organisation called Community Court Yard which RMT donated money to earlier this year. Last year Bianca Todd, the granddaughter of the great trade union leader Ron Todd, came to see Bob Crow to ask for his help in a 'Buy a Brick' campaign to help develop Ron Todd House.

This will be used to help trade union members who are suffering eviction, because of the government's attacks on welfare, a place for them to go to seek help. The work that this organisation is putting in to help people is unbelievable, their commitment second to none.

I would like to thank Bianca, her partner Steve, and her parents Peter and Jean for their warm welcome to me and for a very informative day. As Bianca said to me "socialism is about caring, and helping each other". A very true statement and one we should remember.

Peter Pinkney ■

LEGAL

FLEXIBLE WORKING



Employment rights solicitor at Thompsons Jo Seery explains changes to rights to flexible working

Since July 2014, all employees in England, Scotland and Wales who have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks have had the right to ask to work flexibly. It is vital that workers are aware of the changes and understand their rights.

The key changes are as follows:

- The right to request flexible working has been extended to all eligible employees, not just those with caring responsibilities for children and dependents
- The previous procedure has been repealed and replaced with a duty on the employer to deal with requests in "a reasonable manner"
- There is no statutory right of appeal after a request has been refused
- There is no statutory right to be accompanied at a meeting with an employer to discuss a flexible working request
- Employers can treat a request as withdrawn if the employee fails to attend two meetings to discuss a flexible working request.

The right to request is just that - a right to ask to work flexibly, and not a right to be allowed to work flexibly. Employees can ask for a change in their working hours, for example

from full time to part time hours, and the flexibility to work from home. Requests must be dated, and made in writing stating that it is a statutory request, and detailing the change applied for including what effect, if any, the change would have on the employer, and how the change could be dealt with. It must also confirm if the employee has made a previous flexible working request and if so, when.

Employees can only make a request once within a 12-month period, starting with the date they made the application. Employees who want to return to work on a flexible (but temporary) basis, for example following a long period of sickness absence, should check their capability or ill-health policies and contact their union representative.

HOW SHOULD AN EMPLOYER RESPOND?

The new changes place a general duty on the employer to deal with the flexible working application in a "reasonable manner" and notify the employee of their decision within three months of the date of the request unless a longer period is agreed. Unhelpfully, what constitutes a "reasonable manner" is not defined, though ACAS' code of practice on

flexible working recommends that employers:

- Consider the request and discuss it with the employee as soon as possible
- Allow the employee to be accompanied and tell them this prior to any discussion
- Inform the employee of their decision in writing as soon as possible
- Allow the employee to appeal the decision.

While there is no statutory right for a worker to be accompanied by a colleague in a meeting or to appeal the employer's decision, tribunals can take the ACAS code into account when considering if an employer has acted in a "reasonable manner".

GROUNDINGS FOR REFUSAL

The grounds for an employer to refuse a request remain the same as they were before the changes. Employers can refuse an application for one of the following reasons:

- Burden of additional cost
- Detrimental effects on ability to meet customer demands
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff, detrimental impact on quality or detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee

proposes to work

- Planned structural changes.

This gives employers a great deal of scope to refuse a request, particularly as they do not have to explain their reasoning. However, guidance on the government's Business Information website (www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk) advises employers to explain why the relevant business ground applies.

Although there is no statutory obligation on employers to notify their employees in writing of their decision, the ACAS code recommends that they do so in order to "avoid future confusion on what was decided". Aside from this, employers who fail to put their decision in writing are likely to find it more difficult to defend a claim.

Employers must respond to (and make a decision about) a request within three months of receiving it, but can extend this period if the employee agrees as long as they do so within six months of the original request.

In summary, employers have considerable scope to refuse a request for flexible working on business grounds but the ACAS Code means employers should follow strict guidelines to avoid being deemed to have acted unreasonably when assessing a request. ■

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



Women were accepted into NUR membership in 1915

RAIL WORKERS AND WORLD WAR ONE

Brian Denny looks at the impact of the First World War on the NUR and the lasting effects for its members

One May evening in 1916 a National Union of Railwaymen member, whose name is lost to history, was walking along a platform at a station on the outskirts of London when he noticed a hastily-scribbled note.

It had been thrown from the window of a train heading for Southampton by one of 17 conscientious objectors (COs),

conscripts that were refusing to fight in the trenches of World War One, warning that they were being taken to France to face military discipline and possibly the firing squad.

The quick-thinking NUR member contacted the No-Conscription Fellowship which was mounting a vigorous campaign against the

punishment of COs, known as Chonchies, following the introduction of the Military Service Act the previous March which brought in conscription for the first time in British military history.

The issue was immediately raised in Parliament where Prime Minister Henry Asquith swore he knew nothing about the case. But it emerged that up to 50 men were being transported into the warzone, sparking huge protests led by figures like Sylvia Pankhurst and Bertrand Russell.

This forced Asquith to send a telegram to the army's commander in chief ordering that no Chonchies be shot.

This is just one story of one member of a militant union that had only just won enough

strength to win better conditions from the private companies before Western powers launched their disastrous imperialist war in August 1914.

By the end of the war 184,000 railwaymen had joined up and 18,957 of them had lost their lives fighting in the armed forces.

Despite the pleadings of the anti-war movement led by Keir Hardie, thousands of rail workers that could have claimed their work was of national importance flocked to recruiting stations to join the volunteer army.

In fact by September 1914 railway managers called for a halt of the stampede and the government ruled that no rail worker could enlist without permission of his employer.

This depletion of the labour force led to an increase in the volume of work for those who remained which meant longer hours, greater responsibilities and fruitless struggles to raise wages to keep up with an explosion in the cost of living.

For the duration of the war control of the the railways was taken from the private companies and managed by the government which promised to pay shareholders dividends at generous 1913 levels.

By June 1917 the London and North Western Railway chairman told shareholders that the company had 12,000 less workers than 1914 whilst carrying an additional million tons of goods a year.

The infamous Taff Vale Company, which had victimised its workers and sparked a strike ten years earlier, was forcing its drivers to work 20 hours at a stretch.

The NUR executive committee noted that although the financial position of shareholders was protected by the government those that toiled in the industry were not and demanded the same guaranteed rates for its members.

NUR-backed Derby MP JH Thomas raised this "most one-sided arrangement" in the House of Commons in 1914. It is unlikely that the response of the Prime Minister, the pompous and ineffective Liberal Party leader Asquith, reassured the union.

"I am quite certain that it is the desire and practice of the

railway companies as a whole to share with their employees, particularly in an emergency of this kind, every advantage which they have gained themselves," Asquith told parliament.

Unsurprisingly the opposite occurred and attempts to stem the erosion of members' standard of living were the hardest job for NUR officials through the entire war.

NUR branches, district councils and ad-hoc 'vigilance committees' consistently harassed the union's executive about the need for action against the lack of concessions from the railway companies and rampant profiteering which was hiking up food prices.

By 1916 calls for an end to the 'industrial truce' that had been agreed with the government should be abandoned grew along with demands for strike action.

Finally the government called union representatives to a meeting of the Board of Trade where ministers lectured the NUR about the need to prevent industrial stoppages "even for one hour" as it would impede the war effort.

Though not yet elected NUR general secretary, union delegation member JH Thomas shot back by asking, "if the position be so serious, that the rail companies should be called in so that they should be told of their responsibilities".

The meeting had its effect and war bonuses were increased in September 1916 but the



ROLL OF HONOUR: This book contains the names of thousands of employees from the London and North Western Railway Company that died in World War One. It recalls the Great War as lasting from 1914-14 to 1919 despite the fact that hostilities ceased on November 11 1918. This is because the victorious Allies secretly agreed in February 1919 to intervene in the Russian civil war to defeat the Bolshevik revolutionary government. The Treaty of Versailles officially ending the war was not signed until June 28 1919.

constant battle to improve the conditions of rail workers continued unabated.

Two of the most significant changes to come about due to the impact of the war were the acceptance of women into NUR membership and the introduction of national collective bargaining.

At the start of the 20th century, many within the trade union movement opposed the 'dilution' of the workforce through the employment of women, not least because the lower pay women usually received undercut the wages of male workers.

Women had been employed on Britain's railways throughout Queen Victoria's reign, but in limited numbers and with a low profile. At the start of the war there were 18,200 women in transport generally.

Four years later this number had increased to 117,000, mainly to fill the gaps left by large numbers of men fighting in the trenches.

In 1914 there were just three female porters, by 1918 there were 10,000.

In recognition of this, the 1915 NUR annual general meeting voted to allow women to become members for the first time.

During the war, the NUR and ASLEF negotiated jointly with

the government to win wage increases for railway workers, although at levels below the high rate of inflation. In March 1919 the government announced its plans to reduce the wartime rates of pay, sparking the second national rail strike which began on September 27 1919.

A key feeling during the strike was that sacrifices made during the war had not been acknowledged by the government - in the words of the NUR general secretary JH Thomas, "the short issue is that the long made promise of a better world for railwaymen which was made in the time of the nation's crisis, and accepted by the railwaymen as an offer that would ultimately bear fruit has not materialised".

At a huge rally at the Albert Hall, NUR president Charlie Cramp warned the sea of strikers present that "all the powers of hell, the press, platform and perhaps the pulpit" would be used against them but unity and determination would win the day.

He was right. After nine days of strike action the government capitulated, agreeing to the standardisation of wages across the railway companies at the current rate and the introduction of a maximum eight hour day. ■



TOLPUDDLE REMEMBERS ITS OWN

This year's Tolpuddle Festival gathered against a backdrop of new Tory proposals to tighten the anti-union laws around the necks of the working class, reminding the thousands heading for the Dorset village that the battle started by the brave group of farm labourers 180 years ago for workers' rights is far from over.

But the other backdrop to the event was the loss earlier in the year of two Tolpuddle stalwarts – Bob Crow and Tony Benn.

Images of Bob and Tony were everywhere – including right in the middle of the main stage – and speakers and performers alike paid inspirational tributes throughout the course of the weekend.

At the culmination of the march and rally on the Sunday a roar was sent out across the Dorset countryside in memory

of the two Labour-movement legends as the call went up to continue their work.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady spoke of the "two brave men who had Tolpuddle in their veins" and how both Bob and Tony shared a belief that "by being united we can achieve far, far more than we can achieve alone."

The RMT turn out at the event was once again large, noisy and militant, led on the march by Bob's family and our own brass band and resplendent in "Keep the Guards" t-shirts.

Organisers said that it was the biggest turn out for Tolpuddle in 30 years as the sun shone and the chance was grabbed to recharge the batteries, remember our fallen comrades and top-up the activism.



TRADE UNIONISTS FLOCK TO LEIGH FOLK FESTIVAL

Over ten thousand revellers flocked to the trade union-backed Leigh Folk Festival in Essex, the largest free event of its kind in Britain.

Southend Trades Council, RMT and PCS are just some of the labour movement organisations that support the popular festival.

STUC chairwoman Rachel Heemskerk said that the trade union presence increases every year and encouraged more to come to the three-day event in 2015.

"This is a family and community event and we are here because we support the values and ethos of this special event and its better than Glastonbury which always falls on the same dates.

"This is also an opportunity to tell people what trade unions can do for them and to encourage them to take the final step and join up," she said.

Festival musical director Paul Collier welcomed trade union involvement in the planning of the festival.



"This year was very poignant because Bob Crow often joined us as part of his commitment to the Leigh folk festival and we

all have memories of him enjoying the music in the sunshine," he said.

RMT COMMENDED AT TUC COMMUNICATION AWARDS

RMT won commendations in best campaign and best website categories at the annual TUC communication awards.

Judges agreed that the union's "powerful" campaign to win pay justice for cleaners on Tyne and Wear Metro used "innovative" methods to win an unprecedented pay rise of over 20 per cent.

"It garnered support from customers and from local and national politicians to put pressure on the company for

decent levels of pay," they said.

They commended the RMT website for having a "very interactive site" which worked well on mobile devices.

Judges also agreed that the union's journal RMT News was "hard-hitting, uncompromising and punching well above the union's weight.

"From safety and pay to transport fares and the skills crisis, the magazine tells members exactly how it is-as newsy as it is punchy," judges



COMMENDATION: RMT webmaster Andrew Brattle accepts TUC award.

said.

They found that an RMT News feature attacking EU demands for rail privatisation offered a "blow-by-blow expose" which highlighted the EU's "outdated and ill-thought-out proposals" and included a "useful timeline".

DOVER AND DISTRICT BRANCH

NOMINATE

GARRY HASSELL

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES

EDINBURGH NO1 AND PORTOBELLO BRANCH

NOMINATES

RITCHIE VEITCH

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES

WISHAW & MOTHERWELL BRANCH

NOMINATE

RICHIE VEITCH

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES (SCOTLAND), AND ASKS THAT ALL MEMBERS SUPPORTS THIS EXCELLENT CANDIDATE

NORTH EAST SHIPPING BRANCH

NOMINATES

GRAHAM WALLACE

FOR THE COE REGION FOUR

BAKERLOO BRANCH

NOMINATES

BRIAN WHITEHEAD

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER

WISHAW AND MOTHERWELL BRANCH

SUPPORTS

MICK HOGG

FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER"

WATFORD BRANCH

NOMINATES

BRIAN WHITEHEAD

FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

BAKERLOO BRANCH

NOMINATE

EAMON LYNCH

FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES

NUNEATON BRANCH

SUPPORTS

KEN USHER

FOR MIDLANDS REGIONAL ORGANISER



TRIBUTES TO DAI

RMT activist David Alan Evans died on April 15 aged just 30 years, leaving behind a partner and a young daughter. Those who knew him paid tribute to his faultless campaigning for improved safety and better worker's rights on the RMT/Amey Colas safety and industrial boards

Amey Colas paid tribute to Dai's memory by washing and waxing the tamper he was due to be passed out on as a driver

and attached a wreath to the front, for its journey from Newbury to Thatcham Station.

A commemorative plaque has also been made for the same Tamper, and Dai's colleagues arranged to have it brought into Newport for the family to see.

Acting general secretary Mick Cash said that he had the privilege to know Dai and work with him as an RMT representative.

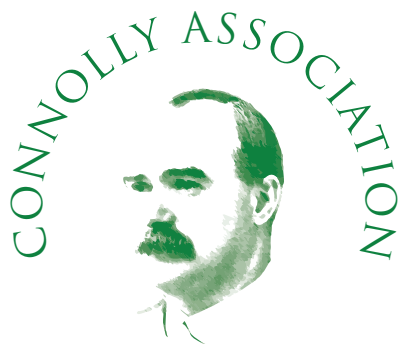
"I was really sorry to hear about his untimely death we have a lost genuine decent person, a dedicated union member and superb representative," he said.

Amey Rail director Simon Bunn said that Dai was one of the youngest and most energetic members of the HO team, looking to enhance safety and operational performance of the Plant.

"I remember very clearly a

number of engagement meetings we both attended on behalf of Amey, Colas and RMT and his personal enthusiasm in ensuring that safety was effectively debated and kept at the front of everyone's thoughts.

"I also witnessed at first hand the effect his loss had on his colleagues as he was a very popular member of the OTM team," he said.



ESTABLISHED 1938

CONNOLLY ASSOCIATION DAY SCHOOL AND LUKE KELLY BALLAD COMPETITION

October 11, London Irish Centre, Camden at 12.30pm

Sessions include:

- The role of Trade Unions in the struggle for Irish independence and unity
- Ireland and the international crisis: 1912-1916
- The EU's assault on national democracy and the state

The school will be followed by an evening social and the Luke Kelly ballad competition. First prize is an average workers' weekly wage.

For more information contact: gensec@connollyassociation.org.uk
www.connollyassociation.org.uk

MOTOR INSURANCE PREMIUMS ARE FALLING

In a recent ABI survey* it was identified that the average motor insurance premium has fallen by 13% over the past 18 months from around £414 to £361 per year. Since April 2013 insurers have passed on total savings to motorists of £378 million as a result of lower premiums.

As an RMT member why not call UIA for a motor insurance quote on 0800 030 4606 or get a quote online at www.rmtinsurance.co.uk

*Details provided by the Association of British Insurers as at 5/8/14. UIA Car Insurance is provided by a third party see www.uia.co.uk/terms – conditions for details. RMT is an Introducer Appointed Representative of UIA (Insurance) Ltd.



WORKERS' VOICES AND VISIONS

General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) general secretary Doug Nicholls unveils a new CD collection of radical song

Voice and Vision is a two-CD collection of radical song compiled by the GFTU Educational Trust together with Topic Records in order to celebrate this important label's 75th year and our 115th anniversary.

Dedicated to the memory of Bob Crow and Tony Benn, these songs reflect a collective experience of hundreds of years of social development. Deep meaning is conveyed in beautifully-crafted tunes and words. These performers are singing about us improving our fortunes as a class, not to make a fortune for themselves.

This collection begins with a ballad reflecting on the first socialists who emerged during the mid- seventeenth century revolution *The World Turned*

Upside Down and ends with a reggae song called *War*, a call to arms against the neoliberal blitz on the people and all we have achieved.

There are songs about organising workers, work and leisure, fighting back against class oppression and its heroes including mythical characters like General Ludd, Robin Hood and Captain Swing.

The CD contains legendary world class performers like Anne Briggs, Norma Waterston, Ewan McColl, Paul Robeson, Martin Carthy, Roy Harris, Chumbawamba, Banner Theatre, Roy Bailey and others and combines them with brilliant young artists such as Fran Morter and Piers Haslam and veterans that demand a wider audience such as Jack Forbes and Kiti Theobald whose work today shows the relevance and delights of this singing tradition.

There are many songs about trade unions. We include Peggy Seeger's magnificent song *If You Want a Better Life*, which perfectly song expresses the very essence of the particular kind of democracy within trade unions that uniquely propel them as the most powerful organisations in society.

Like Joe Hill, these songs will never die. Our hope is that this CD will keep them alive by inspiring another generation to take on the fight of our lives. Part of this fight is to ensure that they do not extinguish our history. Keep music live. Keep songs alive. ■

For more information go to www.gftu.org.uk or www.topic.co.uk

VOICE AND VISION

A double CD of songs to stir every trade unionists' heart and mind.

An ideal gift, an ideal educational tool, an inspiration.

Proceeds from the sale of this CD go to support trade union education.



Voice and Vision is a two-CD collection of radical song compiled by the General Federation of Trade Unions Educational Trust together with Topic Records in order to celebrate this important label's 75th year and the GFTU's 115th.

The songs on this collection, dedicated to the memory of Bob Crow and Tony Benn, resist class oppression, celebrate the lives of workers and the fight for peace, democracy, socialism and social justice in the world.



For more information and to order copies please email sean@gftu.org.uk or call 07903 027 363



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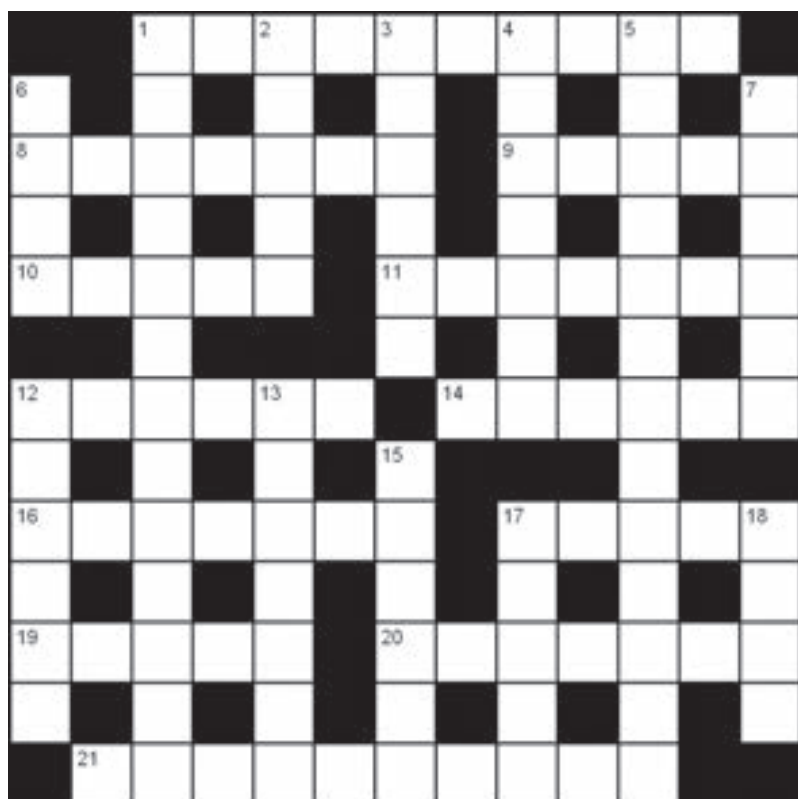
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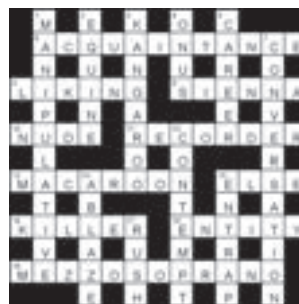
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ACROSS

- 1 Checkerboard (10)
- 8 Oozing (7)
- 9 Implicit (5)
- 10 Lofty nest (5)
- 11 Shoulder piece (7)
- 12 Detector (6)
- 14 Awaken (6)
- 16 Gain with effort (7)
- 17 Loose rock (5)
- 19 Aqua Lung (5)
- 20 Increase (7)
- 21 Extremely pleasing (10)

DOWN

- 1 Central collection place (8,5)
- 2 Exhilarate (5)
- 3 Oblique (6)
- 4 Oblique (7)
- 5 Intractability (13)
- 6 Island (4)
- 7 Sculpture (6)
- 12 Scattered (6)
- 13 Too old (7)
- 15 Return to normal (5)
- 17 Colonial greeting (5)
- 18 Level (4)



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3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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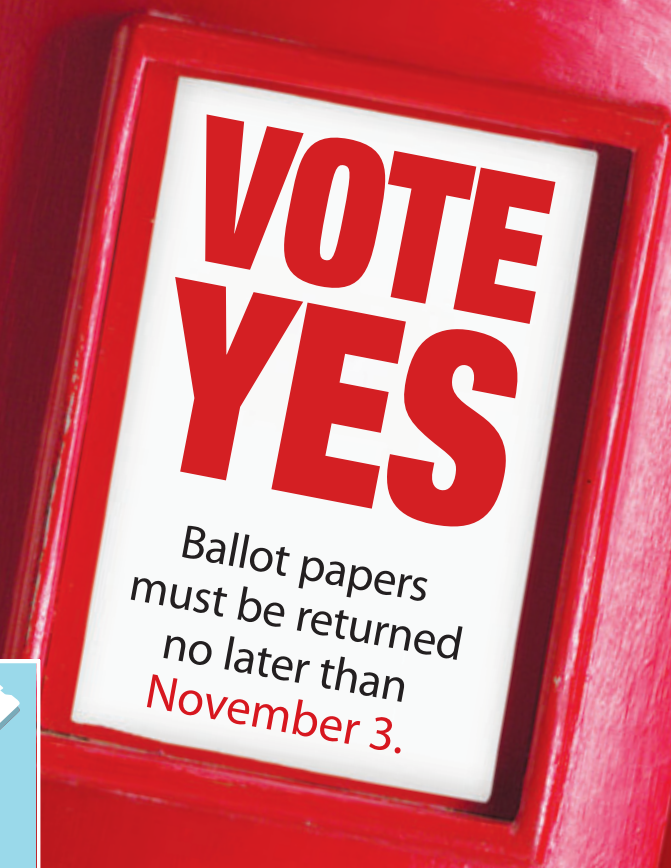


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