

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

END PRIVATISATION



INSIDE THIS ISSUE



SOLID STRIKE
ACTION
PAGE 4



SOUTHERN FAIL
PAGE 10



TORIES BACK SHIP
OWNERS
PAGE 15



DECOMMISSIONING
SCANDAL
PAGE 18



www.rmt.org.uk

WORKING FOR YOU

RMT membership helps you at work and saves you money

RMT has developed a number of benefits to save members money. This includes negotiating access to savings and special offers from our approved partners.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The union has a dedicated team of elected officers and local reps to serve your interests negotiating with employers on issues from pay, hours of work, pensions and working conditions. They are supported by a team of researchers to formulate pay claims to obtain the best negotiated terms for you.

CAMPAIGNING

The union has a political fund to run campaigns and provide a political voice to benefit members' interests in the workplace. RMT has a very active parliamentary group which raises issues of concern for members at Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

PERSONAL INJURIES

Personal injury claims cover if you suffer an accident in work or outside work. RMT underwrites settlements that would not be provided by no-win, no-fee companies. Call 08457 125 495.

INDUSTRIAL DISEASES

Members who have suffered an industrial disease will receive free legal support to make a claim. Such claims are underwritten by the union and members will not have any deduction from their settlement unlike claims run by no-win, no-fee companies. Call 08457 125 495

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

Should a member find themselves unfairly dismissed, discriminated against or have any claim which has reasonable prospects of

success at an Employment Tribunal, RMT will provide legal representation and pay the fee. Even if the union is advised that the claim is unlikely to succeed, members who make a claim are eligible to receive free legal advice.

ACCIDENT BENEFIT

Payable if you have an accident at work or on the way to or from work. Accident benefit is only payable if you have been off for three days or more.

Accident must be reported to branch secretary within 26 weeks in order to qualify for accident benefit.

RETIREMENT BENEFIT

Payable to any member who retires over the age of 60 or aged 55 if retired through redundancy or resettlement. Ill health retirement is also payable; proof of this must be sent with application for retirement benefit.

TAX AND WILL PREPARATION

The union can provide a personal taxation service and will preparation service.

DEMOTION COMPENSATION

Payable to any member who is experiencing loss of wages through being permanently demoted or downgraded as a result of illness or injury.

Payment of £300 provided that member reports this to branch secretary within 12 weeks.

ORPHAN FUND

The beneficiaries of this fund would be any child of a

member or spouse if the member dies in service or if a members' spouse dies and the member has responsibility of the children.

Benefit is paid while a child is in full-time education up until the age of 22. Payment is made quarterly and the rate is £12.00 per week for children up to the age of 16, then £12.75 per week from 16 to 22.

RMT CREDIT UNION

Accessible savings and affordable loans from RMT's Credit union.
www.rmt.org.uk/about/credit-union

ONLINE SHOPPING DISCOUNTS

Shop online with RMTrewards.com and earn cashback savings from hundreds of retailers, like B&Q, Argos and Tesco. It's free to join, plus you'll get a FREE £10 Welcome Bonus in your online account! (Terms and conditions apply)
www.rmtrewards.com

FINES POOL

if you drive a company vehicle as part of your job you can join the RMT fines pool for £7 per year. The Fines Pool will reimburse members for any speeding fines, related court costs and lost time to attend a court hearing.
www.rmt.org.uk/member-benefits/fines-pool

BEREAVEMENT BENEFIT

A Death Grant of £600 is payable to the nearest relative or legal representative if a member dies through any cause prior to retirement.

CASHBACK PREPAID CARD

Fancy cashback on your everyday shopping? Use your RMT Prepaid Plus Cashback card at over 50 partner retailers, including Sainsbury's, ASDA and Boots, and earn unlimited cashback! It's different to a credit or debit card - you can only spend what you load so there's less chance of getting carried away.
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12 months free cover. Annually renewable and always FREE. The Cover is underwritten by Advent Insurance PCC Ltd - UIB Cell.
www.rmtprotect.com

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For a small monthly premium you can claim cash-back on dental, optical and therapy treatments. Visit
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contents

Page 4

SOLID STRIKE ACTION

Page 5

DEFENDING MERSEYRAIL GUARDS

Page 6

DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY STRIKE

Page 7

EAST COAST MAINLINE HITS THE BUFFERS

Page 8

END OUTSOURCING

Page 9

PARLIAMENTARY COLUMN

Page 10

SOUTHERN FAIL

Pages 13

TRAINING LONDON UNDERGROUND REPS

Page 15

LESSONS FOR SEAFARERS

Page 16

25 YEARS OF NEO-LIBERAL IDEOLOGY

Page 18

NORTH SEA DECOMMISSIONING SCANDAL

Page 21

RMT SECURES DAMAGES FOR LIFELONG VIBRATION INJURY

Page 22

A CHARTER FOR WOMEN

Page 24

SHOWTIME FROM THE FRONTLINE

Pages 25

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Page 26

NORFOLK'S NARROW GAUGE

Page 29

AWARDS/LETTERS

Page 30

LETTERS/CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



END PRIVATISATION

The chaotic collapse of the outsourcing giant Carillion has once again highlighted the inherent instability built into handing lucrative public contracts to carpetbaggers whose only interest is private profit and greed.

This was followed by news that the government may take over East Coast Mainline after admitting that the franchise run by Stagecoach and Virgin was about to collapse.

But, according to transport minister Chris Grayling, Stagecoach is fit to be shortlisted for another franchise in the East Midlands.

And Virgin-run West Coast franchise will also be handed an extension up to March 2020 regardless of the chaos reining elsewhere.

This situation only underlines the problems created by other madcap schemes such as the PPP disaster on London Underground and other PFI projects where the private sector has been given a license to print money at the expense of the taxpayer.

This outsourcing culture is also behind strike action at Docklands Light Railway as contractor ISS continues to refuse a fair deal for all but can find money to bring in strike breakers.

In the same fight for justice against rampant profiteering, the union has launched the nationalise Northlink campaign including public meetings among the communities of Orkney and Shetland which rely on these lifeline ferry services.

A recent *Transport Focus* survey shows that passengers are continuing to get a raw deal on Britain's rip-off, privatised railways and the case for an end to profiteering, and a return to public ownership, is reinforced by the findings.

There is also clear evidence that passengers support having guards on their trains and that when it comes to

access and safety guards are crucial to delivering the kind of quality that the public both pay for and expect.

South Western Railway has been singled out for criticism in the survey as the new operator ploughs on with profit-driven plans to axe guards.

Drilling down into the figures, where Southern remain bottom of the pile nearly two years after they first took aim at their guards, the reality of putting profits before safety is laid bare.

The damning National Audit Office report into Southern has also exposed Tory collusion with private operators and is fuelling demands for company to be stripped of the franchise.

The bottom line is that passengers pay the highest fares in Europe to travel on rammed-out, unreliable services where private profit comes before public safety. It is no surprise that support for public ownership grows and it is now no longer a case of if our rail services will return to public hands, it's a question of when.

This crisis is mirrored in the bus industry with low pay, high fares and declining services. For instance Stagecoach is 'reviewing' the possible axing of lifeline Norfolk bus routes.

Stagecoach has only operated Norfolk bus services for a few years and serious questions need to be asked as to what has gone wrong and why.

RMT's priority is to protect members and the services they provide to the local community and the vulnerable groups who would be condemned to transport poverty if routes are axed.

In the wake of the Carillion collapse here we have yet another example of what happens when profit is allowed to take priority over public service.

Mick Cash

When you have finished with this magazine give it to a workmate who is not in your union.



SOLID STRIKE ACTION

Strike action went ahead last month in separate disputes with train operating companies across Britain over attacks on the role of the safety-critical guard and the extension of driver-only operation (DOO) in the name of increased profits.

Members on Northern, Merseyrail, Greater Anglia, South Western Railways and Island Line took action.

The union met with both Northern Rail and South Western Railways in a last ditch effort to broker a solution.

Northern refused to enter into meaningful talks as they lumped on the ludicrous precondition that the union must bend to their demand to run nearly half a million trains a year DOO.

South Western Railway reneged on a suggested guarantee of a second safety-critical person on trains in public statements which turned out to be no guarantee at all but merely PR spin for their real objective which is to have a free hand to run as many trains as they decide with just a driver on board, regardless of the risks to the travelling public.

Merseyrail, Greater Anglia and Southern Rail refused to engage in further talks.

The lack of action by Southern may have been the fact that the government has been caught bunging Southern Rail £22 million of taxpayers' money.

money.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the government had at last been forced to admit that it had bunged the basket-case Southern Rail millions to keep the dispute over safety running.

"This extreme case of corporate welfare has taken place because the ludicrous and rigged GTR contract, condemned by the National Audit Office, means the tax payer and not the company carry the revenue risk.

"It is no surprise that Southern Rail have made no effort to negotiate a solution to the guards' safety dispute when Chris Grayling is paying them out of the public purse to keep it running," he said.

He said that the union had made every effort to reach negotiated settlements in the separate disputes over safe operation and safe staffing.

"No one should be in any doubt these disputes are about putting the safety of the travelling public before the profits of the private train companies

"It is frankly ludicrous that we have been able to negotiate long-term arrangements in Scotland and Wales that protect the guards and passenger safety but we are being denied the same opportunities with rail companies in England.

"This suspension of normal industrial relations by the



Skipton



Leeds



Ipswich



Fratton

employers has to end if we are to make progress towards a solution that guarantees safe rail travel for all.

“RMT is in no doubt that it is the dead hand of the minority Tory government that is interfering in these disputes and that their influence is a factor in preventing the union from reaching negotiated settlements.

“RMT is demanding that the blockade on talks is lifted to allow us to negotiate freely with the companies and give us the opportunity to pursue the objective of a guard guarantee that puts British passenger safety before the rank exploitation of our rail network by fare-jacking private companies who are laughing all the way to the bank.

“If it’s good enough for Wales and Scotland to put safety first then it’s good enough for the rest of the country,” he said. ■



Manchester



Chester



Blackburn



DEFENDING MERSEYRAIL GUARDS

RMT and Labour Party members lobbied the Merseyrail ‘stakeholders’ reception last month as part of the on-going campaign in defence of guards on Merseyrail trains.

RMT members on Merseyrail have been engaged in a long, hard fight to stop lethal, conceived plans to throw guards off Merseyrail trains regardless of the impact on passenger safety.

The fallacy that Merseyrail

was prepared to enter talks over the safety role of guards has been blown apart by the company’s own letter to staff.

In a round-robin to guards, operations director Zoe Hands makes clear not only that Merseyrail’s plan to remove all 207 guards’ jobs was not negotiable, but that even the proposed small number of non-safety critical on-board posts were not guaranteed to be permanent.

The letter asserts that the

company would not “satisfy the RMT demand of a guaranteed second safety-critical person on every train,” demolishing the notion spun by Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham that talks without pre-conditions were on offer.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was about time that senior Labour politicians in the city took a leaf out of the book of the political leaderships in Scotland and Wales who have played key roles in brokering

agreements that guarantee a guard on their trains.

“Merseyrail ‘stakeholders’ need to stop talking amongst themselves and start listening to the people who know about safety on the railway through their daily experiences – the guards and their colleagues out there at the sharp end.

“If Merseyrail won’t engage with their front-line staff then RMT will take the message to their doorstep,” he said. ■

DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY STRIKE

RMT cleaners, security staff and travel safe officers on Docklands Light Railway took a further 48-hour phase of strike action earlier this month over a breakdown in industrial relations.

These workers are employed by contractor ISS on the KAD contract.

The dispute arose over the failure to hold meaningful pay talks or provide a proper

response to the union's pay claim and the failure to resolve long standing issues.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that members had been forced to take further strike action in a bid to force management to honour agreements, pay staff their contractual hours and give them proper respect and dignity at work.

"RMT reps have continually

chased management to settle the dispute but the company are blatantly ignoring the union's concerns.

"The fact that the company

were prepared to kick back in our faces genuine attempts by the union to resolve the dispute in talks over the past week speaks volumes," he said.

STAGECOACH THREATENS NORFOLK BUS SERVICES

RMT is demanding assurances on jobs and services after Stagecoach announced that it was 'reviewing' services and flagging up the possible closure of the King's Lynn depot and the axing of lifeline Norfolk bus routes.

More than 100 jobs, and bus services including the Coasthopper, are in the balance after Stagecoach - which runs around 50 vehicles and employs 120 staff - said that it was reviewing its operations in Norfolk in response to the "challenging economic environment."

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union was in urgent discussions with Stagecoach after the bombshell announcement which leaves jobs and services in Norfolk hanging by a thread.

"It is essential that Norfolk County Council join us in working to protect these lifeline services to thousands of people across their area.

"Stagecoach has only operated Norfolk bus services since December 2013 and serious questions need to be asked as to exactly what has gone wrong and why.

"RMT's priority is to protect members and the lifeline services they provide to the local community and the low income, elderly and vulnerable groups without access to a car who would be condemned to transport poverty if routes are axed.

"In the wake of the Carillion collapse here we have yet another example of what happens when privatisation and profit is allowed to take priority over public service.

"Bus services are already being slashed and axed across the country as private operators cherry-pick profitable routes.

"This scandal must end and RMT will continue to fight for accessible bus services for all," he said. ■

ARRIVA CROSS COUNTRY DEAL

All industrial action in a long running dispute with Arriva Cross Country over rostering has been suspended following significant progress in talks with the company.

As a result the company has committed to a trial time enhancement for train managers of 1.8 times the £17.76 Monday-Saturday hourly rate which equates to an hourly rate of £31.97 for all hours worked on a Sunday until May.

There will be a formal review prior to the end of May under the auspices of ACAS. This offer would also be in conjunction with a mechanism before asking a manager to work on a train.

Previous rock solid strike action had impacted on services from Penzance to Aberdeen and points in between on Britain's most wide-ranging rail operation.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it showed yet again what can be achieved when trade union members stand together.

"I congratulate our members for standing firm, it was their determination and unity which has secured this breakthrough and ensured Cross Country came back to the table with an improved offer," he said ■



EAST COAST MAINLINE HITS THE BUFFERS

RMT calls for Grayling to go and an end to the shameful fiasco of rail privatisation

The government may be forced into taking over the East Coast Mainline after admitting that the Virgin-branded franchise was about to collapse.

Earlier this month hapless Transport Secretary Chris Grayling told MPs that Stagecoach, which operates the line in conjunction with Virgin Trains, was incurring “significant losses” and would not be able to continue the franchise for more than a few months.

Incredibly, despite Stagecoach’s financial failings, Mr Grayling said that the company would still be considered for future franchises.

“The Department has concluded that there are no adequate legal grounds to restrict it from bidding on current and future franchise competitions,” he said, adding that the company had already been shortlisted for operating another franchise in the East Midlands.

Mr Grayling has already allowed Stagecoach and Virgin Trains to end their franchise three years early in order to escape large payments to the

taxpayer— a decision that is being investigated by the National Audit Office.

He has also confirmed that the Virgin-run West Coast franchise would be handed a competition-free sweetheart extension up to March 2020.

Giving a statement to MPs, Mr Grayling said that the situation on East Coast was more urgent than previously thought.

“I have already informed the House that the franchise will in due course run out of money and will not last until 2020, but it has now been confirmed that the situation is much more urgent.

“It is now clear that this franchise will only be able to continue in its current form for a matter of a very small number of months and no more,” he said.

The government has already notified Stagecoach that the company had breached a “key franchise covenant” and would not be bailed out.

“Stagecoach got its numbers wrong, it overbid and it is now paying the price”, he said.

Mr Grayling said that his

department would now assess the best options for who should take over and one option would see Stagecoach continue to operate the line, “under a very strictly-designed, short-term arrangement”.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the shameful fiasco on one of Britain’s main rail routes needed to end.

“RMT warned that taking the East Coast lines out of the hands of the successful public sector operation and handing them back to private speculators and spivs was a disaster in the making and we have been proved right.

“East Coast should be renationalised with immediate effect and the scale of the scandal unveiled today should mark the point at which the whole rotten business of rail privatisation in Britain was called to a halt.

“RMT is demanding immediate assurances that the thousands of rail workers caught in the crossfire of this chaos will have their jobs and working conditions fully protected and underwritten.

“Chris Grayling and the Tory

government have turned transport in Britain, the nation that gave the railways to the world, into a global laughing stock.

“He is a specialist in failure of the highest order and should resign,” he said.

Labour’s Shadow Transport Secretary Andy McDonald joined calls for the railways to be renationalised saying: “A Labour government will bring in a railway for the people and the businesses it is intended to serve, and put an end to this appalling, profiteering racket.

“The announcement today is yet another monumental misjudgement to add to a growing list of miscalculations by this Secretary of State.

“It’s increasingly clear that he doesn’t care about taxpayers, rail passengers or the rail industry itself, but he’ll do everything in his power to protect and support Virgin, Stagecoach and their ilk and the failed franchise system.

“The bailout culture at the Department for Transport is alive and well – it’s never been better,” he said.





END OUTSOURCING

RMT calls for end to outsourcing, franchising and privatisation following chaotic collapse of Carillion

The union has called for all rail contracts affected by the collapse of the outsourcing and construction company Carillion to be taken in-house immediately.

Only Carillion workers on what the government defines as its 450 public sector contracts will be guaranteed their wages.

However the future of the other 90 per cent of outsourced contracts, agency work and the supply chain is unclear and liquidators PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) have confirmed that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) will not apply to them.

A PwC letter, said: "In this situation staff will not automatically transfer under TUPE because a winding up order has been made against each of the Carillion companies."

This means that staff can be transferred to different private companies on inferior rates of pay and poorer conditions.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that clearly anyone working in the rail sector was providing a service to the public

and called on the government to confirm that members would continue to be paid with their functions taken directly in house.

"The government has known for months that Carillion were in trouble and they should have had plans well in hand for just this situation.

"All of the Carillion rail works on the various contracts can be brought in-house easily and that is what we expect to happen with jobs and services protected.

"If there is limitless amounts of cash to bail out rail franchises like Southern and East Coast there should be no penny pinching when it comes to workers caught in the crossfire of the Carillion collapse," he said.

Carillion has also been trying to "wriggle out" of its pension obligations for a decade while paying out tens of millions in dividends for shareholders and "handsome pay packets" for bosses.

Reports that Interserve, another massive outsourcing outfit where RMT has members, is also now coming under

scrutiny.

"We warned that the chaotic collapse of Carillion could spark off a domino effect amongst these high risk businesses and we stand by that.

"The forensic investigation we have been promised into Carillion needs to be extended in scope to include the whole murky world of outsourcing, franchising and privatisation.

"It also needs to include those politicians who have promoted and encouraged the pillaging of our public services by these get-rich-quick merchants despite repeated warnings from the trade unions.

"Anyone with their dabs on this growing scandal must be sent the clear message that

there's nowhere to run and nowhere to hide," he said.

Carillion's liquidation last month has left hundreds of millions of pounds' worth of unfinished public contracts but it is even unlikely that there is enough assets to meet even the cost of winding up the company, according to Sarah Albon, the chief executive of the Insolvency Service.

The group collapsed with £29 million in the bank, a £1.3 billion debt pile and a pension deficit of close to £1 billion.

Ms Albon told MPs that Carillion was made up of 326 companies, 199 of them in the UK, with 169 directors. She said that the Insolvency Service's investigations normally took 21

History of Carillion



months and it was putting “considerable resource” into the Carillion inquiry.

“One significant constraint is the incredibly poor standard of the company’s own record-keeping. It took some hours to identify how many directors we could potentially be targeting,” she said.

RMT has also called on London Mayor Sadiq Khan to bring Carillion’s London rail contract work into direct public ownership through Transport for London with guaranteed protection for the workforce, their jobs, pay, conditions and their pensions.

Staff working on the Carillion contracts carry out a range of safety critical signalling, power, maintenance, cleaning and track works on Crossrail, the East London Line extension, Heathrow Express and London Overground.

The union has urged Sadiq Khan to take the Carillion London rail operations into public ownership with jobs, pensions and the essential safety-critical work protected.

“When Metronet collapsed on London Underground immediate moves were made to maintain the functions under public ownership to ensure safety and continuity.

“The Carillion situation is no different and RMT is seeking to move this forward as a matter of urgency,” Mick Cash said.

Britain’s four biggest accountancy companies are also facing fresh scrutiny, with the head of the industry watchdog calling for the competition regulator to investigate their auditing activities following the collapse of Carillion.

Frank Field, Labour MP and chair of the work and pensions select committee, has asked whether KPMG, Deloitte, EY and PwC should be broken up.

He noted that two of Carillion’s recent finance directors had previously worked for KPMG and it had audited Carillion’s accounts for the past 19 years.

“They are all mates, aren’t they?” he said. ■

Parliamentary column

PARLIAMENT VOTES FOR RAIL PUBLIC OWNERSHIP!

But vote ignored by the Tories...

Last month the House of Commons voted to return the railways to public ownership. MPs voted for a motion for public ownership tabled by Labour’s shadow Secretary of State for Transport in light of eye watering far rises and chaos with the rail franchising system including the debacle of East Coast Rail.

In extraordinary scenes when the motion was put to the vote by Labour, Tory MPs abstained meaning the motions passed without opposition. As the Tories do not have a majority they could not muster the votes to oppose the motion.

We are now entering the 25th year of the anniversary of the legislation that privatised the railway and although the motion was only symbolic, as the opposition does not have the power to initiate legislation, it represents another body blow to rail privatisation and was soon followed by an admission by the government that they are examining taking East Coast back into public ownership.

During the same debate Labour MPs also spoke up in favour of guards, some extracts below.

DAN CARDEN (LIVERPOOL WALTON)

“I want to focus on the current dispute at Merseyrail, where 207 guards may be scrapped against the backdrop of police cuts and rising crime, the role of the guard in Merseyside is more important than ever. The Merseyside travelling public have supported the retention of guards throughout the dispute, amidst grave concerns about passenger safety. Is it fair that Merseyside passengers should pay fares that Merseyrail’s owner, Abellio, uses to pay for Dutch public railways, but do not enjoy the same safety standards as passengers on Dutch railways?

The Merseyrail dispute is not going to disappear. Reluctantly or not, the Government and regional and local politicians will have to engage further if we are to get our railways moving again in 2018. I say to Merseyrail’s owners, Abellio and Serco, that they should not do deals on Merseyside that they think they can hide in their corporate offices.”

SANDY MARTIN (IPSWICH)

“In my region, Abellio is running some trains with guards and some without. It is using its plans to introduce new trains in East Anglia as an excuse for threatening to remove guards’ ability to supervise the closing of the doors. I have a great

fear that my constituents’ travel needs will be sacrificed on the altar of the rail operator’s intransigence. Abellio is quite capable of running brand new, safe and viable trains with guards who fully supervise the train, including by closing the doors. It can do that in Scotland and do it in the Netherlands.”

RACHAEL MASKELL (YORK CENTRAL, SHADOW RAIL MINISTER)

“we must make our railways safe, and we will make them safe and accessible by ending the scrapping of the guards—a resolve the trade unions are calling for today—so that disabled people can have their dignity restored in using rail, while women can feel safe on trains both day and night. This is the rail service that the British people are demanding, and it will take a Labour Government to deliver it.”

JOHN GROGAN (KEIGHLEY)

“Northern Rail is owned by the German state, and I call on the Government to start talks. We can get a solution to the strikes that are affecting my constituents for three days this week. There is a simple solution in Scotland: the driver opens the door, and the guard closes the door and maintains safety. A solution can be reached, and the Government have a responsibility to try to reach it.”

GRAHAME MORRIS (EASINGTON)

“The state-owned German rail company that owns a substantial chunk of our franchises invests that profit in its own system, through subsidised fares there. That seems ludicrous to me and most of the travelling public”

LISA NANDY (WIGAN)

“losing the guard on the train. I will tell him what that will do: it will make our railways no-go areas for many people, including women late at night, people with disabilities and older people, who make up the bulk of my constituents.”

KATE HOEY (VAUXHALL)

“Why has RMT been able to negotiate successfully in Scotland and in Wales the question of driver-only trains, which is concerning for the public, when we cannot get that here in England? Is it something to do with the Secretary of State?”



SOUTHERN FAIL

Damning report into Southern exposes Tory collusion with private operators and fuels demands for company to be stripped of franchise

The on-going chaos and passenger misery on Southern Rail, Britain's worst performing railway, "could have been avoided," according to a damning National Audit Office (NAO) report.

The long-awaited inquiry into the Southern Rail fiasco found that the operation "has not delivered value for money" and concluded that Tory ministers failed to anticipate that plans to axe train guards would be met with fierce resistance.

The government has also been forced to admit that it had bungled Southern Rail over £20 million of taxpayers' money to keep the dispute over safety running for nearly two years.

The Department for Transport (DfT) and Southern parent company Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) claim that industrial action was the biggest cause of cancellations, although the operator has also been hit by a shortage of staff and beset with problems when no strikes have taken place.

In over 20 months of industrial action there has been 39 strike days which is less than two a month on average while the performance on non-strike days has been equally dire. Moreover there have been no strikes on Thameslink and Great Northern where performance has been just as bad.

Since GTR took over operating Britain's biggest rail

franchise in July 2015, around 146,000 services – nearly eight per cent – have been either cancelled or delayed.

Under a unique arrangement with the DfT, the train firm does not collect fare revenue itself but is instead paid a fee to operate the franchise by the government.

Between the start of the franchise and August 2017 the DfT made payments of £2.8 billion to Govia and received £3.6 billion from train tickets allowing the government to use it as a test-bed for expanding driver-only trains.

In the report, comptroller-general Amyas Morse said that the government "recognised that this franchise contract, which

was different from other franchises in that fare revenue was received by the department rather than the operator, meant that Govia Thameslink may have less incentive to avoid strikes than other operators".

Shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald said that the National Audit Office's claim that passenger misery could have been avoided if the DfT had taken more care to consider passengers was true for the entire railway.

Mr NAO also said that Whitehall "did not fully evaluate the possible effects on passengers of different scenarios of industrial action before awarding the contract, nor did it ask Govia Thameslink to do so".

Noting that between September 2014 and September 2017 GTR passengers had experienced the worst overall service performance, the report goes on to reveal:

- The DfT made decisions on the franchise which negatively impacted on passengers and not achieved value for money. The Department also expected to pay GTR for the additional costs, potentially amounting to tens of millions of pounds a year.
- The Department did not seek sufficient assurance that GTR would have enough train drivers when it took on the franchise.
- Around 56,000 cancellations were related “to the availability of drivers and other train crew”. An issue which RMT maintains was wholly down to poor workforce planning and corner-cutting by the company.
- The Department knew the scale of driver-only operation proposed by GTR would increase the risk of industrial action but it did not fully evaluate the possible effects on passengers before awarding the contract, nor did it ask GTR to do so. The union said that at no point had the company tried to negotiate seriously with RMT officials, despite the union reaching lasting agreements in Scotland and Wales on the same issue.
- The Department also negotiated a settlement for Gvia Thameslink to buy out its liability in respect of the performance sums in the contract years September 2016 to September 2018. The department told the NAO that it did this in order to agree more investment in the franchise to improve performance. However it was unclear to the NAO how the DfT would incentivise GTR to improve performance for passengers having removed its ability to use financial

performance penalties up to September 2018.

- The NAO also revealed that the DfT and GTR are currently secretly negotiating a revised remedial plan and interim performance measures.
- The NAO recommends that the Department strengthen its monitoring of train operators crew planning when they are near the end of their franchise terms as well as ensuring that the workforce projections in franchise plans are realistic.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the dynamite report blew wide open the whole scandal of the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise and the scale of government collusion with the private train operators, which had bled the taxpayer dry while giving the “basket-case” operation a free hand to slash staff and run services into the ground.

“The report makes it clear that tens of millions of pounds of public money, cash which could have guaranteed a guard on the trains and delivered decent, accessible rail services, was instead wasted propping up the private owners while they presided over the worst rail franchise in the country.

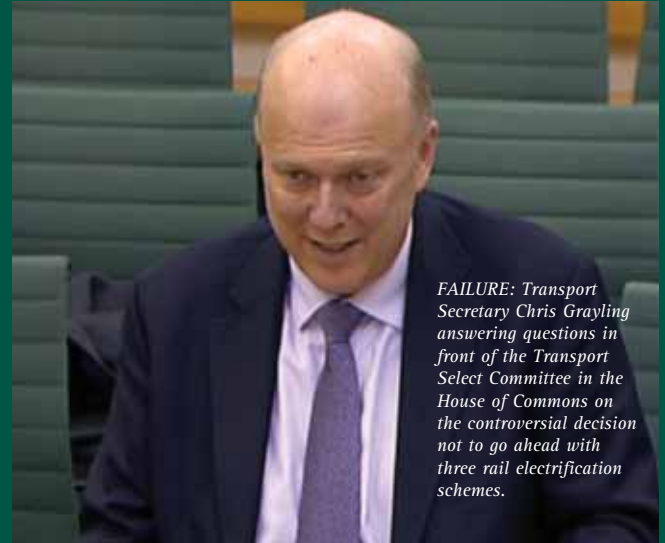
“This is a scandal of epic proportions with Chris Grayling and the Tories centre stage and worst still they are about to embark on an even bigger taxpayer bail-out on the privatised East Coast Mainline.

“The solution is simple, GTR should be stripped of the franchise for gross and repeated failures, the routes should be taken under public ownership and the cash-led cuts to safety critical staffing should be halted and reversed.

“Anything else is just another cop out and will spark a furious backlash from the passengers and staff caught in the middle of this grotesque chaos.

“This report should be the final nail in the coffin of more than two decades of rail privatisation in Britain,” he said.

A SPECIALIST IN FAILURE



FAILURE: Transport Secretary Chris Grayling answering questions in front of the Transport Select Committee in the House of Commons on the controversial decision not to go ahead with three rail electrification schemes.

As Transport Secretary Chris Grayling was hauled before the Transport Select Committee last month to explain the fiasco over the cancellation of crucial rail electrification projects, RMT demanded that the full charge sheet of failure against him should be taken into account including:

- Failure to spot and take action in advance of the collapse of Carillion despite repeated warnings that the company were in dire trouble.
- Failure to engage in serious talks with the trade unions in the on-going guards' disputes in England despite politicians in Wales and Scotland taking a leading role in brokering solutions on the same issue of rail safety and the guard guarantee
- Failure to take action to tackle the basket-case Southern Rail franchise and instead giving them a free pass to dump staff and wreck services with the public purse carrying all the financial risks
- Failure to be in the country when the latest fare increases were announced earlier this month – choosing instead to fly off to the warmer climate of Qatar
- Failure to follow up the PR spin about the “Northern Power House” – choosing instead to axe electrification projects and allow the Region’s train operators to throw the guards off their trains in the name of profit
- Failure to deal with the on-going East Coast Main Line fiasco and choosing instead to line up a £2 billion bail-out from the public purse for Virgin/Stagecoach
- Failure to take action to stop the decimation of bus services which has consigned whole communities to a future of transport poverty

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said many people, even from Chris Grayling’s own side, were now asking just how long this can go on.

“RMT welcomes the fact that Mr Grayling was called in to account for his actions over cancelled rail electrification projects but that is only one issue where he should be under forensic investigation.

“RMT has tried repeatedly to engage with the Transport Secretary but he has failed repeatedly to listen to the genuine concerns of front-line transport workers. That is a major reason why he continues to blunder on from one crisis to the next.

“The continuing failures on Britain’s transport services shame the nation and the buck stops with the Transport Secretary,” he said.



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www.fscs.org.uk/globalassets/press-releases/20151111-fscs-trust-white-paper-final.pdf

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TRAINING LONDON UNDERGROUND REPS

RMT members in London Transport region are benefitting from their union representatives attending an all-new training course based in London.

Previously reps attended their introductory courses at further education colleges or at the union's national education centre in Doncaster.

While reps may still attend further courses at these venues, the union is now running a course in London which is specifically tailored for newly-elected reps on London Underground, ABM (cleaning company), Transport for London, engineering contractors and other companies under the TfL umbrella.

The first week of the new course took place at the beginning of last month with a second week to follow at the end of February.

The course was attended by newly-elected reps and began with an introduction to trade unionism and the role of a representative. It then went on to train the reps in how best to gather members' views and issues for local negotiating meetings and to report back and pursue those issues effectively.

It examined attendance and disciplinary procedures in detail, understanding how managers use these procedures against staff and how we can hit back.

Reps on the course visited workplaces with other reps to find out staff's views and had a guided tour of the union's headquarters, Unity House.

They met their regional organiser John Leach, national executive committee representative Andy Littlechild, general secretary Mick Cash and RMT News managing editor Brian Denny.

They also met London



BESPOKE COURSE: left to right Terry Roustborne LUL Acton Town District line drivers, Wasborn Odeywingie ABM Central Line cleaners, Andy Littlechild NEC, Laszlo Rollinger LUL Baker St CSS1, Michael Lancaster, LUL Victoria Central stations, Trish Walsh, LUL Harrow signals, Jim Lloyd, LUL Bakerloo South stations and RMT tutor Janine Booth.

Underground Ltd Stage 2 (company-wide) representatives for those functions which the new reps work in: Daniel Randall (stations), Frank Curtis (trains) and Michael Livingstone (service control). So now they knew the people to contact for support and to tell about their concerns, issues and demands!

Throughout the course reps were encouraged to consider, criticise and debate. The course does not tell reps what to think, but equips them to think for themselves. It also has a constant theme of organising: a rep's job is not just to represent individuals but to build union power in the workplace.

In the second week of the course, course members will look in more depth at how the union works, the arguments for all-grades trade unionism, and promoting equalities.

RMT tutor Janine Booth

explained that employers train their managers in how to push workers harder and restrict their rights.

"In order to fight back effectively, RMT is training its reps to strengthen those rights and to involve members in collectively standing up for ourselves and, with Transport for London facing a funding squeeze and the Tory government attacking trade unions, this is more important than ever.

"It is good for members to know that when you are face-to-face with your employer, you are accompanied by a rep who knows their stuff.

"It is just as important to know that you have a rep that has been trained to listen to you and to involve you and your workmates in organising for your rights.

"Should anyone decide to

become a rep yourself at some stage, the union will train you and provide you with all the support and encouragement you need," she said.

Course member and level one rep Trish Walsh, LUL Harrow signals, appreciated the fact that the course was tailored for London Underground members, concentrating on company policy.

"I found that this bespoke course was invaluable for existing and new reps to understand policy and how the union engages with members and the employer.

"This was very useful for all of us and will no doubt help us increase membership where we organise," she said.

For more information about level one reps courses contact your branch secretary.

LESSONS FOR SEAFARERS



RMT national secretary Steve Todd outlines the educational opportunities the union has to offer

I am taking the opportunity to inform you as a seafarer within the maritime industry of the opportunities for education and training within the union.

The union provides an extensive programme of trade union education courses at the Bob Crow National Education Centre in Doncaster, many of these courses can be organised through your regional council in localities that best suit maritime members.

The programme has at its heart the basic education required for members in all grades to become an effective RMT workplace representative wherever they work. There are many additional courses covering, mental health, cancer, and equality issues amongst others.

As in recent years RMT in 2018 has a number of courses for our members working in the

maritime industries specifically 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, as they qualify as Maritime H&S Representatives.
- 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.

I would sincerely hope many in our industry would consider taking up these courses. The course programmes are on the RMT website under the ‘Education’ section. If you require any further information or would want an application form then please contact the RMT national education Officer at a.gilchrist@rmt.org.uk

BURSARY

In conjunction with the Seafarers UK, the union has also established a Bursary for training and education solely for current and former seafarer members. This relatively modest Bursary offers excellent opportunities for our Seafarer and former seafarer members to take up training or educational courses to enhance their current

or potential employment opportunities.

If you are interested in applying for financial assistance towards education or training your application should meet the following criteria;

“That the learning/training funding being applied for can be demonstrated to enhance the seafarers’ employment opportunities both directly in the seafaring industries or the individuals’ overall employment more generally”.

Several RMT seafarer members have already been granted financial assistance for courses that will improve their current employment and/or enhance their future employment prospects.

If you are interested in applying for financial assistance towards training and education more generally through the bursary then please contact the RMT national education Officer at a.gilchrist@rmt.org.uk for information or an application form.

RMT DEMANDS ACTION ON LIFE-BOAT SAFETY

RMT has written to safety regulators demanding urgent action over life-boat safety after a routine training exercise on the Bermuda-registered Carnival Cruises vessel MV Arcadia in the Azores last month almost ended in tragedy.

Five people were hurt in the incident on the Arcadia, one seriously, in what the union said was just the latest in a catalogue of serious incidents involving lifeboats – an issue that RMT has been campaigning for change and improvements on for a number of years.

Arcadia is the fourth largest of eight ships currently in service with P&O Cruises.

In a letter to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, RMT is demanding a tighter regulatory regime and improved maintenance to ensure both

crew and passenger safety.

In the letter, RMT says:

RMT has serious concerns over the risks and dangers facing maritime workers involved in life boat drills. It is almost as if the safety and testing regime for life boats under the present system has become the most dangerous part of a maritime workers time at sea, and that just cannot be right. RMT is demanding a tighter regulatory regime and improved maintenance of all life boats to ensure improvements to both crew and passenger safety.

Can you tell me, clearly and with precision what the MCA are doing to ensure immediate improvements in the working process of life boat drills, what the MCA consider requires changing, when they believe those changes will be introduced and finally what narrative they

have in ensuring the safest and best practices are deployed and acted upon accordingly, for life boat drills.

The union has written to both Carnival Cruises and the Cruise Line Industry Association (CLIA) raising similar points.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said that the incident in the Azores should serve as a wake-up call to entire cruise industry that we need improvements and changes to the regulatory and maintenance regime and we need them now.

“RMT will fight with every tool at our disposal to ensure

that safety of both crew and passengers is the absolute top priority the length and breadth of the industry.”

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that the union had raised the issue of lifeboat safety in the past and after the latest incident it would not be fobbed off with any more delays and excuses.

“RMT is blowing the whistle on this issue before there is a major tragedy and we expect urgent and decisive action from both the safety regulator and the cruise companies,” he said.



Arcadia

TORIES BACK SHIP-OWNERS OVER PAY

Government caves in to ship-owners confirming minimum wage and Equality Act is meaningless



RMT responded with outrage to confirmation from UK ship owners that new government guidance on seafarers and the National Minimum Wage will do nothing to tackle the low pay rates which are rife in the UK merchant shipping industry.

Comments from the UK Chamber of Shipping reported in Maritime Global News dealing with the 'Guide to the application of the Equality Act 2010 and National Minimum Wage for seafarers' reveal that there will be no changes to legal entitlement for those working in UK waters.

UK Chamber of Shipping policy director Tim Springett, who specialises in employment issues, said that the guide did not amend the law and there has been no change in the entitlement of any seafarer in respect of the National Minimum Wage or the Equality Act.

"It is hoped that the clarification of the current position provided by the guide will be of use to companies and seafarers," he wrote.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that it was now certain that the government had capitulated to the intense lobbying of wealthy ship owners against the legal changes required to bring seafarers in line with land based workers' entitlement to National Minimum Wage rates of pay.

"The Chamber of Shipping has always opposed enforcing the NMW for exploited foreign

seafarers, some of whom are paid as little as £1.75 per hour.

"The employers made the same, un-costed arguments in the Legal Working Group on Seafarers and the NMW, on which the UK maritime unions and BEIS were also present.

"The BEIS announcement seems designed to scupper the Legal Working Group which had agreed in principle to recommend that the Government change the law to apply and enforce the NMW for seafarers on shipping routes on the UK Continental Shelf, including the offshore oil and gas sector.

"This is an act of sabotage which affects UK seafarers' jobs and our economy.

"We cannot have an industry

systematically undermining UK employment and anti-discrimination law as we prepare for Brexit.

"RMT will step up its campaign to expose the dirty secrets of the shipping industry which profits from discrimination against seafarers on grounds of nationality," he said.

The new guidance was the first of its kind on the application of the National Minimum Wage specifically to seafarers. Advice issued in respect of seafarers has until now been included in general guides and was amended frequently - without consultation with the industry - in ways that led to uncertainty rather than clarity.

"The new guide takes account of the UK's obligations under the International Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the generally observed custom under which coastal states do not impose laws on visiting ships that affect the internal economies of those ships," wrote Mr Springett.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the comments confirmed what the union suspected, the government's new guidance was just an exercise in caving in to the powerful industry lobby and does nothing to tackle the scandal of the Ships of Shame in British waters.

"RMT's SOS2020 campaign for seafarers' justice goes on," he said. ■



CAMPAIGN :National Secretary Steve Todd, Regional Organiser Gordon Martin, NEC member Paul Shaw along with Ricky Kelbie from Aberdeen Shipping branch and Brian Reynolds from Glasgow Shipping branch unveil the Union's Nationalise Northlink banner in advance of public meetings in Orkney and Shetland where the union will be making the positive case for bringing the Northern Isles Ferry Service into public ownership.

25 YEARS OF NEO-LIBERAL IDEOLOGY



Top “priority” of Tory privatisation of rail in 1993 was to “smash the power of the unions” new documents reveal

The Tory government under John Major considered “smashing the unions” as a “priority” objective of privatising British Rail, the *Morning Star* newspaper has revealed.

Newly-declassified Cabinet Office files from the early 1990s released by the National Archives also reveal a rift between then-Transport

Secretary Malcolm Rifkind and arch-Europhile Prime Minister John Major over the shape that the new privatised railway should take.

Mr Rifkind favoured prioritising the sell-off of British Rail’s Intercity sector as a “vertically integrated” business covering both track and train. However Major preferred splitting the railway up into

privatised regions.

The files show Downing Street official Barry H Potter asserting that “the smaller the number of lines linked together to form a saleable private company... the easier it becomes to break up British Rail and union control of the rail network”.

In a briefing for Mr Major on December 12 1991, political adviser Jonathan Hill – later to become a Baron – asked if Mr Rifkind’s model would “really smash the power of the unions”.

In the same document, Mr Hill set out the need to ensure privatisation “breaks BR up and smashes the unions”. This form of words appears in a list of “priorities” the adviser said that Mr Major “made clear” at a summit on rail privatisation at Chequers, the PM’s country residence.

Mr Hill also criticised Mr Rifkind for proposing that railway staff should maintain their employment conditions when transferred to the private sector.

“We obviously cannot tie the hands of the would-be franchisees in this way,” Mr Hill wrote.

Like Major, Jonathan Hill the former corporate lobbyist was also an arch Europhile Tory who later became European Commissioner for Financial Stability, implementing EU financial regulations. However he resigned the post in 2016 following the Brexit vote.

Ultimately the rail network was privatised along the lines of EU directive 91/440/EEC launched on July 29 1991 which demanded a split between ‘wheel and steel’ in order to introduce ‘competition’ into the industry.

Using this EU model the government awarded 25 different franchises to private operators while infrastructure, including tracks and stations, was split from train operations and sold off to become Railtrack – which was later dissolved following rampant profiteering and several fatal rail accidents.

The wheels of rail

privatisation were first set in motion in January 1993, when Major’s government enacted the British Coal and British Rail (Transfer Proposals) Act 1993, specifically designed to allow the privatisation of both industries.

This was followed by the Railway Act 1993 which provided the legal framework for the sell-off and break-up of the rail industry. Many of the principal changes were brought into effect on April 1 1994.

In order to comply with the EU directive, the 1993 Act proposed to impose “any regulations made under section 2 of the European Communities Act 1972 for the purpose of implementing the Council 91/440/EEC”.

Other leading member states did not adopt the EU rail model wholesale. Despite splitting track and operations as demanded by the directive, many maintained a holding model controlled by powerful publicly-funded companies, such as Deutsche Bahn in Germany and SNCF in France,

This allowed them to pursue the control of private rail franchises abroad which come with profitable subsidies that are repatriated to subsidise domestic rail services.

However the EU has now imposed the Fourth Railway Package, a set of six legislative texts designed to complete the single market for rail services (the Single European Railway Area) and actively encourage the complete privatisation of rail Europe-wide.

This Package makes the competitive tendering of rail passenger services mandatory and enforces the full separation of train operations from infrastructure, the initial move which led to fragmentation, inefficiency and extra costs in Britain.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that following the latest revelations and the 25 years in which Britain’s privatised railways have been turned into a money-raking racket, the truth was now out at

last.

“With nearly three quarters of the British people now supporting a return to public ownership of our railways, and with this shambolic minority government on the ropes, it’s no longer a question of if, it’s simply a question of when.

“Privatisation was always simply about busting the unions and exploiting the travelling public in the name of Tory ideology and grotesque corporate greed.

“The Railways Act 1993 states that the public sector cannot bid for franchises unless, of course, it is a foreign state.

“Therefore either a totally new act is needed to oversee nationalisation or there would need to be significant amendments to the existing act.

“Meanwhile the EU is pushing to open up national freight and passenger markets to cross-border competition,” he said.

According to Office of Rail and Road (ORR) figures nearly

60 per cent of all journeys in the 12 months to last September were taken on franchises run by other countries.

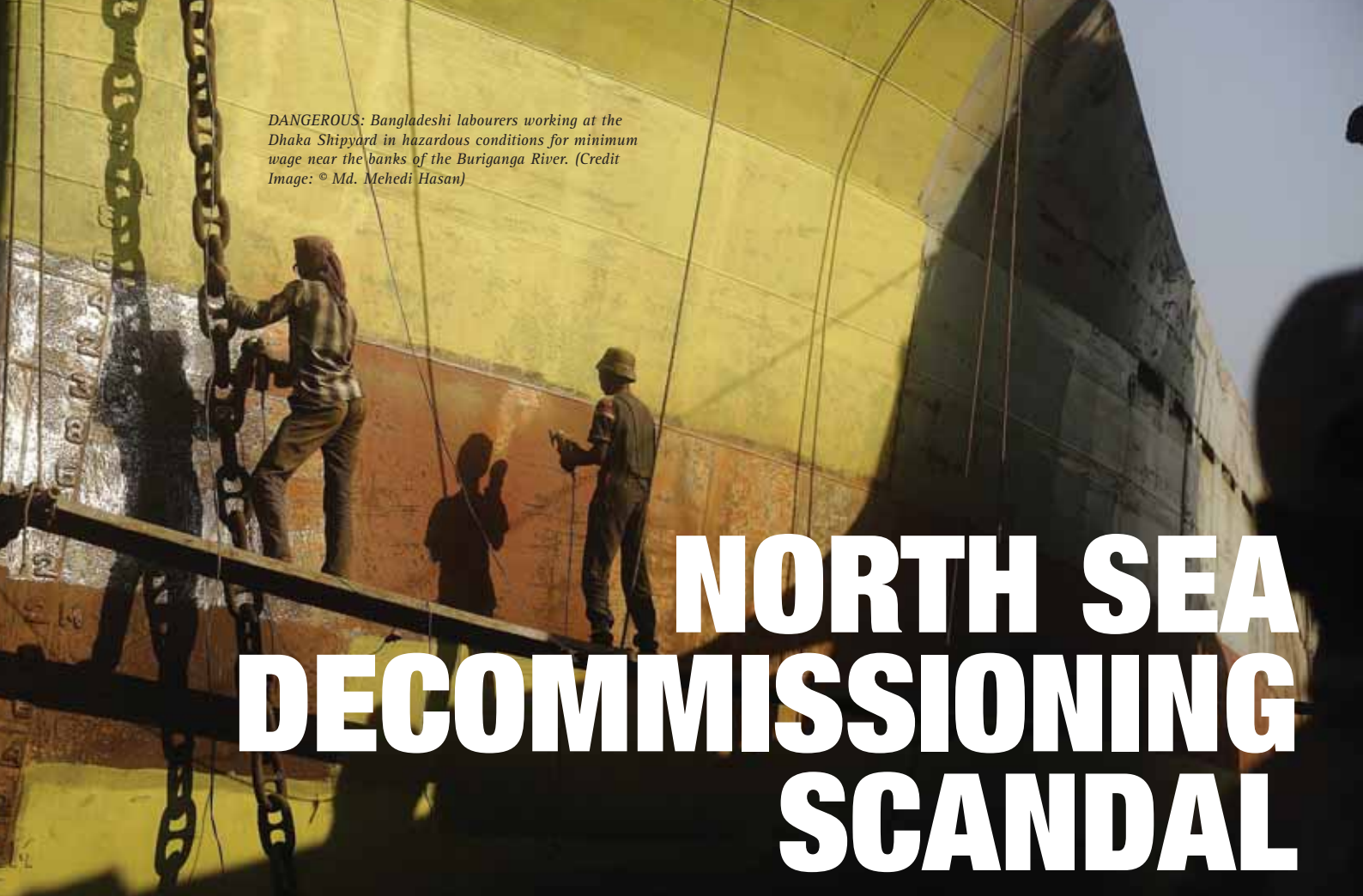
Twenty-three per cent were German-run including London Overground, the busiest rail company fully or partly owned overseas as part of Arriva, a subsidiary of Deutsche Bahn.

The Netherlands ran 15 per cent of services. Its state-owned Abellio runs Scotrail, has a majority stake in the Greater Anglia franchise and also owns 70 per cent of the West Midlands franchise.

French company Kelios – which is 70 per cent owned by the state-run SNCF – also has a stake in Southern.

Other foreign state-owned services include Hong Kong company MTR, which began running South Western Railway with First Group last August, taking over from Stagecoach’s South West Trains. Italian state operator Trenitalia also took over the c2c franchise from National Express last February. ■





DANGEROUS; Bangladeshi labourers working at the Dhaka Shipyard in hazardous conditions for minimum wage near the banks of the Buriganga River. (Credit Image: © Md. Mehedi Hasan)

NORTH SEA DECOMMISSIONING SCANDAL

RMT hits out at offshore oil and gas companies selling off infrastructure to be scrapped on the beaches of South Asia

There are growing concerns over the North Sea decommissioning industry following the cash sale of three semi-submersible drilling platforms to a company that transports offshore oil and gas infrastructure to be scrapped in India and Bangladesh.

The platforms predominantly worked in the UK North Sea which have a combined age of 119 years are currently cold stacked in the Cromarty Firth. However there is existing capacity in Scotland to carry out this decommissioning, recycling and scrapping work.

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform has documented more and more oil platforms, drill ships and other vessels related to the oil industry arriving for demolition on the beaches of South Asia as well as in Turkey and China.

It calls on the large oil and gas companies – such as BP, Shell, ExxonMobil, Petrobras, Total, and Chevron – to ensure that companies specialized in drill ships and leasing oil platforms, as well as tanker companies, commit to clean and safe recycling off the beach.

There are a variety of platforms and vessels that function in the offshore oil industry, but the ones that the NGO is most concerned with are those that can move on their own.

Fixed platforms and compliant towers are attached to the ocean floor with giant submerged steel or concrete towers and are not transported around the world for demolition. However, semi-submersible platforms, drill ships, and floating production systems (FPSO – Floating Production, Storage and Offloading System) move on their own and are likely to end up on the shipbreaking beaches of South Asia.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash that it was another kick in the teeth for offshore workers here, not to mention a continuation of the disgraceful practice of dumping ships and oil and gas infrastructure on South Asian beaches, where workers are regularly killed and injured in highly dangerous and poorly protected conditions.

"Over 160,000 jobs have

gone from installations and the offshore oil and gas supply chain since 2014, yet the government has failed to establish the growing decommissioning industry on terms that increase jobs and deepen the UK skills base.

"This government seems incapable of getting a fair deal from the oil and gas industry and it must immediately commit to regulating the decommissioning sector in the interests of UK workers and the economy," he said.

RMT national secretary Steve Todd said that, alongside the news that Stena Drilling was planning to cut yet more jobs in the North Sea, this decommissioning scandal highlighted the Tory government's complete dereliction of its duty to provide jobs and a sustainable future for UK offshore workers.

"The fact that it is prepared to allow the decommissioning sector to adopt the shipping industry's unethical exploitation

of poor coastal communities in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh when disposing of retired vessels speaks volumes.

"These rigs are in the Cromarty Firth and could quite easily be dismantled and recycled at local facilities in Scotland. Tory ministers have questions to answer and RMT will continue to work to hold this chaotic government to account for its continued failure to protect offshore workers from unsustainable and unethical profiteering," he said.

"In theory, it should be very easy for European shipowners to pick a EU-recognised yard, but the reality shows that the vast majority of EU-owned or EU-flagged end-of-life vessels end up for dangerous and dirty breaking on beaches of Bangladesh, India or Pakistan," said Ingild Jenssen, founder and director at NGO Shipbreaking Platform, a coalition of 19 organisations working to prevent pollution and unsafe working conditions

caused by beaching – the practice of running old ships aground on third-world beaches.

Beaching is by far the most common shipbreaking method in South Asia, according to Shipbreaking Platform. It says that 86 per cent of the world's end-of-life tonnage was broken on beaches in 2016. The practice is very polluting and the working conditions are "appalling," Jenssen said.

According to the NGO, at least 22 workers were killed in Bangladeshi yards in 2016 and 29 suffered severe injuries. Last year saw the worst catastrophe in the history of the industry, when 28 workers were killed and more than 50 injured when an explosion and a massive fire ripped through a tanker beached in Gadani, Pakistan.

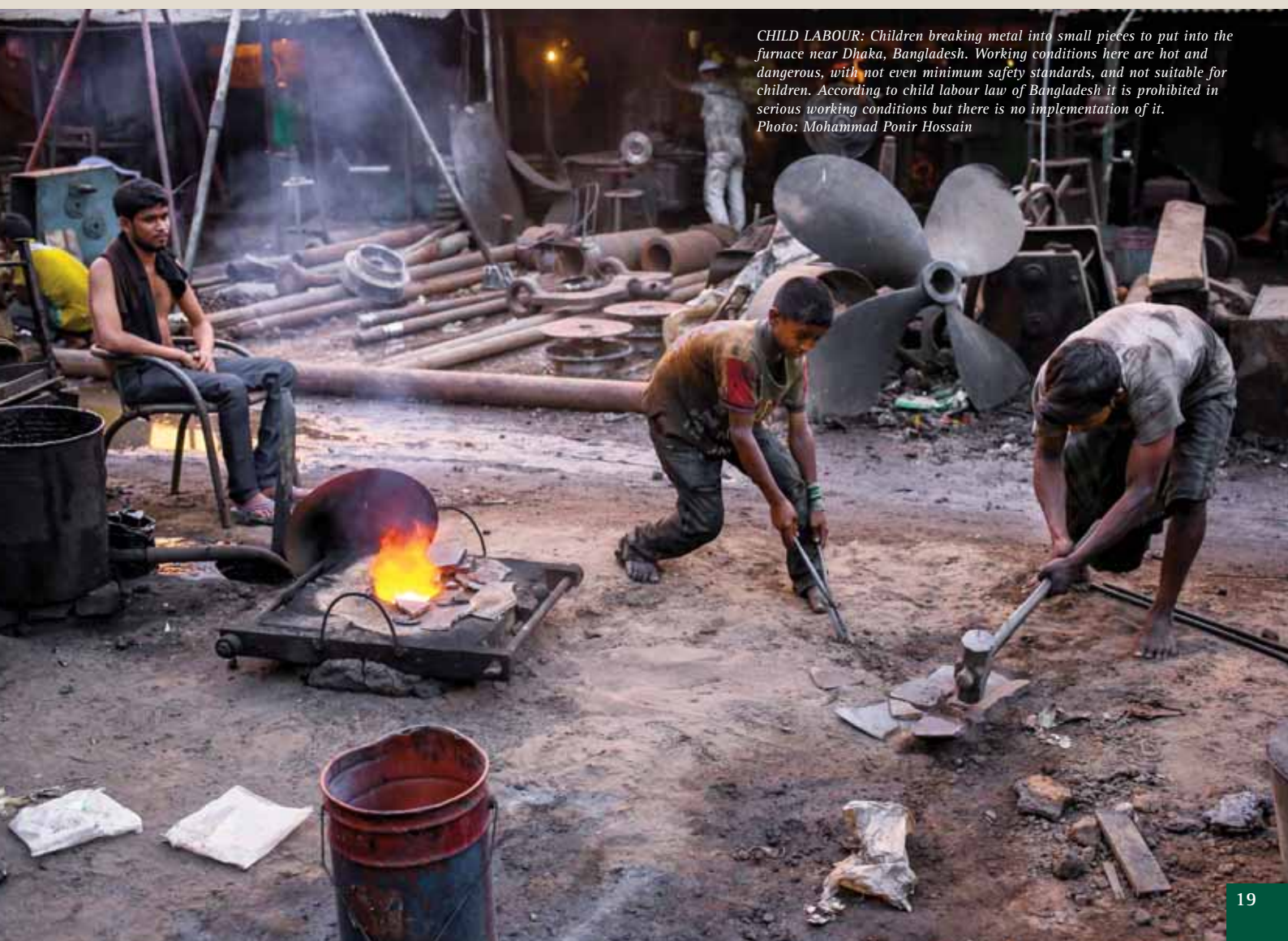
In Bangladesh, unskilled workers – many of them children – cut vessels apart for an estimated \$3 for a 12- to 16-hour working day, according to a report by the European Economic and Social

Committee. The life expectancy for men in the shipbreaking industry is 20 years lower than for Bangladeshi men in the general population.

Most of a ship's steel is coated with paint containing lead, mercury, zinc, arsenic and chromium, according to a study by the International Law and Policy Institute. The tides also wash out PCBs, asbestos and huge quantities of oil from beached ships.

In 2016, 328 vessels owned by EU entities or bearing EU flags were dismantled, of which 84 per cent were beached in South Asia, according to Mr Jenssen.

He said that German shipowners were responsible for 97 ships rammed up on the beaches of South Asia out of a total of 99 vessels sold for demolition. Greek shipowners were responsible for 104 vessels sold to South Asian shipbreaking yards in 2016, the highest number for an EU country. ■



CHILD LABOUR: Children breaking metal into small pieces to put into the furnace near Dhaka, Bangladesh. Working conditions here are hot and dangerous, with not even minimum safety standards, and not suitable for children. According to child labour law of Bangladesh it is prohibited in serious working conditions but there is no implementation of it. Photo: Mohammad Ponir Hossain



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that RMT membership is worth every penny.”

RMT member, work accident claimant

*Within the union scheme. Terms and conditions apply. Claims must be brought within three years of the date of an accident or diagnosis. Exceptions do apply, please contact us for advice on whether or not you have a claim. **Where claims can be pursued in UK courts.

LEGAL

RMT SECURES DAMAGES FOR LIFELONG VIBRATION INJURY

A man who developed a painful hand condition after working with vibrating tools for nearly a decade has secured compensation with the support of the RMT and Thompsons Solicitors.

The member used vibrating machinery to maintain and install railway tracks. In addition to using a Kango drill daily, he would also less frequently operate rail saws, disc cutters and rail drills. He would work seven-hour shifts, of which more than four hours would be spent using vibrating tools.

In November 2012, nearly nine years after he first started operating the vibrating tools, he began experiencing pain and cramp in his hands. This was later diagnosed as hand arm vibration syndrome.

He was initially told by his employer that he could continue using the vibrating tools at his discretion, moving to another job if and when pain began to develop. However, an external occupational health assessment later said that he could not work with any handheld tools, whether vibrating or otherwise, because his hand syndrome made it unsafe. Subsequently, he had to take a role as a track controller.

A year after his diagnosis, the member required surgery to relieve the pressure on the nerves in his hands. He continues to suffer pain, particularly in cold weather, and the syndrome limits his grip.

He turned to the RMT and industrial disease specialists, Thompsons Solicitors, to make a compensation claim.

The member said that to be told that he wouldn't ever recover from a condition caused by his job was incredibly

frustrating.

"I would spend hours each day using vibrating machinery, but it was only after my diagnosis that systems came into place restricting how much time people spend on them. I'm limited in what I can do job-wise.

"I can't even use basic tools like hammers and spanners because of the pain in my hands and lack of grip.

"I'm glad that my employer has changed its procedures for vibrating tools, but it's come too late for me," he said.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the members' working conditions had left him in frequent pain and at a disadvantage when applying for future jobs.

"This could have been avoided had his employer used common sense and acknowledged the well-known dangers surrounding excessive use of vibrating tools.

"RMT represents thousands of members across the UK in work-related compensation claims, and we were proud to fight on Lee's behalf to hold his employer to account for failing to protect him."

Stacey Cox, of Thompsons Solicitors, added that hand arm vibration syndrome would continue to affect him for the rest of his life, but his compensation settlement would mean that he can put money aside for treatment that can ease the pain he suffers.

"Thanks to his RMT membership, not only was he able to access industrial disease specialists but he also got 100 per cent of his compensation both things he wouldn't have got from a high street law firm or a claims company off the TV," she said.

RMT SECURES DAMAGES FOR UNFAIRLY DISMISSED MEMBER

A member has received more than £6,000 in compensation after he was unfairly dismissed from his job following a transfer of undertakings (TUPE).

The member started working for MITIE in 2008 as a cleaning operative on a 30 hour-a-week contract. In April 2016, his employment transferred where he was given a new contract of employment stating the same hours of employment.

Two months after starting work they informed him that his working hours were being reduced to 12 hours a week. The member did not accept these changes and tried to discuss the changes with his employer but they refused to discuss it with him. He continued to work but made it clear that he did not accept the changes and was working under protest.

He turned to his trade union and contacted employment law specialists Thompsons Solicitors to make a claim for compensation.

It argued that the employer had essentially dismissed the member from his 30 hour a week contract and re-engaged him on a 12.5 hour contract. Also the employer had not followed the TUPE regulations, which state that contractual changes can only be made for an 'economic, technical or organisational' reason entailing changes in the workforce, and therefore the changes to his contract were void.

A settlement was secured so that the member had payment for his lost wages and holidays, on the basis that he would take paid redundancy, which he accepted.

The member said that the service he received was



excellent.

"Without their guidance, I wouldn't have had the confidence to take on my employer and recoup the money I lost when they decided to cut my hours against my will.

"It's a shame that my years of service ended in such a negative way, but if I wasn't a trade union member, it could have been a lot worse as I would not have had the backing of free legal support from experts in their field," he said.

Mick Cash said that the member had turned to the union in his time of need and it had worked closely with the employment rights team at Thompsons Solicitors to investigate his claim and ensure a swift conclusion.

"As a trade union member, he kept 100 per cent of the compensation secured, without any deductions, which would not have been the case if he had used a high street solicitor," he said.

Ranjit O'Mahony, of Thompsons Solicitors, added that Thompsons was proud to stand side-by-side with the trade union movement and support workers who aren't given a fair deal at work.

"This case highlights the importance of employers following the regulations, and the consequences they will face if they don't," he said.



A CHARTER FOR WOMEN

A new RMT women's charter to be launched at the annual women's conference in Manchester next month

The union's new, updated charter for women is more than a wish-list of terms and conditions to support women in the workplace.

It is a tool to be used by all members to acknowledge that women still suffer discrimination. Even though we have a variety of laws to defend women, the reality is that they can have worse conditions at work and ultimately feel that they are being pushed out due lack of support, particularly around maternity issues. That is why being in the union is so important.

We are also celebrating the 25th anniversary of the national RMT women's conference. The charter deals with a number of issues in-depth including the fight for equality of pay and equal terms and conditions.

Back in 1970 the Equal Pay

Act was introduced to end pay inequality between men and women. That Act is now part of the Equality Act 2010, but the difference between male and female wages can be huge where employees are not covered by collective agreements.

Women should not be paid less than their colleagues if the work is the same or of equal value in terms of the demands of the job.

Low pay is a scandal which particularly hits women. This is because they are often disproportionately represented in the type of jobs which attract low pay i.e. temporary, part-time and casual.

RMT is committed to campaigning for fair wages and believes the National Minimum Wage is far too low.

Lone working is also an

occupational hazard within the transport industry. There is no special time for being abused or assaulted – it can happen day or night.

The first rule in every transport sector must be safety. There are many ways to reduce the risk of assault and violence at work, such as carrying out risk assessments, and it is up to us to make management listen to our concerns.

This includes safe transport to and from our places of work, especially during unsocial hours. Sexual harassment is also against the law and no-one should have to endure such behaviour.

For women members in the transport industry who are so often 'on the move' as part of their work, provision of toilet facilities can be problematic.

Access to sanitary and toilet

facilities are regulated under the law but they do not apply to means of transport. Despite this, it is important to remember that employers have a general duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all their employees.

The menopause is also an important occupational health issue and employers need to recognise that menopausal women may need extra consideration.

Menopausal women can experience hot flushes, headaches, tiredness, sweating, anxiety attacks and an increase in stress levels. High workplace temperatures, poor ventilation, poor toilet facilities, or a lack of access to cold drinking water can make all of these symptoms worse.

Comfortable and appropriate uniform is also important. Many companies simply adapt or



adopt the male uniform for women. Style, fit and comfort are sacrificed in the interest of cost-cutting. This means women's uniforms can be ill-fitting, unflattering and uncomfortable garments of unsuitable material.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is there to protect workers from potential hazards to their health and safety. However a recent TUC survey on PPE and women found that only three in 10 women were provided with protective clothing that was specifically designed for women and this became significantly more difficult during pregnancy.

Traditionally health and safety has concentrated on risk prevention, in visible dangerous work, largely carried out by men, in sectors like mining and construction where inadequate risk controls can lead to fatalities. In contrast to this the approach to women's "work" has been protective, prohibitive and based on an assumption that women's work is safer.

The importance of Gender in Occupational Safety and Health (GOSH) has been overlooked in

the past. Women and men have physical, physiological and psychological differences that can determine how risks affect them and that there are different employment experiences of women and men. Even in the same workplace, with the same job title, carrying out the same tasks, women and men can experience different demands, exposures and effects.

Women make up 47 per cent of UK workforce, however just 27 per cent of trade union health and safety representatives are women. In RMT, women make up 15 per cent of our membership yet only 8.5 per cent of our safety reps are women. RMT will actively encourage and support women who want to become safety reps.

In respect of maternity pay, the ideal would be to achieve maternity pay equal to full contractual pay, and for it to be paid for up to 52 weeks.

With regard to paternity leave, some companies have agreed payment higher than the statutory rate, but RMT wants all employers to do this and grant more than two weeks

paternity leave with pay.

It is also a fact that we have an ageing population which means that many more of us will become carers. Trying to juggle work with the responsibility of caring for a parent or partner for example, can be a nightmare. Some more enlightened companies are beginning to recognise this. Does yours?

This is your union and RMT needs to ensure your voice is heard – what better way than by meeting with other women to share your experiences and common problems.

The more women that get involved, the more the union can properly voice your concerns and campaigns on what matters to you.

The national women's advisory committee is made up of ordinary women members elected on a regional basis. The purpose of the committee is to advise the union on matters relating to women. So why not get involved.

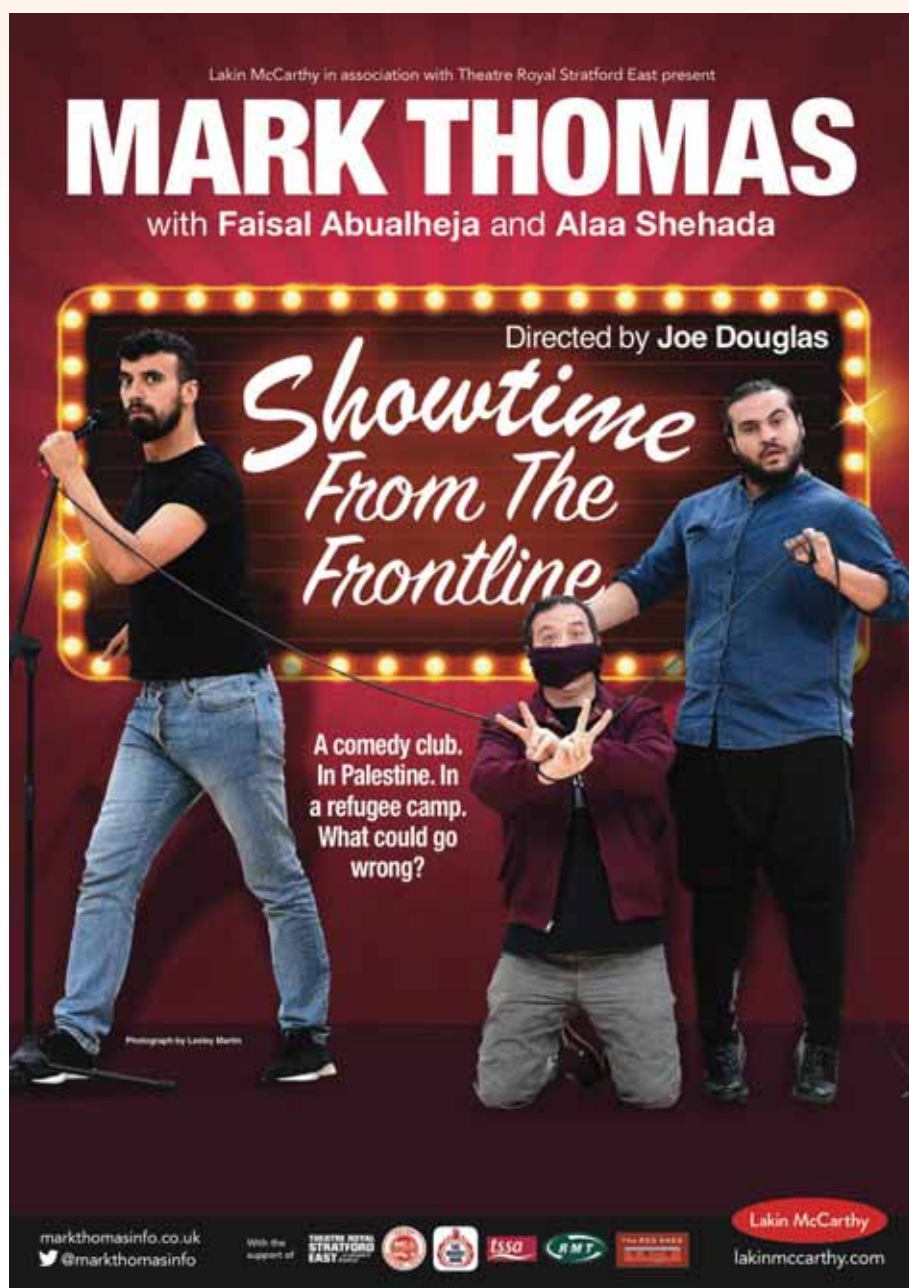
Copies of the RMT women's charter are available from your branch secretary or head office or go to www.rmt.org.uk.

SHOWTIME FROM THE FRONTLINE

Campaigning comedian Mark Thomas takes his new show on the road

TOUR DATES

FEBRUARY	VENUE	BOX OFFICE
Mon 12	BRISTOL, Old Vic	0117 987 7877
Weds 14-Sat 17	EDINBURGH, Traverse	0131 228 1404
Weds 21	CARDIFF, Sherman Theatre	029 2064 6900
Thurs 22	SWANSEA, Volcano Theatre	01792 464790
Fri 23	OXFORD, North Wall	01865 319450
Mon 26 – Tues 27	NOTTINGHAM, Lakeside	0115 846 7777
Weds 28-Sat 3 March	BIRMINGHAM, MAC	0121 446 3232
MARCH		
Tues 6	BELFAST, MAC	028 9023 5053
Thurs 8 – Sat 10	LIVERPOOL, Playhouse	0151 709 4776
Tues 13 – Weds 14	SALFORD, Lowry	0843 208 6000
Thurs 15 –Sat 17	LEEDS, Playhouse Courtyard Theatre	0113 213 7700
Weds 21– Sat 24	GLASGOW, Tron	0141 552 4267
Weds 28	LANCASTER, Dukes	01524 598500
Thurs 29-Fri 30	SHEFFIELD, University of Sheffield Drama Studio	0114 2228888
Sat 31	DURHAM, Gala Theatre	0300 026 6600
APRIL		
Thurs 5	CANTERBURY, Gulbenkian	01227 769075
Fri 6	MILTON KEYNES, The Stables	01908 280800
Sat 7	CAMBRIDGE, Junction	01223 511 511
Tues 10-Sat 14	LONDON, Theatre Royal Stratford East	020 8534 0310
Mon 16 – Sat 21	LONDON, Theatre Royal Stratford East	020 8534 0310



OM E

RMT is co-sponsoring a new show from activist comedian Mark Thomas with two aspiring Palestinian comics Faisal Abualheja and Alaa Shehada and directed by Joe Douglas.

Dodging cultural and literal bullets, Israeli incursions and religion, Mark Thomas and his team set out to run a comedy club for two nights in the Palestinian city of Jenin. Only to find it's not so simple to celebrate freedom of speech in a place with so little freedom.

Jenin refugee camp is home to Jenin Freedom Theatre and to people with a wealth of stories to tell. Mark tells this story alongside two of its actors Faisal Abualheja and Alaa Shehada. A story about being yourself in a place that wants to put you in a box.

With sell-out shows, non-stop awards, the highest critical acclaim, his own TV and radio shows, numerous documentaries, published books, Guinness World Records, influencing changes in the law, creating manifestos and exposing arms trade dealers, it's no wonder that Mark is one of the UK's most recognised performers and influential activists.

For more information
www.markthomasinfo.com
/ TWITTER:

@markthomasinfo

President's column



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Low self-esteem affects eight out of 10 young people at some point, with many finding it difficult to think positively about themselves.

Children's mental health week (5th-11th Feb) is an initiative started by Place2Be in 2015, to support children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Place2Be provides emotional and therapeutic service in primary and secondary schools, building children's resilience through talking, creative work & play and helping young people cope with wide-ranging and often complex social issues.

When you consider the amount we now know about mental "ill" health, the ability to offer support and options from a young age is vital, and we must stop allowing this to continue to be a taboo subject.

Many adults with mental ill health problems would certainly have benefited from earlier diagnoses and support. The Trade Union movement can and must play a fuller role, ensuring our members/workers have full access to that support in the workplace and beyond.

There are many mental ill health issues for instance; Anxiety and panic attacks, Bipolar disorder, Body dysmorphic disorder(BDD), Borderline personality disorder (BPD), Depression, Dissociative disorders, Drugs-Recreational drugs and alcohol, eating disorders, Hypomania and mania, Obsessive-compulsive disorder(OCD), Phobias, Postnatal depression/parental mental "ill" health, Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)...the list goes on and all need various levels of support.

Recently I marched with a number of RMT members in London [and sixty thousand others] to support our wonderful NHS. On July 5 1948 our NHS came into being when Aneurin Bevan (Labour Health Minister) launched the founding principles "that services should be comprehensive, universal and free at the point of delivery". Over the next 70 years we have seen many governments underfunding our vital health services and then we get the Devil himself (Jeremy Hunt).

Health Secretary Hunt, was caught out lying when he said that the number of NHS mental health workers was 30,000 higher than when they came to power (inflating the numbers by 43 times) and we are well used to the outright treachery of the man against the very service he is supposed to be guiding.

If any more proof was needed regarding the tactic the government is using, of underfunding to make privatisation look like a better option (much as they did with our railways in the 90's) they need look no further than the racist, misogynistic, homophobe that just happens to be the current President of the USA, Donald Trump.

Trump sent a Tweet out after observing the NHS march on television "The Democrats are pushing for Universal Healthcare while thousands of people are marching in the UK because their system is going broke and not working. Dems want to greatly raise taxes for really bad and non-personal medical care. No thanks".

Clearly the message the Tory Party is trying to get across, still isn't working on most people who are desperately trying to support our great doctors & nurses and passionately want to retain a NHS for all.

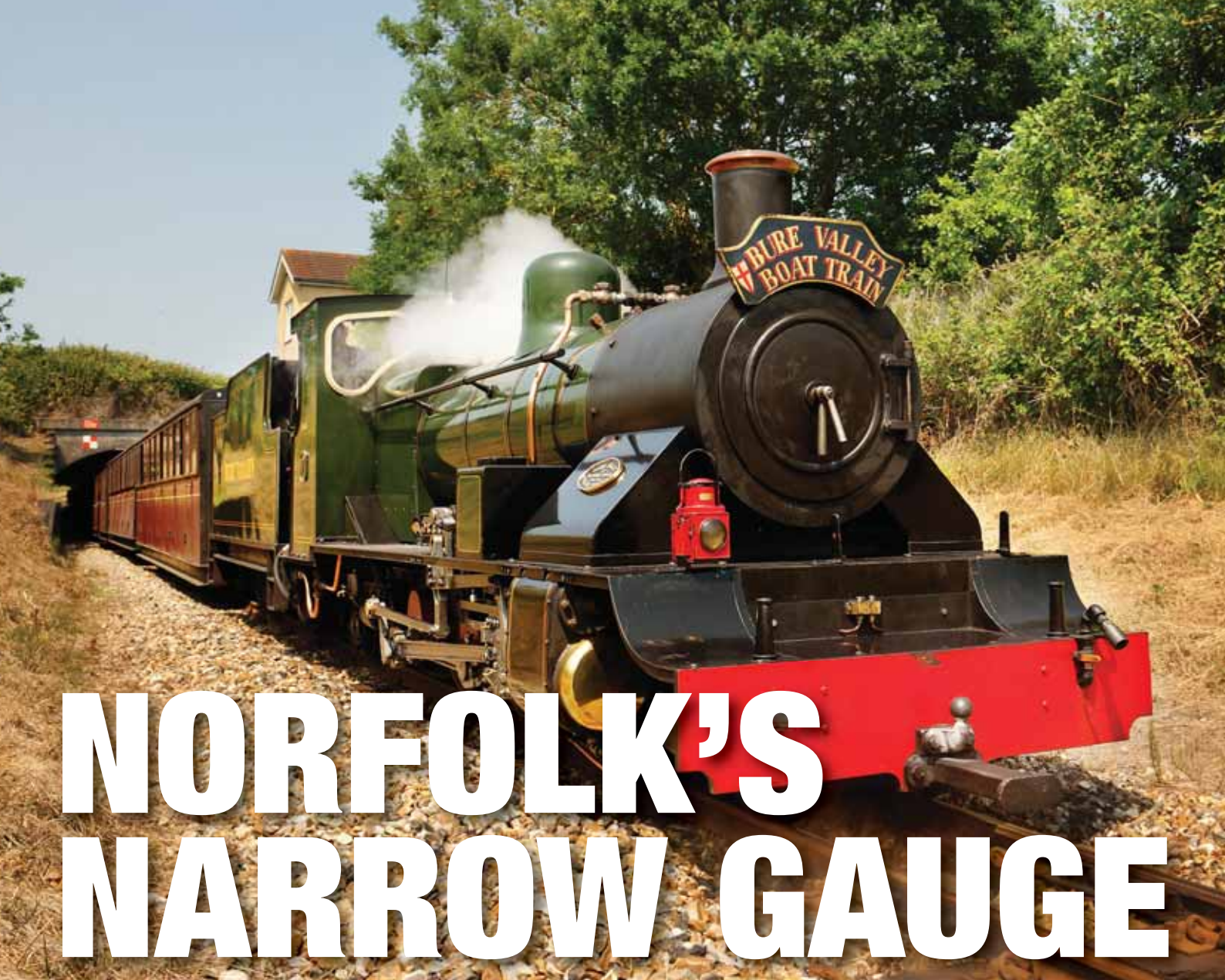
While I am writing this, I notice our delightful media doing what they do best, describing left wing protesters at a Jacob Rees-Mogg supporters meeting as violent and intimidating and yet when I watch the video clip, the only violence on display is a Jacob Rees-Mogg supporter punching a female demonstrator in the face for the crime of pointing out Rees-Mogg's well known opposition of same sex marriage. I'm sure we are all used to the impartiality of the great British media so don't expect to see too much criticism heading in the direction of Rees-Mogg.

Indeed, I only hope Jacob and his public-school chums don't get a telling off from nanny.

"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any"

[Alice Walker, Author of The Colour Purple].

In Solidarity, Sean Hoyle



NORFOLK'S NARROW GAUGE

The Bure Valley Railway meanders for miles through the heart of the Norfolk Broads

The Bure Valley Railway (BVR) is a delightful narrow gauge heritage railway which provides an 18-mile round trip through North Norfolk's pretty countryside following the River Bure through meadowland and ancient pasture.

Along the line, within The Broads National Park, are halts serving the picturesque Broadland villages of Brampton, Buxton and Coltishall where you can hop off and explore by foot. Hop back on and continue your journey by train by waving down the driver to stop.

Built on the trackbed of the original standard gauge 19th century East Norfolk Railway, the 15 inch narrow gauge line came back to life in 1991 to allow new generations to marvel at the Victorian engineering that takes the line through deep cuttings and over man-made

dykes across the valley floor.

Operational manager Neil Cummings oversees the maintenance of over nine miles of Permanent-Way and knows the line inside out as well as the effort involved in building the line.

"There are 17 bridges, including a 105-foot long girder bridge over the River Bure in Buxton as well as Norfolk's only operational railway tunnel.

"The Aylsham tunnel carries the railway under the Aylsham bypass replacing the original standard gauge level crossing," he says.

The restored station at Aylsham, which acts as headquarters, also houses the engine sheds where fitter Mike Turner lovingly keeps the railway's specially-built loco engines rolling.

He explains that working on

the smaller engines means that everything can be done in-house from overhauling bogies to a full engine refit.

This independence has been helped by a new lathe and a new 75 tonne press which allows wheels to be pressed onto axles on site.

He explains how the narrow gauge Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, which runs through the Lake District National Park, was fundamental to helping the Bure Valley Railway getting started by loaning rolling stock and engines.

The BVR also has an on-going partnership with the famous Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway known as 'Kent's Mainline in Miniature'.

"In fact we are hosting a national conference of narrow gauge lines later this year to exchange ideas and develop the sector," says Mike.

He explains that the line is designed as a tourist attraction for the public and after a long struggle it has turned a profit in recent years with growing passenger numbers.

"Each railway has its own particular requirements and all locos have been built for this line to tackle challenges such as the one in 96 incline out of Wroxham.

"We are monitored by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch and must maintain certain standards including qualified staff and drivers," he says.

He explains that drivers take about a year to learn the job and must pass a blind test where examiners set out pre-arranged faults and mixed messages to test the driver.

People of all ages volunteer on the line –the youngest driver Adam is 21 – which runs virtually all-year round.

One trainee driver is Crystal who began training after volunteering on the North Norfolk line heritage line at Sheringham which can be reached from Hoveton and Wroxham railway station that stands alongside the BVR station at Wroxham.

"My husband and Father-in-Law both volunteer so I thought

I would give it a go," she says.

She is being shown the ropes by driver Mark Burch, an Air Traffic Controller when not driving narrow gauge locos.

One important part of the process is learning the route which runs through beautiful countryside following the River Bure. At journey's end at Wroxham there is a turntable at which driver and trainee turn the loco around for the return leg after taking on water.

There is also a wonderfully-restored signal box at Wroxham which used to service the Bittern Line from Norwich to Sheringham. Today it is preserved as a museum with volunteer curators showing visitors how it used to be operated.

There is also plenty to see along the line and, in summer, you can even combine a train ride with a one and a half hour cruise on the stunning Norfolk Broads.

The Friends of the Bure Valley Railway (FoBVR) is the volunteer supporting group for the Bure Valley Railway. It owns locomotive number 4 and supports the railway financially and with regular working parties of volunteers.

There is a hut at Aylsham which sells donated bric-a-brac, books and magazines during the season to raise money to support the railway. A secondhand book and record shop is also open at Wroxham station.

The line would not exist without this support which keeps one of the country's longest narrow gauges lines rolling.

For more information:
www.bvrw.co.uk ■



Mark Burch



Mike Turner



Neil Cummings



Crystal



ESSEX AWARD

South East Essex branch secretary Del Marr and general secretary Mick Cash present Jenny Phillips with her ten-year badge.



WIGHTLINK AWARD

RMT president and regional organiser Mick Tosh recently attended the funeral of long-time NUR/RMT member from ferry operator Wightlink "John Forrest".

John's son Gary – also a Wightlink member – decided it would be the perfect time to receive his own 40-year membership award while remembering his father.



CALLING RETIRED MEMBERS

Dear editor,

I'm sure it was unintended that your excellent January issue of RMT News omitted in "RMT Organising Conferences 2018" on page 12 the retired members advisory conference arranged for Thursday April 19 at 1300 in The Trades Club, Doncaster. Retired members' branches are welcome to send up to four delegates, regional councils who have not set up retired branches are likewise urged to be represented. Agenda items are expected to discuss the call for the 1968 Transport Act to be restored particularly on busses as since bus deregulation bus services have been decimated, Pensions, care and guards on trains and other retired peoples' issues will no doubt be aired.

In solidarity, Tony Donaghey,
RMT retired members chair

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Dear editor,

Whilst I have always enjoyed reading RMT News, myself and my members present at our last branch meeting were taken aback by the comments made by our President in his column in last month's issue.

Unfortunately this isn't the first time that our President appears to be abusing his position by the use of blatant electioneering. Only last year in RMT News he wrote: "Currently we have no women or black and ethnic regional organisers/senior officials. For the first time we have two women on the national executive committee, Michelle Rodgers and Kathy Mazur. But when they finish their term of office at the end of this year, we could have only white males in all positions, and while we are all elected on merit, it wouldn't really reflect the diversity within our membership would it? As a member-led union only you can change this".

When I read the comments the first time I decided to give our President the benefit of the doubt as perhaps his comments were lost somewhere in translation. Regrettably it seems my original concerns have been proved correct as it seems he's at it again, confirming that my suspicions were indeed correct.

Whilst writing about outgoing NEC members President Sean Hoyle writes: "I want to make a special mention regarding Kathy and Michelle, who have been powerhouses in the boardroom and seeing them leave reminds me that we will have an all-white male NEC going forward.

"I don't claim to have all the answers, but we really must do more to get our female and black and ethnic minorities members elected to senior positions within our organisation, as we really should reflect the members we represent.

"The President position is that of the highest lay official we have and there has never been a woman or black and ethnic minority member elected to that position, that can't be right and must change".

Really President? Are you the only person in our great union that considers themselves superior to any candidate from any of our minority groups? You were elected on merit but now it appears you are suggesting that others shouldn't be? If not then why didn't you step aside during your own election when you had the opportunity to support a standing BEM candidate? I await in anticipation for your response.

In Unity, Steve Shaw, Wigan Branch RMT



CARDIFF AWARDS

Cardiff Rail branch held a successful long membership awards evening attended by general secretary Mick Cash and EC member Eddie Dempsey.

Train Driver Ken Houston received his 25 year badge while 10-year badges were

presented to Railport operative Nigel Burden, guard Gareth Staples, signaller Ian Redman, Customer Service Advisor Nathan Pugh and guard Barrie Willacott (not in photo).



PICCADILLY AWARD

Piccadilly and District West branch member and Piccadilly line train operator Ron Burgin received his 50 years membership from LT regional organiser John Leach and branch chair Carlos Barros last month at Acton Town, Bollo Lane depot.

Ron, a former RMT Health and safety rep, has clocked up 50 years on London Underground and 50 years in the NUR and now RMT.

John Leach who has known Ron all of his own time in LU said that Ron was an absolute stalwart of the union.

"We salute you and your dedication to trade unionism and standing up for workers' rights and equality and dignity at work for all workers"

The branch presented Ron with a 50 years badge and a special set of Golden train keys.

LABOUR AFFILIATION

Dear editor,

I wish to reply to the letter sent in by Steve Metcalfe to the November/December issue of RMT News.

I take note of your opinion that my letter may have breached the advice of the RMT circular dated 27 July not to have any formal debate until we are better informed of any future contacts with the Labour Party. As you then ignored your own advice and continued a formal debate so shall I. I do agree with you entirely that the Labour Party should support a socialist Brexit, abolition of anti-union laws and secure tenancy housing matters especially post-Grenfell.

I also believe the Labour Party should fully support renationalisation of rail, bus and other vital services including water and power without compensation. I also whole heartedly believe that elected members of the Labour Party who have not backed the manifesto, leadership or union campaigns and strikes should be forced to seek re-election at the mercy of the membership in fully democratic elections.

I totally disagree that I have singled out TUSC or made any veiled attack on the Socialist Party. I also visited every meeting put on at the AGM in Exeter by the Socialist Party and happily took part in debate with them. I am also not a Socialist Party member.

I stated: "I am afraid that supporting individual MPs is not going to achieve nationalisation of our industries or repealing of the anti-trade union laws. I am afraid supporting TUSC will not have the electability of the Labour Party. In reality I believe the only way to achieve our political aim is to support the Labour party through affiliation making stronger the commitment to socialist policies & manifesto".

I still believe that the Labour Party will win more seats and have more chance of gaining a majority in Parliament and Councils than TUSC will over the next five years, now we can ignore this or use our influence to change Labour Party to a socialist policies and manifesto.

Regards,

Ian Allen

SUPPORT THE GUARDS

Dear editor,

1979 was the year I started my railway career as a Guard/Conductor. It was also the year that Thatcher embarked on a war with trade unions, passing numerous pieces of legislation to undermine workers' rights and stifle solidarity and a feeling of workplace community and camaraderie amongst working class people.

Years later the Blairite new labour brigade maintained these anti-worker policies making some of them even worse. The Tory/Liberal coalition under Cameron and Clegg imposed even more restrictions on organised workers and those principles of collectivism and solidarity, but in one part of England at least called Merseyside, it appears the age old principles of unity is strength and an injury to one is an injury to all is still alive and well.

It is important that not only the guard/conductor grade but all workers especially within the railway industry acknowledge the need of a second safety-critical trained person aboard all trains. I would like to pay tribute to all those Merseyrail ASLEF drivers who have shown courage and steadfast resolve standing alongside their fellow workers by refusing to cross a picket line. Make no mistake, we can and must win this dispute in the name of safety.

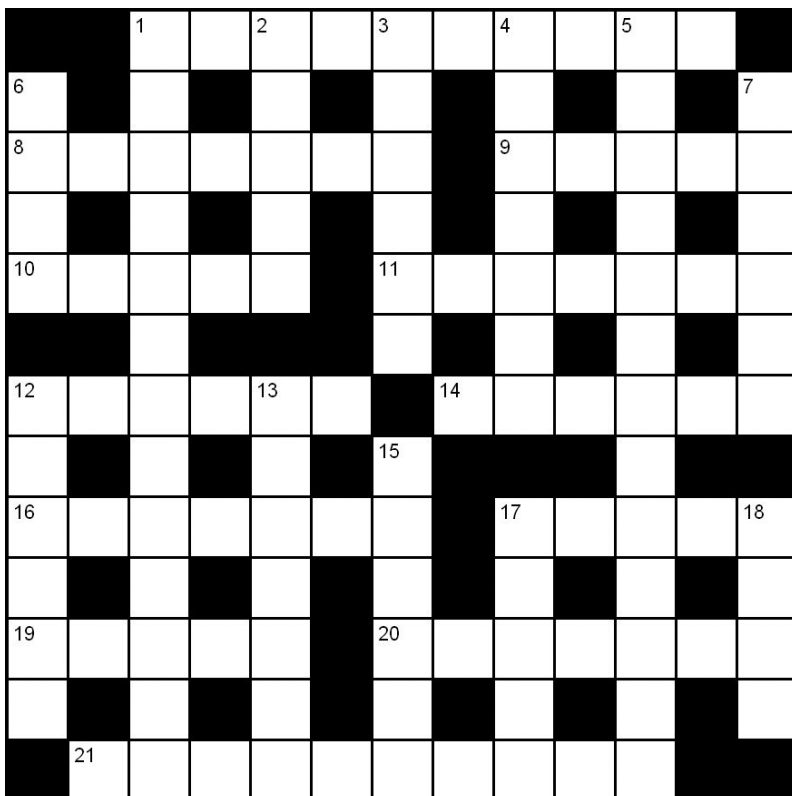
Let us all hope that the strong unwavering principle shown by Merseyrail ASLEF drivers becomes infectious throughout their organisation. It just remains to be said, not only on behalf of my own branch Liverpool no. 5 but branches up and down and the width of the country to our friends and neighbours the Merseyrail drivers, thank you!

Regards

Martin McNulty

On behalf of Liverpool 5 Branch

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword Winner T Powesland

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by March 9 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



Crossword sponsored by UIA

ACROSS

- 1 Scantness (10)
- 8 Alleviate (7)
- 9 Cure (5)
- 10 Praise (5)
- 11 Voter (7)
- 12 Give up (6)
- 14 Impede (6)
- 16 Flight cost (7)
- 17 Declare invalid (5)
- 19 Contort (5)
- 20 Twist together (7)
- 21 Container (10)

DOWN

- 1 Confident (4,9)
- 2 Representative (5)
- 3 Oblique (6)
- 4 Embryonic (7)
- 5 Fair play (13)
- 6 Desire (4)
- 7 Funeral car (6)
- 12 Property (6)
- 13 Receiver (7)
- 15 Imperfection (6)
- 17 Ludicrous act (5)
- 18 Sediment (4)

HELP PROTECT THEM WHEN YOU NO LONGER CAN

RMT
protect✓

The things we do for love! Cheering from the sidelines when they're 6-0 down; overlooking the messy bedroom while they're cramming for exams; Justin Bieber concerts; shaking hands with their first boyfriend through gritted teeth; the 'taxi' to swimming lessons twice a week; the packed lunches; and the after-school 'artwork' we pin on our fridge doors...

You look out for your loved ones everyday. Maybe we can help keep up the good work when you're gone.

RMT Life Cover steps in to shoulder some of your family's financial obligations when you no longer can. How? By giving them a cash lump sum - up to £50,000 - to make up some of the shortfall when they no longer have your salary. It can help cover both the regular household outgoings as well as any other costs that are harder to foresee and, of course, funeral arrangements too.

The average cost of a funeral has more than doubled since 2000 and if the trend continues, it's predicted that costs could reach £6,107 by 2023*. By taking out just £20,000 of life cover, you'll help your nearest and dearest cover immediate expenses and more. With so much else to deal with at this difficult time, helping with the short-term finances for your partner or children can be just the first step towards getting their lives back on track.

It's not the only way life insurance can help them - our cover can also be a longer-term solution for any family who would struggle to pay bills, meet mortgage repayments, bring up the kids and keep meals on the table without your regular income.

It's about helping to keep things ticking over. It's about helping to take care of them, even when you're not around. It's about telling them you still love them.



Don't just take our word for it though. Amanda, 46, from Derbyshire explains why she purchased life insurance, "I have two boys and just worry about leaving them without anything and paying for my own funeral."

Deborah, 47, from Staffordshire agrees that family are extremely important, especially her husband, Paul. "I felt that I had a responsibility to put something in place for him should that day come".

Life insurance is for people like Amanda and Deborah. It's for people who want to enjoy peace of mind knowing their nearest and dearest are going to be ok financially when they're gone. It's for people who want to help their family and home hold together when everything else can feel like it's falling apart. It's for people who have been looking after their loved ones for years, and now want a way to help secure their future too.

Remember...

- ✓ No health checks - guaranteed acceptance for UK residents aged 18-64
- ✓ Up to £50,000 cash lump sum
- ✓ No price increases
- ✓ Your premiums stay the same throughout your cover

Year 1 Cashback – get 10% of your first year's paid premiums back, as a thank you for choosing RMTProtect.

Simply visit:

www.rmtprotect.com/life

or call **0800 033 4184** for a free quote.

Year 1 Cashback Terms and Conditions: 1. The cashback amount payable is 10% of the first 12 months' paid premiums. 2. The cashback will be due once the 12th paid premium has been successfully collected and the policy is fully paid up to date. 3. The cashback will be credited to the nominated bank account, from which the monthly premiums are collected. The cashback is paid by RMTProtect.

*Mintel: Funerals – UK January 2007 / Matter Research August 2014 / Forecast based on average annual compound growth rate of 6.33% each year between 2007 and 2015.

† The gift card will be sent within 14 days after we receive your second premium. One £30 M&S gift card per customer. Offer ends 31st December 2017.

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