

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

Fighting for safety



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NATIONAL UNION OF RAIL, MARITIME & TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD



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Forename(s)*			
Home phone			
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Email address			
Date of Birth*		National Insurance Number*	

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

3 Sex. Male Female	Annual Basic Salary
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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
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Sexuality	Hetrosexual	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/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.	

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Your signature	Date
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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)

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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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- 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.
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EDITORIAL



FIGHTING FOR SAFETY

RMT has called on the Tory government to call off the blockade on serious talks in all of the current rail disputes and allow us to get on with genuine negotiations with their contractors.

If the government allows normal industrial relations to take place both sides could negotiate deals like the ones we have successfully struck in Wales and Scotland that guarantee a guard on the trains.

If it's good enough for Scotland and Wales it's good enough for the rest of Britain.

The government-cheerleaders from the self-styled Rail Delivery Group's own report into disabled access was suppressed because rail bosses did not like its conclusions that there should be a guard on every train.

Now we have a whitewash from the Office of Road and Rail which completely ducks the issue of driver-only trains, the issue at the heart of five current disputes across our railways. The fact is that disabled and older passengers who require assistance during their journey will be at a disadvantage if they no longer have the guarantee of the guard. This report chooses to ignore that.

This dereliction of duty by the ORR also breaks a promise they made to parliament almost a year ago that they would examine the impact of DOO on disabled passengers. Not only have they not done this assessment the public consultation does not even ask whether disabled passengers want to keep staff on trains.

There has been some good news including the fact that, following a high-profile RMT campaign, Network Rail, the Scottish government and ScotRail have agreed to end the dumping of raw sewage on rail infrastructure by the end of this year.

The union has now written to

Network Rail demanding clear assurances that the filthy and disgusting practice will end across the rest of the country by a clearly defined cut-off point with no exemptions or derogations.

I'm also pleased to report that all London Underground maintenance staff on the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines, nearly 2,000 workers, were transferred back into LUL finally ending the disastrous private-public-partnership project which led to Tube Lines being created in the first place.

RMT always opposed to the PPP on London Underground and all our warnings came to pass so this transition finally brings that disastrous experiment with Tube infrastructure privatisation to an end.

However the lessons of transport privatisation have still not been learned and, as the Scottish government review continues on the future of the ferry industry, RMT is calling for Northlink services to be brought back into the public sector where it belongs.

The government's widely-trailed plans to step up the testing of driverless vehicles on Britain's roads are simply a lethal gimmick that puts safety, jobs and the economy at risk.

This hyped up announcement is a desperate measure by a desperate Tory government that has little to offer but cuts, austerity and misery way off into the future if it is allowed to.

This is the last journal of the year so I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the union, to wish you all a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year and enjoy a well-earned break.

Best Wishes



ROCK SOLID

RMT members stand strong in strike action for rail safety

RMT members on Southern, Greater Anglia, South Western Railways and Island Line, Northern and Merseyrail have taken action against the extension of Driver-Only Operation in the latest phase of the fight for safety before the profiteering of private rail companies.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that political and public support was flooding in as communities stood against the drive to throw safety-critical staff off trains.

"At the recent Wimbledon derailment it was the guard on that train who safely evacuated 300 passengers in an emergency situation.

"Those are the same guards that South Western Railway used to call 'legends' and who they now want to throw off their trains.

"They are the same guards who have kept passengers safe for years on Merseyrail, Greater Anglia, Southern and Northern Rail.

"The Rail Delivery Group bosses club need to answer why they are now going back on their suppressed own report which said that guards were in the frontline in providing assistance to disabled and older passengers and that there should always be a member of on-board staff to assist passengers.

"All of these disputes have a common theme and that is a drive by foreign-owned rail companies to axe guards on Britain's trains in order to put private profit before public safety and accessibility.

"It is sickening that Chris Grayling and his supporters in the RDG are prepared to cheer on overseas operators who are robbing British passengers in order to subsidise transport services in Paris, Amsterdam and Hong Kong," he said.

Analysis of South Western Railway's existing policy for protecting older and disabled passengers found 140 – or 7 out of 10 – of the company's stations are unstaffed. The current policy

recognises this by guaranteeing an additional member of staff on "every" and "all trains", to help disabled and older passengers at unstaffed stations.

Under Grayling's plans for South Western, this policy will be ripped up as there will no longer be that guarantee of on train staffing. Where similar arrangements have been introduced on Southern disabled passengers have been left stranded at stations.

On Northern even local Tory MP for Copeland, Trudy Harrison – a marginal seat – has

joined Labour and Lib Dems in calling for train guards to be retained.

York Central MP and Shadow Rail Minister Rachael Maskell joined an RMT picket at York rail station.

She said that guards not only ensure that trains are safely dispatched, in providing a second pair of eyes to ensure that the doors are clear.

"They also ensure passenger safety and I urge Northern to come up with a workable solution to the deadlock," she said. ■





London Victoria



Strike Southend Victoria depot picket line.... with Jaime Blanco Carrasco, David Birmingham, Derrick Marr and Dave Kirk, all RMT train drivers supporting our Brothers and Sisters Guards



SOLIDARITY: YORK Central MP and Shadow Rail Minister Rachael Maskell joined an RMT picket at York Railway Station



Bournemouth



Fratton



Labour MP for Sheffield Heeley and Shadow Policing Minister on the picket line in Sheffield



Huddersfield

RMT CONDEMNS SHODDY SOUTHERN DRIVER DEAL

RMT has expressed disappointment that drivers' union ASLEF has agreed a deal on Southern rail over the role of the guard, which had excluded RMT, in return for a 28.5 per cent pay rise over the next five years.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the shoddy deal with parent firm Govia Thameslink Railway extended driver-only operation and institutionalised discrimination against disabled and older people.

"Where once such passengers who required assistance were guaranteed a second member of staff to assist a new clause in this deal deliberately sets out how where there is no on board supervisor the driver will knowingly have to leave such passengers stranded on trains and stations.

"RMT believes that a significant factor in delivering this result was the threat of massive legal costs levied on ASLEF by GTR as a result of

the anti-trade union laws.

"According to the respected industry journal Rail Business Intelligence punishing costs of £250,000 have already been meted out with a further half a million pounds being held back with a final payment to be based on the final terms agreed in any resolution to the dispute.

"That was a massive financial stick that the Courts had handed over to beat ASLEF and its members with and it had a decisive impact on this result.

"No-one should underestimate the impact of the bundles of cash that were being waved about by the basket-case Southern Rail to swing this vote through and it is a scandal that the company won't make the same financial commitments to keeping a guard on their trains.

"The result changes nothing in terms of RMT's campaign for a safe and accessible railway for all," he said. ■

VIRGIN PAY BATTLE ON TWO FRONTS

RMT members at Virgin West Coast back action and East Coast members balloted over pay justice

Members on Virgin West Coast services have voted massively by over nine to one in favour of both strike action and action short of a strike in a dispute over pay justice.

Virgin East Coast members are also being balloted after the company imposed a rejected pay offer creating a two-tier workforce where new applicants and long-standing staff would have different rights.

The West Coast ballot included nearly 1,800 train managers, on board catering, station, clerical and retail grades on the West Coast route from Glasgow down to Euston. The vote returned massive majorities for both strike action and action short of a strike on a very high turnout.

At the heart of the dispute is the union's demand for a suitable equal offer for its Virgin West Coast members to

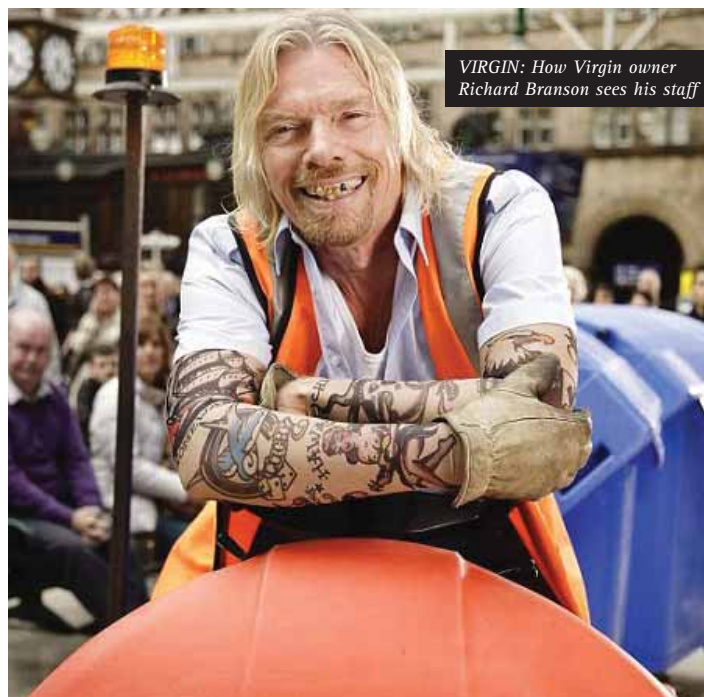
that received by drivers. Virgin has agreed a deal for drivers to buy out their claim for a one hour reduction in the base working week without loss of pay by giving an additional £500 on their basic salary, which is pensionable, whilst asking RMT members to enter into self-financing arrangements for other grades.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that members had voted overwhelmingly for action in this ballot which is all about workplace equality and workplace justice.

"We will also not stand by while Virgin East Coast attempts to impose a two-tier workforce with different terms and conditions for our members.

"It is shocking that the company are offering new employees an inferior sick pay scheme.

"The pay offer was put to our



VIRGIN: How Virgin owner Richard Branson sees his staff

members and they rejected it by a large majority and instead of negotiating the company has sought to impose the offer.

"All our members are demanding is a suitable and equal offer to that given to drivers to buy out their claim for a reduction in the base working week

"RMT has made it clear to the company that the inequality and underhanded approach of Virgin will be fought tooth and

nail.

"We will not accept our members being dealt with less favourably than others," he said.

"The message needs to get through to Sir Richard Branson on his luxury island retreat in the sunshine that those who are financing his lifestyle through their hard graft have had enough and are prepared to fight for justice in their workplaces," he said.



ARRIVA PULLS OUT OF WALES FRANCHISE

Arriva has pulled out of the contest to continue running most of Wales' rail network next year after controlling the franchise since 2003.

There are three remaining bidders - Abellio, KeolisAmey and MTR.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was interesting that Arriva Trains Wales pulled out of the bidding after Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones announced that the next Wales and Borders Franchise would keep a safety-critical conductor

or guard on all trains and services.

"This decision by Arriva to abandon their operations in Wales exposes the whole opportunist nature of the rail franchising process as they appear to have pulled out because they can't make

enough money.

"This news presents a golden opportunity for the Welsh to take back control of their railways through public ownership and that opportunity should be seized with both hands," he said.



PPP OVER AND OUT

Tube Lines staff brought back in-house finally ending PPP disaster

All London Underground maintenance staff on the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines, nearly 2,000 workers, were transferred into London Underground under TUPE last month finally ending the disastrous private-public-partnership project which led to Tube Lines company being created.

All such AP JNP members will remain on previous rates of pay, contract and terms and conditions and all policies, procedures and agreements will continue to apply.

However LUL is seeking to

reorganise its maintenance activities under the wider Transformation programme and these discussions are now taking place.

RMT regional organiser John Leach will be involved in-depth discussions and negotiations with reps from every affected function in attendance. The process is likely to take some time but the union will remain vigilant and be fully involved throughout.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that any future proposals would be subject to full consultation and any threat

to any member's job security or hard-fought agreements will be resisted by the union up to and including industrial action.

"At this early stage there are few details but as all members will now be back in-house under one public sector company we will be in a strong collective position going forward.

"RMT was always opposed to the private-public-partnership which led to Tube Lines being created in the first place and this transition finally brings that chapter to an end," he said.



ARRIVA CROSS COUNTRY STRIKE ACTION

Twenty-four hour strike action by train managers and senior conductors on Arriva Cross Country in a dispute over abuse of rostering and Sunday working went ahead in November after management wrecked talks aimed at reaching a solution.

The action involved services from Penzance to Aberdeen and points in between on Britain's most wide-ranging rail operation and more days of action are planned.

RMT warned passengers that the company are trying to recruit a scab army of managers, ill-equipped and without the skills and training needed to fulfil the safety-critical role of the guard, and paid a bounty of £250 with luxury hotel accommodation thrown in.

Drivers were also being strong-armed by the company with the imposition of compulsory overtime.

RMT has warned that these bogus train managers are acting outside of their substantive role and poorly trained, incapable of carrying out the full role and responsibility of a fully competent and safety critical guard on what will be the start of the busiest periods.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was disgraceful that management at Arriva had sabotaged talks and focussed on dishing out cash bungs to try and break the action.

"Our members are standing up for the principles of a decent work life balance and against the abuse of rostering and Sunday working by a management that is out of control.

"The action goes ahead and the disruption to services will be solely down to Arriva management intransigence," he said.



Members on Stagecoach South West buses have won an improved pay offer following a successful ballot for strike action.

The dispute involved over 800 bus drivers, cleaners and engineering grades at the Exeter, Torquay and Barnstaple garages.

Over 78 per cent of RMT members' voted for strike action whilst nearly 90 per cent voted

for action short of a strike in the ballot, highlighting the anger amongst staff and their determination to secure a fairer deal.

The improved offer represents a two per cent pay increase over the year and the hourly rate will rise to 2.5 per cent creating a higher base rate for future pay negotiations.

RMT general secretary Mick

Cash said that bus workers in the South West provided an essential service across a wide geographical area and they deserve a fair deal on pay

"The fact that the union has won an improved offer is wholly down to the members being prepared to fight for pay and workplace justice," he said.



NEVER AGAIN

NEVER AGAIN: RMT general secretary Mick Cash lays a wreath at the Kings Cross fire memorial

On the 30th anniversary of the Kings Cross fire union calls for end to £5.2 billion Tube cuts plan

RMT took part in commemorations for the 30th anniversary of the King's Cross fire, the worst fire in the history of the London Underground claiming the lives of 31 people and seriously injuring many more at King's Cross station.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash and RMT regional organiser John Leach laid a wreath on behalf of the union.

"Our thoughts are with all of those who lost their lives or were injured in this tragic event which still resonates throughout the transport industry thirty years on.

"The Kings Cross Fire stands alongside the appalling disaster at Grenfell Tower as a reminder to everyone that safety and regulation must remain our watchwords regardless of what

the bottom line says on a set of accounts.

"RMT has pledged to continue to fight cuts to jobs and budgets across London Underground, the wider rail industry and every sector that this trade union organises in.

"We will oppose with every tool at our disposal any moves which compromise the safety culture or water down the

regulatory framework.

"This commemoration will reinforce in all of us the need to be ever vigilant in respect of the safest possible staffing, standards and legislation to avoid a repeat of this tragedy," he said.

The blaze is thought to have started around 7:25pm on November 18 1987, when a lit match fell through a gap on a

wooden escalator and set fire to material beneath the steps.

London Underground was strongly criticised in the Fennell report produced following the disaster for underestimating the hazard. For example staff were expected to send for the Fire Brigade only if the fire was out of control, dealing with it themselves if possible.

The publication of the report led to the introduction of The Fire Precautions (Sub-surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989 which, among other things, laid out minimum staffing levels and other safety standards.

In 2004 the union successfully fought off attempts by the government to water down these regulations and abolishing the 'Section 12' regulations that prescribe safety standards for sub-surface stations all over Britain.

The regulations stipulate minimum safe staffing levels, means of detecting fires and means of escape and fire-fighting, as well as standards of fire-resistant construction, training and various other precautions.

Today the union is fighting over £5 billion worth of planned cuts and over 1,400 job losses being lined up by Transport for London.

All the Tube and TfL unions have been sent written details of the next phase in the wrongly named 'transformation' process.

"As part of the Mayor's efforts to slash spending by £5.5 billion by 2021 we are now being told that the company plan to cut up to 1,400 jobs in engineering in TfL and in some areas of LU.

"RMT demands that no cuts take place, so close to the King's Cross fire anniversary and it would be appalling if there was any hacking back on safety.

"The Mayor needs to stand up for TfL and demand restoration of the full capital grant and proper central government funding for the Tube," said Mick Cash. ■

Parliamentary column



MPS BACK MERSEYRAIL GUARDS

Liverpool Walton Labour MP Dan Carden recently secured a parliamentary debate in support of Merseyrail guards. Below are some of the extracts.

"It is worth remembering that when workers want to raise issues as important as public safety and protecting decent jobs, they too often have to take industrial action, putting their livelihoods at risk—something I do not have to do by making this speech.

"Guards are so important for safety, security, service and accessibility and to highlight the level of public support for retaining guards on trains"

"There is not, a binary choice between having our new trains and keeping a fully-staffed service. The two are not mutually exclusive. The new carriageless trains, with their more open structure, allow a guard to pass more easily through the length of a train.

"In fact, Merseytravel originally said that it wanted to have a second member of staff on every train.

"Figures obtained under a freedom of information request submitted by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers showed that in the past five years there were more than 1,200 on-train crimes on Merseyrail.

"The figures also show that almost 900 crimes, or 72 per cent, took place before 8 pm, which was the time at which Merseyrail indicated that it would seek to keep a second, non-safety-critical person on the train. That begs the question that if Merseyrail acknowledges the need for a second person on the train after 8 pm, why not before?"

"Too much of the debate so far has focused on issues such as who will operate the doors and whether DOO can safely dispatch a train. I am afraid that these arguments are disingenuous and completely miss the point.

"Neither the government nor the train company-financed rail regulators have made any assessment of the additional risk to passengers once the train has left the platform, with or without a

guard on board. How can any decision on extending DOO claim to take passenger safety seriously before such an assessment has been made?"

"Despite several days of strike action, the public still overwhelmingly back the guards. The entire trade union movement and the north-west TUC support the guards and Labour Party policy is clear: to oppose any extension of DOO.

"The Welsh government has now guaranteed a guard on every train for future franchises, and Scotland has made similar long-term arrangements. The shadow Secretary of State wrote to train operators last week to tell them that a Labour government would halt any plans to extend DOO. Merseytravel former chairman Mark Dowd remains fully opposed to removing the guards, saying that "common sense should prevail".

"It has never been clearer that we need a new structure for our railways. Labour would take back control by bringing our rail network into public ownership. By reinvesting the revenues that are currently disappearing into shareholders' pockets, a Labour government would ensure that we have affordable fares, state-of-the-art trains, safe staffing levels and an end to DOO. We would embrace technology while preserving good, skilled jobs," he said.

Responding to the debate RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union is seeking a meeting with Liverpool's Metro Mayor and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority leaders to resolve the dispute and await any proposal on independent conciliation.

"We are also prepared to respond constructively to proposals from MPs and examine how agreements we have reached elsewhere can also be applied to Merseyrail.

"It is also important to note that the Welsh Labour government recently agreed with RMT to keep a guard on all new trains, including metro services and we cannot see any reason why Labour leaders in Liverpool cannot also do the same," he said.

FUNDING: Engineers look at the railway line near Botley station in Hampshire



NETWORK RAIL MUST END CASUALISATION

Government
publishes plans for
Network Rail
funding union calls
for an end to
outsourcing and
casualisation

Network Rail is expected to spend £47.9 billion, including a government grant of £34.7 billion according to the Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) for 2019 to 2024, known as Control Period 6 (CP6).

In general, the funding is to cover the operation, maintenance and renewals of the railway with little provision for enhancements as new enhancements in CP6 will be funded separately and possibly differently as suggested by the Hanford Review.

There are two important factors to note regarding the additional funding.

Firstly, an increase in funding is rare. There were cuts of 27 per cent in CP3 (2004–2009), a further 20 per cent in CP4 (2009–2014) and around another 20 per cent in CP5 (2014–2019).

These cuts, coupled with the inefficiencies which outsourcing brings to the industry, have led to the current renewals crisis.

When the SoFA is compared against the equivalent figures for CP5, it shows an increase of around 20 per cent in Network Rail's expenditure which when compared to the cuts endured over the previous three control periods hardly amounts to an

investment.

Secondly where is the money going?

In the last financial year almost £3.7 billion was sucked out of Network Rail by its "top 20 suppliers" – predominately labour suppliers. Any additional funding should be considered in that context – if the leakages occur at the current rates some £18.5 billion will be returned to the construction oligarchs over the five years of Control Period 6. That is almost 40 per cent of total expenditure on the top 20 suppliers alone.

It is no surprise that the SoFA was "applauded" by the Railway Industry Association.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that while extra funding to Network Rail was welcome it must be linked to key issues including, as a top priority, a commitment to stamp out the negative employment practices which have been nurtured on the railways by the private construction sector.

"The Office of Rail and Road has in the past described these practices as being "not conducive to a safe railway".

"The public sector Network Rail must move away from the short term avarice of the private sector, and the government

	CP5	CP6
Total Expenditure	38.3	47.9
Incl. Network Grant	19.6	34.7

cheerleaders in the bosses club the Rail Delivery Group, through ending the rip off of subcontracting and investing in the skills base instead shoring up private shareholders dividends," he said.

The union is continuing to campaign against the deferral of £3.7 billion of renewals to CP6, and has highlighted that bringing forward monies which were already deferred to CP6 are not new or additional funds.

In fact, as noted by the respected Rail Business Intelligence journal, there is "a parallel with the Periodic Review 2000 when funding was brought forward to ease financial pressures on Railtrack".

The union has repeatedly raised its concerns that despite the plethora of reviews no analysis of the consequences of outsourcing renewals work or the benefits of returning the work in-house has been undertaken despite the obvious comparison with the saving of £400 million a year through unifying and bringing maintenance in-house.

RMT will be campaigning throughout PR18 for the government to undertake such a review and take measures to end the casualisation of the safety critical rail infrastructure workforce.

Transport Scotland did not receive the details of the settlement until the evening of October 12, and believe that changes brought about by the UK government from 2019 could result in a real terms cut to Scotland's rail funds. The Scottish government was made aware of these changes the day before the original publication date for the HLOS and SoFA and now estimate that it could leave a £600 million shortfall based on what was prescribed in their detailed HLOS.

In December Network Rail will produce its Strategic Business Plans (SBPs) setting out what it proposes to deliver in CP6 and how much it will cost. This will be the first opportunity to see real detail regarding proposals, in particular proposed efficiencies. ■

BOGUS BILLIONS FOR RAIL

RMT exposes double accounting in bosses 'rail plan'

Rail industry bosses club the Rail Delivery Group has been pumping out more bogus propaganda claiming that private train operating companies are investing in the country when, in fact, they are robbing hundreds of millions of pounds to invest in domestic transport operations in other parts of Europe.

A new flimsy Rail Delivery Group plan, called 'In Partnership for Britain's Prosperity', claims that railway will secure almost £85 billion of additional economic benefits for the country.

The report also claims six

times that the private sector is investing £11.5 billion in the desperate hope that someone will believe them.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the much-hyped Rail Delivery Group's plans for Britain's railways did not stand up to scrutiny and were exposed as yet another fraud imposed on the British travelling public by a racketeering rail industry that is out of control.

"There is not a penny piece of new money in any of this and the cash that is being talked up is British taxpayer and fare-payer money that has

already been announced and spun up on numerous occasions in the past.

"It is scandalous double-accounting on an epic scale which leaves the foreign companies that own the vast bulk of Britain's railways free to carry on fleecing passengers in the UK in order to invest in services in Paris, Berlin and Amsterdam.

"That racket should be called to a halt and there should also be some thorough scrutiny of the fare payer and tax payer money that is being used to finance this pro-government propaganda through the Tory

Party cheerleaders in the self-styled Rail Delivery Group.

"It is sickening to hear industry bosses on the media talking up the role of staff in delivering rail services, the very same safety-critical staff that Rail Delivery Group members are determined to throw off our trains.

"RMT will continue to fight for a genuine single and publicly owned railway as part of a fully integrated transport policy that puts the needs of the people, our communities and our economy before those of the profiteers," he said. ■

OSBORNE'S SUB-STANDARD

London Evening Standard campaign against RMT backfires spectacularly

You know when you are hitting home against the vested-interests who run our privatised rail companies when the usual suspects from the right-wing media reach deep into the very darkest of recesses of the old dirty tricks department.

So with five separate groups of RMT members involved in disputes with their employers around the common theme of rail safety and the role of the guard it came as no surprise that in one newsroom in central London a political figure from the not too distant past was cooking up a scam that was to leave him with egg smeared right across his all-to familiar face.

Step forward George Osborne – former failed Chancellor of the Exchequer that invented both austerity and the big lies of the doomed EU Remain campaign. When the electorate found him out George legged it for the big bucks of the City and the editors chair at the *London Evening Standard*, despite the fact that he drove

the UK economy over a cliff and has never done a day's work as a journalist in his life.

It's well known that George Osborne hates Theresa May but when push comes to shove old school class interests kick in and he hates the trade unions even more. Despite the fact that it's *Evening Standard* core readers, the beleaguered commuters who have the most to lose from axing guards on their expensive, rammed-out trains, George couldn't resist the temptation to try and stick the boot in on behalf of Grayling and the greedy train companies.

The so-called sting was pathetic in the extreme. RMT general secretary Mick Cash and the assistant general secretary Mick Lynch were to be followed by a hack on their journey into work and then confronted en-route to account for their actions.

The whole racketsy concept failed to even get past first base with the GS who was dropping a family member off at the station before heading down to

central London on the train. Not even the great brain of George Osborne could do much with the material which that exercise yielded so it was on to Mick Lynch.

Mick commutes in from his West London home on the only available rail service – which happens to be one of the 30 per cent of routes running on D00. As he told the press: "I don't agree with the privatisation of our water, does that mean that as far as George Osborne and the *Evening Standard* are concerned that I'm not allowed to have a bath".

Cue a front page splash in Osborne's rag with Mick Lynch sitting between two other passengers, reading a newspaper under the banner headline "Hypocrite". But Osborne had misjudged his audience wholesale and when he tweeted news of his scoop his timeline

filled up with hundreds of people pointing out that "Man Gets On Train" is hardly breaking news along with plenty of salacious stuff about the Tory Boy himself.

Because let's not forget George Osborne's own form when it comes to using the railways. Like the time he got fingered trying to bunk First Class with a standard ticket, hypocrite indeed.

As Mick Cash pointed out: "It is ludicrous to suggest that the union should boycott existing D00 services in the same way it would be to boycott the entire transport network because we oppose privatisation.

"The union will not be deflected away from the fight to put public safety before private profit through attempts to trivialise the issue".

Osbourne travels without a ticket



RMT AT STUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

An RMT delegation attended the 90th STUC woman's conference in Rothes Hall in Glenrothes last month.

As well as attending workshops on the affects Brexit will have on women in Scotland and women and Mesothelioma, there was a full two days of debate on the issues affecting woman daily in Scotland.

There was a screening of the Period Dignity film Free Period and period poverty was very high in the conference agenda and the STUC women's committee has backed the consultation paper by Monica

Lennon MSP.

The RMT delegation moved a motion on modern apprenticeships in Caledonian MacBryne, in the work done to encourage more women to apply for apprenticeships. There was also a motion on Woman's safety and D00 trains calling for the retention of the guard.

The delegation also supported motions on opposing cuts to personal safety for women at railway stations and domestic abuse. Ann Henderson (centre of picture) also received the Meritorious Award, a very worthy recipient. ■



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FIGHTING BACK OFFSHORE

RMT offshore energy branch secretary Mike McCaig reports on how the union is fighting back against vicious cuts

RMT members in the offshore energy sector have faced an unprecedented scale of cuts and redundancies over the last three years as the biggest downturn ever to affect the global oil and gas sector has taken effect.

Industry body Oil and Gas UK report that over 160,000 jobs have gone in the UK across the industry and the wider supply chain as a consequence of industry cutbacks, and there is no one in the industry that hasn't been affected.

It's been a very long and extremely difficult period for our members and offshore workers generally, for many it's been a battle for survival.

There's no doubt that workers across the sector are 'battle weary', and when you look at the eye-watering figures of those out of a job and the extent of the cuts applied to those who survived – an average of 20 per cent – you begin to understand why.

However, for RMT the battle cry has always been "never on our knees" and, weary or not, the union believes that it is time to start the fight back.

Organisers and branches in Scotland have met in recent weeks and battle plans are being drawn up to start organising a sector that desperately needs support. Catering workers

covered by COTA, the diving crews covered by the ODIA and now the maintenance and engineering workers covered by OCA are all at critical stages as negotiations begin in earnest for the next year or more.

RMT is now part of the OCA along with our Unite and GMB union colleagues and members will be included in the consultation and balloting processes. As well as these groups RMT also has our seafaring members employed in the stand-by and supply vessel industries.

To start the fight back the union will have teams out in January at the heliports, the

docks and the surrounding hotels setting out dates and locations for meetings, information and contacts.

RMT wants to start a 'big conversation' about how to organise to protect the industry, provide secure well paid employment in the oil and gas, decommissioning and renewables sectors and to secure a future.

The fact is, if we don't get organised and start the fight back, there will be no future. Look out for more information and get involved. The offshore energy branch and the Aberdeen shipping branch want to hear from you. ■

SEWAGE SUCCESS

Union welcomes ScotRail plan to end dumping raw sewage on rail tracks and calls on others to follow suit

Following a high-profile RMT campaign, Network Rail, the Scottish government and Abellio ScotRail have put in additional resources to end the dumping of raw sewage onto Scotland's rail infrastructure by the end of this year.

RMT coordinators at ScotRail Jim Gray and Dane Smith led the campaign said that the completion of the work was great news for workers employed at Scotrail in the engineering department as they will no longer have to deal with human waste spread all over the undercarriage of the rolling stock while undertaking their duties.

"RMT infrastructure members at Network Rail and at contracting companies have had to endure the infrastructure being contaminated by human waste for far too long and I am delighted this is now coming to an end in a few weeks' time," said Mr Smith.

They both took the opportunity to thank Syeda Ghufuran, head of engineering projects at Scotrail and her team for their diligence in keeping the programme on course on a

tight schedule.

Jim and Dane hope the successful campaign in Scotland will send a message to other train operating companies and the government that a twenty first century railway must not tolerate nineteenth century methods of dealing with human waste.

The union has written to the Chief Executive of Network Rail demanding clear assurances that the filthy and disgusting practice will end by a clearly defined cut-off point with no exemptions or derogations.

RMT has written the letter after Mark Carne told the press that the practice would be phased out by next year – a pledge that RMT wants turned into a cast iron guarantee with an assurance that punitive action will be taken against those train companies that attempt to flout it.

RMT also wants assurances that train companies will not be allowed to duck the issue by simply stripping out their toilets and replacing them with seats as has happened in the past on the south coast.

RMT general secretary Mick



SUCCESS: RMT coordinators at Scotrail Jim Gray (centre) and Dane Smith (right) with Syeda Ghufuran, head of engineering projects at Scotrail.

Cash wrote to NR concerning recent articles in the press with regards to the end of dumping raw human sewage out on to the rail track.

"My trade union has been raising this very issue for many years and many times promises are made with reference to new rolling stock, modern technology and facilities back in depots and sidings. I have to ask you, what makes it so different this time around?"

"I would ask you to ensure that every operator across all sectors of the industry is operationally bound to provide suitable and sufficient arrangements for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health by an agreed cut-off date.

"If it's good enough for the workers in Scotland from December 2017 it should be the same standard for rail maintenance and track workers in England and Wales?," the letter said.

Mick Cash said that the union had fought long and hard to end practice of dumping

human waste on Britain's railways for many years now and was sick and tired of being fobbed off with warm words and vague targets.

"We want cast-iron guarantees and we want them now.

"It is outrageous that wealthy, profiteering private train companies have been allowed to get away with this scandalous abuse for so long because they are too greedy and tight-fisted to bring it to an end.

"The financial responsibility for ending this scandal should fall to the rail rip-off merchants and not the British taxpayer.

"The government cheerleaders at the self-styled Rail Delivery Group are quick to stick the boot into Britain's guards when they stand up for public safety.

"It is time for them to get their house and their industry in order and show some support for the workforce for whom a dousing with faeces from a passing train is a regular occurrence," he said. ■

EDUCATING IN 2018

RMT has a full education programme for next year at our state-of-the-art education centre in Doncaster

The work of equipping RMT representatives and activists to protect the interests of our members and to fight for their demands continues next year.

The 2018 calendar for the Bob Crow national education centre is available on the RMT website, within the education section, and can be provided by contacting the national education officer at a.gilchrist@rmt.org.uk.

The programme prioritises core skills courses for workplace representative and branch officials. These courses continue to provide the basic skills, knowledge and guidance for those key roles in our union, including equality. As in previous years a range of specialist courses are scheduled around issues that are prevalent in the workplaces and affect our members, these courses, whether looking at mental health, cancer or autism, look to provide support to deal with these issues for the benefit of our membership. A number of course for members working in the maritime industries are also within the programme –

- Maritime Health & Safety – Stages 1 and 2 and both parts of each. To enable

those completing these courses to ensure the safety and welfare whilst at work of their work mates.

- Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) – a course to assist those members to whom this applies to understand exactly what it covers and how it can be used to benefit our members.
- Seafarers Introductory Course – mirroring the longstanding Workplace Reps Introductory course, this is the ideal first course for ‘new’ RMT Seafarer members before considering attending the core skills courses to continue their Trade Union education.

The union’s advisory committees also have the opportunity to apply to attend short weekend courses that concentrate on their issues and provide an excellent first taste of trade union education that hopefully will lead to many of them on to attending courses to become representatives and future officials.

The learning agenda continues with two projects in Scotland and one in England, all three being hugely successful, so

in 2018 the learning teams will utilise the centre for meetings and ULR training.

The programme reflects the fact that RMT is an all grades union with RMT representatives from across the country learning and teaching their comrades side by side. Many of the problems members are faced with in the workplace are very similar across the industries and often the solutions are common and it's through the collective learning approach that these solutions are tested and shared. It is this same collective learning experience that should help us to work collectively with great effect back in the workplaces.

The courses continue to be delivered by RMT lay tutors, all of whom are properly trained and qualified.

FILM

As part of on-going development of RMT's educational programme, a new tutoring resource has been developed to offer a refreshing and engaging way of looking at our union's history and structures and how RMT came to be the union it is.

In a film that features archive footage, animation, and a variety of contributors, this new resource, located on the education section of the RMT website, will be supported with tutor notes to spark discussion and debate. Of course, it can be viewed in its entirety, or just to inform and even entertain.

There are many people to thank for this innovative project but special thanks must go to Alex Gordon, Chris Reeves of Platform Films, award-winning animator Robert Grieves and star of stage, screen and TV Maxine Peake, as well as our own members especially Jennifer Aggrey-Finn, Ajayi Olumiyiwa and Thandi Mabudoko and too many RMT members and officers to mention here.

This filmed resource has been listed for the Labour Film awards as part of the London Labour Film Festival later this year.

CHANGES

Changes have had to be made to the management of course programmes with three rooms at the centre in Doncaster and the regional programme effectively constituting a fourth room. The new application forms for all courses will be collated at the centre, but also by working closely with regional offices.

The recent circulars Ed/147/17 & Ed/148/17 set out the administrative detail. However it is important to underline two new elements, firstly the request for any information relating to any reasonable adjustments we need to make for members attending courses due to disability. Secondly a request in the application form for information from the applicant as to what previous course they may have done or been involved in as a result of the course, if they are new to education, what they hope to get out of the course and hope to do as a result. Students continue to be contacted some six weeks after their attendance.

CONFERENCE

Clearly the education centre and its educational work is a wonderful resource but it's also driven ultimately by our members. Each year the national education conference takes place, the next being on March 14 2018, at Doncaster Trades Club.

This conference has the ability, as set out in our rules, to submit up to two resolutions on any education or learning issue. Further it can submit resolutions directly to the national executive committee (NEC) for their consideration. Between conferences, the national education advisory committee meets at least three times a year to consider all matters education and learning and again it can forward advice to the NEC for consideration.

These are the two structures that were placed in our rule book to progress issues education and learning to our NEC and AGM. Both are

democratic and lay-led and any education or learning issue can be raised or suggested for the agenda of the meetings. Conference attendance could be better and the education advisory committee needs more delegates attending from the tutor group, four Union Learning Reps (ULRs) and, in fact, anyone with an interest or a point to make about our education and learning work.

Changes are still being made to the 2018 programme. The union has decided to put in place short tutored sessions at branches and regions and work to make this happen in 2018 is underway.

Finally, earlier in 2017 the education centre manager Barbara Collinson retired and many people in the union over the years of attending the centre

will have met and known Barbara and the help she was always on hand to give. Barbara was appointed at the very beginnings in 2006 and clearly has played her part in making the centre the success it is today. All in the RMT past and present would want to wish Barbara a long and happy retirement.

In September the union appointed Yvonne Thiede as the new manager of the Bob Crow national education centre and it is clear already that Yvonne is rising to the challenge she has undertaken and all will wish her well. Rosaline Bryant has also joined our cleaning team, a big welcome to 'Ros'.

The union would encourage members to get involved by booking themselves onto a course at the centre in 2018. ■





ORGANISING ON ORKNEY

Aberdeen Shipping branch chair Tom Causby reports on organising seafarers at three ferry operators on Orkney

I spent some very interesting and productive days organising seafarers at three ferry operators on Orkney along with regional organiser Gordon Martin and Donald Graham from RMT's organising unit last month.

Our organising activities began at Northlink with a well-attended meeting on board the MV Hamnavoe where forthcoming pay negotiations were discussed and members present contributed fully to discussions and voiced their aspirations regarding pay and conditions.

Gordon Martin led a discussion on the union's Nationalise Northlink! campaign with many excellent contributions from the floor. This was a really positive meeting with 100 per cent

support for the RMT campaign to end private operators making money out of lifeline ferry services.

The members clearly understand the reasons for the union's campaign and will continue to play an active role in helping to spread our principled position of public ownership to their families and friends on Orkney and beyond.

As Chair of the Northlink Port Committee, I highlighted how Aberdeen Shipping branch would continue to work closely with the union to ensure we have as many members as possible in RMT and to ensure information gets from the union to the members at Northlink.

In recent years we have significantly increased our representation structure at

Northlink. This has undoubtedly strengthened our position throughout these uncertain times for all at Northlink as the Scottish government ferries review continues to deliberate on the future of the ferry industry in Scotland.

The second day of our three-day organising activities took us down to the terminal at St Margaret's Hope which is home to Pentland Ferries. This is a small independent and unfortunately anti-union ferry operator where RMT has only very recently began trying to recruit and organise.

Terms and conditions at this company are far from ideal but the regional organiser has visited the vessel a couple of times since the summer and we are beginning to recruit and

organise these workers.

Unfortunately shortly after arrival at St Margaret's Hope we were informed that the vessel had broken down at the other side which of course denied us access to the crew. This proved only to be a minor setback as we were able to make contact with members and arranged to meet up with them at a later date.

While disappointed at not being able to sail with Pentland Ferries and talk to the crew about the many benefits of RMT membership we took the opportunity to meet up with interested parties on the situation of the ferry industry on Orkney.

It was suggested a public meeting should be arranged and all interested parties should be



ORGANISING : Aberdeen Shipping branch chair Tom Causby with regional organiser Gordon Martin explaining the benefits of RMT membership

invited to discuss and debate future funding and ownership arrangements for the industry.

The third and final day there was an informal and introductory meeting with the head of Orkney Islands marine services at Orkney Islands Council.

The regional organiser made it clear that the current pay offer on the table was unacceptable and an improvement must be tabled soon or RMT would ballot our Orkney Ferries membership.

Following the meeting we held an on-board meeting on one of the Orkney Ferries vessels. Due to the winter timetable now being in place, all three vessels covered by the RMT collective agreement were in Kirkwall ferry terminal at the same time which ensured a packed mess room for our

meeting.

I explained the role of the branch and Gordon Martin gave the members an update on the potential dispute over the unsatisfactory pay offer. I am delighted to report that crew members who weren't members joined up substantially increasing membership at Orkney Ferries. New RMT rep Paul Robertson is also in place we have also improved our organisation at this company over the last few months.

Later that day Gordon Martin had a pre-planned meeting with senior management from Pentland Ferries. The company made it clear they were not interested in granting a recognition agreement while the Gordon made clear that RMT would continue to recruit and organise at the company.

I would like to thank the

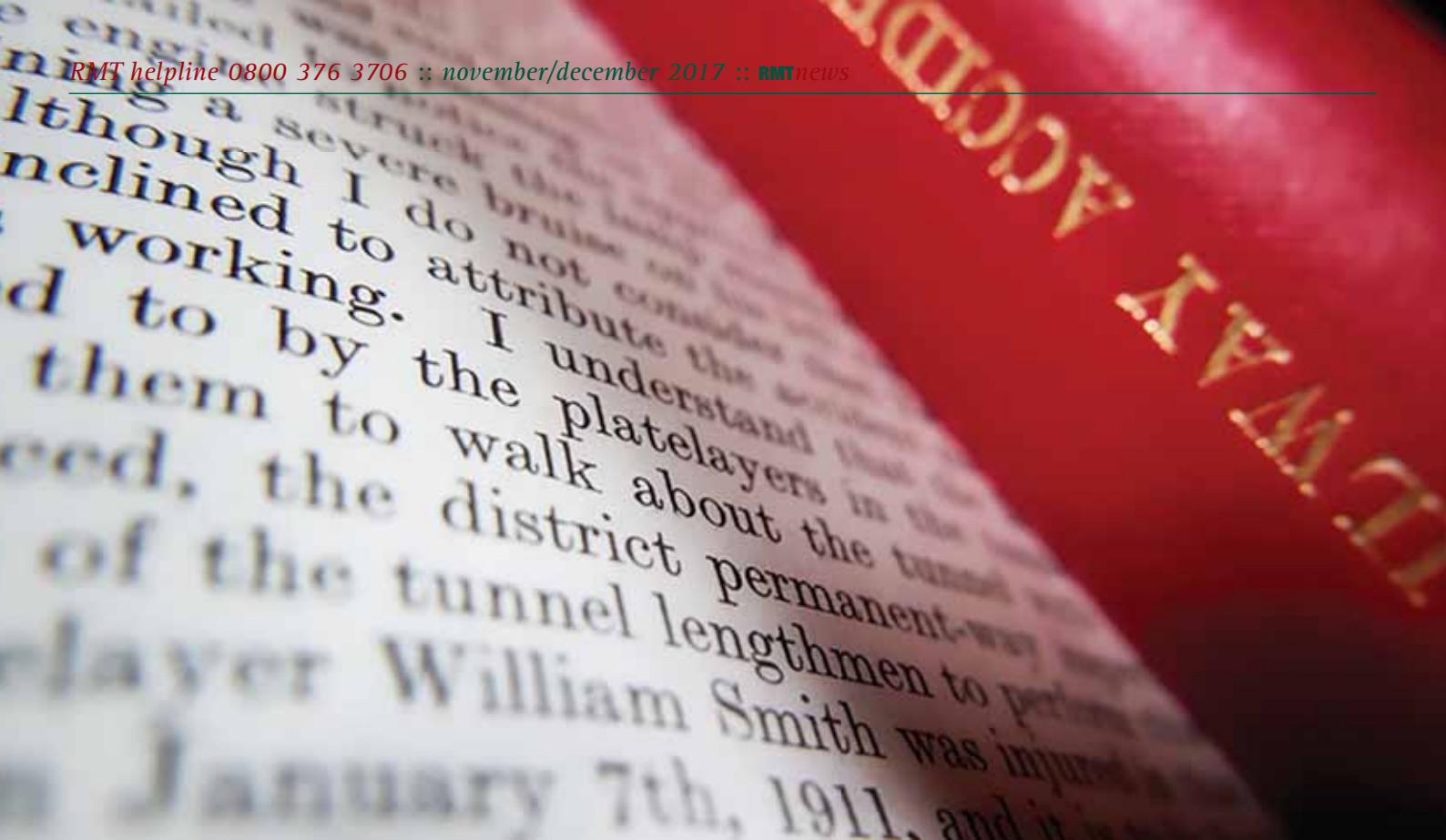


members at each of the companies we visited for their warm welcome and active support for what we as a branch and as a union are trying to achieve.

Aberdeen Shipping branch secretary Scott Agnew, myself and the other branch officials are determined to see the branch

grow and strengthen in the coming years, and visits to Orkney and Shetland on recruitment and retention visits as well as holding branch meetings on the Northern Isles from time to time is very much part of the branch plan in the New Year.





WORKING & DYING ON THE RAILWAYS, 100 YEARS AGO

Historian Mike Esbester introduces a new project which shows the perils of railway work around the time of the First World War – and makes us think about what's changed today

One death or injury on the railways is one too many – that much was as true in 1911 as it is today, though sadly in 1911 it didn't prevent 446 railway workers from dying on the job and nearly 27,900 from being injured.

The 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project is exploring

accidents to railway workers between 1911 and 1915, taken from the state accident investigations undertaken at the time. We're using the reports of the investigations to find out more about what it was like to work on Britain's railways in the run-up to the First World War and how so many people

died or were injured.

We also want to humanise the harsh statistics: every one of the 28,294 casualties in 1911 had a name, a family, friends and colleagues. It's all too easy to lose sight of the real impact of accidents when confronted with the vast numbers of casualties at this time. And it's

important for us to think about – and challenge – the ideas of responsibility which were held at the time. All too often these found that worker 'carelessness' (the term used at the time) was to blame, whereas now we'd see the issues as relating to the pressure of work, economies in work and dangers that were

accepted by the employers as a part of work.

The project website is available at: www.railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk It features details of all the 3,911 cases featured in the state accident reports between 1911 and 1915 (when reporting was suspended due to the war). Clearly the state didn't investigate every single accident: it couldn't, as there were far too many. This is just another reminder of the fact that the railway industry was one of the most dangerous workplaces in Britain at this time.

Until our project, it was difficult to find out details about these cases: the accident reports were hidden in the archives (if you knew where to look!). Now, thanks to the project, it's very easy to find out more. We're put all the key details of the accidents into a single spreadsheet, available for free on our project website. We'd encourage you all to go and have a look and see what you find.

The spreadsheet includes details of the date of accident, name(s) of people involved, sex, age, location of accident, occupation, employer, time of accident, nature of casualty (fatal/ type of injury), type of accident and details, cause of accident, time on duty, and any recommendation for changes following investigation. It covers all grades of railway work, and cases from across the UK, including Ireland (which was still part of the UK at this time).

We're also featuring a regular blog on the website, usually exploring one case from the files in detail. We hope our project will be of interest to you all – as well as to anyone interested in railway history, labour history, family history and many other topics.

So, one case that features is about intensifying work: that of boiler washer T George, killed at Bassaleg Loco Shed in 1911. He was crushed between a shed pillar and an engine –

one of a new, bigger class, as the railway company attempted to extract more work from its staff. The state inspector recommended altering the shed – but that would have been costly, something the companies didn't like. There's more about this case, and many others, on the blog.

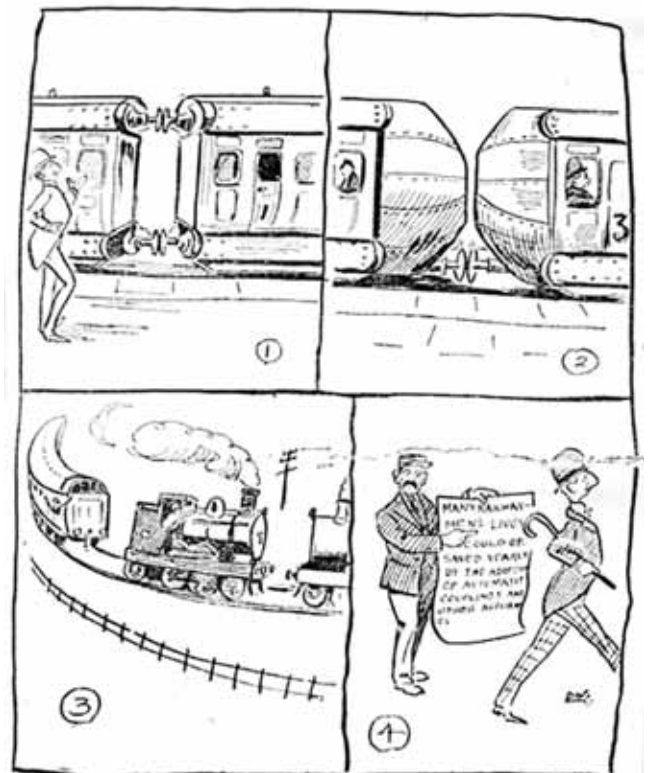
One thing we don't often know is if the people featured in the accidents were union members or not. So, if you spot anyone you know was a union member, please tell us.

One really important aspect of what we're doing is that we want to use the past to help us understand – and maybe even improve – the present and future. So, we want to think about how we can use our project today: and we're keen to hear from you about this – please get in touch.

The project is led by Dr Mike Esbester of the University of Portsmouth and Karen Baker of the National Railway Museum. But the most important part has been played by volunteers from NRM, who have been through the reports and collated the details in the spreadsheet. They've done a fantastic job, and we're very grateful to them for their efforts.

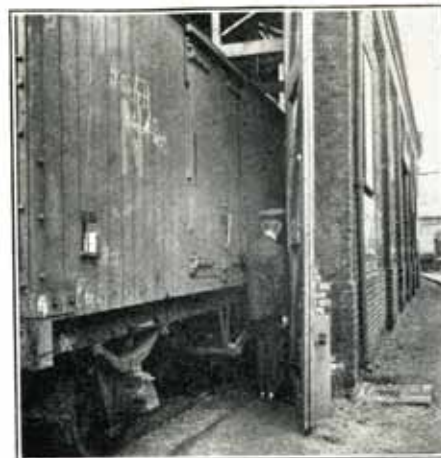
So far we've covered state reports for 1911-15 – but we want to do more! There are plenty more state reports after 1919, and also all sorts of other materials: the railway companies produced their own reports, and of course the trades unions (particularly the NUR, the forerunner of the RMT) have plenty of material touching on worker accidents. We're working with key archives to get them involved in making this material available, and we'll be looking for volunteers to get involved in the future – do let us know if you're interested.

You can contact us at railwayaccidents@gmail.com or via Twitter (@RWLDproject) – we're keen to hear from you, especially if you'd like to be involved in the next stages of our work. ■



Many persons inspired by the recent railway collisions have been offering suggestions through the Press.

1. One genius suggested buffers at the top of the carriage as well as at the bottom.
2. Another suggested a sort of bulk-head arrangement at the ends of the coaches.
3. Whilst another advocated a "slip" arrangement upon the engine so that the driver, on seeing a collision imminent, could leave his train behind and damage only his engine.
4. But when it comes to practical suggestions for saving thousands of railwaymen's lives, why—that is quite another matter.



Before attempting to pass between the shed door and a wagon, make sure there is no possibility of the vehicle moving, otherwise you may get crushed.



"Into the Jaws of Death,"

Many a man loses his life through not looking in both directions before crossing the line.

NATIONALISE RAIL!



RMT Manchester South branch chair George Waterhouse argues that Brexit is an opportunity to get our railways back

Britain loves its railway. It was one of our country's finest inventions. Its sense of nostalgic romance still captivates us and is reflected in the popularity of our many heritage lines, steam charter trains and television programmes.

Many stations are looked after by enthusiastic community groups that maintain flower beds. Its respectable, disciplined workforce and its union the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS), fired by a nonconformist Christian sense of community and solidarity, played a major role in the founding of the Labour Party.

Yet with rising ticket prices and a vindictive government campaign to take guards off trains, renationalisation is increasingly popular with voters of all parties. Withdrawal from the European Union with its strict enforcement of competitive tendering in the single liberalised European rail "market" leave the door open to bringing back British Rail. A new peoples' railway run on the values of work, family and community would symbolise a brighter post-Brexit future.

Railway employment with its stability and discipline produced a proud workforce with a strong sense of identity. This was reflected in the ASRS union which became the National Union of Railwaymen in 1913.

In the family

It was a friendly society that looked after its members and their families in an industry where injury and even death at work was common. At meetings branch chairs presided holding the branch gavels, conferences were chaired by their president wearing his chain of office. They called each other brother, we still do.

When the union marched it did so in formation behind beautiful branch banners with brass bands and branch officials wearing their embroidered red and green sashes. David Howell's study of the history of railway union politics, *Respectable Radicals*, describes their uniform, their time keeping and their adherence to railway rules and regulations and they certainly were very respectable.

With their peaked caps there was a semi-military way of working, today on the railway we still use terms such as mess

rooms. With its national spread railway trade unionism was the backbone of the labour movement-particularly in rural areas.

ASRS organiser James Holmes successfully brought the motion to establish the labour representation committee at the 1899 TUC and the 1901 Taff Vale judgement which fined the ASRS for damages for a strike encouraged the rest of the trade union movement to support the establishment of the Labour Party.

During these years my great-great grandfather George Thaxton was ASRS president and he went on to be one of the first Labour Party Aldermen of Leeds city council. Like many of his contemporaries he educated himself at a nonconformist evening school and his socialist politics evolved from his Christian ethics. Railway employment retains many features that are unfortunately seen as old fashioned. It remains highly unionised, internal promotion is common – you can work your way up from cleaning to driving trains – it is also still a family occupation with many generations

following their parent's footsteps.

Yet today our railway receives two or three times more in state subsidy in real terms than British Rail did. We have the most expensive railway in Europe. Many of our franchises are run by foreign state owned firms. Our system is complicated and fragmented with many different companies and contractors operating on a railway that could be run more efficiently if ran as a single company. There is a huge regional disparity in railway infrastructure investment with London receiving more transport funding per head than the rest of the country combined.

The government has recently announced that planned electrification of lines in the north of England and Wales have been cancelled while London is set to enjoy a Crossrail 2 after an expensive Crossrail 1 has been recently completed.

Neoliberal EU rules

With our pending withdrawal from the European Union we can escape from liberalising EU rail directives that enforce

separation of rail infrastructure and operations and facilitate competitive tendering for contracts open to all in the single market.

We could establish a unified railway run on a not-for-profit basis. This doesn't have to be a resurrected British Rail circa 1994. There is an opportunity to run a better railway that engages with its workers and passengers with union and community transport groups represented on the board.

A community group at my local station, Freccles (friends of Eccles station) organise monthly gardening sessions to maintain beautiful flower beds. They have produced notices of historical interest around the station, lobby the authorities for increased stopping services, produce a newsletter with service updates and suggestions of days out. This passionate sense of community could be harnessed to transform a post-Brexit Britain where our railways are ran with a sense of civic and collective pride.

And a state-run railway could end contracting out and reliance on foreign companies to create decent employment for our communities. There are many highly skilled well-paid jobs on the railway, but the workforce is an aging one. National schools could be established to take on apprentices to teach our children key skills in rail manufacturing, engineering and operations.

The great loco works of Crewe and Doncaster that once employed tens of thousands and built trains to run across the globe are now shadows of their former selves where trains are now maintained rather than constructed. York and Darlington works are now museums.

With many of our trains now built abroad, trains are now built only in Derby and Newton Aycliffe, County Durham by a total workforce of only around two thousand people. This sector could receive a massive boost from a new peoples' railway. Post-industrial areas of high unemployment could see a return of manufacturing jobs. Brexit is an opportunity to get our railways back. Let's take it. ■

President's column



UNSUNG HEROES

Over the last two years there have been many organisations and individuals supporting our campaign for a safe and accessible railway. I want to pay special tribute to someone who from day one has been on our picket lines in all weathers, showing her absolute solidarity with RMT.

Paula Peters from Disabled People Against Cuts [DPAC] is an inspiration to so many that strive for a fairer more equal society. Recently Paula posted a message on social media that I would like to share with you.

"The last few days have been tough emotionally and physically. Standing outside Downing Street with the People's Assembly and the huge pile of food donations reminded me of all the times had been in the same spot over the years. Remembering people I had previously campaigned with, people who are no longer with us, people who simply cannot take another day.

"I was so shattered last night with two protests on the same day, and yet, struggle to sleep.

"I do not know how I got through today, I went to London for the housing protest and came home and was in bed the rest of the day.

"I live with chronic pain, chronic fatigue, RA, fibro, severe and enduring mental health hypermobility and Pots along with asthma. I am struggling with the dark nights, with the cold and the damp, but, the battle has to be fought, and there are countless thousands of people who are doing just that, fighting every day.

For many, it takes guts and courage and determination to just fight another day and simply get through it. Opening your eyes is a battle in itself. I know it because I live it too.

That a great many of us have got through to now after seven years of brutal Tory austerity says so much. We have fought so hard, we have lost so much, it has

tested us beyond any words and it has changed us all.

But, what it has given me is knowledge I would not have received anywhere else, bonds with people I know will last a lifetime, friendships forged on the street and we have shared love, laughter, tears and anger, but we shared a belief, and that belief is there to this day. That the fight for equality, inclusion, social justice and human rights is one worth fighting for.

"All I say to you now, is this, please take care of you. Remember you matter. You are important. You may not believe it, but you all keep me going another day by the strength you show and the determination of your fight.

I thank you for that. You help me keep focus, and give me courage when I could have so easily given up."

So I say to you all, when the struggle feels like it's just too difficult to make a difference, think of all the Paula's out there and go again.

As I am writing this, Philip Hammond is announcing his latest Budget and, as ever, it appears to be a budget for the few and not the many, with no extra money for schools, £1.6 billion for the NHS instead of the £4 billion that is needed and Social Care treated with complete contempt.

Interesting that we see business rates cut in real terms and our corporation tax that started at 40 per cent in 1965 is now 19 per cent and will move to 18 per cent by 2020. I think we know which side this government is on.

"Life Doesn't Require That We Be The Best, Only That We Try Our Best".

H.Jackson Brown Jr

Solidarity

Sean Hoyle

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PROTECTING AND PROMOTING OUR MEMBERS' INTERESTS





MENTAL ILL HEALTH AT WORK

ACAS publishes good practice guide for dealing with mental health at work

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, known as ACAS, has published guidance recently to help employers manage mental ill health in the workplace. The advice is equally helpful to trade union reps that can draw on it as a good practice guide.

Emphasising the crucial role that managers play in supporting employee well-being, Acas recommends that they should be as approachable as possible; should monitor staff workloads, set realistic targets and be clear about priorities; and have regular one-to-ones and catch-ups to check on how work is going, identify upcoming challenges and the support that may be required.

In terms of spotting the signs of mental ill health the guidance recommends that managers should be aware of:

- changes in usual behaviour, mood or how a team

member is interacting with colleagues

- changes in the standard of a member's work or focus on tasks
- changes in tiredness or anxiety levels
- changes in appetite and/or increase in smoking and drinking
- an increase in sickness absence and/or turning up late to work.

When having a conversation with a colleague about mental health, the guidance advises that managers should ensure it takes place in a private space to prevent any disturbances; allow the employee as much time as they need; and think about potential solutions and adjourn the meeting if it is necessary to think through what has been discussed before making a decision.

Managers need to be aware

that not everyone wants to talk about issues they are going through, and should not therefore try to rush their colleagues or pressure them to talk. Instead, it may be best to simply ensure that the team member knows they are available at any time. If that is the case, the manager should then monitor the situation. If they continue to see and hear things that concern them, they may need to seek further advice and guidance from HR, senior management or Occupational Health.

Most staff who experience mental ill health will recover but on some occasions, even with adjustments in place, a team member's performance or conduct may warrant further action. Before doing so, managers should consider whether additional adjustments may improve performance or conduct. Alternatively, other

lighter duties or a transfer to different role may be available. If further action is necessary the manager must follow the organisation's procedures for handling disciplinary matters and ensure a fair process.

Neil Todd of Thompsons Solicitors said that ACAS reports that mental ill-health is thought to be responsible for 91 million lost working days each year.

"It is also correct to point out that given this statistic it is surprising that more employers do not promote positive mental health in the workplace as a priority.

"On this basis the ACAS guidance that has been introduced is welcome and all employers would be well advised to take careful note of it and adopt their practices accordingly," he said.

To read the guidance in full, visit the ACAS website.





LIVING STEAM HISTORY

The East Anglian Railway Museum is drawing in ever more visitors for its legendary steam days and beer festivals

The history of the East Anglian Railway Museum is one of hard work as dedicated enthusiasts and volunteers continue to fight for the survival of an important piece of regional industrial and cultural heritage.

The museum is based at the Chappel and Wakes Colne railway station, a working station through which trains pass every half an hour.

This working line, which had been targeted for closure by Beeching's axe, still runs across the famous Chappel viaduct, which has 32 arches and stands 23 metres high, one of the largest brick-built structures in England.

Museum volunteer Peter Robinson explains that the threat from Beeching to shut the entire line over the iconic

viaduct was lifted just two days before its imminent closure and plans for a heritage line had already been put in place.

The Stour Valley Railway Preservation Society was initially formed in 1968 with the aim of preserving the recently closed stretch of line from Sudbury to Long Melford, a distance of some three miles. However, lack of funding meant this project was unsuccessful and the line was lost.

The following year the society re-established at Chappel and Wakes Colne station after securing a lease from British Rail for the derelict goods yard, goods shed, signal box and station buildings. Members were faced with a daunting task – the site was without electricity and the track had been dismantled





The fat controller

in preparation for removal.

Despite this, the first public “steaming” took place just three months later, when the only operational locomotive carried passengers along a short stretch of re-laid track. The hard work continued for many years as buildings were restored and teams took delivery of a miscellany of rolling stock and locomotives.

In 1983 an engine restoration workshop was constructed from a shed originally used during the building of the Dartford Tunnel.

In 1985 the signal box from Mistley Station was purchased for the princely sum of £5. Fully restored, this Grade 1 listed building now controls most of the signalling and points on the site.

In 1986 the society officially became the East Anglian Railway Museum to confirm its focus on representing railway history of the Eastern Counties rather than just operating trains. The following year the EARM bought the Chappel site from BR, part funded by the sale of a locomotive to a consortium of members.

The current wrought iron footbridge was relocated from Sudbury Station by volunteers to give visitors safe access to the museum.

The Goods Shed was also immaculately restored and is now a popular venue for exhibitions, beer festivals, functions and events. The busy restoration shed, which is open

to the public, employs full-time painters, carpenters and electricians and is well worth a visit.

The museum also has a miniature railway and displays a lot of railway artefacts and memorabilia including a wonderful National Union of Railwayman banner from Romford branch and other items from its predecessor the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS).

With the future of the site assured and registered as a museum in 1995, fund-raising continues by operating Steam Days along the length of the goods yard.

Peter explains that the museum remains dedicated to the conservation of historically significant regional railway heritage, largely through the efforts of volunteers.

“As a result we are focussing on widening our rail operations rather than extending them as heritage lines often aspire to do,” he says.

And it is has a large amount of engines and rolling stock particularly the museum’s famous *Thomas the Tank Engine* collection busy running across the site when *RMT News* visited.

Events like these attract adults and children alike and visitor numbers have increased over 30 per cent this year alone.

As a result, thousands of visitors every year are able to enjoy a working museum and witness a slice of “living history”. ■



Peter Robinson



REMEMBERING THE FALLEN

RMT was represented at the Remembrance Sunday memorial service in Trinity Square Gardens, London in November which recognised the sacrifice of more than 40,000 UK merchant seafarers lost during two world wars and subsequent conflicts.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash and national secretary Steve Todd laid a wreath on behalf of the union.

"We all owe a great deal of gratitude to those seafarers that lost their lives during conflict.

Particularly the over 30,000

Merchant seafarers that were lost keep this country fed during the Nazi onslaught and supplying the Soviet Union throughout the dark days of World War Two," Mick Cash said.

The Arctic convoys began in August 1941 running to the Arctic port of Murmansk until the end of the war. The northern route of less than 2,500 miles was practical, but it crossed the cruellest sea of all, the Arctic Ocean.

Sailing around the northern tip of Norway, the convoys

would also be exposed to one of the largest concentrations of German U-boats, surface raiders and aircraft anywhere in the world. Strict orders forbade the halting of any ship for even a moment for fear of being attacked by prowling German U-boats. Each delivery of arms was an epic achievement,

described as undertaking the impossible.

The monument near Tower Hill station lists all those who died in those conflicts and lists the ships lost as well as the trawlers of fisherman that continued to work in order to feed Britain during the Second World War. ■



REMEMBER THEM: RMT general secretary Mick Cash, RMT national secretary Steve Todd and Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson lay wreaths at Trinity Square Gardens, Tower Hill London.



REMEMBER THEM: Serving and retired RMT members attended the Remembrance Day memorial service in Sunderland led by Royal Fleet Auxiliary CPO Ian Parkin.



MERCHANT MEDAL AWARD

RMT national secretary Steve Todd received the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service at a ceremony last month last month.

He attended Trinity House, London, for the Merchant Navy Medal ceremony, of which the union is a founding member.

The medal ceremony was well attended and some 26 medals for Meritorious Service were awarded by Princess Anne.

His citation highlighted his 'exemplary' commitment to seafarer welfare and increasing

employment and training opportunities for ratings.

He first went to sea in 1972 as a deck boy with the Blue Funnel Line and went on to serve as an able seaman and bosun with a number of other companies.

"I first got involved with the union when I got into a bit of trouble and decided I wanted to put something back and became a rep," he said.

Steve said that he was very proud to be one of the recipient's this year for services

to seafarers.

"It coincided with my 45 years membership of the union and 45 years involvement and commitment to our industry.

"It is a very timely reminder that there are others out there who have served this industry well that are equally if not more deserving of this honour.

"I hope that branches take the opportunity to nominate them next year full details are available from the website," he said. ■

AFFILIATE TO LABOUR?

Dear editor,

I wish to reply to the contentious letter sent in by Ian Allen in the September edition of RMT News endorsing the union re-affiliating to the Labour Party.

I am concerned that the letter breached the advice of an RMT circular dated July 27 not to have any formal debate until we are better informed of any future contacts with the Labour Party.

I do not think the union should re-affiliate until the party support the aims of the union including a socialist Brexit, abolition of anti-union laws, housing matters especially post-Grenfell, unambiguous positions on renationalisation without compensation of rail and other vital services like water and power supply.

We need assurances that renegades from the policies of Corbyn and McDonnell will be disciplined or deselected have yet

been received concretely. Also attempts to re-establish reselection of Labour officeholders who oppose socialist principles were remitted at the recent Labour conference. We have also seen Labour mayors like Rotherham in Liverpool and Sadiq Khan in London refusing to back the anti-DOO strikes by our union.

I have a great regard for socialists in the Labour Party, especially people like Corbyn, McDonnell and my own MP Cat Smith who massively increased their majorities in the recent general election.

But I fail to see why we should ditch a strategy which has served us well since Bob Crow initiated it after our disgraceful treatment by Blair, Mandelson and Brown.

I also dislike the singling out by Brother Allen of the TUSC, founded by Bob Crow, who am sure would have been

equally suspicious of prematurely diving back into the still far from fit for purpose Labour Party.

How many of our members would like their branches, regional councils and the national union should donate as of affiliation automatic funding of candidates even though they are proven enemies of the aims of their union.

I believe the singling out of TUSC was a veiled attack on the Trotskyist Socialist Party and I condemn it despite the fact that I am neither as an SP member or even a Trotskyist as some have tried to pigeonhole me.

Let us stick to the course laid out by Bob Crow and reject gimmicks and political short-cuts and stunts.

Fraternally

Steve Metcalfe

DOVER SHIPPER AWARDS

RMT national secretary Steve Todd pictured with Lee Davison branch secretary of

Dover Shipping presenting 40-year medals to Alan Smith, Les Bonham and John Parker. ■



NOTIFICATION OF CONTRIBUTION RATES FOR 2018

Like most things, the cost of providing you with the benefits of RMT membership increases every year and contribution rates increase to help us to maintain and improve those benefits and our services to members.

From the 1st January 2018 new members joining whose basic salary or equivalent earnings are above £21,700 per annum will pay £4.96 per week.

New members whose basic salary or equivalent earnings are below £21,700 per annum will pay £2.13 per week.

Direct debit payments will be amended accordingly as will contributions collected by employers under paybill deduction arrangements. Members who pay contributions to cash collectors will receive a new contribution card from the collector. Those sending cheques or postal orders direct will need to adjust the amounts sent in accordingly.

Period	Full Rate	Low Rate
Weekly	£4.96	£2.13
4 Weekly	£19.82	£8.52
Monthly	£21.48	£9.23

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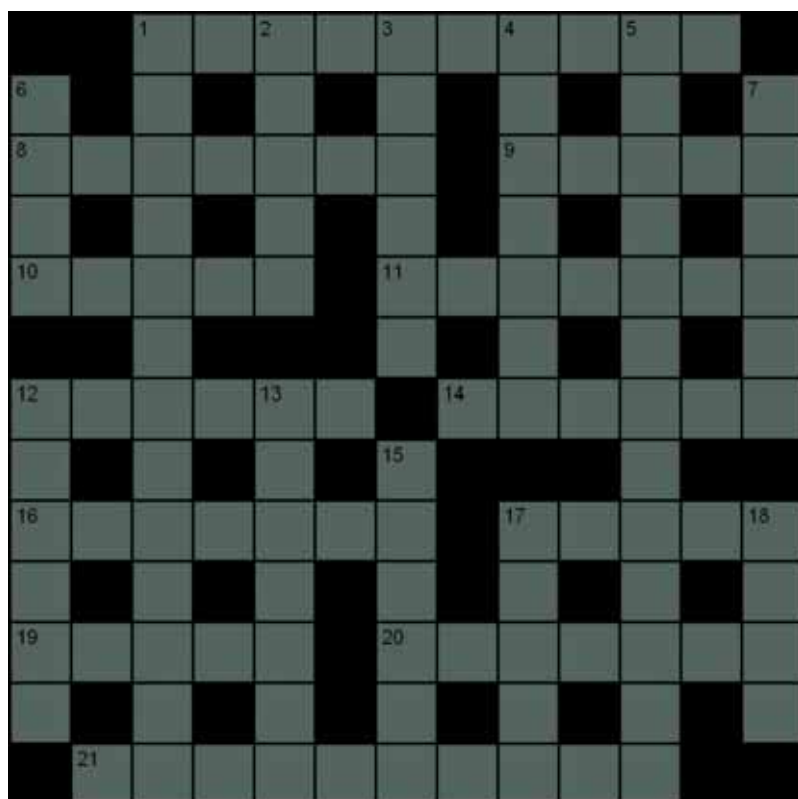
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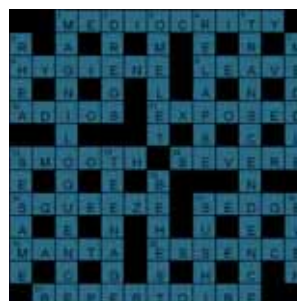
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£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword Winner Scott Fowler, Fleetwood.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by December 24 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.

ACROSS

- 1 Capability (10)
- 8 Decoration (7)
- 9 Tint (5)
- 10 Bail out (5)
- 11 Oozing (7)
- 12 Inundation (6)
- 14 Authenticate (6)
- 16 Eliminate (7)
- 17 Tropical tree (5)
- 19 Farewell (5)
- 20 Despotism (7)
- 21 Easily seen (10)

DOWN

- 1 Relative to cost (4, 9)
- 2 Choral music (5)
- 3 Level (6)
- 4 Remove (7)
- 5 Rest (13)
- 6 Desire (4)
- 7 Return to normal (6)
- 12 Superhero (6)
- 13 Supervise (7)
- 15 Group of six (6)
- 17 Edible pod (5)
- 18 Oxide mineral (4)



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Home phone			
Mobile phone		Postcode	
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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** ☐

5 Membership Status

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

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

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To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
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Bank/Building Society account number

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Signature(s)

Date

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