

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

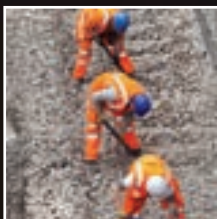
BUS PAY WIN



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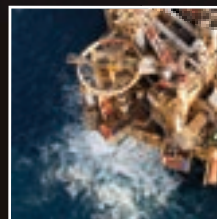
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www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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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

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Your National Insurance Number

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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.

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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.
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- 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



BUS PAY WIN

Congratulations to bus members in Devon for winning an improved back-dated pay deal which will take drivers pay to £10 an hour by next year.

These members working for Stagecoach South West only won these improvements after overwhelmingly supporting industrial action.

Bus members at Norfolk Green, operated by Stagecoach East, are also being balloted for industrial action in a dispute over the latest pay offer which does not even reach £10 hour by the end of the three-year deal.

The action in Devon proves that if you stand together we can achieve an offer that bus workers deserve.

It is not as if Stagecoach can't afford it as they have just blagged themselves a money-spinning franchise extension on East Midlands Trains until March 2018 without a hint of competition and with no consideration of the public sector option.

Rail franchising is a cash-laden, one-way ticket to the bank for the same old chancers who have robbed our railways blind under two decades of privatisation.

There is also no excuse for not modifying the new Hitachi Inter-City trains on Great Western Railways to accommodate guards door operation and catering facilities as it emerged that the same trains will have to be retro-fitted with diesel engines due to the rail electrification shambles.

The issues of the door operation and despatch, along with catering and the threat to fleet jobs, are at the heart of a long-running and on-going dispute which has led to a succession of rock-solid strikes across the franchise.

Members in the North will receive a briefing with this magazine about our campaign to put passengers before profit on Northern Rail and Transpennine Express Trains.

Tory promises of a Northern Power House are fast becoming a sick joke following the cancellation of rail electrification plans in the North.

Now the latest threat to jobs comes in proposals for the new Northern rail franchises due to start in April shortly before the local elections in May.

Therefore the union is targeting councils to warn them that under the proposals train guards will be axed from rail services across the north resulting in Driver Only Trains.

RMT has also united with other unions across Europe to oppose the European Union's fourth rail package which effectively outlaws the public ownership of rail networks.

The fact remains that railways are effectively natural monopolies, it is only a matter of if they are publicly owned and controlled in the interests of society or privately-owned serving the interests of bankers and big business.

The European Commission aims to fragment national rail systems to ensure permanent private ownership and bumper profits for investors achieved on the backs of cuts to safety, jobs and services, no-one has voted for that.

This nonsense has to stop and it is a breath of fresh air that the new Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has finally driven the issue of rail renationalisation right up the political agenda.

As every member in Scotland will also a campaign postcard with this magazine to get involved in the campaign to keep Caledonian MacBrayne lifeline ferry services in the public sector.

RMT has made its position clear – any privatisation of CalMac would be a wholesale betrayal of the Scottish people and would fly in the face of Scottish National Party claims to stand with working people against the greed and exploitation of the big money-grabbing corporations.

The union is also working hard to reduce the impact on workers in all sectors of the North Sea from the collapse in oil prices which is leading to pay cuts, shift increases, ending all bonus schemes and redundancies.

Safety standards are also coming under pressure and offshore workers know better than anyone the effect that these policies are having on on contracts in drilling, diving and offshore supply.

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



CITY LINK SCANDAL

Three former City Link bosses are facing criminal prosecution over the collapse of the delivery firm in December 2014.

More than 3,000 City Link jobs were lost following the announcement on Christmas Day last year that the firm had gone into administration.

Former managing director David Smith, finance director Robert Peto and Better Capital director Thomas Wright have been charged with failing to notify the government of plans to make staff redundant.

RMT demanded at the time

of the City Link collapse that these directors should be prosecuted and barred from ever running a company again.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that they had connived to get workers to do overtime over Christmas and for self-employed people to do shifts that they knew they would never be paid for.

"This was bandit capitalism in the raw and should have no place in British industry.

"Instead of twisting the knife with a new raft of anti-union laws the government should be clamping down on those who

treat the workforce like dirt," he said.

The three will go on trial next month and are the first directors of any company to be charged with the offence.

Charges were brought under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, which the government has decided to use for the first time in more than 20 years.

Employment laws dictate that employers must give workers at least 30 days' notice before jobs are axed and the Business Secretary is to be given 30 days' notice if more

than 20 workers are let go at any one site. Although companies that fail to do so are only liable for fines of up to a paltry £5,000.

The taxpayer foots the bill in any compensation payouts when staff are made redundant without proper consultation. It has already paid out £5 million to compensate axed City Link workers.

"It's inexcusable that the taxpayer has had to pay out via the National Insurance Fund to workers that the company has short-changed," said Mick Cash.



WATERLOO BATTLE

Following a recent 100 per cent vote in favour of industrial action over a long-running re-grading dispute, Waterloo and City service control staff took strike action last month.

The action was forced on the union as a result of a total

failure by LU management to address fundamental issues around re-grading for this key group of staff and the attempt to bulldoze through changes to duties without agreement.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the members involved had a clear legitimate

and reasonable demand for re-grading.

"The union will not accept an offer which is based on a change in staff duties or which would cause a detriment to other members.

"All our members are asking for is to be treated the

same as similar staff elsewhere on the Underground.

"If the company had spent as much time, money and effort in resolving this dispute as they have in trying to break it we could have negotiated a settlement months ago," he said.



Docklands Light Railway cleaners take strike action as all staff balloted over collapse in industrial relations

Around 700 staff across all grades on Keolis Amey Docklands Light Railway are being balloted for both strike action and action short of a strike in a dispute over a serious breakdown in industrial relations.

In a separate dispute over pay, RMT members working for Interserve (KAD) as cleaners took part in a third round of 48-hour strike action earlier this month.

RMT reps recently met the new Keolis Amey management, which took over from Serco, to

discuss the issues in this long-running dispute. They were promised a response from the company but to date, there has still been no response received.

The other dispute affecting all grades on Docklands Light Railway includes a range of serious issues that are wrecking industrial relations.

The key issues at the heart of the dispute include the use of agency staff on P-Way operations and elsewhere within the KAD network.

Control Centre, stores and

other grades are also being undermined as the company is effectively casualising the work of these key functions. There is also a creeping culture of bullying and intimidation of staff and breaches of agreements, procedures and the recognition framework.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that members on DLR were furious at the way that Keolis/Amey were trying to bulldoze in some of the worst working practices and conditions associated with the operations of

the most cheapskate and anti-union companies in the transport sector.

"We will not sit back and allow this culture to develop on this key part of London's transport network.

"The company should not underestimate the anger of the workforce and KAD's abject failure to address pay for cleaners and decent industrial relations for all DLR staff," he said.



DEFINE PLYING FOR HIRE

RMT's campaign for a statutory definition of who can and what precisely is 'plying for hire' won the support of Transport for London after the High Court ruled that the Uber app involving the use of a taxi meter was legal.

Existing regulations state that private hire vehicles (minicabs) may only pick up passengers when pre-booked – rather than from a rank or in response to being hailed. However, the definition of plying for hire is based on case law built up over decades and would be more coherent and therefore easier to enforce if defined in legislation.

At root this issue is about how to limit the incidences of unlicensed drivers preying on vulnerable passengers. It is an issue that has vexed regulators for some time, which is why the need for restrictions on why can ply for hire were first introduced.

Transport for London has reached the informed and mature position that the Uber app as currently operated involves unacceptable risks to



the travelling public.

RMT welcomes Transport for London's change of heart as evidenced in its current consultation and now with the publication of its 2015 strategy document for the sector. On page 30 of TfL's document on the issue ([http://content.tfl.gov.uk/taxi-](http://content.tfl.gov.uk/taxi-and-private-hire-strategy2.pdf)

[and-private-hire-strategy2.pdf](http://content.tfl.gov.uk/taxi-and-private-hire-strategy2.pdf)) it publicly supports the concept of a statutory definition of plying for hire and call on the government to accept this expert advice.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the fight to defend the taxi industry from the on-going assault on the

right to ply for hire continues.

"The union notes the important decision of the High Court which gives us an opportunity to keep the issue of the statutory definition of plying for hire, and the safety of the travelling public, right under the spotlight," he said.



BRUM TAXI CHARGE VICTORY

RMT's campaign against the hike in access charges for drivers serving the public at Birmingham New Street station has scored a major victory with Network Rail pushing back the implementation to allow for further consultation.

The proposed charges would lump RMT taxi members with charges as high as £1,000 a year.

Network Rail intended to levy the huge fees on drivers starting from last month – the date when the newly refurbished station re-opens. However, as a result of the RMT campaign it has been

forced to rethink its plans.

Faced with a boycott by Hackney Carriage taxi drivers, Network Rail had sought to illegally fill the taxi spaces with minicabs. These are vehicles that, for safety reasons, need to be pre-booked and which passengers cannot pick up from ranks direct.

Given the well-publicised concerns about unregulated rogue minicab drivers, this was a shocking error by Network Rail bosses. Alerted by RMT's public campaign – co-ordinated by the local branch and the West Midlands Regional Council –

Birmingham City Council quickly recognised the error and sent the rail body's plans back to the drawing board.

Network Rail's climb down involves it having to refund the annual permits already purchased by minicab operators, with it forced instead to start a consultation with the bodies that represent taxi drivers in Birmingham – RMT, TOA and ComCab.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the climb down over the introduction of access charges had been secured as a result of the hard work and determination of RMT members.

"However this fight is not over and we still have work to do to consign these proposals to the scrap heap.

"We have secured an important victory for passengers, who ultimately would have borne the cost of excessive annual station pick up licences.

"However it seems Network Rail and other station operators are determined to squeeze their site users – whether that be retail space tenants, toilet charges, car parking or taxi access," he said.





BUS PAY WIN

Strike threat wins £10 an hour for Devon bus drivers by next year

Following an overwhelming vote for strike action by bus members at Stagecoach South West in Devon the company returned to the negotiating table and made an improved pay offer.

The revised offer backdated to May is a two-year deal that will take drivers pay to £10 an hour by next November.

The percentage increase of over three per cent also applies to all pay grades with the

exception of the cleaners and the clerks on lower rates of pay whose increase would be based on the monetary increases.

With the exception of apprentices, all grades will be paid no less than the Living Wage. The probationary rate of pay will be renamed New Starter Rate and will apply for three months after a driver has completed their training.

RMT members at Norfolk Green, operated by Stagecoach

East, are also being balloted for strike action and action short of in a dispute over the latest pay offer which does not even reach £10 hour by the end of the three-year deal.

The company's proposed three-year pay offer clearly does not take into account the dramatic rise in the cost of living.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that once Stagecoach Devon realised the strength of

feeling among the workforce the company tabled a new offer which would give staff £10 an hour by next year.

"The offer that Stagecoach in Norfolk is offering is far inferior and does not give parity to their colleagues in Devon even after three years.

"The action in Devon proves that if you stand together we can achieve an offer that bus workers deserve," he said.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY BUFFET THREAT

RMT has stepped up its campaign to save the buffet car on the new Great Western Railway (GWR) Intercity Express Trains due to arrive in May 2017.

During a meeting with RMT the Department for Transport (DfT), claimed that any movement on the placing of buffet cars on the sets would have an impact on the delivery timetable given the way the contract is constructed.

They also claimed that a buffet facility will remove 16 seats per set.

The DfT further claimed that if GWR want to add a buffet car facility they would have to apply to the DfT via a business

proposal which would have to be evaluated to ensure it is feasible against current plans and contract provisions.

GWR is claiming that the decision is solely down to the DfT.

RMT believes that a buffet car facility provides a necessary service to the travelling public, who will be taking journeys as far as London Paddington to Swansea. It gives the passengers their own choice when they want to obtain refreshments rather than relying on a standard class trolley to come through the train.

The buffet car also serves as a regular point for information. For RMT members, it provides

an area of safety, more space to provide a better service and a place for safe handling of money.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that after a similar RMT-led campaign over the introduction of the same Hitachi high speed rail stock on East Coast, buffet cars are being introduced by that company.

"Rather than blame each other for the lack of resolution to the problem the DfT and GWR need work together to ensure that there are buffet cars on these trains, as will be the case on East Coast.

"A commitment to keep the buffet cars on these trains would end a long-standing

dispute that our union has with GWR over safety and jobs on the new trains," he said.

RMT has called for the £18,813,455 million windfall handed to GWR by Network Rail – as compensation for delays to its services – to be used for modifications to buffet cars and door controls on the new trains.

The new Hitachi trains are modular in design and can easily be refitted to include buffet cars and new door controls. However, the company has insisted that the funds are not there for the work to be carried out.



Unions calls for decent public transport services and against EU diktats that demand privatisation and job cuts

This year's TUC in Brighton was given a massive lift with the election of RMT Parliamentary group member Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Leader just 24 hours before the Congress got rolling.

RMT had a full range of items submitted to the agenda covering both its industrial and political priorities.

First up was RMT delegate Glenroy Watson speaking in opposition to a motion from Community that lauded the benefits of Social Partnership:

"Why would we want to align ourselves with the architects of austerity?"

"There is a very real difference between dialogue and partnerships and RMT is wholly opposed to jumping into alliances with those very same people who are trying to screw us into the ground," he said.

Shipping member Ian Boyle led for RMT in two key debates on the maritime and offshore industries.

Moving RMT's amendment on the exclusion of seafarers from the protections of the national minimum wage and the Equality Act Ian told the Congress:

"There are seafarers earning £2.30, working horrific hours under horrendous conditions and shift patterns and it is time that the scandal of the ships of shame was ended once and for

all," he said.

Ian also spoke on RMT's amendment to the Nautilus motion on the savage job cuts and attacks on safety across the UK oil and gas industries with our union specifically highlighting the continuing demand for a full public inquiry into helicopter operations and all aspects of offshore safety.

Both motions were carried unanimously.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash moved the set-piece Congress motion on the transport industry.

Drawing attention to the Tory government's renewed privatisation drive Mick opened up by listing the catalogue of previous disasters, from Hatfield to Potters Bar, that had been unleashed by corporate greed.

"And now they are back again, with new attacks on staff and on services.

"Well, we should be applauding those who have had the guts to fight back and I put the government on notice right now that if they don't reverse the assault that they have unleashed then RMT will mobilise for the biggest national rail strike in a generation," he said.

Mick laid into the EU directives that are setting the pace for new waves of privatisation and saluted the solidarity and determination of

members on CalMac who had shown the way by forcing major concessions through a prolonged campaign involving industrial action.

"All of our transport services are public services and should be run by the public for the public.

"Join our campaigns, support Action for Rail and other joint initiatives on our buses and elsewhere, and let's rebuild a public transport system that we can once again be proud of," he said.

The motion was carried unanimously.

RMT president Peter Pinkney moved motion 64 on the anti-trade union laws. The motion stood on its own alongside a composite involving other unions but the TUC General Council only supported the RMT position with "reservations" because it referred to "generalised strike action".

"I don't understand what the objections of the General Council are and we are proud that our general secretary Mick Cash has stuck to his guns on this.

"RMT is proud that we have put on a series of high profile strikes this year across a range of employers from Network Rail to London Underground, CalMac and First Great Western and we know that you get

nothing unless you fight for it.

"The Tories are always ruthless and maybe we haven't been ruthless enough and now is the time to get off our knees and coordinate and generalise our action," he said.

RMT's motion was overwhelmingly carried.

A controversial TUC statement on the EU, making a series of bogus claims about the benefits of membership and delaying a decision on the referendum until after David Cameron returns from his negotiations with EU leaders, was opposed by RMT.

RMT delegate Chris Davidson asked from the rostrum: "Can someone please tell me why we would want to be part of an organisation that says you have to privatise public services?"

The TUC General Council statement was approved.

With Jeremy Corbyn making his first major speech as Labour Leader to the TUC the gathering was electrified as he set out a clear and direct alternative to the "poverty deniers" in government and as Mick Cash said on the fringe RMT had supported Jeremy and John McDonnell 100 per cent since "before it was fashionable" and would continue to do so.



Parliamentary column



KEEP CALMAC AND CARRY ON



With Scottish Parliamentary elections seven months away, the Scottish government's record will rightly come under close inspection and in some areas, such as Scottish ferries, the devil is most definitely in the detail.

Firstly, in May 2012 there was the privatisation of the £350 million 2012-18 contract for Northern Isles Ferry Services.

Despite using a procurement process known as 'competitive dialogue' which allows bidders to discuss with the Scottish government ways to improve their bid, the Scottish government returned, unopened, the public sector bid from David MacBrayne. Out of the four remaining private sector bidders, Serco was awarded the contract.

Secondly, the Scottish government's claims to be seeking an exemption for Scottish Ferries from the inappropriate requirements of EU maritime competition regulations cannot be verified.

A three year extension to the existing Clyde and Hebrides contract was swiftly secured from the European Commission in 2012 but since then the trail has gone cold and the official correspondence has been withheld.

Thirdly, with the Scottish government continuing to abide by these inappropriate regulations, privatisation of the £1 billion Clyde and Hebrides (CHFS) contract from October 2016 is a distinct possibility. Not only do RMT believe that lifeline Scottish ferry services can be exempted from the regulations, a host of academic and legal

opinion also believes that this is possible. Yet here we are again, with public sector operator CalMac bidding against Serco to keep hold of a lifeline ferries contract.

Finally there is the date on which the Scottish government plans to announce the winner of the CHFS bid: May 31 2016, some three weeks or so after the Scottish Parliamentary elections. Since postponing the tender in September 2012, the Scottish Government has had nearly three years (longer than any other transport procurement project in the UK) to plan for an announcement of the winning CHFS bid in advance of Holyrood elections on May 5.

The only explanation for this timing is that the Scottish Government wanted to keep the private sector and Serco in particular, interested in bidding for the 2016 CHFS contract.

It is, therefore, to the great credit of RMT members on CalMac that their industrial action on CalMac ferry services on June 26 this year and the subsequent negotiations with the company and the Scottish government secured protections for workers, passengers and the taxpayer from cuts to jobs, terms and conditions, service cuts and profiteering from lifeline Clyde and Hebrides ferry services.

If the Scottish government was serious at providing stable, value for money lifeline ferry services, they would have meaningful plans to change the governance at CalMac and CMAL, the public body responsible for vessel

procurement and upkeep of ports and harbours on the Scottish ferry network. Giving workers and passengers' seats on the CalMac and CMAL boards would provide a meaningful voice in the operation of public sector ferry services and strengthen the connection to island communities.

And let's just spend some time looking at Serco. By the yardstick of their own share price, they are failing – the share price having collapsed to £1.03 last month, from £6.74 in July 2013.

Yet since 2012, when the Scottish government privatised the Northern Isles contract, Serco Group plc have paid out over £145m in dividends to private shareholders. Why should passengers in remote communities, ferry and harbour workers, not to mention the taxpayer have to put up with public subsidy and fares being leeched from their essential services by Serco or any other private sector company?

As RMT and *The Daily Record's* excellent campaign slogan goes: Keep CalMac and Carry On. I hope that the Scottish government is listening and announces the winning bid for the CHFS contract before the Holyrood elections on May 5.

After all, the First Minister assured RMT delegates at the STUC conference in April that CalMac would not be privatised, so surely it's only a matter of Nicola Sturgeon keeping her word.

Elaine Smith MSP is the convenor of the RMT Group of MSPs in the Scottish Parliament

THANKS FROM THE LABOUR LEADER

Dear editor,

I'd like to thank RMT very much for their support in the campaign for the leadership of the Labour Party and the active participation of so many RMT members at many of the events we've organised all over the UK.

Fundamentally our campaign has been one of opposition to the politics of austerity and also to the kind of society we want to live in and the way the economy could be run.

I strongly support public ownership of the railways and have made this very clear at numerous events over the country and in

the consultative documents we've produced as a campaign.

I look forward to working with the union to oppose the Tory Trade Union bill and also for the kind of rail industry we want.

The whole campaign has been done by train travel all over Britain and I've met many RMT members on the trains or at the stations and I'm always impressed with their dedication, efficiency and good humour. Thanks again for your support.

All the best

Jeremy Corbyn MP
Islington North

MERSEYRAIL BADGE BAN



RMT has hit back at train company Merseyrail for trying to ban its staff from wearing official union badges.

RMT has distributed tens of thousands of “Keep the Guard on the Train – Keep the Train Safe” badges as part of a national campaign to defend guards jobs from a concerted effort, orchestrated by central government, to throw them off services and enforce a policy of Driver Only Operation.

The badges are worn by guards and other staff grades supporting the fight to defend

these safety critical jobs.

But now Merseyrail, one of the companies looking to ditch guards in the name of increasing private profits, has tried to enforce a blanket ban on staff wearing the badges.

With 207 guards facing the loss of their jobs as the company presses on with a proposed cull of 393 posts as part of its so-called “fleet modernisation” programme, RMT has written to Merseyrail demanding the withdrawal of this “authoritarian diktat” which has led to staff facing the ritual

humiliation of having managers demand that they remove their union badges.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was disgraceful that Merseyrail were attempting to ban staff from wearing official union badges that simply show support for a national RMT campaign to defend jobs and safety.

“That is a shocking attack on the basic principles of freedom of expression and smacks of politically-motivated censorship to try and shut down any objections to company policy.

“RMT is taking up this issue with Merseyrail and it follows warnings from our members that other train companies are also trying to bully staff into not wearing their official trade union badges.

“This move will not detract from RMT’s campaign to save the guards jobs one jot and in fact it will fuel staff anger as they see the lengths that the train companies are prepared to go to gag our members,” he said. ■

STRIKE VOTE OVER NORTHERN RAIL LEEDS DOWNGRADING

RMT is balloting staff working at Northern Rail’s Leeds Customer Relations Department for industrial action over an outrageous assault on existing terms and conditions.

The company intends to reduce the CO4 grades to CO2 whilst expecting the same if not more work from these staff. Similarly, CO5 grades whilst not being downgraded are expected to take on extra duties with no extra pay.

Northern Rail’s justification for this shock attack on their employees is that market rates for call centre work outside of the rail industry are 40 per cent lower – an excuse that the union has branded as nothing more

than a “race to the bottom” that will increase the company profits and line the pockets of their shareholders at the expense of staff.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was an appalling attack on hard working Northern Rail staff.

“It is clear that a ‘race to the bottom’ for call centre staff has been launched which the TOC’s clearly intend to roll out across the rail industry as they look to fatten their profits.

“RMT intends to fight these plans which are the thin end of a very long wedge and which would batter the working conditions and living standards of our members,” he said.

SWINDON AND THAMES VALLEY SIGNALLERS BATTLE SACKING

Signallers working out of the Swindon A and Thames Valley Centre took rock solid industrial action this month over the wholly unwarranted sacking of a colleague.

All Signalling members at Swindon A and Thames Valley Signalling Centre are refusing to work any overtime for two weeks this month.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash congratulated the members for the steadfast support for their colleague that the union believes has been unjustly sacked by Network Rail.

“The action has had a real impact with managers being

utilised in a desperate attempt to maintain a service but to the complete detriment of their own work.

“As part of the scabbing operation, during the most recent action at TVSC there have been on average three contingent managers rostered per shift.

“The result of this is that they are unable to train signallers for the new system they are looking to introduce at the end of this year which will have serious impact in the long term,” he said.

Despite efforts to resolve the matter, regrettably the company has so far refused to budge but the union remains available for talks. ■

NORTH RAIL FIGHT OVER JOBS AND SAFETY



Cumbria RMT Organiser Craig Johnston and Barrow-in-Furness and Northern Rail Company Council Rep Steve Nott prior to talks with Cumbria County Council on Rail North and the RMT campaign to Defend Rail Services, Safety and Jobs

Union targets Northern councillors as it distributes briefing on the Northern Rail and Transpennine Express Trains campaign to members

The union's campaign to put passengers before profit on Northern Rail and Transpennine Express Trains kicked off with a protests around the Tory Conference in Manchester, exposing the lies and hype around George Osbornes 'Northern Powerhouse' claims.

Promises of a Northern Power House is fast becoming a sick joke with a new warning that thousands of skilled rail jobs and passenger safety are under threat in the North.

Following the cancellation of rail electrification plans in the North, the union said that the latest threat to jobs comes in proposals for the new Northern and Transpennine Express rail franchises due to start in April shortly before the local elections in May.

The franchises will be jointly managed by a new body 'Rail North' - chaired by Sir Richard Leese - and comprising of

representatives of 29 northern councils / combined authorities and the Department for Transport.

In a letter to Rail North councillors the union has warned train guards will be axed from rail services across the north resulting in Driver Only Trains (D00) The letter states,

"at the moment railway regulations guarantee that passenger's in the North always have a Guard/Conductor on their train. In addition to the driver, passengers know there will always be a highly trained Guard to protect the safe operation of the train and deal with emergencies, such as fire, derailments and driver incapacity. The Guard also provides general assurance to passengers, ticket and travel advice and revenue protection. Astonishingly the proposed rail franchise agreements mean

passengers will no longer have this protection."

The union also warns that there is no guarantee that current ticket offices and station staffing will be retained on the new franchise.

Over 12,000 passengers have already written to protest against the cuts and in polling three quarters have expressed concern about safety on trains if guards are removed. In the letter the Union has called on Rail North Councillors to also oppose the cuts warning.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that according to Rail North's own estimates passenger demand for the North's railway will soar by 50 per cent over the next fifteen years which should mean more, much needed rail staff, not less.

"Rail North also needs to speak out against the region being last in the queue for decent rail services, new rolling

stock and electrification. Good, modern communication links are essential for passengers, the economy of the North and our local Communities.

"Councillors should also be supporting the opening of new routes and opposing the government's proposals to scrap the Transpennine Express services from Windermere, Barrow-in-Furness and Blackpool North.

"The union is sending out the message that it is not only passenger safety and service that will be affected, so will our economy and communities.

"Thousands of decent rail jobs will be under threat, deskilled and casualised. Cuts to rail jobs are always a false economy and makes a nonsense of the government's hot air about a 'Northern Power House'," he said.

PRIVATISING EUROPE'S RAILWAYS

Unions protest
in Luxembourg
against EU plans to
impose rail privatisation
across Europe

Trade unionists from across Europe picketed an EU Transport Ministers meeting in Luxembourg last month which adopted a 'common approach' to privatising railway networks across the continent.

The proposals are contained in the EU's the 4th Railway Package which was first unveiled over two years ago but has been held up due to division among member states.

Ministers agreed a so-called 'political pillar' of the rail package which demands independency of infrastructure managers and open access competition for domestic rail passenger services within the negotiations with the European Parliament.

The European Transport Federation handed over a petition to the meeting demanding an end to open access competition and compulsory tendering proposals for rail public passenger services across Europe.

"Don't make public transport workers and their jobs subject to competition, don't allow a race to the bottom on working conditions and ensure job security for workers by a compulsory transfer of staff in the case of change of operator.

"We do not want to see the railway sector turned into another opportunity for private actors to make profits" said ETF deputy general secretary Sabine Trier.

European transport commissioner Siim Kallas first unveiled the proposals designed to further breakup of national rail networks and hand them over to the private sector back in 2013.

The proposals demand a formal split between rail infrastructure and operations and mandatory competitive tendering procedures for public service contracts in order to abolish national publicly-owned monopolies operating rail services.

The commission had originally sought a full separation between the companies that own railway infrastructure and those that operate train services as has been imposed in Britain by the Tories using EU directives (see timeline).

This approach, known as "unbundling", has allowed Germany's Deutsche Bahn, Europe's largest state-owned operator and France's SNCF to massively expand into foreign rail markets but both countries are opposed to having this EU model imposed on themselves.

DB has expanded considerably in the rail freight market, with the purchase of the freight section of the Dutch railway company NS (now DB Schenker Rail Nederland), EWS in Britain and DSB goods in Denmark amongst others.

SNCF has also expanded through acquisitions, raising the spectre of virtual monopolies on rail freight replacing former

national public monopolies or a potential duopoly between SNCF and DB in most of Western Europe.

But Germany has long resisted attempts to break up DB supported by France's SNCF, the second-biggest operator, which has been separated from the infrastructure provider.

As a result many foreign state-backed companies now run three-quarters of Britain's rail franchises and use the profits paid for by passengers here to improve services and cut fares in their own countries.

In fact, a German Transport Ministry spokesperson has openly admitted such a strategy.

"We're skimming profits from the entire Deutsche Bahn operation and ensuring that it is anchored in our budget - that way we can make sure it is invested in the rail network here in Germany," he said.

RMT research also shows that Dutch state firm Abellio now operates a network in Britain ■



PROTEST RMT assistant general secretary Steve Hedley at the Luxembourg protest against rail privatisation

over two and a half times the size of the one in Netherlands.

In short our railways are being used as a cash-cow to run services across the rest of Europe.

TORY RAIL PLANS

Nearly 25 years ago the European Commission published its infamous rail directive 91/440/EEC which was used by John Major's Tory government in 1992 as a blueprint to break up and privatise British Rail.

The Commission's new rail package is designed to privatise remaining state-owned railways in Europe and switch investment from a 'social railway' to a corporate "single European railway area" with a priority on high-speed and trans-European rail freight to serve Europe's single market.

Its proposals are also remarkably similar to the McNulty report on the future of GB railways.

Page 68 of the McNulty report summary even points out there are no legal obstacles with implementation "provided due attention is given to conformance with EU and public law restrictions, EU directives,

particularly with regard to the separation of railway infrastructure and undertakings and EU procurement and State Aid constraints".

The full report goes on to say that "EU legislation is unlikely to allow the transfer of assets into a single nationalised public body".

McNulty, the Tory government and the EU share the business-led mania for 'liberalisation' and privatisation and agree on the need to jack up fares and attack jobs, pay and pensions to pay for it.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that railways were by their very nature monopolies and the only question that remained was whether such monopolies are publicly owned and controlled in the interests of society, or privatised to serve the interests of bankers and big business.

"The European Commission aims to fragment national rail systems to ensure permanent private ownership and bumper profits for investors achieved on the backs of cuts to safety, jobs and services, no-one has voted for that," he said.

EU TRANSPORT PRIVATISATION TIMELINE

1957 European Commission establishes plan for a common transport market run on the basis of "free competition" and the "principles of the market economy" as written into the Treaty of Rome.

1965 The Council of Ministers proposes a common strategy to "ensure the implementation of the principles of the market economy" in transport.

1972 Commission brings sea transport into the common strategy to operate on the "principles of the market economy".

1983 European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) lobby group www.ert.be draws up plans for Trans-European Transport Networks (TENs) strategic transport corridors complete with privatised railways.

1986 Single European Act enacted includes plans for an internal EU market for goods and a transport infrastructure (TENs) as the physical backbone of the internal market.

1991 EC introduces rail directive 91/440/EEC on July 29 1991 demanding the separation of infrastructure undertakings and operations, open access for international undertakings and the introduction of track access charges.

1993 Tory government privatises British Rail along the lines of the EU directive. The Railways Regulation 1992 introduced under Section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 in order to comply with the directive.

2001 First Railway Package demands 'liberalisation' of EU rail freight, implemented in Britain in November 2005

2004 Second Railway Package demands open access for all types of rail freight services by 2006 and establishes a European Railway Agency to oversee implementation of EU directives

2007 Third Railway Package demands 'liberalisation' of passenger rail services requiring open access in all EU member states by January 1 2010.

2009 Lisbon Treaty removes the national veto in over 60 new areas including transport, transferring decisions to Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) allowing member states to be outvoted.

2012 First Railway Package 'recast' to establish a single European railway area and outlaws member states from using the "holding model" to manage rail infrastructure and train operations within the same parent company

2013 European Commission publishes a Fourth Railway Package which requires the compulsory competitive tendering of all rail services.

2014 Member states are divided on the Package and when the proposals reached the European Parliament MEPs made amendments but without providing the legal right to renationalise.

2015 EU Transport Ministers meeting in Luxembourg on October 8 adopt a "common approach" on the political pillar of the Railway Package to keep the privatisation proposals alive. New draft texts will be presented to the European Parliament before the end of the year.

SAFETY CONCERNS 15 YEARS ON FROM HATFIELD DISASTER



Fifteen years after the crash union has serious safety concerns around the planning and delivery of track maintenance

Fifteen years on from the Hatfield rail disaster RMT has serious safety concerns around the planning and delivery of rail maintenance through the Planning and Delivery of Work and Safe Work Leader (PDSW/SWL) programme.

On October 17 2000 a train travelling from Kings Cross to Leeds derailed just south of Hatfield station, killing four passengers and injuring over 70 people.

The train, travelling just under line speed at 115 mph, derailed after the left hand rail suffered a catastrophic failure breaking into 300 parts.

The cause of the crash eventually forced rail maintenance back into the public sector.

But RMT general secretary Mick Cash warned that the new

Safe Work Leader infrastructure maintenance system had created chaos and a fog of confusion on site.

“RMT has requested that Network Rail withdraw the system rolled out in the East Midlands and work with the union to develop a safe programme we can all support.

“The picture we are getting from reps is one of ‘this is getting dangerous and we’d be safer under the old system’.

“Network Rail needs to take this message seriously otherwise RMT will have to resort to industrial action to get the current dangerous programme halted,” he said.

HATFIELD DISASTER

The rail that broke at Hatfield had been subjected to excessive stresses resulting in ‘rolling

contact fatigue’ also known as ‘gauge corner cracking’.

This known risk was identified as a cause of the derailment and over 1,200 speed-restrictions were imposed resulting in massive delays for both passenger and freight services for over a year.

There also needed to be a huge programme of rail replacement after the HSE investigation uncovered severe problems with Balfour Beatty’s management of the infrastructure which Railtrack knew of.

There were two significant developments as a result of the accident, firstly Railtrack was placed into administration and eventually Network Rail took over control of the railway infrastructure. Secondly, following a long RMT

campaign, Network Rail took maintenance infrastructure back in-house.

CHANGES AND PROBLEMS

Much has changed and much of it for the better, particularly in the area of health and safety which has led to advances in collaborative working.

Since 2011 RMT has had six elected health and safety reps on full time release working jointly with the company to improve safety culture, embed a new health and safety procedure agreement and support a new set of Area health and safety reps in the workplace.

There have also been improvements following on from the introduction of the Life Saving Rules and the jointly agreed Fair Culture principles. This level of health and safety

representation is a major achievement for the union and its members.

This new way of working is being spread to other organisations where the union has representation, including among sub-contractors.

However the union still encounters serious issues with the way safety is managed. There are still issues over consultation in some areas. Network Rail management has to prioritise two separate messages – “safety is our number one priority” against “every delay minute costs us” and the second message tends to over-rule the first.

Network Rail’s in-house magazine recently reported on their “check before you travel” campaign which concentrates on keeping the railway moving without once mentioning safety.

The programme has the aim of improving workforce safety when working on or near the line by having a single

controlling mind responsible for the task and for safety of the workforce engaged in the task. RMT has very carefully considered the aims of the programme and supported the principle aim of improving safety.

However it has concerns over how the programme was to be implemented. At the very beginning RMT realised that with such a major change to the way of working the programme would depend on its implementation in the field.

To this end RMT has urged the company to do extensive national trials which would then allow learning from experience lessons to be integrated into the programme.

Despite this Network Rail chose to ignore the union and went for a route-based roll-out concentrating on the East Midlands Route. Following the national consultation and area consultation SWL was introduced in East Midlands.

There have been risks and hazards throughout the programme right from the beginning. Indeed if it wasn’t for RMT reps working with management the whole programme would have collapsed long ago.

RMT has concerns over the software system Proscient, resourcing, availability, numbers and workloads of planners – there are simply not enough of them. Those that exist are overworked and stressed.

The system relies on working closely together with a Planner and an SWL and it’s not happening due to work loads and time restraints. Recently one rep sat down with 20 SWL’s and only one had had a conversation with a planner in setting up a safe system and a safe plan.

RMT has reports of detailed safety incidents caused as a direct result of the implementation of SWL in the East Midlands area – in a safe

guarded green zone a welding gang accessed the track whilst it was still live and open and placed a trolley of welding materials on the track.

A grinding team who could not get a SWL permit, had their work re-graded to that of a ‘fault’ and where told to continue and write a SWL out there and then. It seems that managements default position if there is no SWL plan is treat it as a fault or an emergency and tell staff to get on with it.

This sends serious mixed messages on safety and causes confusion and there are instances where staff are saying they want nothing more to do with SWL as it is undermining safety standards.

RMT has called on both the ORR and RSSB to step in and halt the programme. Meetings are being held with senior management so watch this space.



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A VIEW FROM THE P-WAY

DANGER SILICA DUST

Track worker John Pencott outlines the dangers of silica dust, which kills around 800 people each year, and asks workers to get help if affected

After working as a coal miner before the Tories shut down the pits, I started work on High Output track renewals in 2006.

I had previously worked for various agencies on renewals and I noticed then that Ballast created as much if not more dust than any coal face.

But high output was something else and very little was done to protect workers, dust masks were available sometimes, but the wearing of

them was not compulsory. If a dust cloud appeared then workers would put a t-shirt over their nose to act as a filter.

It has been my mission, along with other RMT safety reps, to improve working conditions throughout the rail industry. So what is the problem?

Since 2005 Network Rail has used contractors to operate the high output work, private companies such as

Babcock/Sweitlesky, Amey Colas, and Fastline Jarvis. These companies have a good appetite for profit but pay very little attention to the protection of workers from dust.

Ballast dust has been a major issue right back to the days of British Rail. Men working in gangs operated wagons tipping ballast onto the track and more recently with auto-hoppers diggers, dozers and every other piece of plant that moves

ballast, usually picking it up and dropping it several times.

In 2012, the HSE published new independent research, led by Dr Lesley Ruston of Imperial College London, into the burden of occupational cancers in the UK caused by workplace exposure. Based on the research, HSE estimates that almost 800 deaths a year are caused from occupational silica exposure.

According to the ORR Latest report Better Health is

Happening, instances of silica-related ill health in the rail industry are currently higher than that of other construction industries.

One member was employed in 2006 with a hereditary kidney disease, which was fully disclosed when he gained employment. He was placed into work with some of the dustiest conditions in the industry. Shockingly, by 2008 he was on dialysis, worst still, by 2010 he had suffered a heart attack and his kidneys had deteriorated so badly that he underwent a kidney transplant.

His health has suffered terribly and to date no suitable assessment of risk to his health and wellbeing has been carried out. I feel that his ill health was due to the fact he was allowed to work in such hazardous conditions, with little thought of his pre-disclosed condition, which contributed hugely to the accelerated kidney failure.

Trade unions have recognised this hazard and RMT, which represents the majority of workers exposed to dust, has challenged the rail industry to make improvements.

Every RMT hazard survey has identified silica dust as the most concerning hazard so ask yourself as the reader could this be me, are you being exposed to dust in your workplace?

SILICOSIS

Silicosis is the oldest known industrial disease; it is believed that the Egyptians suffered from this. Bernardino Ramazzini, an Italian doctor first noticed in 1705 that the lungs of stonemasons and miners contained a substance that looked like sand. The name silicosis was first used by the prosecutor Achille Visconti in 1870 and it comes from the Latin term 'Silex' which means 'Flint'.

Silicosis causes harm by the prolonged breathing of crystalline silica dust, fine particles deposited in the lungs cause thickening and scarring of the lung tissue. Crystalline silica exposure has also been linked to lung cancer. A worker may

develop any of the following three types of silicosis, depending on the concentrations of silica dust and the duration of exposure:

- Chronic silicosis - develops after 10 or more years of exposure to crystalline silica at relatively low concentrations.
- Accelerated silicosis - develops 5 to 10 years after initial exposure to crystalline silica at high concentrations.
- Acute silicosis - symptoms develop anywhere from a few weeks to 4-5 years after exposure to very high concentrations of crystalline silica.

Initially, workers with silicosis may have no symptoms. However, as the disease progresses a worker may experience:

- Shortness of breath
- Severe cough
- Weakness

These symptoms can worsen over time and lead to death.

LUNG AND OTHER CANCERS

The HSE has accepted that silica exposure is responsible for several hundred lung cancer deaths a year in the UK. Silica-related lung cancer is a government recognised industrial disease. The International Agency for Research on Cancer noted crystalline silica in the form of quartz or cristobalite dust is carcinogenic to humans.

OTHER RESPIRATORY DISEASES

The HSE, OSHA and other regulatory agencies accept silica exposure can cause COPD, reduced lung function with emphysema, or chronic bronchitis being diagnosed.

RENAL DISEASE

There is a direct link between silica exposure and kidney disease. OSHA suggests that there is evidence that silica exposure increases the risk of rheumatoid arthritis.

FIVE POINT PLAN

There is a five point improvement plan that will not

solve every issue but it will save lives and help prevent any further risk of ill health from this specific hazard.

The five steps of the plan are not in any particular order, each step holds as much importance as the other, when linked together will create a safer workplace throughout the whole rail industry.

1) Dust Monitoring

Dust monitoring is an underpinning requirement in calculating (WEL) it is a requirement under the (COSHH Regulation 10). A comprehensive study is required over at least three months but preferably a 12-month sampling exercise to capture every machine, every High Output Operational Base (HOOB), inside and outside the cabs, both production workers and machine operators.

2) Health Surveillance

Where an employee is exposed to or liable to be exposed to a substance hazardous to health the employee must be put under health surveillance (COSHH Regulation 11). RMT would like to see an annual dust health screening programme started immediately.

3) Education

We wish to see a rail Industry-led education programme to be developed that informs employees of the harm that breathing in dust can cause and explaining what silicosis is and how it can be prevented.

4) Welfare Provision

Network Rail employees working in dusty conditions should have an area that workers can have food and drinks not exposed to ballast dust whilst taking their allocated meal breaks, changing and cleaning facilities and disposable Hi-Visibility clothing that can be removed, before removing RPE.

5) Dust Suppression

Apart from the High Output

regulators, machines have no form of dust suppression fitted to them. Dust suppression is an engineering control measure and should be the secondary level in the hierarchy of control to elimination.

Dust masks and PPE should only be used as a temporary control measure until safety can be engineered into our machines; disappointingly the issue has been highlighted over ten years with no positive changes made. The only line of protection remains a dust mask.

SUMMARY

High output has been in operation for around ten years. It is made up of six machines for ballast cleaning systems that remove and replace old worn out ballast and two re-railing machines that replace track and sleepers, included with them are two under-cutter machines that put the track back into the correct specified position. This process produces an unacceptable amount of silica dust.

The five point plan is based around the current requirements in the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health regulations 2002. I think that Network Rail and the other contract companies are in a position to go much further by putting in place timescales for improvements and aiming to improve minimum standards.

If you or any of your have mates are suffering breathing problems that you feel maybe related to working in an environment that was dusty or still is dusty then please contact me (see below) or contact your local rep so the union can take steps to make improvements or put you in touch with the legal department to support you.

John Pencott
phone: 07866319504

Email:
john@johnpencott.orangehome.co.uk

FIGHTING FOR A FAIR SETTLEMENT IN THE NORTH SEA

The union is working hard to reduce the impact on workers in all sectors of the North Sea from the collapse in oil prices over the last year to \$48 per barrel, having averaged nearly \$100 for the previous three years.

Pay cuts, shift increases, ending all bonus schemes and large scale redundancies are resulting from the policies of oil and gas companies who are squeezing the workforce on North Sea installations and the supply chain for every last penny.

Safety standards are also coming under pressure, as the over powerful oil industry puts politicians to work in government on its behalf.

RMT members know better than anyone the effect that these policies are having on terms and conditions on installations, as well as on contracts in drilling, diving and offshore supply.

In all sectors, thousands of workers have had extended

shifts and increased working hours imposed on them. And that is amongst those who have been fortunate enough to keep their jobs, with an estimated 65,000 jobs having been lost in the offshore sector and supply chain since August 2014. Over 35,000 jobs have also gone in the Norwegian sector and supply chain.

However, there are also exploitative forces at work across the industry and supply chain, and they are using the crisis created by persistently low oil prices to attack jobs, terms and conditions and basic employment rights.

For example, the damaging impact of flags of convenience (FoC) across the shipping industry is being acutely felt amongst seafarers working in offshore supply.

The Norwegian Second Register and FoC offshore supply vessels are using low cost crewing models to undercut companies like Gulfmark, who claim UK seafarers are too

expensive to employ and are recruiting non-UK seafarers on monthly rates of pay below the minimum set by the ITF, in contravention of the Maritime Labour Convention.

Offshore divers are also at the sharp end of the ruthless pressure global oil companies are putting on their contractors in the North Sea. Along with severe pay cuts and shift increases, cheap labour is also being imported, as employers plead 'high cost' whenever confronted with the consequences of their actions by a unionised membership.

The union will continue to pursue all industrial and political avenues in blocking the outrageous attacks on members across the offshore industry and the wider supply chain, including any lessons we can learn from our brothers and sisters in the Norwegian sector.

The Living Wage and the principles of Fair Work must be upheld in the offshore industry if there are to be enforceable

minimum standards that protect skills and employment for UK workers in the sector.

The UK Government retains responsibility for offshore energy policy in the North Sea and the ineffective and pro-oil company nature of George Osborne's policies to date partly explain why offshore workers across the sector continue to bear the brunt of the low oil price.

There are lessons here that need to be learned by all offshore trade unions in the UK and the essential concept of solidarity must prevail if we are to take effective action to stop the decimation of the industry that is underway.

Now, more than ever, offshore and supply chain workers need trade unions to negotiate directly with the oil companies to set terms and conditions that cannot be retrospectively torn up. This is what happens in the Norwegian sector and the union should not settle for anything less. ■

NEW DECK RATING APPRENTICESHIPS AGREED

The government has accepted the standard and assessment plan for a new Able Seafarer (Deck) Rating Apprenticeship scheme.

This new apprenticeship was agreed through the Maritime Trailblazer Working Group which includes RMT, Nautilus, the maritime colleges, the MNTB and employers DFDS, P&O, RFA, James Fisher, Carnival and Princess Cruises.

The government has capped public funding for each Able Seafarer Deck Rating Apprentice at £6,000 which would cover around a quarter of the total

training costs.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd welcomed this progress in the union's campaign to halt the fall in the number of UK ratings working in merchant shipping.

"Apprenticeships are only one part of that campaign but it will help new ratings to get trained up and employed.

"We're working on apprenticeships for engine, catering and on-board services ratings and expect these to follow next year.

"This is now a real test of the shipping industry's long term

commitment to UK ratings and we need to see more commitment to ratings apprenticeships from other companies like Stena which have been conspicuous through their absence from the process of designing ratings apprenticeships," he said.

The number of UK deck ratings declined by six per cent between 2013 and 2014 to just 3,020 so it is imperative that UK shipping companies, particularly in the domestic ferry sector, take up this new apprenticeship.

"Despite the government's predictable ignorance of the role

trade unions and maritime colleges play in developing and agreeing the deck rating apprenticeship, RMT will continue to contribute to the development of standards and assessment plans for apprentice ratings in engine, catering and on-board services," Steve said.

The new Ratings Apprenticeships designed by the Trailblazer Working Group will replace the previous maritime apprenticeships launched by the Merchant Navy Training Board in 2011. ■



KEEP CALMAC AND CARRY ON

As every member in Scotland gets a campaign postcard with this magazine, Mick Cash explains why CalMac should be in the public sector

If the current timetable runs its course we are almost a year away from a potential privatisation of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services currently operated within the public sector by Caledonian MacBrayne.

RMT has made its position clear – any privatisation of CalMac would be a wholesale betrayal of the Scottish people and would fly in the face of Scottish National Party claims to stand shoulder to shoulder with working people against the greed and exploitation of the big money-grabbing corporations.

The way that the proposed timetable falls means that an announcement on the future of these crucial services will fall just after the Scottish Parliamentary elections on May 5 next year.

However, that timetable is not cast in stone and RMT believes that it should be redrawn so that the formal announcement is made before polling day, allowing Scottish

voters to have an opportunity to cast judgement on the Government's record on ferries policy.

There is no excuse for delaying the announcement other than for trying to prevent the future of CalMac from being a major election issue.

RMT also intends to deal head on with the claims from the Scottish Transport Minister that a hiving off of CalMac to Serco or some similar outfit is "not privatisation". Of course it is!

If a private company is allowed to take over a public service for profit that it is privatisation whether it is on our railways, in our hospitals or on our ferry services.

Attempts to spin your way out of that one are frankly ludicrous and will fool no one.

The bidder currently in the frame to take over if the decision is taken to privatise is a company called Serco and their name should fill everyone concerned about the future of the CalMac services with horror.

This is a company with form as long as your arm when it comes to failing in public services, who got caught out electronically tagging prisoners who were dead, were lumped with heavy-duty fines and banned from bidding for Westminster contracts.

They are not fit to be running Scotland's ferry services and the recent collapse in Serco's share price will mean that they will push even harder for a dividend arrangement in the CHFS contract that allows them to squeeze the maximum profit from taxpayer subsidy and passenger fares.

RMT is in no doubt whatsoever that CalMac should be awarded the contract so that lifeline services and jobs stay in the public sector.

Privatisation would be a shocking waste. Public investment in Scottish ferries and infrastructure will exceed £400 million in the coming years and this should benefit publicly operated lifeline ferry services not greedy vultures

from the private sector.

CalMac has also run CHFS routes at a profit in every year of the current contract. Around £8.42 million has been paid back to the Scottish government in dividends or subsidy clawback since 2008-09.

If the contract is privatised and handed to Serco, all dividends would be taken out of the Scottish ferry industry and straight into the pockets of Serco's international portfolio of private shareholders.

CalMac provides crucial services to the Scottish people but the workforce are also active and respected members of their local communities, a fact reflected in the overwhelming support we enjoyed when we took the difficult to strike earlier this year. We should be proud that CalMac provides decent jobs in areas that are under constant economic pressure.

The threat to our future must be lifted and RMT welcomes the support of the Daily Record as our fight continues.



HELPING RAILWAY PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY



The Railway Benevolent Fund offers free advice and financial support for current and former railway people in times of need



The Railway Benevolent Fund (RBF) exists to help current and former railway workers and their families in times of need.

Help has traditionally been cash grants for items ranging from fridges and funerals to stair lifts and essential debt such as housing, mortgages and rent etc.

The mission statement states that the 'RBF aims to improve the quality of life for current and former railway people in the UK through the provision of customised support'.

The charity offers services to current and former railway workers and their families who face financial difficulties through illness, injury, bereavement and adversity.

Now over 150 years old the RBF has been through a modernisation programme to bring its services in line with current need.

The good news is the services are being used, but RBF believes there is still unmet need.

RBF's new advisory services, which were introduced nationwide last month following four months of trials in SWT and Merseyrail, have been used every working day since trials began in June.

The new services offer information, advice and support on a wide range of topics including benefits, debt, employment, housing, relationships and wellbeing. This sits along the side of the traditional grant giving.

New partnerships have been formed with Manchester's Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and national charity Turn2Us for specialist advice.

The result of the changes – the biggest in decades according to chairman Tim Shoveller – is that people are being encouraged successfully to seek advice before their personal situation becomes critical.

Callers to RBF in need of specialist advice may be referred to CAB. RBF is also using the Turn2Us benefits calculator, which can be found on their website www.railwaybenefitfund.org.uk. It helps people check on line their welfare entitlement if they are, for example, unemployed, retired, ill, disabled or caring for someone.

"The overall idea is to offer assistance in a wider variety of forms that can be specifically tailored to an individual's situation.

"In times of need and hardship it is difficult to look at your own situation clearly. Having someone objective to talk to helps focus on the issues and makes sure things are dealt with properly.

"The trials demonstrated clearly that these new services do indeed have a positive effect on a person's situation. They are relevant and effective and completely justify the work we have done so far.

"RBF is aiming to become the preferred destination for current and former railway workers looking for support and advice. A one-stop-shop where those in need can call up and either receive direct assistance or be referred to a partnering organisation that may be more specialised in certain areas," Tim said.

Tim explained that the RBF's own offices and its telephone helpline should be the first point of contact for any supported needed ranging from welfare to caring for elderly parents. Information and advice will come initially from the charity, which can assist with benefit calculations, grants search and general advice.

Simmy Akhtar, RBF's services

manager, added that analysis of the type of information requested demonstrated clearly that there is need within the current generation of railway workers.

"There is a common misconception that RBF is there for only retired people.

"That's never been true and the increasing demand from active workers proves it.

"The modernisation of RBF is becoming established and we have made good progress during 2015 and I thank all those who have backed us with funds and practical support. Long may that continue – we can only help others if the industry helps us," she said.

The charity offers financial backing, practical help and wide ranging advice all in the strictest confidence. The RBF relies on YOUR support to help fellow colleagues and their families in time of need. In the future that person could be you! You can help by donating a set amount each week from your salary (minimum £1 per week), fundraising or making a one off donation.

Ronnie Hardman (top), a station retailer at Merseyrail Electrics for 38 years, became

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involved with the RBF a few years ago when as a staff supporter he became aware of some of the hardships suffered by his fellow workers due to various life changing events such as bereavements, long term illness and family breakdowns resulting from such events.

Ronnie became active in the promotion of the RBF within the Merseyrail network with the support of the HR director at Merseyrail Jane English who is a board director with the charity. As a result donations from salaries have increased significantly and the organisation is constantly looking at fundraising opportunities and has an active Merseyside committee.

At the recent station grades conference in Cardiff Ronnie was given the opportunity to speak to delegates about the RBF and was surprised to discover how little if anything members knew about the charity.

The invaluable assistance offered by the charity can be seen in the testimonials from people who have benefited from the charity on the RBF website www.railwaybenefitfund.org.uk.

Please take the opportunity to look at the work of the charity, suggest fundraising to your local branch, or donate to the fund in order that it can continue to support our railway colleagues. Donations no matter how small are greatly appreciated and needed more than ever.

If any of the branches would like further information Ronnie is happy to be contacted on 07595270699.

How to get help

FIRST

Check out the charity's website for factsheets and other information

www.railwaybenefitfund.org.uk

THEN

Call the RBF office on 01270 251316 or email welfare@railwaybenefitfund.org.uk

President's column



LET THEM IN

Recently I attended a meeting titled 'Let Them In' organised by Lambeth Trades Council to address the issues of refugees and what we can do to help them.

There were various speakers from trade unions and support groups. Before I spoke, I looked up The Geneva Convention's definition of refugees, and I make no apologies for quoting it in full:-

"a person who is outside their home country of citizenship because they have well founded grounds for fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, and is unable to obtain sanctuary from their home country or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country; or in the case of not having a nationality and being outside their country of former habitual residence as a result of such event, is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to their country of former habitual residence".

There are other parts to it, but the thing that stands out to me is the continual use of the word fear. The fear that they are going through is unimaginable to us secure in our relatively free society.

What type of fear drives people to leave their homes, and cross dangerous terrains, with horrific dangers, to arrive in a country that is totally alien to them? The answer is torture, persecution, rape, discrimination, and the most prevalent danger of them all, war.

Wars that have very little to do with them over issues that ordinary people have no conception of that see the terrifying bombing of their homes and villages.

I moan about the noise on November 5, people jump at the sound of a car backfiring.

But can you imagine the noise of modern bombs going off, so called Earth busters? Bombs going off

with no warning? Such is modern warfare, people suffering terribly, while inevitably arms manufacturers make massive profits.

Over the years there have been many refugees. There have been refugees from Tsarist terror in Russia, Jews fleeing persecution, refugees from the Vietnam War and, of course, refugees from Palestine and the Middle East. On and on it goes, and governments just sit there doing as little as possible or paying lip service to helping.

There are nearly twenty million refugees worldwide today. Their situation is desperate. We should be opening our arms to all of them. There is room, there are reckoned to be over five million houses empty across Europe.

We could also occupy the houses of the uber rich, the people who pay obscene prices for houses but never live in them. They just buy them with a hope to selling on at enormous profits.

The far-right peddles scare stories saying that terrorists will come over under cover of being refugees. What about the terrorists, or western governments as they are better known, who have bombed hundreds of thousands of innocent citizens in the name of "freedom"? They are the root cause of the problem.

There are only four thousand refugees in Calais, terrified people who are taking desperate risks, to help themselves and their children.

We should welcome our fellow members of the human family with open arms and we should do it now. I was going to say they are the same as us, but they're not, they are people who have suffered beyond anything that we'd ever known. Suffering from austerity here is terrible, but nothing to what they are going through 24 hours a day, every day of their lives.

Peter Pinkney

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Dave Meredith,
Gerry Moy,
Mick Cash and
Adrian Fricker

TSA
Track Safety Alliance

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONTRACT WITH BABCOCK

RMT general secretary Mick Cash recently signed a new health and safety contract with Babcock Rail.

For a number of years RMT has been strengthening its level of health and safety representation across all sectors where the union has members.

An agreement was reached with Babcock in 2013 to have key health and safety representatives on full-time

release and for an elected full-time health and safety representative to work with management to improve health and safety for front line workers, a post filled by Dave Meredith.

The full-time union health and safety post has the responsibility for facilitating co-operative working between 20 health and safety representatives and the

company in the development of better health and safety in the promotion of best practice in worker protection and safety.

In a ceremony at Unity House Mick Cash and Babcock Rail's director of infrastructure Gerry Moy signed the document which recognises that employers and trade unions working together can have many benefits for both the company and front line workers.

The signing ceremony was also attended by Adrian Fricker, representing the Track Safety Alliance (TSA).

Through the health and safety contract, the union and the company are adopting a collaborative approach in improving health and safety culture within the company and its supply chain.

HARSCO RAIL RECOGNITION DEAL

RMT representatives signed off a sole recognition agreement with senior Harsco Rail management last month.

RMT lead officer Sean McGowan for Harsco Rail gave special praise to RMT reps within Harsco Rail.

"This sole recognition agreement between our two organisations is a testament to the steadfast loyalty, patience and hard work of our RMT reps who have worked hard for the benefit of RMT members within the company.

"Our representatives; Maurice Payne, Gary Llewellyn, Tony Fuller and Stewart Clarke and Martyn Walker who unfortunately could not attend the signing are an absolute credit to the union and its membership.

"It's fair to give credit and recognition to the management team at Harsco Rail.

"Our collaborative method of amicably working together has produced good industrial relations thus far and long may that continue," he said. ■



Harsco Head of environment, health and safety Wayne Clay, RMT rep Maurice Payne, Harsco operations director Dave Marsh, RMT lead officer for Harsco Rail Sean McGowan, Harsco managing director Mark Emmerson, Harsco HR advisor UK Andrea Greensmith, RMT rep Gary Llewellyn and RMT rep Tony Fuller

STAND UP YOU DIGGERS ALL!

EC member Steve Shaw reports from the annual festival in Wigan celebrating the life of the Diggers' leader Gerrard Winstanley

RMT had a stall at the fifth annual Diggers festival in Wigan last month which attracted as many as 5,000, a far cry from the 80 to 100 socialists that attended the first.

This year's event included live bands, trade union stalls, food stalls selling local delicacies such as 'Corbyn's Hot-Pot' and real ales with local brews.

The founder of this festival is Wigan socialist Stephen Hall, an active member of Wigan Trades Council. He decided a number of years ago to research Gerrard Winstanley after noticing a Wigan building had been adequately named 'Gerrard Winstanley House'.

He found out that Winstanley was born in Wigan and that he was the Inspirational leader of the 17th century diggers movement, whose members were also known as the 'True Levellers'.

Stephen lays claim that Wigan is the true home of socialism since discovering that Winstanley was the first Leader of a political movement to represent the poor and those without property, who also argued for the equality of men and women.

Winstanley's politics were driven by his own experiences. In 1630, aged 21 years old, he moved to London. He did well at first, but as a result of the abuse of power by both the King and Parliament and then the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642, Winstanley saw his business ruined and in 1643 became bankrupt.

His father-in-law helped him



Wigan Labour MP and RMT Parliamentary Group member and now shadow minister Lisa Nandy visits the RMT Stall at Wigan Diggers Festival

move to Cobham in Surrey, where he initially worked as a cowherd. By the time of the defeat of the Royalist side and King Charles' execution in January 1649, Winstanley and a group of others in a similar situation got together to represent the voice of the common people, especially the property-less poor.

Their name 'Diggers' came from their belief that the land should be available to every person to dig and sow, so that everyone, rich or poor, could live, grow and eat by the sweat of their own brows, for according to them where Winstanley's famous quote states "the earth was made to be

a common treasury for all".

The whole spirit of this festival has brought the people of Wigan together in a town that is famous for its links to the trade union movement.

Since the Hovis dispute in Wigan two years ago, led by the Bakers' Union, the town has gone back to basics with an attitude that if local employers want to wipe out hard fought pay and conditions then the workers of Wigan will take them on. Three weeks of solid strike action resulted in the company agreeing not to employ staff on zero hour contracts.

Wigan is a mining town decimated by Thatcher's assault on the industry. It is also the



home town of actress Maxine Peake, a supporter of Jeremy Corbyn and a strong advocate for equal rights.

Joe Gormley former NUM president, also was born and lived in Wigan, led the famous 1972 miner's strike resulting in a whopping 21 per cent pay rise for the miners moving them to the top of the industrial wage league. So see you next year at the annual Diggers festival. ■



CORBYN WOWS BURSTON

Over 3,000 people flocked to the annual Burston Strike Rally last month to hear Labour leadership contender Jeremy Corbyn speak just days before he took the reins of the party.

The North Islington MP, who began the contest as the outsider, won the leadership race with 60 per cent of the vote, beating frontbenchers Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper and Liz Kendall after a three-month campaign.

Mr Corbyn said that he was always pleased to speak at the rally which celebrates the longest strike in history.

In 1914 children marched out of their school when their much-loved teachers, Tom and Kitty Higdon, were sacked on trumped up charges because of their support for the farm workers' union.

The Higdon's continued to educate children right up to 1939 despite opposition from landowners until Tom Higdon died 25 years after the strike began.

"This is showing respect for the memory of the way the Higdons stood up for working class children and we should remember many of our rights and liberties were won by people who made brave stances in the past.

"This is a massive educational exercise today and what fun it is too," he said after completing the march retracing the steps of the route the children took – known today as the Candlestick – over one hundred years ago.

Mr Corbyn paid tribute to other labour movement leaders that had spoken at the event in

previous years including Tony Benn, Bob Crow and Joan Maynard.

He went on to thank the trade union movement for their support in his leadership campaign

"There have been huge attendances wherever we go and that's because people are buoyed up by the idea that there is optimism about, we can do things differently, we don't have to bequeath to the next generation greater poverty than this generation has.

"We need to democratise our party and the movement in order to reinvigorate ourselves for the struggles ahead.

"We need to send out the message there is an alternative to endless monetarism that is destroying our society," he said.

He said that it was the reckless banks that had created the crisis yet poor people were being expected to pay for it.

"We say no more austerity, no more PFIs, no to the arms trade and no to an aggressive foreign policy.

"We need a different agenda that the 36 per cent that didn't vote in the last election can be galvanised to support," he said.



CARDIFF RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR RMT PRESIDENT	WISHAW AND MOTHERWELL BRANCH SUPPORT JIM GRAY FOR PRESIDENT	BRIDGEND, LLANTRISANT BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT	NEASDEN BRANCH NOMINATES GLENROY WATSON FOR THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT
CARDIFF NO7 BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	AYR BRANCH NOMINATES JIM GRAY FOR PRESIDENT	LONDON AND ORIENT ENGINEERING BRANCH NOMINATES DEL MARR FOR PRESIDENT	EIRE SHIPPING BRANCH SUPPORTS TONY LLOYD FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES FOR SHIPPING	BRISTOL BRANCH SUPPORTS CHRIS DAVIDSON FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES
PADDINGTON NO1 NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	LIVERPOOL 5 BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	LONDON ANGLIA AND MIDLAND TRANSPORT BRANCH NOMINATES DERRICK MARR FOR PRESIDENT	EIRE SHIPPING BRANCH SUPPORTS PETER HALL FOR ASSISTANT NATIONAL SECRETARY	BRISTOL BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT
HEATHROW EXPRESS NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	OFFSHORE ENERGY BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	DONCASTER BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT	MANCHESTER SHIPPING BRANCH SUPPORTS PETER HALL FOR ASSISTANT NATIONAL SECRETARY	RYDE IOW BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT
EUROPEAN PASSENGER SERVICES NOMINATES GLENROY WATSON FOR PRESIDENT	FELTHAM BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT	WATERLOO BRANCH NOMINATES GLENROY WATSON FOR THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT	SURREY AND HANTS BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT
NORTH EAST SHIPPING OFFSHORE BRANCH SUPPORTS TONY LLOYD FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES FOR SHIPPING	BRIDGEND, LLANTRISANT BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE SHAW FOR RMT PRESIDENT	SOUTHALL, EALING AND SLOUGH BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT	FINSBURY PARK NOMINATES GLENROY WATSON FOR THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT	PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT
MANCHESTER SHIPPING BRANCH SUPPORT TONY LLOYD FOR COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES FOR SHIPPING	CENTRAL & NORTH MERSEY BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE SHAW FOR RMT PRESIDENT	CENTRAL LINE WEST BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT	EXETER RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES GLENROY WATSON FOR THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT	DOVER DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT
GLASGOW SHIPPING BRANCH SUPPORT JIM GRAY FOR PRESIDENT	DERBY RAIL & ENGINEERING BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE SHAW FOR RMT PRESIDENT	CAMBORNE BUS BRANCH SUPPORTS SEAN HOYLE FOR THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT	LU ENGINEERING BRANCH NOMINATES GLENROY WATSON FOR THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT	BIRMINGHAM ENGINEERING BRANCH SUPPORT STEVE SHAW FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

WARRINGTON AND DISTRICT BRANCH SUPPORT STEVE SHAW FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT	SOUTH HANTS AND EASTLEIGH WORKSHOPS NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	NORTH CLYDE BRANCH NOMINATES JIM GRAY FOR PRESIDENT	FELTHAM BRANCH SUPPORT SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	MORDEN & OVAL BRANCH SUPPORTS GLENROY WATSON FOR PRESIDENT
EAST LONDON RAIL BRANCH NOMINATE DERRICK MARR FOR PRESIDENT	WIGAN BRANCH NOMINATE STEVE SHAW FOR PRESIDENT	BURTON ON TRENT NO1 BRANCH NOMINATES DEL MARR FOR PRESIDENT	NOTT'S AND DERBY'S BUS BRANCH SUPPORT SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES SHIPPING BRANCH SUPPORT MARK CARDEN FOR ASSISTANT NATIONAL SECRETARY
READING BRANCH NOMINATE DERRICK MARR FOR PRESIDENT	PERTH NO1 BRANCH NOMINATE STEVE SHAW FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT	NORTH THAMES BRANCH NOMINATES DEL MARR FOR PRESIDENT	PORTSMOUTH BRANCH SUPPORT SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	
NORWICH BRANCH NOMINATE DERRICK MARR FOR PRESIDENT	NORTH STAFFS BRANCH NOMINATE STEVE SHAW FOR PRESIDENT	LINCOLNSHIRE ROADCAR BRANCH SUPPORTING DAVE GOTT FOR PRESIDENT	EUSTON NO.1 BRANCH NOMINATES DEL MARR FOR PRESIDENT	
GREAT NORTHERN RAIL BRANCH NOMINATE DERRICK MARR FOR PRESIDENT	BIRMINGHAM RAIL BRANCH NOMINATE STEVE SHAW FOR PRESIDENT	WIMBLEDON BRANCH SUPPORT SEAN HOYLE FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT	DORSET RAIL BRANCH N NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT PRESIDENT	
WILLESDEN RAIL BRANCH NOMINATE DERRICK MARR FOR PRESIDENT	DOVER DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT	NEWPORT IOW NO2 BRANCH SUPPORT SEAN HOYLE FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT	WALTHAM CROSS BRANCH SUPPORTS DEL MARR FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT	
EAST KENT BRANCH NOMINATE DERRICK MARR FOR PRESIDENT	BRISTOL BRANCH NOMINATE CHRIS DAVIDSON FOR THE COUNCIL OF EXECUTIVES	LYMINGTON NO1 BRANCH SUPPORT SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	MARCH AND DISTRICT SUPPORTS DEL MARR FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT	
SALISBURY 3 BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	SHEFFIELD & DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	CAMBORNE BUS BRANCH SUPPORT SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	ASHFORD 1 BRANCH SUPPORTS DEL MARR FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT	



WALLY WALKS FOR CHARITY

Retired rail worker Wally Levy completed his 12th London Bridges Walk in aid of Kidney research UK recently. Wally, who remains active in the union, helped raise £300 and he thanked everyone for their support. ■



BRUM AWARD

Birmingham Rail branch recently celebrated over 190 years of union membership handing out badges to 60 members. ■

JOYCE RETIRES

RMT general secretary Mick Cash paid tribute to Joyce Skye who is retiring from Network Rail and standing down from her union duties after 39 years of membership.

"Joyce has served the union very well over many including in her role as

South Humberside branch secretary and on the union's women's advisory committee.

"It is people like Joyce that represent the cornerstone of our great union," he said. ■



BEN NEVIS FOR BOB

A group of RMT members conquered Ben Nevis recently for charity in memory of former general secretary Bob Crow. The group comprised of Bob's partner Nicola Hoarau, mountain guide John Dougherty, Mat Webb and Gabriel Barton.

Following a trip up Snowden in 2013, Bob had planned to hike the highest peaks in England, Scafell Pike and Scotland, Ben Nevis.

After Bob passed away the group completed Scafell Pike in October 2014 and now Ben Nevis last month.

The group would like to thank all RMT members who supported them, if you would like to contribute please visit www.lastinghope.bhf.org.uk/bobcrow ■



Obituary

LARRY COTTON



It is with sadness to report the death of one of RMT's great rank and file leaders, Larry Cotton.

Larry was struck down by a very severe stroke soon after organising the Rail Against Privatisation mobile demonstration during the two weeks leading up to the 2005 general election.

Bob Crow had no hesitation bringing Larry out of retirement to take on this enormous task because he knew Larry was the best and would deliver. Sixteen days on the road,

fourteen cities to demonstrate in, leaflet its citizens, hold rallies and meetings, put the election back on the streets through the RMT demand for railways to belong to the people.

When the demonstrators arrived in London they were greeted by, among others, Jeremy Corbyn who hailed Larry as "one of the best of political organisers".

Raised in a London slum area by fighting socialists, his mum and dad were well-known anti-fascists in the thirties Larry was truly a home-bred street organiser.

After National Service in submarines Larry joined the fire brigade for a short time before joining London Transport and the National Union of Railwaymen.

Larry was a local rep, AGM delegate, branch secretary, secretary

of the London Transport Regional Council and Council of Executives member.

But, more than that, he threw himself into rank and file support for the union's wider policies. He organised a delegation of regional council members to Ireland for meetings with all concerned dismissing criticism as "rubbish." "If the members of the government can do this secretly why can't workers in the front line do it openly".

His commitments to union work did not deter him from solidarity work in the Grunwick strike, the miners, Wapping and anti-Apartheid work. All this earned him the honour of being labelled by the press of his day "a mindless militant".

I and his comrades from those times were privileged to have him in our lives. He had true leadership qualities which benefited all. Though he was of advanced years the chapel of rest was packed, young and old spoke of him in glowing terms and a letter was read from Jeremy Corbyn paying tribute to his old street fighting friend.

"Larry Cotton, socialist fighter, among the best of his generation and a true heir to Joe Hill, on behalf of those who go before you and those to follow, we salute you!"

Geoff Revell

SOUTHERN QUESTION

Dear editor,

Croydon No1 branch was a little bemused to read an article in the last RMT News regarding Southern Engineering 37-hour week victory.

We are not sure if you are aware but it is far from a "victory", as our members are continuing to contest the real issues behind the dispute namely "Rosters (Selhurst Depot) and the "Lean" method of working.

At our recent branch meeting members from Selhurst depot reported that they were somewhat astonished at this "hyping" up of a so called victory. For your information the branch has consistently raised that our members, over 85 per cent of engineers in the depot, are still on a 39-hour week.

Yes we agree this goes a little way to address that. But it has to be noted that membership within the depot has climbed dramatically in the last 18 months so that our members are

in a stronger position to challenge the local managements draconian behaviour.

But the dispute as previously reported was initially about the continued imposition of rosters and the "lean" method of working and that battle will continue.

Faternally

Paul Burton

Branch Secretary Croydon

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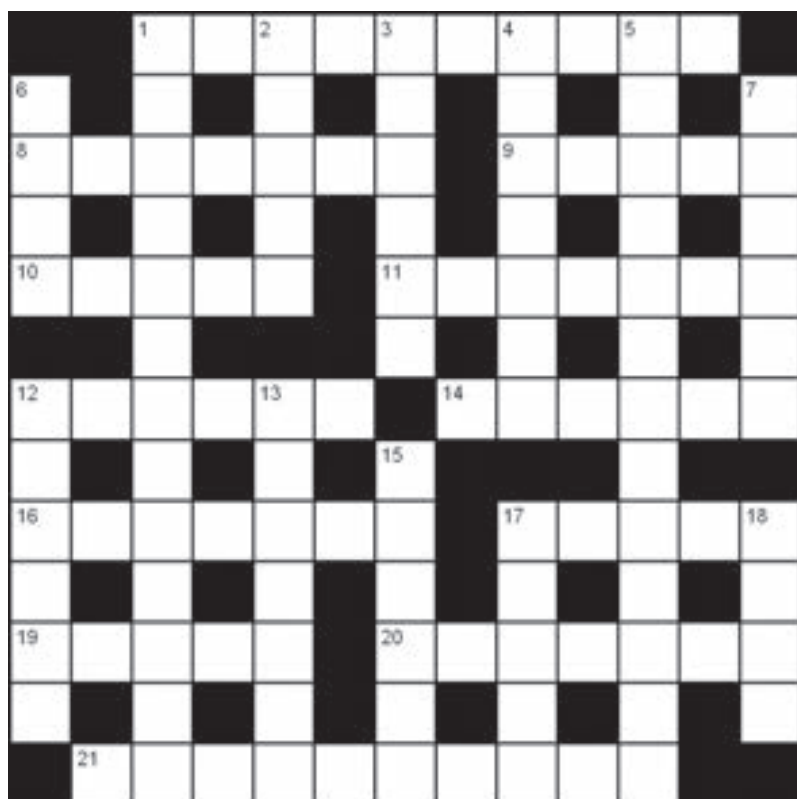
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Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is **MR G Wood, Kent**.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by November 18 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Not changed (10)
- 8 Qualify (7)
- 9 Name (5).
- 10 . Levy (5)
- 11 . Arch of facial hair (7)
- 12 Strongly opposed (6)
- 14 Leak (6)
- 16 Three-tiered rowing vessel (7)
- 17 Discern (5)
- 19 Breathing gear (5)
- 20 Novel in Gaza (6)
- 21 Indignation (10)

DOWN

- 1 Fashionable (2,2,3,6)
- 2 Not reflecting light (5)
- 3 Fuel (6)
- 4 Suitability (6)
- 5 Amusement (13)
- 6 Maintained (4)
- 7 Comedian Herman (6)
- 12 Provide evidence (6)
- 13 Oozing (7)
- 15 Return to normal (6)
- 17 Blockade (5)
- 18 At a previous time (4)



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Date of Birth		National Insurance Number	

2 **Marital Status** married ☐ partner ☐ single ☐ divorced ☐ **Drivers Licence No.**

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

4 **Mr** ☐ **Mrs** ☐ **Ms** ☐ **Miss** ☐

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6 **How much do you wish to save £** This is the amount you wish to save by Direct Debit monthly on the 28th ☐ or date you next get paid weekly ☐ if 4 weekly (Fri) ☐ date here.....

7 Normally your payments are made once a month (28th) to RMT Credit Union Ltd.

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....
.....

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

Your signature

Date

We are checking new member identification electronically. To do this, we now carry out searches with credit reference agencies who supply us with relevant detail including information from the Electoral Register. The searches will not be used by other lenders to assess your ability to obtain credit.

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

If we cannot verify your identity and address by this method, we will ask you to provide paper documentation instead. Full details of these can be supplied to you by calling 020 7529 8835.



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 Credit Union Ltd., 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

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

Please pay RMT Credit Union Ltd 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 Credit Union Ltd, 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.



JOIN RMT BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION



Visit www.rmt.org.uk to join online
or call the helpline on freephone

0800 376 3706

Problems at work? Call the helpline
(Now with two operators)

Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

In the light of draconian anti-trade union laws that have been used against the union, members should keep their personal data up to date. It is also important to note that in order to keep members informed your union requires your mobile telephone number and email address.

Members can do this via the RMT website, telephone the RMT helpline above, or writing to the membership department at RMT head office, Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

