

RMT *news*

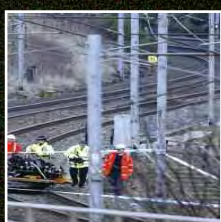
Essential reading for today's transport worker

HALT TUBE JOB CUTS!



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HOLIDAY VOUCHER
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YEARS OF WOMEN IN
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**HANDS OFF CALMAC
FERRY SERVICES
PAGE 14**



www.rmt.org.uk

NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Date of Birth*		National Insurance Number*	

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

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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
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To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
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Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

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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

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CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



STOP TUBE CUTS

The 'terrorist incident' at Leytonstone station last month and revelations that fare evasion on London Underground has rocketed by over 200 per cent are just two of many reasons why the Tube station job cuts programme must be halted.

The cuts are part of an overall package which would strip 838 front-line, uniformed station staff out of the tube system.

In the last eight years there has also been a freeze on recruitment of Revenue Control Inspectors (RCI'S) on the Tube and the number has gone down from the 270 to only now 175 with projections that another 20 per cent will be retiring in the next few years.

News that oil BP plans to cut 600 jobs from its North Sea operations is also another terrible blow to the off-shore sector.

Yet all we hear from Tory politicians is the need to remove the right of workers to withdraw their labour.

Tory mayoral candidate Zac Goldsmith is the latest multi-millionaire to claim that he will ban transport strikes in the capital. It is interesting that Tories love promoting the 'free market' and 'rolling back the state' when it comes to the rich but when it comes to the poor they want to use the state to drive down wages and abolish trade union rights.

They are also using a consultation being undertaken by Nicola Shaw into the future shape and financing of Network Rail to hand it all back to the private sector and create another Railtrack, a disaster that decimated the industry and led to the deaths of many rail workers and passengers.

The report notes that under Network's Rail's privatised predecessor Railtrack there were far more workplace accidents, broken rails and trains ignoring emergency signals.

A TUC report says that if Network Rail was sold off it would increase fares and threaten the substantial improvements in passenger safety made since Railtrack's collapse.

The Tories also seem to think it fine to allow Northern rail franchises to subsidise the cost of travel in Germany and France then after the two countries were handed the contracts to run them.

German state railways Deutsche Bahn has openly admitted that it is sucking profits from the privatised rail industry in Britain to provide lower fares and better services at home.

The union is also opposing plans by the Scottish government to hand lifeline Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services over the profiteering transnational Serco, specialists in failure if ever there was one.

We will be joining with any politicians at Holyrood who have stated on the record in parliament that no stone should be left unturned in efforts to keep Calmac public.

The union has had some victories including the successfully forcing the government not to cut the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) and it will be maintained at its current level of £250 million.

As a result of industrial pressure, ie a strike ballot, staff working for outsourcing company Interserve on London's Docklands Light Railway won an eight per cent pay increase. Congratulations!

Finally as we reach the 12th anniversary of the tragedy at Tebay which killed four of our members and scarred many more, Network Rail has finally deployed equipment designed to give secondary protection for rail infrastructure workers against the risks of runaways.

The equipment currently being deployed on the London North Western route and a national rollout for its use is now underway.

I personally would like to congratulate the persistent campaigning of RMT's Lancaster branch and their activists Tom Angus, Les Houghton, Steve Metcalfe and the families.

The branch continued with their campaign to secure secondary protection. There were a number of runaway incidents after Tebay that showed that they were right all along and workers will have now one last chance to dive away from runaway vehicles.

Kind regards

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

HALT TUBE JOB CUTS



RMT reveals that Leytonstone will lose half its rush-hour staff next month

RMT is demanding a moratorium on London Underground's station job cuts programme following a 'terrorist incident' at Leytonstone station last month.

The scene of the horrific knife attack will lose half its rush-hour staff from February under proposed new rosters. The cuts are part of an overall package which would strip 838 front-line, uniformed station staff out of the tube system.

Metropolitan Police counter-terrorism command commander Richard Walton said: "We are treating this as a terrorist incident.

"The threat from terrorism

remains at severe, which means that a terrorist attack is highly likely," he said.

Leytonstone currently has four station staff on duty during rush-hour and London Underground plan to cut that to just two as part of their drive to reduce staff numbers.

Even worse, one of those two staff will be allocated to platform despatch duties meaning that only one person will be on station duty during the time of peak demand as opposed to three currently.

RMT has also challenged TfL claims that all staff have received updated briefings in light of the current security

situation with the union saying that the briefings are "at best cursory and at worse non-existent".

RMT general secretary Mick Cash called for an immediate halt the station staff job cuts programme and demanded that London Underground send out a clear signal that is was genuinely facing up to the current security threat that faces passengers and staff alike.

"Plans to halve the staff numbers at Leytonstone in February will shock passengers as they face up to the appalling events of the weekend.

"Even worse those cuts are

replicated across the tube network.

"RMT also challenges the claims that all staff have received updated and detailed security briefings as that is simply not matched up with the experience of our members.

"The union expects the moratorium on station staffing cuts to be implemented immediately and we will not be fobbed off with meaningless rhetoric and political posturing at a time when we all need to be working together to address the current security alert across the transport network," he said.

LU STRIKES CALLED

Tube staff from three unions to take industrial action over pay, Night Tube and job cuts

London Underground staff from three unions are to stage three 24-hour strikes and other industrial action over pay, plans for Night Tubes and proposed job cuts but talks are ongoing as RMT News went to press.

Currently RMT, Aslef and Unite union members will start industrial action on the evenings of January 26, February 15 and February 17.

RMT agreed a wide ranging programme of industrial action

across London Underground grades in two separate disputes over pay, Night Tube and the plans to bulldoze through massive cuts to station staffing numbers early next month.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that members were furious at the bodged Night Tube plans and the fact that they have been tied in with a pay deal that has left members dangling on a string and out of pocket since April last year.

“RMT supports the principle of a properly worked out Night Tube service introduced through agreement with the unions but the abject failure to work through the detail has led to a comprehensive breakdown in the negotiations and has forced us to name a programme of further industrial action.

“This whole situation could have been avoided if London Underground, under direction from the Mayor, had dealt with the Night Tube professionally from the off instead of resorting to ultimatums and imposition.

“RMT has fought for more jobs on the Underground to cope with the added pressures of Night Tube but those jobs must be within the framework of the existing tube operations and must offer career opportunities

to the Underground’s existing staff, including existing drivers who may choose to take up the offer of reducing their hours.

“On the station staffing crisis it is absolutely crazy to be bulldozing through and imposing new rosters linked to the axing of over 800 safety-critical jobs from early next month when there is a heightened security status and when services are dangerously overcrowded across the network.

The current plans also rip up previous agreements to protect staff caught in the middle of this reorganisation.

“The station staff are the eyes and ears of the Underground and hacking back their numbers represents a lethal gamble with safety that RMT will continue to fight against,” he said. ■

TUBE LINES STAFF BALLOTTED FOR STRIKE ACTION

Tube Lines staff are being balloted for strike action and action short of a strike after reps overwhelmingly rejected the latest pay and Night Tube offer which mirrors the rejected proposals from London Underground to its workforce.

Tube Lines is a wholly owned subsidiary of London Underground and was taken in-house in the wake of the tube privatisation fiasco.

RMT has nearly 1,300 members looking after maintenance and upgrade works on the Piccadilly,

Northern and Jubilee Lines.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that Tube Lines members had been offered the same deal on pay and Night Tube as their London Underground colleagues and reps had clearly rejected it.

“RMT has made it clear

that with growing numbers of tube users, and planned expansions of the service, the staff in all grades who are expected to keep the railway running must be respected and their efforts properly rewarded,” he said. ■



TUBE CLEANERS TAKE PAY FIGHT TO INTERSERVE

Tube cleaners working for giant facilities company Interserve protested over pay and conditions outside their headquarters last month.

The cleaning contractor Interserve, one of two main cleaning companies on London Underground, often leave Tube cleaners short paid, leaving them massively in arrears.

The multimillion pound multinational corporation blames administrative errors but the union says that it is stealing money from low-paid workers in one of the world's most expensive cities.

Cleaners face bullying and harassment from managers, on

top of having to do one of the hardest and most unpleasant jobs on London Underground.

Interserve is also slashing jobs across the Tube and night shift cleaner numbers have been reduced by more than 50 percent in locations like Oxford Circus, where five cleaners now have to do work previously done by 13.

The company also subcontracts to agencies like AGS People, which pressure their workers into registering as "self-employed contractors" or "limited liability companies" in order to avoid paying National Insurance on their wages and to avoid having to respect

statutory rights on sick pay and holidays.

RMT is taking the fight to Interserve demanding:

- Pay all cleaners in full, on time, every time.
- £10 an hour!
- Stop job cuts.
- Direct employment for all agency workers.
- Travel passes for cleaners.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that Tube cleaners do some of the dirtiest and worst paid jobs on the transport network and they have had enough

"Boris Johnson and his TfL top-brass cannot wash their hands while workers who keep

the tube clean are treated like the dirt they sweep up.

"This is an outrage that shames London this Christmas as the Mayor claims we are a modern, global capital city while his own workers are subjected to Dickensian pay and conditions by his appointed contractors.

"Ultimately, we want LU to take outsourced functions like cleaning back in house, so cleaners have access to the same pay scales, pension rights, and staff benefits as other Tube workers.

"In the meantime we would urge Londoners to support their tube cleaners in their fight for workplace justice," he said. ■

MASSIVE DLR CLEANERS PAY VICTORY

RMT secured a massive pre-Christmas pay victory for key groups of staff working for outsourcing company Interserve on London's Docklands Light Railway.

After RMT put on a package of strike action and action short of a strike further negotiations were held with

Interserve on the pay issue.

As a result of industrial pressure the company agreed to a 75p per hour increase for all cleaning supervisors, travel safe and security staff, backdated to April 2015, an increase of around eight per cent.

RMT's executive welcomed the breakthrough and called off

the next planned phase of planned industrial action.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the victory gave some much-needed Christmas cheer to a group of London transport workers who had fought long and hard for pay justice.

"This pay victory proves that

low paid workers can get organised into a fighting trade union and use their collective industrial strength to win a fair deal in the workplace.

"It will send out a positive message to millions of workers facing a bleak Christmas to join a union and fightback in 2016," he said. ■

BUS FUNDING CUTS BLOCKED

Lobby groups including RMT have successfully forced the government to agree not to cut the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) and it will be maintained at its current level of £250 million.

The union joined up with Campaign for Better Transport and community groups in writing to the Chancellor setting out why funding should be retained under the Treasury's recent Spending Review.

Bus operators receive a number of different types of grants in support of them

providing services on routes and/or at times which are less profitable.

These sources of additional income for the sector include the BSOG and funding distributed via local authorities.

Bus worker members' jobs depend on adequate government financial support to keep these lifeline services going.

Without these grants, under the current deregulated system, bus companies would be free to cherry pick their operations much more - which would have a negative impact on the

workforce and likely lead to a spiralling decline in passenger patronage.

The union has been concerned for some time that the government intended to reduce funds for bus services.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the move to keep BSOG was good news.

"However, local authority budgets continue to be under pressure, so our campaigning will continue.

"The connections that we have made with other groups will help us in uniting against

this new wave of austerity-inspired funding cuts.

"We are now focusing on shaping the government's new Buses Bill - intended to bring franchising to the sector, as well as regional devolution - which would lump responsibility for funding cuts onto local authorities.

"Ultimately RMT believes that the bus industry must be taken into public ownership in order to plan a bus sector that is fit for purpose in the 21st century and not the plaything of giant transport monopolies," he said. ■

NORTH SEA SAFETY FINE 'WHOLLY INADEQUATE'

RMT branded a £1.1 million fine handed out to oil giant Total for North Sea safety failures as "nothing more than a slap on the wrist that will be absorbed within the companies petty cash and wholly inadequate when it comes to tackling the fundamental issues of offshore safety".

Total has been fined £1.125 million for serious safety failings that caused one of the biggest ever gas leaks in the North Sea when the Elgin platform, 150 miles east of Aberdeen, was evacuated when the gas began leaking in March 2012.

The leak was stopped after 51 days by pumping heavy mud into the well with the leak eventually capped off with

cement plugs.

Total admitted offshore installation regulation failings at Aberdeen Sheriff Court.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that for a giant global player like Total this fine can be written off as petty cash and a minor inconvenience and does nothing to hold the senior management of the company to real and genuine corporate account.

"RMT is also angry that the findings that led to this judgement are not being shared with us and discussed openly so that real lessons can be learnt to prevent a repetition.

"RMT will continue to fight for safety in the UK offshore industry against the current background of cuts," he said.

ARRIVA TRAINS WALES STRIKE

Train driving staff on Arriva Trains Wales took rock solid 24-hour strike action earlier this month over working hours, cancelling all services

Rail unions RMT and ASLEF had already postponed previous strike action last month to allow for further meaningful discussions to take place.

The pay side of the dispute has already been accepted, but Arriva has been trying to "railroad through" changes to terms and conditions.

Both unions had felt a compromise had been reached during talks last year but the wording a subsequent email sent by Arriva claimed that staff would be expected to work beyond an agreed maximum 9 hour 30min working day except for "special circumstances".

Unions are concerned that staff could be required to regularly work over that time due to the frequency of such circumstances including engineering works and special events like ferrying fans to big sporting events.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the strike was about basic workplace justice and decent working conditions and it was down to the company to recognise the anger amongst the workforce and enter genuine and meaningful talks on the issues in dispute.

"RMT salutes our driver members who are standing rock solid, shoulder to shoulder with ASLEF colleagues in the action which has closed down all services," he said. ■



RENATIONLAISE: Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn (centre right) flanked by Shadow Secretary of State for Transport Lillian Greenwood (centre left) join a protest over rail fares outside King's Cross Station, London, as government accused of profiting from commuters with the annual hike in rail fares.

RAIL FARE RIP-OFF

Commuters spend up to six times as much of their salary on rail fares as other European passengers

Commuters on Britain's privatised railways returned to work after the Christmas break to face new fare increases, spending up to six times as much of their salaries on rail fares as European passengers on publicly-owned railways, new analysis has revealed.

Action for Rail, a campaign by rail unions and the TUC, has compared average earnings with monthly season tickets on similar commuter routes across Europe.

The analysis looked at a UK worker on an average salary who is now spending 13 per cent of their monthly wages on a £357.90 monthly season ticket from Chelmsford to London.

By contrast, the average amount of salary going on a monthly season ticket for a similar journey is just two per cent in Italy, three per cent in Spain and four per cent in Germany.

The comparably high costs of the UK's privatised railways are reflected by public opinion. A separate new poll for Action for Rail of 1,719 British adults by YouGov found that:

61% say train services in the UK are bad value for money

62% think that fares would be cheaper if train companies weren't trying to make a profit

62% support public ownership of train operating companies

The findings come as rail campaigners and workers plan to hold protests at over 60 stations around the country against fare rises and in support of public ownership.

The government point to regulated rail fare rises being capped at the rate of inflation. But Action for Rail says the public will pay for this cap through taxes amounting to £700 million over the next five years.

Research shows that more than double this –£1.5billion – could be saved over the same period if the rail franchises up for renewal were returned to the public sector. Researchers at Transport for Quality of Life have estimated that this could fund a 10 per cent reduction in season tickets and other regulated fares from 2017.

Rail campaigners, passengers and rail unions held protests across the country handing out mock tickets to passengers, which highlight the high costs of fares and privatisation and called for public ownership of the railways.

TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said that was hardly surprising that passengers thought rail travel was bad value for money.

"They are shelling out far more of their income on rail fares than their counterparts in Europe.

"Years of failed privatisation have left us with exorbitant ticket prices, overcrowded trains and ageing infrastructure. It would be nice if ministers woke-up to this reality instead of allowing train companies to milk the system at taxpayers' and commuters' expense."

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said that the British public had awoken to another kick in the teeth from the greedy private train companies.

"We would urge everyone to join with the trade unions to end the money making racket on our rail tracks in 2016," he said. ■

HANDS OFF NETWORK RAIL!

Privatising Network Rail would increase fares and put passenger safety at risk, warns new a report.

The report – Staying On The Right Track by Dr John Stittle also warns of a "disastrous" return to the days of Railtrack if Network Rail becomes a for-profit company.

The report was commissioned by the TUC and rail unions' Action for Rail Campaign in response to the government consultation being undertaken by Nicola Shaw into the future shape and financing of Network Rail.

The report outlines the following key arguments against re-privatising Network Rail.

- Passenger safety – The report warns that privatising Network Rail could lead to a decline in safety standards.

The report notes that under Network's Rail's privatised predecessor Railtrack there were far more workplace accidents, broken rails and trains ignoring emergency signals.

The report says that if Network Rail is devolved or sold off to companies this could threaten the substantial improvements in passenger safety made since Railtrack's collapse.

- Higher fares – The report warns that if Network Rail is privatised, money that should be spent on improving the UK's rail infrastructure will end up going to shareholders.

Railtrack, even when posting big losses, still paid out huge dividends. Were privatisation to happen, the cost of future improvements would have to be passed on to taxpayers or funded by higher fares.

- Projects running over budget – The report highlights Railtrack's poor record of delivering important infrastructure projects on budget. For example, the cost of up-grading the West Coast Main Line cost skyrocketed from £2.5 billion to £14.5 billion under Railtrack's management.

With major upgrades planned, such as the electrification of the TransPennine and Midland Mainline routes, handing control back to the private sector would pose a huge risk to the taxpayer.

- Debt – If Network Rail's debt is no longer underwritten by the state, potential equity investors will almost certainly hesitate to invest. And without

government guarantees, the annual interest cost of Network Rail's debt could become unsustainable.

- Fragmentation – The fundamental challenge faced by UK rail is that it is too fragmented with competing interests pursuing short term commercial gains. Privatising Network Rail would only make this problem worse.

The Shaw review should therefore give more priority to the benefits of a vertically integrated railway in public ownership supported by more longer-term and sustainable funding,

Dr John Stittle, a senior lecturer at the University of Essex, said that it was essential that the Shaw Commission did not support any form of privatisation for Network Rail. Railway privatisation has been a clear and costly failure for both passengers and tax payers.

"The country cannot afford to have Network Rail privatised either wholly or partially. The industry must not be returned to the disastrous era of Railtrack where shareholder returns were placed above safety and investment."

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said that the report provided a very compelling case for keeping Network Rail as a public body.

"Taxpayers and the travelling public deserve a modern, sustainable approach to upgrading our railways. Not a repeat of past failures.

"Resurrecting the ghost of Railtrack could lead to a worryingly decline in safety standards and higher fares.

"More fragmentation and commercialisation would be the worst of both worlds," she said.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that there were siren voices on the right who want to carve up and privatise Network Rail and drag us back to the lethal days of Railtrack and the disasters at Hatfield and Potters Bar.

"Those wreckers must be fought all the way.

"If the profits bled out of our railways by the greedy private train companies were reclaimed and re-invested through a publicly-owned operation, with Network Rail at its heart, we would have a chance of building a reliable and affordable rail service fit for the modern age," he said.



DRIVER-ONLY OPERATION IS DANGEROUS

Rail safety body issues urgent warning to drivers after woman trapped by train door

A safety report has called on train drivers on driver-only operations (DOO) to not solely rely on the illumination of the door interlock light.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) issued the Urgent Safety Advice (USA) after an incident at Hayes and Harlington station earlier this year in which a passenger attempted to board a First Great Western service, had her hand trapped in the door and was subsequently dragged 10 yards along the platform (see page opposite). When she tripped and

fell her hand was pulled free.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union was completely opposed to Driver Only Operation and its forms, including Driver Controlled Operation (DCO) / Drive Door Operation (DDO), throughout the network.

"We firmly believe that this method of operation is less safe for passengers and the workforce and our union will not agree to the extension of DOO or DCO /DDO under any circumstances," he said.

RAIB said that there is a



common misconception amongst train drivers that it is not possible to obtain door interlock and for a train to depart if a person hand or other object of a similar size is trapped in the door of a train. In fact the standard for door interlocking is 25-30 mm wide.

RAIB's advice is that train drivers responsible for the dispatch of their trains must perform a thorough final safety check after the door interlock light has been obtained and should not place sole reliance on the illumination of the door interlock light.

If, having performed such a check, they are still not satisfied that it is safe to move the train, they should implement company procedures for dealing with such a situation.

RAIB adjusted their advice in the USA after consulting RMT on its contents. However the union said that the advice contained in the USA did not go far enough.

The CCTV pictures reproduced in the USA are of relatively good level but there is much variation in quality of CCTV available to drivers to see the real situation behind them.

Even with the relatively good quality pictures in this incident it would be very hard to distinguish between a person trapped as opposed to a person banging on the window to be let in to the train after the doors have closed, or shaking their fist at the door in frustration for missing their train.

The union said that if there is any doubt when performing pre-departure safety checks that it is safe to dispatch the train then drivers should perform a visual check and not rely solely on CCTV, stepping out onto the platform if necessary.

"It is not just body parts that could be trapped - any object

less than 30 mm thick attached to a person could result in the same or worse set of circumstances - a handbag would around someone's hand, anything electrical on a strap, a crutch for a person with restricted mobility - I'm sure you can think of others.

"There have been a rash of

prosecutions of individual rail workers recently - the two guards from Merseyrail being good examples - if members don't follow the instructions in the USA they could become subject to prosecution," a statement said.

JOINT ASLEF/RMT STATEMENT OPPOSING DRIVER-ONLY OPERATION AND DRIVER-CONTROLLED OPERATION

"We are completely opposed to Driver Only Operation and its forms, including Driver Controlled Operation (DCO) / Drive Door Operation (DDO), throughout the network.

We firmly believe this method of operation is less safe for passengers and the workforce and our unions will not agree to the extension of DOO or DCO /DDO under any circumstances.

This includes recent proposals for DOO by Great Western in respect of the new IEP trains and the Governments proposals for DCO for the next Northern Rail franchise.

The responsibility of the driver of the train is to drive, which requires 100% focus. It is less safe for both the driver and passengers if the driver is distracted by additional duties such as protecting the platform train interface. The Guard / Conductor should retain responsibility for door operation.

We are particularly concerned for example that there have been a number of incidents in the last year across all sectors where even more pressure has been placed on drivers rather than questioning the safety of DOO.

We are also opposed to DOO and DCO/DDO because its introduction would remove the current guarantee that passengers will always have a safety critical safety second person on the train who can not only deal with emergencies but can also provide general reassurance and

assistance to passengers.

It is also essential for the safety of both the driver and passengers to have the guarantee of a Guard / Conductor on the train to protect the train driver and passengers in the event of driver incapacity. This was demonstrated by a recent incident at Sutton Weaver where a driver received a severe electrical shock and was assisted by the Guard who was able to call for the emergency services and accompany a doctor who was travelling on the train to provide emergency first aid.

With record passengers numbers we now need more rail staff, not less. Services for passengers should be improved by investment in modern railway infrastructure and rolling stock - not by dismissing and deskilling Guards and placing even more responsibility on the driver.

We will campaign in unity to oppose any extension of DOO and DCO/DDO and to seek to explore ways of reversing it where it has been introduced. This will include making our views clear to the employers, government and other politicians."

Mick Whelan

ASLEF General Secretary

Mick Cash

RMT General Secretary



VICTORY: Carillion RMT reps from left to right Francis Ewke, Josephine Eksoh, Kyle St Albyn. Not pictured are Mohammed Orisakeye and Jude Achebe

CLEANERS WIN LOROL BATTLE

Cleaners working for Carillion on the London Overground contract defeat redundancy threat after strike ballot called

Cleaners employed by Carillion on the London Overground (LOROL) contract have fought off the threat of redundancy and won improved conditions at work.

The battle began after cleaners working in two groups of 'mobile heavy cleaning gangs' on night shifts requested basic welfare facilities such as toilets, changing facilities and somewhere to get a hot drink.

The company responded by attempting to make workers redundant and move the work to days.

RMT reps and regional organiser John Leach organised workplace meetings before the start of the shifts and discussed the grievances and a decision was made to organise a strike ballot across the Carillion

LOROL contract.

As a result the proposal to shift the work to days and to make redundancies was abandoned and two welfare vans were purchased to provide decent welfare facilities to the workforce.

John Leach said that the workforce should be congratulated for the stand they took.

"It was only because these workers stood up for themselves against a big company like Carillion, which is by no means easy, that they won these improvements and fought off job cuts.

"By showing that they were not prepared to be pushed around they have won the decent facilities that these workers fully deserve," he said.



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF WOMEN IN THE UNION

RMT women's advisory committee rounded off a year of celebrations by holding a parliamentary reception to mark the 100th anniversary of the rule change in 1915 which allowed women members into the union.

The November meeting also marked the UN Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, known as the white ribbon campaign.

Their last committee meeting of the year was held in the House of Commons followed by a reception just off Westminster Hall hosted by Lisa Nandy MP, shadow secretary of state for energy and climate change.

Lisa reflected on her connection with the women as she had previously been a member of RMT's Parliamentary group and spoken at the women's national conference earlier in the year when it was held in her constituency of Wigan.

Council of Executive members Michelle Rodgers and Kathy Mazur spoke about the lack of real access to flexible working and concerns raised by the breakup of the industry

dragging workers into zero hour contracts and agency status.

It was noted that in a year celebrating 100 years of women, for the first time in our history there are two women on the Council of Executives, a point to celebrate on its own!

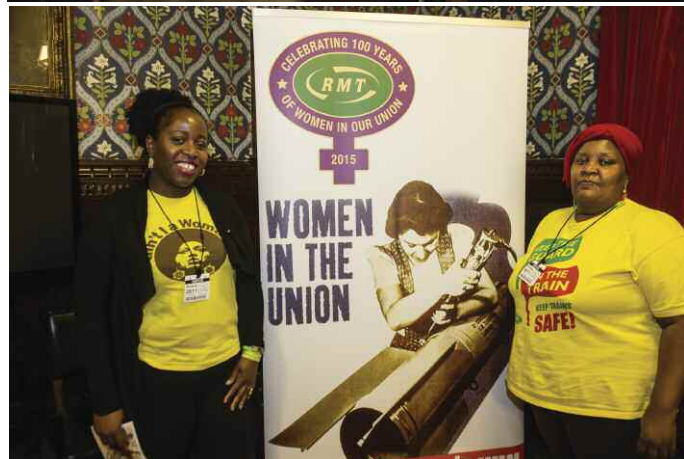
Women's committee chair Becky Crocker reflected on it being the UN Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and that female members of staff are victims of sexual assault and harassment in the transport industry as well as passengers.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady talked about the threat of the Trade Union Reform Bill to the trade union movement and the impact it would have on workers unable to protect their rights.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn MP was a surprise guest and he was invited to say a few words which were well received. Despite his team desperately trying to drag him away to his next engagement he was happy to have photos taken with the members of the committee.



Lisa Nandy MP and Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn



EC members Michelle Rodgers and Kathy Mazur with TUC GS Frances O'Grady

HANDS OFF CALMAC FERRY SERVICES



Scottish government concedes that RMT legal opinion on exemption from tendering public contracts needs to be fully examined

RMT members turned out in force last month to lobby members of the Scottish parliament to demand lifeline Caledonian MacBrayne ferry services remain in the public sector and out of the hands of the transnational profiteering Serco.

The lobby coincided with a debate on the tender process for the services which could see the private outfit Serco taking over from the public sector operator CalMac despite massive public opposition to any such privatisation of the services.

During the debate in Holyrood Transport Minister Derek Mackay conceding the

RMT's legal opinion on the Teckal exemption from tendering public contracts needs to be fully examined and offered to meet his Labour

counterparts to discuss further.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the admission was a potential game changer.

"We expect the Scottish government to fully explore and exhaust the legal opinion RMT has received in relation to tendering public sector transport systems.

"RMT would welcome an invitation to join with both front bench transport teams at Holyrood to put forward our positive campaign which is fully backed up with a legal opinion from an expert in this field, to keep Calmac public and end this

very expensive and wholly unnecessary tendering process.

"Serco has a dreadful record in relation to public sector contracts and have established themselves as specialists in failure," he said.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that the union would join with the politicians at Holyrood who stated on the record in parliament that no stone should be left unturned in efforts to keep Calmac public.

"This is in the best interests of the taxpayer, the travelling public and the hard working loyal staff," he said. ■



ROCK SOLID CALEDONIAN SLEEPER STRIKE



Following rock solid 48-hour strike action last month on the Caledonian Sleeper RMT has revealed that the operator SERCO scooped up a taxpayer-funded bung of over £300,000 for “lost revenue”.

Under the arcane rail privatisation rules, deliberately rigged in favour of the private train companies, they can demand compensation for income lost during a trade dispute – regardless of whether it was of their making in the first place.

More than £5 million was also blown on consultancy and tendering costs before the contract was let last March – money that could have been spent on rectifying the serious

safety faults at the heart of the dispute.

In a written answer to a Parliamentary question the Scottish Transport Minister was forced to admit that the cost to the Scottish taxpayer of the tendering process for the Caledonian Sleeper was £5,672,393.

In addition RMT said that the decision to fragment the sleeper service away from the main Scotrail franchise has also meant that it no longer benefits from being able to draw on shared financial or engineering resources.

This fragmentation has been further compounded by the decision to outsource the upkeep of the sleeper service which has

led to less effective control and oversight of train repair and maintenance.

In addition the expertise acquired over many years by in-house staff would have been better placed to continue to deliver a maintenance and repair regime which would not have tolerated rolling stock leaving the depot in the state of disrepair that they do now.

The cheapest and most efficient vehicle would be to have the whole package of services combined into one publicly owned and integrated operation.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash congratulated members on the Serco Caledonian Sleeper in defence of passenger and staff

safety.

“We have had a brilliant response from the public who understand what this dispute is all about and have decided to back their rail workers against Serco – the specialists in failure.

“This dispute has been caused by penny-pinching on maintenance by SERCO which has allowed a number of major defects to rolling stock to deteriorate to a level where it is unsafe, leading to carriages being condemned and taken out of service at short notice.

“RMT will continue to fight for safe and reliable services on the sleeper and the union remains available for further meaningful talks,” he said.



NORTHERN FOREIGN TAKE OVERS THREATEN RAIL JOBS

German state captures Northern Rail and French retain control of Trans-Pennine franchise



Passengers on the Northern Rail and Trans-Pennine franchises will now be subsidising the cost of travel in Germany and France after the two countries were handed the contracts to run them.

Arriva Rail North, which will run Northern Rail from April, is wholly owned by the German state railway Deutsche Bahn and the French public railway SNCF have a 45 per cent stake in First TransPennine.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that as well as paying the highest fares in Europe, passengers will be subsidising the cost of travel in mainland Europe.

Berlin has openly admitted that it is sucking profits from the privatised rail industry in Britain to provide lower fares and better services at home.

German Transport Ministry spokeswoman Vera Moosmayer boasted of such a strategy in

relation to its state operator Deutsche Bahn.

"We're skimming profit from the entire Deutsche Bahn 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," she said.

Mick Cash said that the awards were no surprise but will still come as a bitter blow to rail users and rail staff across the North.

"Rather than all the garbage about the Northern Powerhouse this announcement opens the door to years of cuts to staff and safety and to profiteering on an epic scale.

"RMT has waged a public fight against this carve up, engaging the public and local politicians, and that fight goes on.

"The battle for a publicly owned, people's railway will continue regardless of today's profit-driven fit up," he said.



POSTCARD

Every RMT member in the North of England will receive a postcard with this magazine calling on the chairman of Rail North Sir Richard Leese to guarantee that the Guard will be kept on rail services.

It calls for ticket offices to be kept open and properly staffed, clean stations and trains with directly employed rail workers retained to at least their current levels.

Please take the time to send this off to put maximum pressure to ensure jobs and safety are paramount and prevent a run-down of services in the interests of profit.

RMT has long warned that passengers in the North are to be used as used a cash-cow to hold down fares and improve services for railways in EU states like France, Holland and Germany.

As a result there will be cuts to rail services and staff here

POSTCARD:
Northern
members,
please send
postcard
enclosed

Will your council be supporting Northern railways? Or cutting rail jobs and services?



"We're skimming profit from the entire Deutsche Bahn 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," German Transport Ministry spokeswoman Vera Moosmayer

and passengers will be crammed into overcrowded, driver-only operated trains while paying the most expensive rail fares in Europe.

RMT has taken a clear message out onto the streets across the North that it is time to put passengers first and for the public to sign up for a publicly owned People's Railway in the North. That means:

- Every penny that is put into the railway will be invested in the railway
- Funding fair fares, new trains and more services
- And more help for passengers: trains will keep their guard with proper staffing for stations and ticket offices
- Proper democratic oversight by communities and councils, instead of rail policy in the North being dictated by private and foreign companies. ■

FOREIGN STATE OWNED/BACKED RAIL DOMINATION OF RAIL IN BRITAIN

Contract / Route	Operator	Operator Owner name	Operator Owner - Country
Caledonian Sleeper	Serco Caledonian Sleepers	Serco	UK private company
Chiltern	Arriva	Deutsche Bahn	German State Railways
Cross Country	Arriva	Deutsche Bahn	German State Railways
Docklands Light Railway	Keolis Amey Docklands	Amey / Keolis joint venture	French state owns Keolis
Essex Thameside	C2C	National Express	UK private company
East Midlands	East Midlands Trains	Stagecoach	UK private company
East Coast	Virgin East Coast	Stagecoach/Virgin	UK private company
Gatwick Express	GTR	Govia (comprising of Go-ahead and Keolis)	French state owns Keolis
Grand Central	Arriva	Deutsche Bahn	German state railways
Greater Anglia	Greater Anglia	Abellio	Dutch State railways
Great Western	First Great Western	First Group	UK registered private company
London Midland	London Midland Railway	Govia (comprising of Go-ahead and Keolis)	French state railways owns Keolis
London Overground	Arriva/MTR	Deutsche Bahn/MTR	German State Railways / Hong Kong State
Northern	Northern	Serco / Abellio	Dutch state railways own Abellio
Scotland	Abellio Scotrail (begins April 2015)	Abellio	Dutch state railways own Abellio
South West	South West Trains	Stagecoach	UK private company
Southern	GTR	Govia (comprising of Go-ahead and Keolis)	French state owns Keolis
South Eastern	South Eastern	Govia (comprising of Go-ahead and Keolis)	French state railways owns Keolis
Thameslink, Great Northern	GTR	Govia (comprising of Go-ahead and Keolis)	French state railways owns Keolis
TransPennine	First TransPennine Express	First Group / Keolis	French state railways owns Keolis
Tyne & Wear Metro	DB Regio Tyne and Wear	Arriva Deutsche Bahn	German State Railways
Wales & Borders	Arriva	Deutsche Bahn	German State Railways
West Coast	Virgin West Coast	Virgin / Stagecoach	Virgin and Stagecoach are UK private companies
Hull	First Hull Trains	First Group	UK private company
Merseyrail	Merseyrail	Serco / Abellio	Dutch state railways own Abellio
Eurostar	Eurostar	EIL is owned by London and Continental Railways(40%), SNCB (5%) and SNCF (55%)	SNCB owned by Belgian state railway and SNCF is French state railway. Note UK government is selling its stake.
Heathrow Express	Heathrow Express	Heathrow Airport Holdings	Heathrow Airport Holdings is consortium, 41.88% of which is owned by the sovereign wealth funds of Singapore, China and Qatar.
Heathrow Connect	Heathrow Connect	Heathrow Airport Holdings/ First Group	Heathrow Airport Holdings is consortium, 41.88% of which is owned by the sovereign wealth funds of Singapore, China and Qatar.

ITALIAN STATE TO PLUNDER BRITAIN'S RAILWAYS

The Tory government has added Italian state railway operator Trenitalia to the list of bidders given a 'fast track' passport to soak up lucrative franchises on Britain's rip-off railways.

The announcement followed the confirmation that the German state was handed Northern Rail and French

retained control of Trans-Pennine franchise.

With over three quarters of Britain's train operations now owned by overseas state companies (see above) the Tories have now decided to widen the 'fast track' route to the great British rail rip-off by opening the door to the Italian state operator following in the

footsteps of the German, Dutch, French and Chinese state rail companies.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the domination of the rail industry by foreign state railways was a disaster as rail franchises were being used as a cash cow to subsidise their own railways.

"That is a scandal which

proves conclusively that this rotten government will happily have any state running our rail services as long as it isn't the British state.

"RMT will continue to battle for a railway owned and run by the British public in the interest of safe and efficient services," he said. ■

SECONDARY PROTECTION FOR TRACK WORKERS

Network Rail has finally deployed equipment on worksites across Lancashire and Cumbria designed to give secondary protection for rail infrastructure workers against the risks of runaways.

The equipment currently being deployed on the London North Western route, manufactured by Vortok, is called a Rearguard system a national rollout for its use is now underway.

12 years after the Tebay disaster on February 15 2004 the equipment is now mandatory where a worksite may be at risk of runaway if it sits on track at a gradient of 1 in 100 or steeper or is within five track miles of such a gradient.

Network Rail will publish weekly reports on which sites should be protected by the Rearguard system and work site owner must complete documentation to highlight what measures were taken to manage runaway risk.

RMT has been working with NR to look at the role of Watchman and agreement has been reached that if this task was utilised instead of deployment of Rearguard then it was necessary for the staff to hold the same competencies as for a Lookout.

Further discussion is required on how these roles were to be resourced with RMT insisting that the duty would have to be covered by extra resource rather than from current team sizes.

It was agreed that RMT reps and management would make a joint presentation to the Network Rail Joint Safety Council on lessons learnt from the early deployment in LNW and offer their knowledge and skills acquired recently to other routes within Network Rail to assist them with nationwide



roll-out.

There has also been a broad discussion on the need to win hearts and minds as in spite of being given the kit there have been instances of staff failing to deploy the equipment. Management has confirmed the steps it has taken to improve compliance.

It has also been noted that the workforce have a role to play in questioning and challenging decisions if they do not feel the correct process is being adopted.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash welcomed the developments following a deplorable lack of progress in the campaign to force Network Rail to provide workers with one last chance to dive away from runaway vehicles.

"This campaign has been a high profile issue for the union for many years and we can thank the persistent campaigning of RMT's Lancaster branch and their activists Tom Angus, Les Houghton and Steve Metcalfe.

"Despite initial conclusions following Tebay that secondary protection posed a greater risk to the railway than could be

offset against the risk to the lives of track workers, the branch continued with their campaign to secure secondary protection.

"We have been determined to avoid similar consequences than those suffered by the four RMT members who lost their lives at Tebay - of Colin Buckley, Darren Burgess, Chris Waters and Gary Tindall.

"We have constantly pushed

Network Rail to accept that secondary protection was critical to prevent worker deaths.

"There were a number of runaway incidents after Tebay that showed this was true - indeed there was scarcely a year that passed that didn't feature a runaway of one type or another in the safety reporting of the rail industry," he said.

A THANK YOU FROM TOM

Dear editor,

I would like to personally thank the families of Colin Buckley, Darren Burgess, Chris Waters and Gary Tindall for their support to the Lancaster branch in our campaign to get Rearguard secondary protection.

I'd also like to thank Lancaster branch members Les Houghton, Steve Metcalfe, local reps Steve Sproat and Tim Giles and Area Council Rep John Joe Carruthers. Members of the RMT executive also helped us including the late Arthur Grundy, Peter Pinkney, Craig Johnson, Kevin Morrison, Pat Collins and Michelle Rogers. My thanks also goes to staff and officers at head office; the late Bob Crow, general secretary Mick Cash and the head of health and safety Paul Clyndes.

Tom Angus

Retired Area Council Rep

Retired Health and Safety Rep

NEVER AGAIN

RMT News talks to retired rail worker Tom Angus about the Tebay disaster and the new secondary protection his branch fought so hard for

Tom Angus says that at the time of the Tebay tragedy on February 15 2004, which killed four RMT members, track workers were at the top of the league table for industrial injuries in the country.

"In the previous four years there had been 15 deaths among track workers with 12 of those struck by trains.

"We were also critically short of staff and this was even before the attacks on 2B/C reduced staffing levels even further," he says.

Then Tebay happened. The accident occurred after a wagon laden with lengths of steel rail ran away from a maintenance area at Scout Green because it did not have properly working brakes.

Flimsy blocks of wood had been placed in front of the wagon to stop it moving because the faulty hydraulics brakes had been disconnected instead of being repaired or replaced.

Finally the wooden blocks gave way and the wagon began to move downhill gathering momentum on the 1 in 75

gradient from Shap summit.

Running almost silently in darkness, the 16-tonne steel wagon rolled down the West Coast Main Line reaching speeds of up to 40 miles per hour and, without any warning, it fatally struck four railway workers Colin Buckley, Darren Burgess, Chris Waters and Gary Tindall. The wagon continued to travel for a further four miles.

Mark Connolly the boss of the private rail maintenance company, MAC Machinery Services, and crane operator, Roy Kennett, were found guilty on charges of manslaughter caused by gross negligence, Connolly was sentenced to nine years and Kennett for two years.

PRIVATISATION

One of the causes of the Tebay disaster began ten years earlier when the Tories privatised and broke up the rail network, plunging the industry into turmoil. The fatal accidents at Southall in 1997 and Ladbroke Grove in 1999 exposed the effect that the fragmentation of the rail network had had on both safety and maintenance

procedures.

But it was the Hatfield crash in October 2000 that proved to be the defining moment in Railtrack's collapse, a private company which had overseen years of rampant profiteering at the expense of safety.

By 2003 Network Rail, a 'not for dividend' company, came into being as infrastructure manager for most of the rail network but contractors

continued to operate in the industry that had developed a profit-led culture which directly led to the tragedy at Tebay.

"Our employer at the time, Carillion talked about safety a lot but didn't actually apply it much in the workplace.

"The night before the guys were killed we'd been called out at 6pm on the Saturday night to find a horse reportedly running about on the track, we found and captured the horse and also found were other contractors had removed the fence that allowed the horse on the track in the first place.

"We got back to the yard at 22:30 to be told we were required back on the track at 04:00, if we'd told managers we were to be fatigued to work our four mates would still be alive," Tom said.

He said that in 2013 a confidential source revealed a prior runaway had occurred in the Tebay area which the bosses had covered up.

"If we'd know about it we might have been more aware of the risks and then after Tebay

the runaway just didn't stop until we had a list of dozens of incidents all of which could have had the same outcome as at Tebay – multiple deaths," he said.

RMT's Lancaster branch began to discuss the problem at the funeral of Darren Burgess after his mother Christine approached Tom and said "All I hope that comes out of this is that it never happens again".

That was when the branch realised that it had to push very hard to get something real on to the track that would give workers one last chance to get out of the way.

"All Network Rail had given us was paperwork and changes to machine breaks but no-one was ever able to tell us how a trolley could be stopped once it had started to runaway.

"The branch worked hard, getting support for a resolution to the AGM, we talked to the families and got support from our local MP and the local press and media.

"Now we've got what we aimed to achieve, a system that gives workers one last chance to get out of the way," Tom said.

So now there is a form of secondary protection, is the branch satisfied or does the company need to do more?

"Well we want to see the secondary protection improved and even better protection rolled out to give workers even better safety," said Tom in a quiet but very determined way.





LEARNING POLITICS

RMT Crewe branch member Dan Robinson reports on a recent RMT political school

The political school took place at the RMT education centre in Doncaster, the home town of two railwaymen Thomas Steels and Jimmy Holmes accredited as founding fathers of the Labour Party, to which there is a plaque dedicated to them at railway station.

As I walked up to the building a stone tablet on the front lawn indicated that I had arrived at the Bob Crow education centre and gave me a strange feeling of pride to be associated to such an establishment.

RMT political officer James Croy, dressed in a black suit with only an RMT badge on the lapel breaking the shade, took us all to the class room for introductions which revealed the stark differences of those attending the course in backgrounds, locations, jobs and significantly in opinions.

RMT president Peter Pinkney gave us a brief history of how trade unions became interlinked with politics and their involvement with the Labour Party as a movement and other political parties of the left to

improve working people's rights.

"Every generation has to fight the same battles for peace, justice and democracy and there is no final victory nor final defeat," he said.

The next speaker Professor Roger Seifert clearly came with a high level of intellect, dealing with Darwin's theory of those that adapt to change survive to discussing a doubt that people believed they were being unable to change anything.

He pointed out positive examples of this not being true such as women gaining the right to vote and victories in campaigns for workers' rights.

He made an incredibly important point by taking the Marxist definition of the working class as being anyone that has to sell their labour to live and those that own capital and can stop working tomorrow is not.

Looking at socio-types of class such as working class, middle class, upper middle class and so on removes the pride of being working class and enables the divide-and-rule culture to help prevent working people

coming together and challenging those in power.

Making working people more compliant through creating a person's sense of self-importance and dividing the working class was a system advocated by prime ministers such as Benjamin Disraeli and Margaret Thatcher.

This sparked heated debate pushing people's passions to the forefront that had not previously been present. He left everyone wondering if he was actually that aggressively arrogant or purposely engaging people's passions.

The coming days saw delegates trying to create ways that they would change policies to improve the transport industry and then being pressed on the methods of implementation.

Regional organiser Craig Johnston shared ways of campaigning learnt through fighting proposed Northern rail cuts under scrutiny from mass media.

A live link to RMT Parliamentary Group member Kate Hoey MP explained why

people should vote to leave the EU and some of the different reasons to those taking up the same stance but from the perspective of the right.

RMT journalist Brian Denny spoke on the same topic and explained in a beautifully erratic manner how the European Union works. It so succinct that by the time he had finished all but one of the group had moved their opinion to leave the EU.

Hasan Dodwell from Justice for Columbia spoke of why working people in other countries are no different to working people like ourselves and when trade unionists are being shot for standing up for their rights it becomes important that those in such countries get the support of those that do not have to endure the same thing.

Paul Mezaros from Hope Not Hope came to speak about the threat of far-right groups such as Britain First, National Front, EDL and BNP which split communities through scapegoating and racism.

The end of the week brought a trip to the House of Commons.

As you get off the Tube at Westminster and look up at the buildings you can only be overawed by the skill and craftsmanship of the working people that were put to work to erect them.

Once inside the decorative decadence can lead you to some understanding of how some develop a level of undeserved self-importance and pomposity. Fortunately there are small areas of real importance like the plaque dedicated to Emily Wheeler Davidson – a suffragette who gave her life in support of votes for women – put there by Tony Benn helped by Jeremy Corbyn.

We met members of the RMT's parliamentary group of MPs, such as new convenor Ian Mearns who achieved the feat of doing a mini-sessions with us in between whipped votes, former convenor and now Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell MP, Trade Union Group chair Ian Lavery and Grahame Morris who is also a whip.

An outstanding contribution was made by Angela Rayner MP. She came from a job in domestic services and confessed to not having a GCSE or attending a college. But pushed by her trade union peers she was elected and proudly represents her home constituency of Ashton-under-Lyme.

She was far from the stereotype of an MP as you could get with unequivocally good intentions and quick to offer help to those trying to move the Labour party back to creating an actual fairer society. The two most important points for me from this week were that all RMT members can and should apply for a place on the political school.

And, going back to Professor Seifert explanation of class and Charles Darwin on the first day, a humming bird and an ostrich are both still birds and it should not be differences people should focus on but your similarities.

President's column



SOLIDARITY AND UNITY

I would like to start my first column by applauding all the candidates that took part in the election for RMT president.

It is a testament to the strength of grassroots activism in our union, that so many worthy candidates were available for what is the most senior lay position in the union. I would also like to thank the great team that supported me over what was a long campaign period.

There are many challenges that face us all and a strong united union is vital as we strive to fight back and deliver for our members.

One of the biggest challenges faced by all unions in this country is the governments 'anti' Trade Union Bill, which attempts to remove worker's ability to take industrial action. It's shameful that 183 year after the Abolition of Slavery Act was passed in parliament, we see a Bill that seeks to criminalise trade unionist for having the temerity to think that they have the right to withdraw their labour. Ultimately workers that cannot withdraw their labour are little more than modern day slaves.

Looking ahead I will campaign for:

- A publically owned and democratically run railway fit for both our members and the travelling public is achievable with the majority of the public now in favour of a re-nationalisation. They want ticket offices open and a guard on every train.
- We must do all we can to defend our off-shore members as predatory bosses use the excuse of crashing oil prices to rip up hard fought terms and conditions and put safety at risk.
- We need to support our road freight and taxi members, deregulation is selling them out.
- Our bus members are feeling the pain as 'Bus Service Operators Grants' are cut around the country. Political and industrial pressure must continue.
- Network rail must always put safety before profit and

privatisation will not deliver that.

- Social dumping of seafarers and exploitation of foreign nationals has long been a problem and must stop.
- TfL's fit for the future programme is as insincere as many of their previous initiatives and we must continue to hold Boris's cronies to account.
- The progressive rules regarding RMT subscriptions [affordability] that allow our lowest paid workers to remain members should be protected.

Recently I was pleased to accept an invitation to attend the AGM of Liverpool 5 branch, which gave me the opportunity to talk to the very people that run our union the rank and file.

Billy Kimm should be very pleased indeed as I observed a model branch where all participated with knowledge, enthusiasm and more than a little humour. It also gave me the opportunity to say goodbye to one of my dearest friends in our movement, outgoing president Peter Pinkney. I had the greatest respect for Peter before he became president and after his three year term that included the loss of the greatest general secretary our union has ever or is ever likely to have, Bob Crow. My admiration for Peter couldn't be any higher.

RMT is already the most progressive trade union in the country and I'm committed to maintaining the member-led philosophy that has made us the union we are today.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible over the next three years as your president.

Finally, many of my predecessors often quoted Marx, Engels, Lenin etc. and I think you learn a lot about someone from the quotes they choose so here's mine.

"Being honest may not get you a lot of friends but it will always get you the right ones" John Lennon.

In Solidarity
Sean Hoyle

RMT STANDS UP FOR ITS MEMBERS

If you have suffered an avoidable injury or illness, our team of expert lawyers can help you

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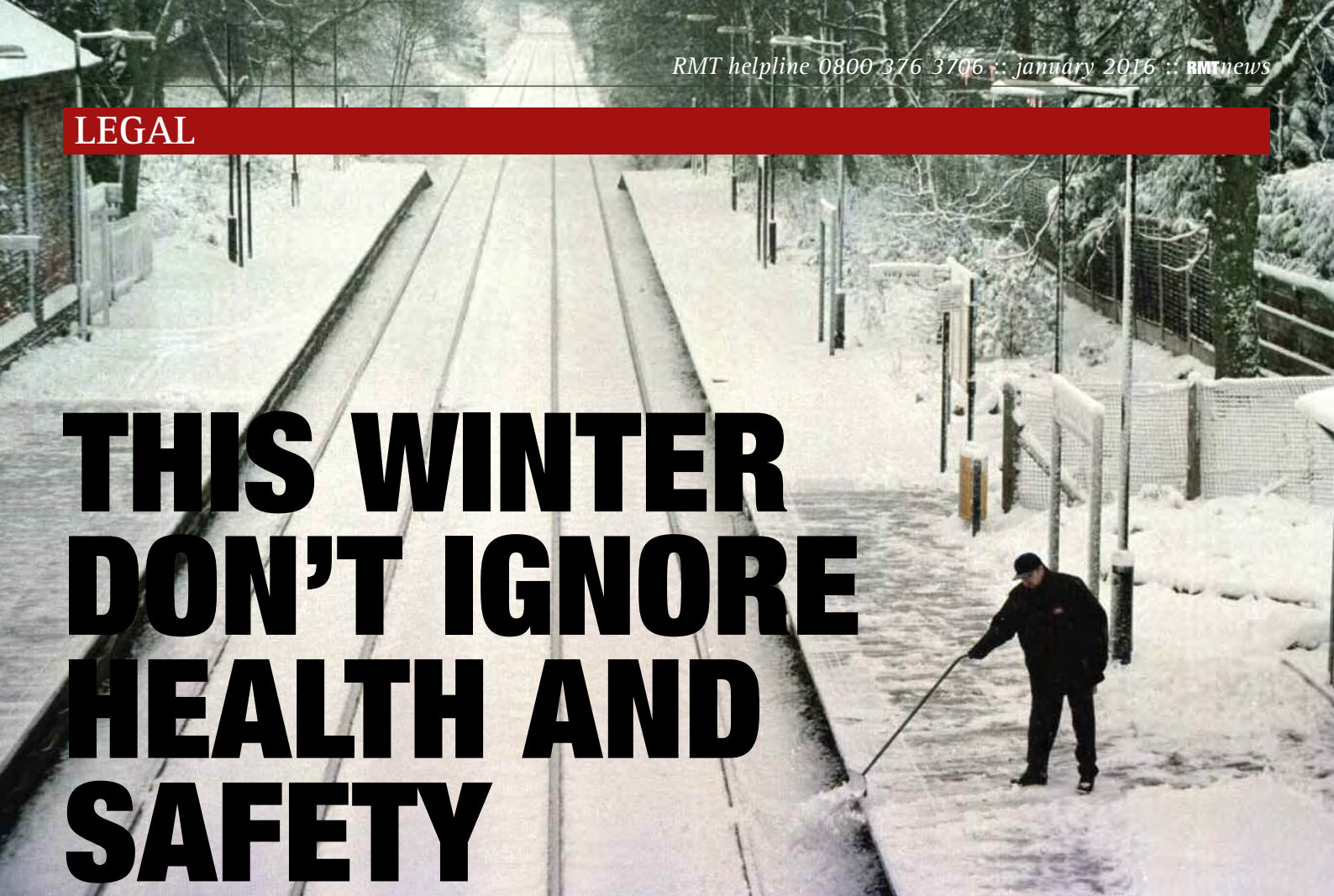
T THOMPSONS
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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS



LEGAL



THIS WINTER DON'T IGNORE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Andrew Hutson of Thompsons solicitors warns that proper health and safety systems need to be in place during cold weather

As we reach the darkest depths of the British winter, the threat of seasonal weather causing injuries to workers reaches its peak.

Every year, Thompsons receives a large number of claims from union members who have sustained weather related injuries which, in many cases, could have been prevented with proper health and safety systems.

While some employers unfortunately consider health and safety to be something they would rather overlook, it is a clear legal responsibility and good practice is likely to actually save them money in the long run. Relatively simple measures can prevent serious injuries to members of staff and,

when the costs of compensation and of an employee taking time off work to recover are taken into account, bosses should not need to think twice about whether or not to put into place the necessary procedures.

As well as a legal requirement, it makes clear financial sense too.

According to Network Rail, slips, trips and falls account for 47 per cent of the injuries sustained by passengers when travelling on Britain's railways. It exceeds any other type of risk by a significant margin and, if this is the case for passengers, then it stands to reason that accidents of this kind should be a major concern for employees too.

Uneven surfaces, especially

during periods of wet and icy conditions, are particularly dangerous for passengers and workers on train platforms and other areas of high footfall. Failing to put up signs which urge caution to be taken around areas of snow or ice means employers may have to pay out compensation for injuries subsequently sustained.

Similarly, putting down salt and grit is a cheap and simple way to limit the likelihood of an employee slipping in the first place. The havoc recently wreaked by Storm Barney also shows the importance of also making workplaces safe in high winds. A proper risk assessment can easily identify a potential hazard, be it an overhanging tree branch or loose roof tiles.

When a worker has to take time away from work to recover from an avoidable injury, the employer has to meet the costs of absence and finding appropriate cover. Indeed the employer may also have to pay twice, if the worker secures compensation. When one compares these costs to the expense of taking simple steps

to fulfil health and safety requirements it is clear that a rigorously applied health and safety policy is highly cost efficient. There are no excuses.

Thompsons recently dealt with the case of an RMT member who tripped on an uneven surface on a train platform and fell, fracturing bones in his wrist and hand. The station operator was forced to pay a five-figure sum in compensation due to the injuries and financial losses suffered by the union member.

This example is indicative of the kinds of cases we work with all year round. But it makes it clear that simple steps and a properly implemented health and safety plan can prevent injuries which may be highly damaging - not just to members' health but also to employers' finances.

This winter, keep your employer in check and keep the safety of your colleagues front and centre by reporting risks wherever you see them. If you do have an accident at work which is not your fault, contact the RMT legal service for advice.



FIGHTING APARTHEID

Film project reveals the heroic contributions of ordinary union members, including British seafarers and rail workers, to South Africa's anti-apartheid freedom struggle

The film *London Recruits*, due for completion at the end of this year, will show how dozens of volunteers risked life and limb carrying out top secret missions in South Africa on behalf of the banned African National Congress in the 1960s and 1970s.

ANC leaders exiled in London recruited young workers and students to carry out illegal clandestine operations in the apartheid state. Had these volunteers been caught they faced lengthy imprisonment, torture and possibly even death.

To avoid suspicion, all those recruited were white – posing as

tourists or businessmen. The ruse, which relied on the racist mentality of South Africa's immigration officials, worked perfectly. All breezed easily through customs, their false-bottomed suitcases packed with illicit ANC materials.

Once established, the recruits assembled a device known as a "leaflet bomb". This was a harmless contraption containing no more explosive force than a firework, yet powerful enough to propel thousands of featherweight propaganda leaflets high into the air.

The devices were strategically placed near busy train and bus

stations, where African workers gathered for their commute back to the townships, and timed to detonate simultaneously at rush-hour in every major city. Also triggered were recordings of South African freedom songs and rousing speeches by ANC leaders amplified through makeshift loudspeaker systems.

It had an enormous impact, making front page headlines in South Africa, inspiring the country's oppressed masses and confounding the regime, which believed it had snuffed out all resistance by jailing Mandela and his comrades several years before.

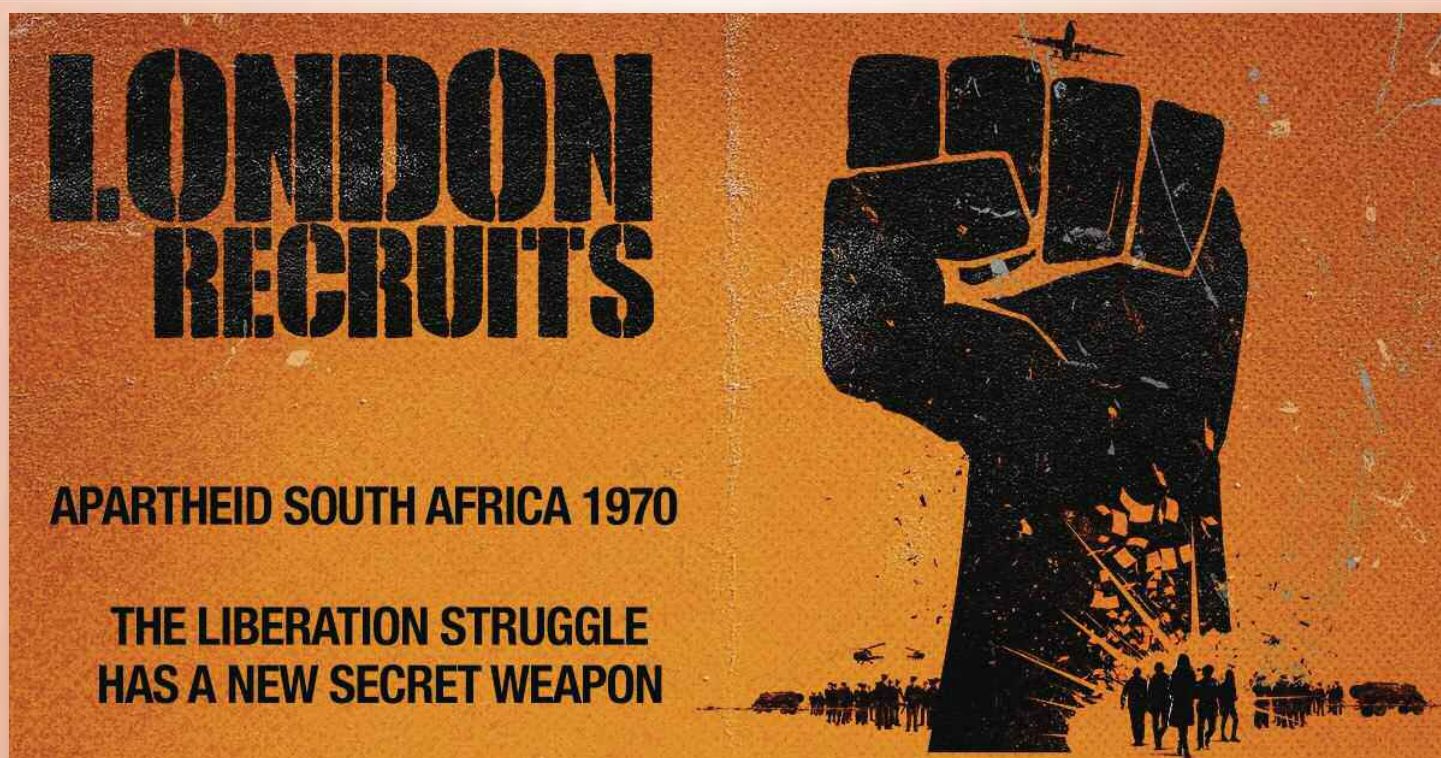
The film will also recount a separate mission, involving members of the National Union of Railwaymen and National Union of Seamen (forerunners of RMT), in an audacious attempt to secretly land returning ANC activists by boat

off South Africa's coast.

London Recruits has the backing of the TUC and a growing number of its affiliates, including RMT – which donated £2,000 last year towards the film's initial costs.

The film-maker, Cardiff-based production company Barefoot Rascals, is now embarking on a second stage of fundraising and RMT is encouraging branches and regional councils to contribute funds in order to help bring this proud episode of British labour movement internationalism to the screen.

Some of the stories of NUR and NUS activists involved in the film will be recounted in the next edition of RMT News. For further information about the film, and for details about how to donate, visit www.londonrecruits.com.





Around 50 RMT Union Learning reps gathered at the Trades and Labour Club in Doncaster recently for their traditional one day event.

The event allows reps to share ideas and successes, learn from others experience, catch up with ULRs they have met or worked with and build their network of contacts.

This year the RMT learning team built the day around feedback given by the ULRs themselves, designing much of the content and subject matter around their needs and

aspirations.

RMT education officer Andy Gilchrist opened the day and there were keynote speeches from the general secretary Mick Cash and senior assistant general secretary Steve Hedley.

All the speakers emphasised the value of the union learning rep to the core work of the union and how they can be key in spreading the message of striving even harder and more effectively in the battle to resist the coming attacks enshrined in the new Anti-Trade Union Laws.

"Make no mistake this is the biggest challenge to the trade union movement in the last 30 years.

"We must all stand together and ULRs are uniquely placed to spread this message, whilst still carrying out their role of empowering workers and their families through learning and education," Mick Cash said.

A new ULR handbook was launched which is a one stop shop for guidance and contacts that gave information from paid time off to links for learning providers and campaigns.

Many branch secretaries who joined in the day and the workshops, helping reps to get a perspective and understanding of how the branch can support them and what they can do to organise within the branch.

The RMT Learning Team Emily King, Donna Murray, Karen Skelly, Petrit Mihaj, Paul Shaw and Ivor Riddell would like to thank all those ULRs who came along and all the for their work and support in keeping the learning agenda alive. ■

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CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) history month is an annual event that takes place every February. A range of events are organised around the world to celebrate the lives of activists and acknowledging their role in history, culture and society.

RMT LGBT officer Finsbury Park branch John Stack said that the events play an important role in raising awareness of the prejudice and discrimination that people still face and in helping to break down barriers to equality of opportunity.

"This year we are launching a new badge for all our LGBT members and supporters and the annual LGBT weekend at the education centre in Doncaster is also taking place February 26-27.

"The aim of the weekend is to encourage LGBT members to be active within the union covering history and structure of the union, along with writing and presenting resolutions.

"If you wish to go, please do contact your branch secretary as you will need to be nominated

by your branch, I highly recommend it," said.

LGBT advisory committee chair Steven Moule also said that the union needed your help in updating the details held on the membership database.

"Please spare a few minutes to look at the member's section and then 'my personal details' on the website and update any details that you need to by filling the relevant sections in ie sexuality, transgender, and if you want to be contacted about equality information.

"By doing this your union will be able to contact you regarding any activities that might be happening in your region or nationally.

"For example last year members attended a number of Pride events across the country including London, Birmingham and Brighton.

"Members also attended the Tolpuddle Martyrs festival, Durham Miners gala and Burston School march.

"You can also be kept informed of other activities that RMT may be alerted to from other unions throughout the

country and the TUC and please be assured all information you provide is kept confidential," he said.

Steven said that it was important to be active in your branch including electing an LGBT representative on the branch committee plus equality representatives that can cover black and ethnic minority members, disabled members and women members.

"These posts are actively encouraged by the union and each region should have these additional positions which are waiting for volunteers to come forward to fill them.

"If your branch or region do not have these posts, ask why and get them filled.

"The LGBT advisory committee advises the union on all matters relating to LGBT members both in and out of the union and there is an annual conference held around the country which is open to all LGBT members and a great chance to network.

This year's conference is on May 13-14 in the Ramada Nottingham City Centre - I hope

you can join us.

"Motions are passed by these meetings and shape how the union works and campaigns on issues such as hate crime and international LGBT rights supporting demonstrations outside embassies when those countries have proposed anti-LGBT legislation," he said.

LGBT members also represent the union in the wider trade union movement at the TUC and STUC conferences each year, sending full delegations, moving motions and sitting on LGBT committees.

Speak to your Branch Secretary if you are interested in being nominated to any of the committees or the conferences. If you have difficulty in doing that, contact our Equal Opportunities Officer, Jess Webb, on J.Webb@rmt.org.uk or contact the members' helpline.

This is your union and your voice is vital to help all your LGBT colleagues in all grades. If you chose to update your details as a small 'thank you' you will be sent a new RMT rainbow badge- don't miss out!





NEW WATERLOO BANNER UNVEILED

Two special guests unveiled the new Waterloo branch banner recently Nicky Hoarau, partner of the late Bob Crow, and Joan Twelves partner of the late Greg Tucker.

Nicky said that it was a great honour to be invited to unveil the banner which includes a portrait of Bob and Greg.

"This is a very thoughtful and fitting tribute to Bob and I would like to thank the branch for inviting me," she said.

Joan also thanked the branch for inviting her as Greg was a very well-known and respected former Waterloo branch secretary.

"I am so proud and pleased

that the branch has remembered Greg in this way," she said.

Branch secretary Rickey Goodman said that there was a lot of hard work and thought that went into the design of the banner.

"I would like to thank everyone who assisted in this project which we believe is the

first banner the branch has ever had.

"We would particularly like to just say another big thank you to the maker of the banner Ed Halls who done a brilliant job of making this incredible piece of artwork which has already attracted a lot of attention," he said. ■

A WATERLOO FAREWELL

Waterloo branch said farewell to a long serving activist Dave Butler who felt it time to retire from South West Trains after working for over three decades as an activist at both LDC and Company Council level.

He was also the last former member of the old Sectional Council from British Rail.

Waterloo branch secretary Rickey Goodman worked with Dave on the SWT Company Council and alongside him as branch vice chairman.

"It's sad that we have to

say goodbye to Dave but it was a great honour to know someone who had a wealth of knowledge and would always stand up for his principals and represent his members to the best of his ability.

"He is a person who fought long and hard to secure the

best possible agreements for the members," he said.

He thanked Dave for all his hard work and branch members wished him all the very best in his retirement before the branch presented Dave with a gift. ■





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YORKS AND LINGS SAY FAREWELL TO JOYCE

Yorkshire and Lincolnshire regional council threw party to say farewell to South Humberside branch secretary Joyce Skye on her retirement.

Joyce joined the then NUR in October 1976 and has just completed 39 years' membership of the NUR/RMT. In that time, Joyce has been a long standing leading activist within the union, having been

a delegate to the women's conference, the women's advisory committee and was instrumental in the formation of the regional council's women's advisory committee.

Joyce was also South Humberside branch secretary for many years as well as regional council president, a local staff rep, Company Council rep and health and

safety Rep. Joyce has now retired from her job as a Crossing Keeper/Signaller at Barnetby and will be relinquishing her role as branch secretary at the end of the year.

RMT regional organiser Dave Collinson said that Joyce would be a very difficult act to follow.

"I hope Joyce will continue

to attend branch meetings when she can as a retired member where her extensive and invaluable knowledge gained over many years can be passed on to others following in her footsteps.

"On behalf of all our members and branches, I wish Joyce a long, happy, healthy retirement and all the very best for the future," he said. ■



FORT WILLIAM AWARD

Steve Hedley with branch chair Steve Wallace awarding 25 year service badges along with Mel

Davenport, Steven Cameron and Paul MacDonald in the Fort William Railway Club. ■



EAST HAM AWARDS

RMT assistant general secretary Steve Hedley presents 10 year awards to Tony Rowntree and Andrew Guyott and a 25 year badge to Joseph Boateng. ■

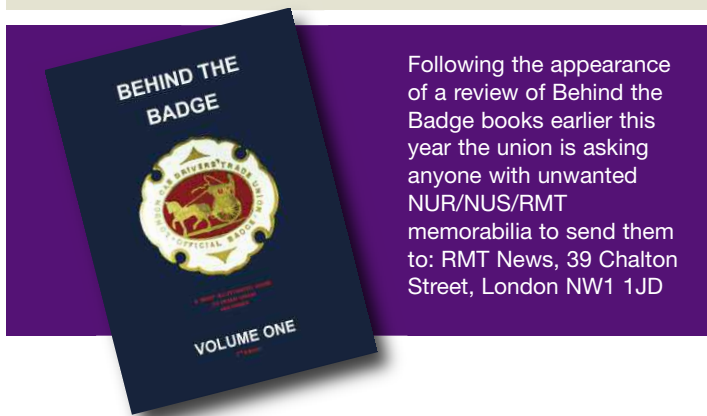


LUL AWARD

Long-serving Tube drivers' representative Gary Weston (centre) has retired, and received a presentation from president Peter Pinkney (left) and regional organiser John Leach (right). Central Line East branch secretary Janine Booth said that Gary was the Legend of Leytonstone.

"He joined the union in 1979 and has worked hard to represent and defend his fellow drivers for decades," she said.

Over 50 members turned out for the branch meeting to say goodbye to Gary and present long-service awards to several other branch members.



Following the appearance of a review of Behind the Badge books earlier this year the union is asking anyone with unwanted NUR/NUS/RMT memorabilia to send them to: RMT News, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

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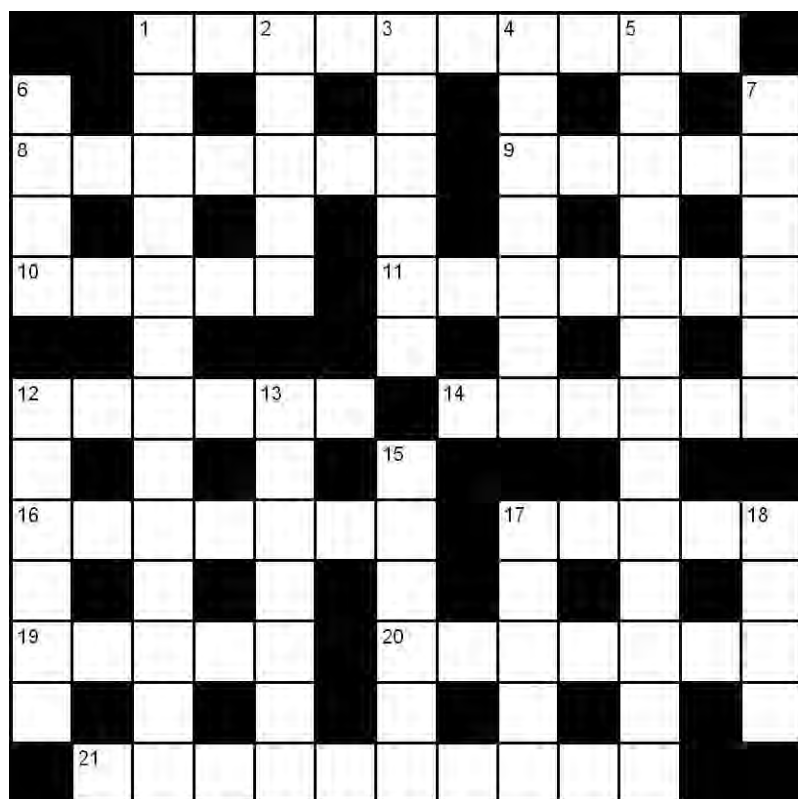
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Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by February 10 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Equivalent (10)
- 8 Supervise (7)
- 9 Tedium (6)
- 10 Tripod (5)
- 11 Understatement (7)
- 12 Treachery (6)
- 14 Cajun music (6)
- 16 Locate (7)
- 17 Grass (5)
- 19 Choose (5)
- 20 Increase (7)
- 21 Replicable (10)

DOWN

- 1 Hidden valuables (8,5)
- 2 Of the nose (5)
- 3 Ancient (3,3)
- 4 Openly (7)
- 5 Absence (3,10)
- 6 Discharge (4)
- 7 Farce (6)
- 12 Move sideways (7)
- 13 Babble (6)
- 15 Warm up (6)
- 17 Colonial greeting (5)
- 18 Open vessel (4)



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3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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