

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

TUBE SAFETY VICTORY



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

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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.

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EDITORIAL



TUBE SAFETY BATTLE ON

I am pleased to announce that RMT has won an important victory in the battle for safety and jobs on the Tube. This trade union will not stand back while London Underground plays fast and loose with a safety culture that has been built up over decades.

As delegates to the engineering grades conference make clear in this magazine the cuts to Tube train preparation, inspection and maintenance is the thin edge of the wedge.

If we had allowed this dangerous model of extending pre-service checks to go through it will be rolled out for all other train operating companies and that can't be allowed to happen.

RMT is also balloting for industrial action on London Underground over job losses after TfL launched a process called 'Transformation' which aims to cut costs and make savings through job cuts.

This union is wholly opposed to the Transformation process and is demanding that the negotiated agreements are adhered to which states that any changes in relation to staffing levels will only be carried out following full consultation and negotiation.

RMT is also balloting for industrial action at the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – the Royal Navy supply lifeline – in a fight for pay justice after employers imposed a 1.5 per cent increase, undermining the living standards of a crucial group of workers who have seen service in major trouble spots at huge personal risk.

It was heartening to hear

Labour Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell address the protest which marked the third anniversary of RMT's fight on Southern Rail against driver-only operation.

He said that Labour would put a guard on every Southern train as part of the process of bringing the railways back into public ownership.

RMT has also launched a 'bring back the buffet' campaign starting on Great Western Railway services. A recent survey of RMT members on GWR found that the buffet car must be reinstated and the replacement trolley service was also having significant impact on the health and safety of on-train catering staff.

By the time you receive this magazine the grades conference period will be drawing to an end. It has been an absolute pleasure to get to as many as possible to meet members and listen to the debates about how we move forward as a union.

These forums are essential for us to look at the many sectors we organise as an all grades union in order to make policy and fight for members everywhere. These debates feed into our annual general meeting next month.

Whatever job you do there is a conference for you. So get involved and ask your branch secretary where your grades conference is next year. You will always get a warm reception from men and women that care about you and the work you do.

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SOUTHERN PROTEST

Third anniversary of guards fight on Southern marked with protest outside French state-owned Keolis UK headquarters



RMT and supporters marked the third anniversary of RMT strike action on Southern Rail against driver-only operation – Britain’s longest running industrial dispute – by protesting outside Keolis UK headquarters in London.

Labour Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell MP addressed the crowds which included Southern guards and RMT banners from across the country.

“We will put a guard on every Southern train as part of the process of bringing the railways back into public ownership,” he said.

Other speakers that brought messages of support were Paul Peters of Disabled Peoples Against the Cuts, Association of British Commuters rep Summer

Dean and Unite general secretary Len McCluskey.

RMT also warned of “mass transport discrimination” against disabled passengers on Southern Rail services.

The union revealed that at least 15,000 Southern Rail services have run without a second person on board since

the introduction of driver only operated services in 2017, according to new figures provided by official parliamentary answers.

With the majority of Southern stations unstaffed RMT has warned that mass discrimination is taking place against older and disabled

passengers who now no longer have the guarantee of a second member of staff to assist them, including being able to turn up and go and travel on the train of their choice.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently has warned that that “the shift to D00 trains, with the



increased likelihood of there being no second member of staff on board to assist passengers, and a decrease in staffed stations could represent a diminution of protection for disabled people, and potentially be a breach of the Equality Act 2010”.

Although the figures were provided by the Department for Transport on the basis of figures reported to them by Southern, the standard of reporting has not been assessed by the equality rail regulator the ORR, and the union fears the situation is far worse.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the shocking reality of the scale of discrimination against disabled passengers was laid bare.

“Keolis and this government should be hanging their heads in shame.

“Despite all the promises that there would continue to be a second person on trains,

Ministers have now admitted thousands of Southern services are running with a driver alone.

“With Chris Grayling’s record of deceiving passengers, the situation is likely to be even worse than they are prepared to admit and it’s time for the truth to be told.

“Disabled and vulnerable passengers were once guaranteed a guard on their services to provide assistance and protection. That is now no longer the case, as we can see in this appalling increase in discrimination against disabled and vulnerable passengers.

“And as Southern is ultimately part -owned by French state railways, French services are benefiting off the backs of discriminatory cuts on Southern railways.

“This scandal has to end and end now and that means Southern reversing their Driver Only policy and signing up to the guard guarantee,” he said. ■



TAKE ARRIVA AND STAGECOACH CONTRACTS INTO PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

RMT has called for Arriva Rail’s UK franchises and contracts to be taken into public ownership after the outfit’s parent company German state rail operator Deutsche Bahn, confirmed that sell-off plans are underway and are expected to be confirmed in September.

The union also demanded that immediate steps be taken to bring franchises involving Stagecoach into public ownership after the company was barred from bidding in the current round of franchise awards.

RMT has warned that services, and the jobs of thousands of rail workers, are now left hanging by a thread as the chaotic mismanagement of

Britain’s railways takes another turn for the worst. With 70 per cent of the British public supporting public ownership RMT is stepping up campaigning in light of the latest news.

In a letter to transport secretary Chris Grayling RMT general secretary Mick Cash said: “In light of the decision to bar Stagecoach from bidding for franchises I am writing to urge you now to bring to an end the franchising fiasco.

“The franchise system is now teetering on the brink and I would urge you to take urgent action to protect passengers and rail workers.

“The network needs to be returned to public ownership

and as first step all Stagecoach contracts should be bought in house immediately.

“I have to warn you that rail workers and their pensions will not be used as pawns in a row between your department and the train companies and we will take all necessary steps to protect our members.

“I am calling also for an urgent industry wide summit to resolve this crisis and ensure the necessary protections are in place to protect rail workers and passengers.”

Arriva Rail UK holds franchises on Northern, Cross Country and Chiltern as well as the concession on London Overground and the Grand Central and GWR open access

operations. It also has a major train care division.

“It can’t be right that thousands of jobs associated with train operations across pretty much the whole of the country are left hanging in the balance awaiting a boardroom decision in Berlin. That is a ludicrous way to run our railways.

“The only solution to this nonsense is to bring the UK’s rail assets back into public ownership free from this kind of grubby speculation where our future is carved up behind closed doors in the interests of global finance capital and not the British rail passenger,” he said. ■



TUBE SAFETY VICTORY

Three-day strike action by over a thousand safety-critical London Underground fleet staff was suspended this month after lethal cuts to train preparation and inspection frequencies were abandoned by LUL.

Members had also been taking action short of strike in a number of areas around risk assessments, a ban on lone working and a ban on working without valid licences and fire wardens being in place.

RMT has long been opposed to wholesale cuts to train preparation, inspection and maintenance that would mean:

- *24 hour safety inspections now set to take part up to 84 days apart

- *Testing on brakes, doors, lighting and safety-critical emergency equipment no longer

done on a daily basis with reductions of up to 97 per cent in the frequency of these tests.

- *Cuts being proposed despite the fact that trains on some lines approaching 50 years old require more testing, not less

- *Cuts to the established, tried and tested safety inspection regime being made despite the fact that London Underground are making profits of £800 million

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that if RMT had not taken action tube bosses would have bulldozed through a package of damaging and dangerous cuts to tube inspection and preparation frequencies with disastrous consequences.

"First of all I want to pay tribute to London Underground fleet members who have proved

once again that militant, united and determined trade union action can roll back the tide of cuts.

"This is their victory but it also a victory for the travelling public, the RMT campaign on tube safety and for basic common sense.

"It is a massive achievement for this union to overturn the planned cuts to tube train inspections and preparation but the campaign doesn't stop here, not by a long chalk.

"We now expect London Underground to reverse the planned cuts to jobs under their "transformation" programme and give us an assurance that there will be no further attacks on our members, their working conditions and the safety culture on the tube network.

"Our action has been

suspended but RMT remains vigilant and will have no hesitation in taking whatever steps are required to block cuts and their consequences wherever and whenever they may emerge," he said.

TRANSFORMATION

RMT is also preparing separate ballot for industrial action on London Underground in disputes over job losses.

The latest dispute has arisen after TfL/LUL launched a process called 'Transformation' which aims to cut costs and make savings through job cuts.

LUL has recently announced a further raft of job losses affecting members in Track Access Control, Power Control, Service Control, LUCC, Skills Development, Waste, Pumps, Stations Buildings and Civils

and Signals Incidents.

RMT is wholly opposed to the Transformation process and has written to the company demanding that the negotiated Main Framework Agreement is adhered to. That agreement states that any changes in relation to staffing levels will only be carried out following full consultation and negotiation with the trades unions. This has been flouted in respect of the latest proposals as no negotiation has taken place and no safety review or validation has been provided.

Due to this breach of the key main agreement principles, RMT has made it clear to the company that unless the union receives the relevant information, including the full proposals and full information on all safety aspects, it will withdraw from the 90 day statutory consultation.

Mick Cash said that RMT members across London Underground were furious at what they rightly see as a barrage of attacks from the company with the job cuts assault under the guise of the "Transformation" process just the latest in a catalogue of grievances that are all about

hammering down on pay, staffing levels, safety and working conditions.

"RMT has made it crystal clear that we will fight any attempts to rip up agreements as part of a process designed to

ram through cash-led cuts that would decimate the workforce and open the door to an assault on job security, pay and working conditions that our members have had to fight long and hard to achieve.

"We are now in dispute with London Underground on a number of fronts and are mobilising an industrial and political response that will turn the tide on these ill-conceived attacks," he said. ■

FURTHER ACTION ON LONDON OVERGROUND



Further industrial action took place this month on London Overground over a pay freeze for Travel Safe Officers which would effectively mean a slide into poverty pay for these essential workers.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that Travel Safe Officers offered security for

passengers and staff against a background of increasing anti-social and violent behaviour on the railways.

"Despite previous rock-solid strike action the company still refuse to listen and have left us with no option but to confirm a further phase.

"Our members do an important job on London

Overground and deserve to be paid properly for the work that they do. A pay freeze for workers on a low wage is an insult and represents a pay cut in real terms.

"RMT remains available for talks and is ready to enter into serious negotiations in order to resolve the dispute," he said. ■

RAIL PRIVATEERS DEMAND MORE FRAGMENTATION

RMt has warned of total chaos on the railways after the private rail contractors club – the Rail Delivery Group – called for wholesale deregulation on the tracks that would effectively allow private operators to bid route by route, slot by slot for the most lucrative chunks of the network.

The union warned that any such move would be a mirror of the Tory bus deregulation which saw companies queuing up on the streets to pick up passengers in dense areas of population at peak time while rural and lesser-used services were closed down wholesale.

The private operators are also demanding that there should be no political accountability to the taxpayer for their actions with a total break from government control of the railways and it's replacement with a new quango organisation stuffed full of bosses and with a licence to maximise profits.

The plan – called out by RMT as "rail privatisation on steroids" – formed the basis of the Rail Delivery Group's submission to the Government Rail Review set up under the control of top city boy Keith Williams, the former Chief

Executive of British Airways, who is expected to agree to the demands of big business under the direction of failing Tory transport secretary Chris Grayling.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that what the private rail operators were proposing was a de-regulated free for all where private train operators slug it out on the most lucrative routes on a slot by slot basis.

"This would lead to total chaos with passengers trapped in a transport nightmare of escalating fares where prices rise by the minute according to availability.

"They are also demanding a break from the last shreds of accountability to the taxpayer through the normal political machinery in a move that would give the racketeering train companies an absolute free run to milk the system and the passenger for every penny piece.

"The Rail Delivery Group is actually proposing a version of the broken rail franchising model pumped up on steroids when what is really needed is an end to this nonsense and public ownership of our railways," he said. ■



DEFENDING SAFETY

RMT engineering conference backs action on London Underground against reductions in safety

Delegates to the union's industrial organising conference of engineering grades meeting in Rugby backed planned industrial action by London Underground fleet members against plans to extend long-standing safety checks on all fleets.

Tony Carter-Leay, LU Fleet said that pre-service safety checks presently occur every 24 hours, a proven safe system of work that prevents potential defective trains from entering service avoiding lengthy delay, overcrowding or worse.

He said that LU's proposal was to extend testing to 96 hours on some stock and over 70 days (1,680 hours) on S Stock which run on four different lines.

"Despite a number of attempts to gain access to vital safety documents which LUL claim to support the move, we have yet to see any evidence that this is the case.

"If these changes are allowed to come into effect on LUL then this down-sized model of extending pre-service checks will be rolled out for all other fleet operating companies and all other aspects of routine maintenance," he warned.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash backed the call and warned against the London Labour mayor from carrying out Tory cuts.

"We have to take LUL on and say that there can be no compromises on safety and RMT is prepared to take whatever action is necessary to keep it that way," he said.

Delegates noted the introduction of MacRail technology by Network Rail in some areas without prior notification which monitors the location of workers at all times and called for the practice to be withdrawn immediately.

Lee Gardiner, Wakefield and Healey Mills warned that the company was introducing the system under the banner of health and safety by claiming it was about managing fatigue but it was really about monitoring workers and gathering information.

"The use of this non-consulted system breached the pahse 2b/c agreements and collective bargaining agreements and could be rolled out nationally," he said.

Dai Hobbs, Newport Rail warned of the dangers of such monitoring systems.

"Not only is this not about safety but it actively encourages workers to lie about the length of travel to work as it takes that time into account. How is this any way safe," he said.

Delegates also raised concerned regarding Network Rail use of train CCTV footage in near miss incidents that are still under investigation.

Mark Eastwood, Doncaster explained that Network Rail policy was to show footage from the train after a near miss incident to all maintenance staff just a few days after it had occurred and while the investigation is on-going.

"This is having a devastating effect on members who don't know if they will be losing their jobs and enduring finger pointing and whispering campaigns based on CCTV footage.

"Showing this evidence whilst the investigation are still on-going is unfair on the individual who would expect to have a fair and unbiased hearing which is impossible after everyone has seen a crucial part of this evidence and cast their own opinion," he said.

Shaune Woods, Peterborough said that it was morally wrong

to show everybody footage at an already distressing time.

"How do you get a fair hearing under these circumstances?

"We should have a full investigation first to establish exactly what happened and then show footage so we can learn from the incident," he said.

Delegates also called on the union to negotiate a national register with companies for everyone that carries out welding activities and set out minimum standards.

Alex Hogg, Edinburgh and Portobello warned that there was mounting evidence of damage done by exposure to welding fumes over many decades.

"We are getting advice that welding should be carried out up wind which really is not good enough.

"We must challenge employers and this should be the start of a major campaign," he said.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

There were two sessions which involved brainstorming issues of most concern in fleet and on track maintenance.

The lively maintenance

session identified a number of issues including the need to tackle casualisation of the sector and the need to organise agency workers into the union. The question of privilege travel was raised and the development of a two-tier workforce. Delegates also called for training sessions at next year's conference on P,T&R including a question and answer session.

Issues around the introduction of new technology and surveillance were also raised and the need to collate evidence of general practices and maximise opportunities that may arise from them.

The session dealing with fleet discussed the potential outsourcing of aspects of the roles through Technical Services and Spares Supply Agreement (TSSSA) agreements, with external "experts" being placed in depots to act as human catalogues for the ordering of spares from the companies they

The threat of design, build and maintain contracts in separating fleet roles from other rail jobs, and potentially greater centralisation of work which may lead to re-location or unemployment.

The lack of a coherent rail fleet strategy from government which would assess the impact of the introduction of a large quantity of new fleet on existing roles and the available infrastructure (electrified depots etc...). In particular the necessity of maintaining the skills based was discussed.

The need for an organising campaign was also raised specifically targeting fleet workers and to gain a complete picture of current rolling stock arrangements and potential for changes in future.

The group also noted that a meeting of the train fleet maintenance consultative committee was being called to discuss these and other challenges facing the industry. ■

WOMAN DELEGATE TO CONFERENCE

As track and train maintenance is a male-dominated industry the organising conference of engineering grades has not had a female delegate for many years. But that changed this year when Hannah Moody of Rugby branch attended her first grades conference.

Hannah has worked at S&T for nine years and she was not sure what to expect when she signed up to attend. However she is no stranger to trade union meeting as she was a regular delegate to the South West TUC when she lived in Bristol and she has never looked back.

"I attended RMT courses at the education centre in Doncaster and learnt a lot meeting workers from different grades including bus workers and seafarers as well as rail



workers.

"I also got involved with the women's network including the What's App women's group," she said.

Hannah took part in debates during conference this year and is set to be a regular delegate to many other RMT events in the future. ■

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RMT BALLOTS FOR FAIR PAY AT RFA

RMT is balloting nearly 700 workers at the Royal Fleet Auxiliary – the Royal Navy supply lifeline – for industrial action in a fight for pay justice.

Despite repeated efforts by the union to reach a negotiated solution, employers have instead opted to impose a 1.5 per cent increase, undermining the living standards of a crucial group of workers who have seen service in major trouble spots, including the Falklands and the Gulf, at huge personal risk.

As well as announcing the

balloting timetable – which will run for nearly two months due to members being on-board ship on tours of duty and unable to register a postal vote that complies with the Tory anti-union laws – RMT is also launching a “Fair Pay for RFA” campaign to mobilise public and political support for a group of workers who are crucial to the safety and security of the nation.

In a referendum ballot of members over the derisory offer 95 per cent voted to oppose,

signalling the strength of feeling amongst the workforce as we now move to into a formal industrial action ballot.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was a disgraceful that Royal Fleet Auxiliary members, staff delivering the supplies life-line to the Royal Navy that is crucial to our national safety and security, have had a derisory pay increase imposed on them which doesn’t even keep pace with the cost of living.

“That amounts to a pay cut

in real terms and is wholly unacceptable and that is why we are now moving to a formal industrial action ballot.

“RMT will not stand by while RFA staff are denied basic pay justice and the union is launching a “Fair Pay for RFA” campaign which will give the public a chance to show their support for this essential group of workers. We remain available for genuine and meaningful talks,” he said.

SNP LOBBY

RMT activists held a noisy and colourful demonstration outside the SNP spring conference in Edinburgh last month which highlighted on-going RMT campaigns on rail, maritime and offshore energy issues to the over 2,000 delegates.

With the SNP firmly in power at the Scottish Parliament delegates to their spring and

annual conferences are by now well used to RMT being in attendance to highlight the clear failings in their party’s much vaunted Fair Work agenda and the union was, for the most part, made very welcome by delegates who clearly understood it was trying to secure fairness in the workplace.

Many political discussions took place between RMT

members and SNP delegates with firm agreement in place that the government’s warm words on Fair Work were continuing to fail to deliver for workers and their families.

RMT argued that, although employment law is not at the present time devolved to the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish government could do more to encourage employers to recognise trade unions and put more fair work principles into their procurement practices for government contracts on the ferry and rail sectors and to use

their influence with oil companies and contractors to end the race to the bottom in the offshore and maritime sectors in general.

RMT regional organiser Gordon Martin said that the SNP annual conference would take place in Aberdeen in October this year and it is a far larger event.

“RMT will be there again campaigning with vigour on behalf of members while fiercely defending our independent political, industrial and organising strategy,” he said.

GOVERNMENT BACKS OFFSHORE SOCIAL DUMPING

RMT slammed the government's decision last month to grant another waiver from immigration rules for offshore wind companies to import non-EEA seafarers to work on vessels that construct and maintain offshore wind farms on the UK Continental Shelf.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the betrayal of UK seafarers and exploitation of foreign seafarers continued under this failing government.

"This immigration waiver

has now been in place since October 2016, in which time hundreds more offshore wind turbines have been connected to the grid using exploited crews.

"The construction and installation of wind farms are where most jobs are created yet the Home Office have decided to issue another waiver, the fourth by our count, to allow wind energy companies to profit from importing cheap labour to build and maintain wind farms in UK waters for

another year.

"Last month's 'Offshore Wind Sector Deal' committed the government to increase the 'UK content' of offshore wind projects yet this waiver actively excludes UK seafarers from jobs in the growing offshore wind supply chain, just ahead of the next round of energy pricing for new offshore wind farm projects.

"The further delay in extending the National Minimum Wage Act to provide some protection for seafarer

pay in the offshore energy supply chain is also exposed by this scandalous contempt for British Ratings' jobs.

"What we should be seeing is standardisation of employment practices in the offshore wind industry and the supply chain to stamp out seafarer exploitation. It is totally unacceptable for this sustainable energy source to be developed on the backs of exploited workers who lack basic employment rights or protections," he said. ■

GRAYLING TOLD TO GO AFTER BREXIT FERRY FARCE

Transport secretary Chris Grayling was under fresh pressure to resign last month after the government stacked up over a £50 million pound loss for cancelling contracts for extra ferries to bring in essential supplies in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

The decision to award the contracts has been a major political embarrassment after it emerged the government handed out a £14 million pound contract for extra ferries to a company that

owned no boats and published terms and conditions on its website that appeared to be for a takeaway food business.

Then, the government was forced to pay a further £33 million pounds to settle a lawsuit brought by Eurotunnel, which complained that it was unfairly prevented from bidding on the ferry contracts, which were negotiated in secret.

Labour's transport spokesman Andy McDonald said that Grayling and the

ferry contracts would evermore be a case study in ministerial incompetence.

"His career as a minister has left a trail of scorched earth and billions of pounds of public money wasted. This country cannot afford Chris Grayling," he said.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the Brexit ferry chaos had moved from farce to national scandal with the taxpayer picking up the bill.

"If he had listened to the maritime unions none of this

would have happened.

"The £56 million wasted could have been used to create proper jobs for British seafarers and pay the Royal Fleet Auxiliary workforce a decent wage.

"Grayling has reduced the shipping industry in this island nation to a global laughing stock and anyone with a shred of decency would have resigned long ago off the back of his catalogue of failures," he said. ■

SAVE OUR STATIONS



Stations are under just as much threat as guards in a privatised railway

RMT launched its Staff our Stations campaign last month at the station grades organising conference in Dunfermline

RMT general secretary Mr Cash warned that the driver-only operation dispute had been “not just about saving guards on trains, but about how we perceive the future of our industry”.

“We’re going to see the same argument on stations and the Staff our Stations campaign we’re launching is on the same debate. We need to broaden the issues to other grades – and ensure that the attacks we know are coming, we get ahead of.”

“We didn’t wait for the bosses to introduce their brand new trains to take industrial action – because as soon as they introduce the new trains they can run them without a guard,” he told delegates.

He also rubbished claims made by train companies that there was less need for staff in the modern day.

“As many people travel for leisure today as they do for work.

“That means they need more support and it actually means we’re in a situation where you need more staff, not less staff,” he said.

RMT senior assistant general secretary Steve Hedley also emphasised the Staff Our Stations campaign.

“The station grades themselves have to take ownership of the campaign, saying these are our jobs, these are the things we care passionately about.

“Quite rightly over the last few years a lot of the union’s attention has been going to fighting for the guard on the

train. But we’re an all grades union... so it’s absolutely essential to send message out we’re fighting for safety and accessibility on the stations,” he said.

Conference unanimously endorsed a motion to demand that “industrial action be explored” over understaffed and understaffed stations. It demanded a national RMT campaign on the issue of a recent increase in such practices of de-staffing by stealth.

The motion, from Central Line West branch, spoke of how “successful strike action and ballot threats” on London Underground had forced management to reconsider”.

Jenny Adams, Camden 3 said: “It does need to be noted with regard to us that there has been about four or five jobs now where they’ve said they

will fill all vacancies”.

Delegates also called for booking office closures to be fought “by any means”. Lloyd Griffin, Waltham Cross argued that redeployments of booking office staff had led to greater inefficiencies.

“At Audley End, where the booking office used to be quite packed – you’ve got two or three people sitting there doing less work,” he said.

Josie Partington, Blackpool and Fylde said that there needed to be more education about the importance of buying tickets at booking offices, rather than from machines or online.

Recalling a recent RMT event, she said: “We’re missing a trick, members in other grades didn’t know they were costing me my job.

“They’d all bought their tickets online, and they didn’t

know they could get it cheaper through me," she said.

Another theme at the conference was the failure of management to support station staff at risk from violence from disgruntled passengers.

Ross Marshall, Finsbury Park spoke of the case of the London Bridge three, in which a member was sacked in spite of the police stating they had acted reasonably.

"Because the members defended themselves, one was sacked, two were disciplined.

"We've now moved forward two or three years, and we've got two members of LU staff in the disciplinary procedure.

"One member had been "racially abused, spat at, put in a headlock and punched", adding: "I wouldn't say she defended herself because there was no physical contact, but they suspended her because they said they didn't think her customer service ethos was good enough.

"The fact is London Underground don't recognise the legal right to self-defence, he said.

Jenny Adams stated: "We've said to them, in zones 3, 4, 5 and 6 on the tube it's basically now a free railway.

"If you even ask for a ticket in any of these zones, passengers are going to come back to you with aggression," she said.

Ken Hopkins, Derby Rail and Engineering, concurred: "If you complain, they're going to bring someone in who'll do as they're told."

Another motion called on the union to "make it clear to all companies that RMT did not accept any member being dragged through the discipline procedures for being abused by criminals".

Mick Cross, Camden 3 said: "While I do have some sympathy for the police - with regard to BTP, their numbers have been reduced.

"But because of the lack of resources they've had, and the way they approach cases, a lot of our staff have lost confidence in the BTP," he said.



WELCOME: Ross Marshall with Jim Leishman MBE, former professional footballer and Provost of Fife, who welcomed delegates to Dunfermline

Steve Hedley said that the railways "should either abolish fares, make it free to travel on public transport" or "make the fares cheap enough" that fare evasion doesn't happen.

"We have to look at what causes these assaults, and in a lot of cases it is people that can't afford to pay fares, and they need to get to work," he argued.

A further motion noted that "self defence is perfectly reasonable if being attacked" under the law, but said "many companies have a totally different opinion".

Tré Crossfield, Bakerloo Line South said: "In a lot of situations, staff don't have the wherewithal to retreat. We should look at a situation where we actually train our workers to use self-defence".

Members also raised concerns that body-worn CCTV footage could be used "against staff". A motion endorsed by delegates called for an "absolute guarantee" that footage be used only in working towards a "reduction of assaults and prosecutions" of workers, and not in disciplinary cases.

Ross Marshall said that such an agreement had already been reached on ScotRail.

Phil Rowan, Finsbury Park said: "I've been against [body-worn CCTV] and I've been

saying to our members saying don't do it, it's voluntary".

He warned there was a potential for the technology to present a selective account of events. For instance, if a worker wearing a camera intervenes in an incident, it would only captures one side of events.

Delegates were briefed on related issues by Thompsons Solicitors lawyers Alan Rodgers and Paul Deans.

"You need to keep in mind that when you're defending yourself, your entire course of conduct will be scrutinised," Mr Rodgers said.

He also warned that social media footage was also a matter of concern, saying: "I've had cases of Scotrail workers photographed asleep on the train, and then it's been put on social media.

"If someone captures something on their mobile phone, they put that on social media and straight away it's out there.

"Everyone needs to be ultra-cautious in terms of what's been recorded and what's being distributed."

Ross Marshall revealed: "We know of at least two people who wilfully accepted being punched, because they don't want to be the next sacking.

"What we're looking for is a baseline of common sense," he

said.

Concerns were also raised over internal promotions - particularly on Merseyrail, with staff under disciplinary redress unable to apply for promotion as they approached their return to work.

Ronnie Arven, Wirral said: "We think it's unfair because you've been disciplined for 10 months, and you've got two months to go, you're not allowed to go for the vacancies.

"Whether it's happening on other TOCs, I don't know," he said.

In a motion the conference will submit to the AGM, the alarm was raised over air quality in stations. Willie Strang, Edinburgh 1 and Portobello said Edinburgh Waverley had been ranked the worst station for pollution levels.

Josie Partington also warned: "Too much exposure to diesel can bring on early-onset dementia."

NEC member Mark Nothard said: "It's not only that the dust and the fumes, it's building work that's going on in the station, it's noise pollution. If you're standing there all day with someone with a jackhammer behind you, that's all you can hear, that's pollution".



CATERING FOR THE FUTURE

RMT catering conference delegates discuss priorities and challenges for the coming year

This year's packed national organising conference of hotel, catering and ancillary grades assembled in Birmingham for a full programme of discussions mapping out a programme for the year ahead.

Conference was opened up by chair Derek England from LNER. He set the tone for the fighting, organising and ambitious spirit of the activists present that would flow through throughout the day:

"There are huge challenges facing this union of catering employers in our industries trying to cap wages and conditions to the legal minimum.

"We must never under-value or under-sell ourselves – we make these companies their profits through our hard work. We are worth every penny of what we are demanding and

more," he said.

Craig Johnson, acting midlands regional organiser, reinforced the points made that "all catering work should be brought back in-house on collective terms and conditions.

"Catering is an integral part of the travelling experience and staff should be valued accordingly, that is our most basic of demands.

"Instead, we are confronted with some of the most Dickensian employment practices in our industry with some members working inhumane 13 hour shifts on services stretching from Newcastle to Southampton. That is what we are up against.

"As well as fighting to defend services one of our key priorities should be for expansion with the reintroduction of buffet services a central demand,

proving that the catering sector is a key priority for the union," he said.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash updated conference on the wider work across the union and on how the catering sector fits in as an important and integral part of RMT's activities. He also set out how the union is prioritising building membership density, improving education and representation and strengthening the union's financial position to underpin the battles ahead.

Kathy Mazur from West Coast thanked both officials for their contributions and pointed out how the industrial organising approach of RMT had been instrumental in securing the superb victory of the DHL staff working on the supplies and logistics side of the Virgin operation but also

reminded conference that the union is only ever as strong as its members on the ground.

Dave Marshall from the RMT organising unit then took conference through a series of activities aimed at identifying priorities, best practices and how to achieve them which sparked off some lively debate.

The afternoon session was filled with a number of motions covering a wide range of subjects pertinent to the grade from the impact of training cuts, sharpening up recruitment activities, safety and the shocking pressure on personal well-being of the long hours and low pay culture that blights the industry.

There was extensive debate around the motion from Swansea No 1 Branch laying the launch pad for an all-out campaign over the future of

buffet service. Although focussing on GWR, the same issues raised by the branch resonate around the country.

RMT assistant general secretary Steve Hedley told RMT News that the motion set out the groundwork for a union-wide campaign that can unite members in defence of the catering grades and take forward a national fight for the buffet service that will attract widespread support from the travelling public who spend a fortune for seats on trains where a key part of the passengers experience has been hacked back to the bare bones. ■



GWR MUST #BRINGBACKTHEBUFFET

RMT held events across the country this month in support of the union campaign to Bring Back the Buffet on Great Western Railway (GWR) services.

Members handed out postcards urging the public to write to their MPs asking them to sign up to Early Day Motion 2361 in the House of Commons in support of the Bring Back the Buffet campaign.

The events linked up workers along the GWR routes at Swansea, Plymouth and London Paddington who are demanding that the buffet car be reinstated and that the staff who work in the catering grades are properly valued and respected.

Great Western Railway removed the buffet car from all of its new Intercity Express Trains, which serve routes from London to Wales and the South West – a move which RMT always argued was a retrograde step. Their removal has impacted on the passenger experience by removing the option of a proper catering service. The buffet car also acts as a point of safety and contact.

A recent survey of GWR staff found that the buffet car must be reinstated in all GWR Intercity trains without delay. The replacement trolley service was also having significant impact on the health and safety of on-train catering staff.

Key survey findings included:

- A massive 95 per cent of RMT GWR members think the buffet should be reinstated;
- Similarly, 95 per cent think the removal of the buffet has had a negative impact on the passenger experience
- 77 per cent think it has had an impact on safety, with 62 per cent saying it's had an impact on both passenger and staff safety

RMT will be rolling out the #BringBackTheBuffet campaign on a national basis with GWR the starting point for a national drive that will put rail catering, and rail catering staff, centre



stage.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the axing of the buffet car on Great Western Railway was a cash-led move that was all about maximising profits at the expense of the traveller and RMT's campaign has set out to right that wrong.

"RMT catering members are an integral part of the rail team and they deserve respect and support.

"For too long catering services on the railway have been seen as a soft touch for cuts but no longer, RMT's #BringBackTheBuffet campaign will put catering on the railway centre stage, where it belongs," he said. ■





NO TO DRIVER-ONLY OPERATION

Train crew conference delegates discuss the need for a guard guarantee

The National Industrial Organising Conference of Train Crew and Shunting Grades met in Chatham recently buoyed up by the progress made in the long fight against Driver Only Operation.

Ivor Riddell, Medway, gave the welcoming address telling delegates about the long local radical history of the area going back to the Peasants' Revolt.

Billy Kim, Liverpool No. 5, applauded the efforts of members who continue to fight against the introduction of driver-only and driver-controlled trains.

Conference supported his call with regard to the on-going industrial dispute with Arriva Rail North reaffirming the union commits to three key points:

- That there is an absolute 100 per cent guarantee that no trains will run without the second member of staff on board
- That the second member of staff will be clearly designated as safety critical to the running of all services
- That the second member of staff will retain the full suite of safety and operational competencies of the guard,

including a direct role at the platform/train interface and train despatch

"We believe our cause is just and resolve to continue to fight to keep the guard on the train," Billy said.

Steve Shaw, Wigan opened a spirited discussion on the role of the guard.

"Important decisions are to be made over the coming months on ARN, SWR, Merseyrail and WMT that will map out the future key roles and responsibilities of the affected guards within those respective companies.

"It is imperative and essential that our negotiating teams are provided with clear instruction and guidance from our NEC before accepting any proposal from employers," Steve said.

Jeff Slee, Lewisham, Southward and Deptford said that he believed the union's policy is clear, however achieving the policy in every instance on every company was dependent on local industrial strength.

Jeff also led the call for conference to support the national demonstration in London against DOO on 26 April outside the headquarters

of Keolis UK. The demonstration marks the third anniversary of the beginning of the dispute with Southern.

"We are conducting a great campaign against DOO and have fought one of the best industrial disputes the trade union movement has fought for many years," he said.

Jim Buchanan, Dorset Rail moved a composited motion on behalf of his branch and Wigan calling for the union to mount an intensive campaign to highlight the correlation between guaranteed guards on the train and guaranteed access to services for all members of society.

"It is clear that train guards provide an indispensable service which facilitates open access to rail services. A measure of a civilised society is accessibility to services for all members of

society.

"Currently guaranteed guards mean guaranteed access any attempt to remove or downgrade this provision is both morally repugnant and retrograde step," he said.

RMT assistant general secretary Steve Hedley told delegates that they had won the argument with the public for keeping the guard on the train.

Steve talked about the barriers to travel that face disabled people.

"Every station needs to be staffed and it is discrimination that prevents disabled people from travelling from any station on any train at any time," he said.

Alex Gordon, Paddington No 1, explained to delegates that new Hitachi trains have such serious problems with their bodyside cameras that GWR



have had to issue an instruction that Class 80 type trains were not allowed to be operated in driver-only dispatch mode. This means that some routes that had formerly been operating DOO have had to reintroduce guards on the train.

“Technology will never be as good as having a guard and we need to fight to keep these guards on the train,” he said.

Neil Sharples, Wigan called for training to be provided so that rail staff can be fully equipped to assist people who have been the victims of sexual assault on the rail network.

“At a time when sexual assaults are on the rise across the rail network this initiative would be a positive and proactive step for the whole rail industry to be involved in and would more importantly greatly benefit anyone who may sadly suffer from such abuse,” he said.

Steve Nott gave the national executive committee's report to conference, outlining the work carried out on the previous year's motions. He congratulated delegates on their solidarity in the various guard disputes that they had been involved in.

Steve Wilkins, Medway TUC, spoke on behalf of the local



trades' council and said that RMT was a great example of a union that has no hesitation in taking industrial action. He pledged continued support from the trades council for the Keep the Guard campaign on Southern.

Chris Williamson MP brought greetings from the RMT group in Parliament. He congratulated delegates for the campaigning and industrial action that they had been engaged in defence of keeping guards on the train.

Chris argued that the changes needed to transform the transport industry could only come about with the election of a Labour government.

“As a labour movement we need to ensure a Labour government makes fundamental changes to the economy. People malign the Luddites unfairly, but like the Luddites we need to

argue for new technology to be our servant and not our master. We can achieve that by democratising our economy,” he said.

David Gobé, Rail Section President of the International Transport Workers Federation, said that neo-liberalism had made the situation terrible for rail workers across the world. He explained the importance of international solidarity among transport workers who are fighting companies that have operations that straddle national borders.

David pledged support from his union, CGT, for the national demonstration outside Keolis UK. Keolis, which owns 35 per cent of Govia, is itself owned by SNCF, the French State railway.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash asked delegates whether they felt that progress had been

made recently. “Yes” was the resounding answer from the room.

Mick gave a roundup of progress made in the fight over DOO company by company and then called on delegates to turn out for the national anti-DOO demonstration.

“We have fought this government to a standstill on DOO. Three years ago their plan was to start with Southern and then roll out DOO everywhere else. You are an example not only to rail workers but the whole trade union movement.

“We are a fighting trade union. We are balloting members at the rate of more than once a week and over the last five years have been involved in 500 disputes and have a profile second to none,” he said. ■

LEWISHAM DERAILMENT EXPOSES NEED FOR GUARD

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) report last month into the potentially lethal self-detrainment of passengers onto icy and live tracks at Lewisham in March last year has once again exposed the dangers of driver-only operation (DOO) and the fragmentation of operations under the private franchise system.

RMT has pointed out that the circumstances on that day March 2 2018 would likely have had a very different outcome had there been safety-trained second person on the train.

The RAIB report also looked at previous similar events (Dock

Junction, May 2011 and Peckham Rye, November 17) and both of these were on trains that were also DOO - reinforcing the union campaign for a guard on our trains.

In summary:

- The report shows that NR and Southeastern had poor quality planning processes in place to deal with situations like this.
- That in particular they did not have processes in place to identify when a train should be considered ‘stranded’.
- There was poor utilisation of the few staff they did have

and NR and SE need to review the processes for assisting the driver.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was a shocking report and it was only pure luck that no one was killed or seriously injured at Lewisham last March. Safety on our railways must never be left to chance.

“If there had been a second safety critical worker on the train they could have been the means of providing effective communication between the control and the train and best placed to pass this information on to the passengers.

“In this instance the focus was on getting points de-iced and getting trains moving rather than paying close attention to what was actually happening on board the train and the welfare and safety of passengers.

Communication between the different and fragmented parts of the operation was poor and that is a common theme now when it comes to recent safety investigations on our railway.

“RMT will continue to fight for a guard on our trains, proper staffing levels and an end to fragmentation under a single publicly owned rail body,” he said. ■



END THE PAY ROBBERY ON NORTHERN

RMT cleaners working for ISS on the Arriva Rail North contract protest against the great pay robbery

RMT cleaners working for ISS on the Arriva Rail North contract held protest outside Blackburn railway station last month over what the union is calling the great pay robbery affecting a group of key Northern Rail workers.

The protest is over plans by private contractor ISS to unilaterally change the low paid workers terms and conditions so that they will be forced into accepting 11 days' pay owed in arrears. Currently they work five days paid in arrears.

What should be paid as wages will be paid as a loan and then clawed back by the employer. Wages owed will then be paid back only when staff leave the company.

The cleaners are concerned that among other things the changes could affect Universal Credit Welfare Payments, that there hasn't been sufficient time to change outgoing direct debit payments and that this will mean that they could incur bank charges.

RMT general secretary Mick

Cash said that cleaners on Arriva Rail North were protesting again over the worsening of their conditions that will force them to accept 11 days' pay owed in arrears.

"This will create significant hardship for these low paid workers

"No thought has been given as to how these low paid workers are going to be able to cope with the detrimental changes to their finances.

"It is the great pay-robbery with a key group of Northern

Rail workers targeted as the victims. Arriva should not be tolerating a situation where their contractors behave in such an openly aggressive and penny-pinching manner towards the cleaning workforce.

"The move will cause unnecessary hardship and inconvenience to workers doing some of the dirtiest jobs on the railway and RMT calls on ISS to withdraw these unnecessary, vindictive and damaging proposals," he said.



DELEGATION: Mary Jane Herbison, Kim Gibson, Ann Joss, Georgina Holmes, Josie Partington, Lesley Clark, Samantha MacLeod, Shelagh Hewitt, Marie Harrington, Millicent Samuel, Christine Willett, Maria Evans



TUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE EMPOWERING WOMEN

RMT delegation to 2019 Women's TUC call for safety at work

Nine RMT women members attended this year's Women's TUC to highlight the need for jobs in the maritime sector and the safety-critical role of the guard.

Conference noted the importance of the safety critical role of a guard on a train and in particular the security they bring for women passengers.

Delegates were informed of an RMT survey of guards outlined how they have used their training throughout their careers with such matters as emergencies, sexual assaults, anti-social behaviour, security and providing assistance.

The findings included:

- 51 per cent of guards have

prevented or deterred at least one sexual assault and 12 have dealt with more than 5 such incidents

- 98 per cent of guards have dealt with anti-social behaviour with 63% having tackled it over 20 times
- 80 per cent have prevented an emergency situation and a further 80% have dealt with an actual emergency

Conference sent solidarity to workers fighting to ensure there are safety critical guards on all trains.

Conference backed calls for the TUC to campaign for adequate staffing on trains and stations and the

renationalisation of the industry for the benefit of all.

Delegates also backed calls for the TUC to campaign for more women seafarers and to highlight the barriers that exist to this in employment and equality legislation.

Conference welcomed that the International Maritime Organisation theme for World Maritime Day 2019, Empowering Women in the Maritime Community, as an opportunity to highlight the important contribution of women to the maritime sector and focussing on raising awareness of gender equality.

The industry lobby group, Maritime UK, has also produced

a 'Women in Maritime Charter' which states "Achieving a balanced workforce at all levels in the maritime sector will undoubtedly improve culture, behaviour, outcomes, profitability and productivity".

Despite these initiatives RMT remain concerned at the parlous state of jobs held by UK ratings as shipping companies routinely avoid the national minimum wage, practice nationality based pay discrimination and impose contracted hours way beyond land based health and safety requirements, there are immense structural barriers to recruiting a new generation of female seafarers in the UK shipping industry. ■



Black and ethnic minority members gather in Portsmouth for the biggest advisory conference for years

“We are definitely becoming more high profile and recognised for the work we do,” RMT Black and Ethnic Minority (BEM) advisory committee chair Glen Hart said as he opened the union’s BEM conference in Portsmouth – the biggest in recent years.

The growth of the conference was also hailed by RMT general secretary Mick Cash, who stressed the union was “the sum of our parts” – but emphasised the vital work done by black and ethnic minority activists across workplaces.

Praising the Southern rail guards in dispute over driver-only operation, Mr Cash said that the whole union owed them a debt of honour. “Without the struggle and the fight they’ve put in place we wouldn’t now be delivering the results we’ve got elsewhere.

“We’re in a situation where the strides, the progress we’ve made can only keep going if we

keep doing more of the same. We should be making sure that politicians know, that bosses know, that we as a union we aren’t going to change one iota,” he said.

He also welcomed the work activists in cleaning grades had done to advance their profile in both the union and their workplaces. He said the struggle to get decent pay, terms and conditions – including free travel – would continue, but stressed the union’s ultimate objective was to get all workers back into direct employment.

“That’s what our aim should be ultimately – get everyone in one company. At the end of the day [private contractors] are there, they’re making a profit out of it.”

Guest speaker Unison assistant general secretary Roger McKenzie said that RMT’s record of standing up to be counted could be an inspiration for the England football team. Shortly

before the conference took place, Raheem Sterling’s goal against Montenegro in a Euro 2020 qualifier was met with racist taunts.

“I think what should have happened is something you’re very good at in RMT,” the Unison official said. “What should have happened is those players should have taken industrial action. They should have picked the ball up and walked off the pitch”.

Mr McKenzie also warned that the fight against racism must be waged in every part of life. “It’s all too easy to think this stuff is about fascists marching down our streets,” he said. “We should get vexed about all that stuff... but it’s going on in our workplaces as well.

“The only way that things change is that we stand up and demand it,” he said.

These words foreshadowed many of the debates ahead. An

emergency motion unanimously endorsed by delegates expressed alarm at “the horrific Islamophobic terrorist attack” on a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand. The motion highlighted the complicity of the right-wing press and its hateful commentators in stoking the fires of division and hate and it called for the union to step up its anti-racism activity.

Mark Smith, Neasden said that racism was personal for him.

“I was born in the UK and was brought in Jamaica and when I was six years old a Chinese Jamaican spat in my face.

“I was never black enough for the blacks, I was never Indian enough for the Indians – I was stuck somewhere in the middle.

“I’m 55 years old, and I’m kind of shocked because 55 years later, the same thing’s happening: racism,” he said.

Shoaib Malik, Liverpool No. 5 urged: "We need to take the lead in tackling the rising fascism coming across our shores now."

Thandi Mabodoko, Surrey and Hants brought the issue back to impact of prejudice on black and ethnic minority people in the workplace.

"Being abused and discriminated against, it impacts on your mental health.

"Even I was unsure as to if I should talk or if I should keep silence. Please don't keep anything to yourself, even if you're not sure you're being abused, speak out - it does help," she said.

Delegates also resolved to join calls for the British government to formally apologise for the Amritsar massacre, ahead of its 100th anniversary. A motion passed at the conference said the anniversary commemorations could serve as a lesson to the labour movement "against doctrines of racial superiority and violations of human rights to peaceful protest".

Oluwarotimi Ajayi, South Wales & South West Regional Council said that it was a history that should be taught.

"Let the British government know, let the colonial masters know, what they've done to us, it's not good, it's not right and we will always fight against it".

Mohammed Aslam, Exeter No. 2 added: "Unless we go and teach people why this happened, it will be perpetuated over and over again".

Delegates also spoke out

against the attempts of major world powers to destabilise the elected government of Venezuela. A motion passed by delegates called on the general secretary to write to the British government and express opposition to its support for opposition leader and self-declared president Juan Guaidó.

Glenroy Watson, London Transport Regional Council said that nobody had ever heard of him but the day he declares himself president, the US recognises him and the UK follows suit.

"They attack us when we ballot as a trade union, saying we haven't met the threshold. What threshold did Juan Guaidó have?" he asked.

The racial profiling of young people in the present day, including through the Metropolitan Police's "gang matrix", was another cause for concern.

Jayesh Patel, Bakerloo Line said the activities of the Met came "off the back of the police being found out" for "befriending activists, having relationships with activists, having children with activists" during undercover activities.

Nicholas Brown, Birmingham Rail said: "What we have is kids who are trying their hardest to get out of [gangs] being implicated by the police.

"It's not a fair way to be judged. Sometimes you have to dress that way just to avoid being a target of your peers".

A related theme was addressed by guest speaker



Gloria Morrison, of campaign group Joint Enterprise: Not Guilty by Association. The group raises awareness of unjust convictions - most often of young, black men - under arcane laws which do not require evidence of individual wrongdoing. "We're the only country in Europe that sends children to prison for life," she said. "You can go to prison for a crime you haven't committed - just by association".

In his address to the conference, Mick Cash recalled that the union had been "down on our uppers" at points over the 40 years since he joined, but he stated: "We're not down on our uppers now, are we? We're doing good work out there, aren't we? But we can't afford to be complacent".

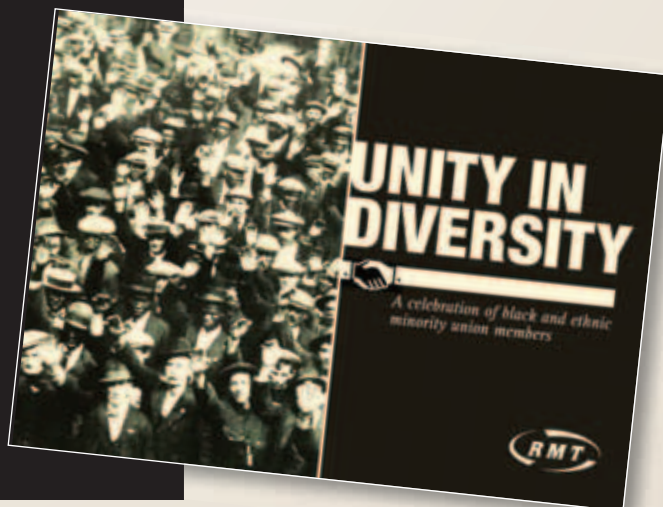
"We're definitely building in the right direction," said Millie Samuel, speaking on behalf of the advisory committee. ■

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

A celebration of black and ethnic minority union members

RMT published a pamphlet last year to mark the 25th anniversary of the union's black and ethnic minority members' advisory committee and its annual conference.

Unity in diversity, a celebration of black and ethnic minority union members is available from head office by emailing: j.webb@rmt.org.uk



COST CUTTING IN FREIGHT SECTOR



Mick Lynch addresses conference

Freight and logistic conference looks at the effect of cost-cutting in the sector

The National Freight and Logistics Industrial Organising Conference was hosted by Leeds Goods and Cartage branch recently.

Dissatisfaction with the effects on workers by Freightliner's cost-cutting exercises was a common theme of the conference.

George Marshall, Leeds Goods and Cartage, complained of the high level of agency drivers currently being employed on Freightliner's Road Section in spite of past assurances by company bosses that the practice was on the wane.

"This comes despite numerous promises from previous directors on the introduction of the LGV grade that this would dramatically reduce if not negate the need for agency road drivers within the company," George said.

George also called on the union to take up the issue with Freightliner Heavy Haul of why the ground staff had not been allocated vans to carry out their duties as had been the case in the past. The new practice of pooling vans had caused numerous problems and inconvenience for workers including lack of access to a vehicle at all.

"Our ground staff members share a pool of vans that are in short supply and usually left in a state of disrepair as no one is held responsible. The vans are generally filthy, have no fuel, and water bottles are left empty.

"They are also in such short supply that staff sometimes have to load their extensive shunting equipment into taxis to get to remote locations. The van is usually the only source of shelter in hot and cold weather. Surely the company

should be obligated to provide a van," George argued.

Peter Daniels, Leeds City, pressed for the union to look into the current pension shortfall on the Freightliner section of the Railway Pension Scheme which currently stands at £2.3 million.

Andy Blackman, London Anglia Midland Transport, led a call for RMT's parliamentary

group to push for legislation that can help with the financial burden of the unique costs that freight drivers incur in their line of work.

"I would like to see legislation ensuring employed haulage, delivery and courier drivers can be reimbursed for HGV driving licence renewal and medical costs, CPC training and Digi card [tachograph]



Mick Lynch addresses conference

renewal costs through employment tax allowances,” Andy said.

Victor Winning, London Anglia Midland Transport, condemned the opposition party’s proposals to increase costs for road freight. He asked “what is the reasoning behind the Labour Party’s requirement to increase the taxes paid by British road hauliers?”

Neil Hagar, Teesside, called for RMT’s parliamentary group to push for upgrading the freight capacity alongside the forthcoming electrification upgrade of the Manchester-Leeds-York via Huddersfield Trans-Pennines route.

“The union needs to find a way of convincing the Department of Transport and Network rail to seriously consider that both upgrades [electrification and freight] are carried out at the same time,” Neil said.

Delegates expressed disappointment that confusion over targeted recruitment proposals which had been put forward at last year’s conference to AGM had to be dealt with from scratch at this year’s event.

Mick Lynch, assistant general secretary, gave the officers’ report on what he described as an increasingly challenging environment to organise in.

“The union must find ways of extending our influence through organisation and recruitment strategies.

“The strong levels of membership, a network of representatives across the sites and divisions and campaigning on the issues such as pay and pensions like we have on Freightliner brings rewards in terms of profile, membership and organisation.

“We are the most democratic and principled union in this country. I urge you to keep fighting, keep winning and let’s stick together in RMT,” He said.

President’s column



LOOKING TO AGM

Next month will be our AGM, RMT’s supreme governing body where real democracy will take place elected rank and file members from branches will discuss old and new policies, and I’m sure they will make policies for taking our union into another year. I hope it’s lively and comradely; I am looking forward to seeing new and old comrades and making more friends in our movement.

This month has been a real roller coaster for me, full of emotion and despair I was privileged enough to represent our union in Palestine, a TUC motion from the teachers union one which still hasn’t been carried out in full but we have started by sending 16 women from different trade unions to meet predominantly Palestinian women but men also in occupied Israel, the sights and people will be memorable for the rest of my life their resistance, determination but most of all resilience is empowering.

So much I can say but my column isn’t big enough but there will be a fringe at the agm and hopefully I’ll put an article in the RMT news.

I also attended the STUC in Dundee where the Rmt delegation again Spoke out instead of conforming, lots of good speakers and motions, from off shore, maritime and our general grades. It was a great week shared with old and new friends and I’m already looking forward to next year.

The cleaners conference was in Southend, I was pleased to be around members who have so much to give and gain and when they spoke out about getting recognition, support and respect from the movement with there fights around out-sourcing, sick pay and pensions like other

transport workers they did it with passion which the whole room could feel. It’s a conference which is going from strength to strength and one I’m proud to see achieve victories as thirty plus years ago I worked at Craigintinny depot in Edinburgh and my journey has led me to be your President.

I also attended Brussels ITF women’s committee lots going on but all achievable when we work together. Successes in the last couple of years with campaigns to rid our industries of violence and harassment but still lots to achieve also having over seventy itf women trainers. A new chapter begins where past projects and new are worked on, and making our industry attractive for women workers is paramount lots of changes on the horizon for all our industry we must be prepared to defend, change and learn to protect.

I must say it was also an absolute pleasure to visit Caphouse colliery a day I’ll never forget thank you to all those involved in making the day memorable, thanks to Wakefield Trades Council for the warm welcome and allowing me to address you and for all the support for our dispute around driver only Operation and safety of the train and public. Well done to LU Fleet for the solidarity shown to defend jobs from more austerity cuts implemented by this Cotton government and assisted by labour mayor Khan for London.

The same people making it impossible for our black cab members to operate effectively and efficiently.

I had the pleasure of attending the Taxi branch again, and will be attending Croydon no1 branch later this month.

Solidarity, Michelle

DISABLED CONFERENCE GROWING



Over thirty delegates gathered in Plymouth last month for RMT's third annual disabled members' conference. This is the newest of RMT's equality group conferences, and has grown each year as more disabled members get involved in its work.

Chair Janine Booth welcomed delegates, stressing the important decisions that the conference would make, the discussions that would take place, and the solidarity that would develop among delegates.

A recurring theme of the conference was the need to make RMT more effective.

RMT assistant general secretary Steve Hedley told the conference that the lack of accessibility of union premises and events is an embarrassment.

"When we demand that employers treat disabled workers better, they can accuse us of double standards," he warned.

Throughout the conference delegates posted their ideas for improving the accessibility of RMT branch meetings and these ideas are being put together with responses to the RMT access needs survey.

Conference also condemned

employers' use of personality testing for applicants for jobs and promotions. These may be called 'psychometric tests', 'situational judgement tests' or something else and are designed to select applicants on social conformity rather than on aptitude at the job.

Nick Jones, Birmingham Rail branch explained how these tests particularly discriminate against autistic and other disabled applicants and called on the union to demand that employers stop using them.

Christine Willett, South East Essex also proposed that the union expand its training on disability issues, establish and fill disability officer posts in branches and regional councils, and run a national 'Know Your Rights' campaign aimed at disabled members.

Christine reported on the successful 'Know Your Rights' week run by RMT reps and activists in Transport for London in January, during which two thousand wallet-sized 'know your rights' cards were distributed to workers.

Jennifer Aggrey-Finn, European Passenger Services argued that 'reasonable

adjustments' for disabled workers are Plan B – our Plan A is for workplaces and jobs to be fully accessible. But while individual workers still need adjustments, it is important that they do not lose them when they change job, workplace or manager.

Jennifer explained that the solution to this is 'reasonable adjustment passports', and successfully moved a motion on behalf of Finsbury Park branch calling on the union to negotiate these with all employers.

Conference noted that were employers are running 'mental health awareness' campaigns but continued to damage workers' mental health, through anti-social hours, low pay, insecure employment, management bullying and trauma at work.

Conference called on the union to run its own campaigning in support of workers' mental health, against distressing working conditions and independently of employers.

Conference also welcomed the initiatives by some employers in setting up programmes for learning disabled and/or autistic people to learn work skills, for example



Transport for London's 'Steps Into Work' but these were often unpaid.

Delegates did not accept that learning disabled and autistic people were less entitled to pay while they are working and studying than apprentices are.

Delegates notes that more members were contacting reps and branch officials seeking advice on disability and long term issues regarding medical conditions. South East Essex branch called for more education and information. ■

*What you can do if you would like to get more involved:
email Janine Booth
j.booth@rmt.org.uk
complete the union's access needs survey
<http://tinyurl.com/y3ggchdq>*

REMEMBERING THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES

RMT members took part in a service at Crewe cemetery earlier this month to remember George Fletcher and Edward McQuade who answered the call to fight the rise of fascism in Spain in 1936.

Docker, trade unionist and International Brigade volunteer Jack Jones was quoted at the event:

"The march had started with Mussolini and had gained terrible momentum with Hitler and was being carried forward by Franco. For most young people there was a feeling of frustration, but some determined to do anything that seemed possible, even if it meant death, to try to stop the spread of fascism".

May their names be among the heroes of labour. ■



AID FOR CUBA GARDEN PARTY

The 16th annual RMT Garden Party for Cuba
in association with Cuba Solidarity Campaign

Wednesday June 12, 2019. 7.00pm
Maritime House, Clapham, London SW4 0JW

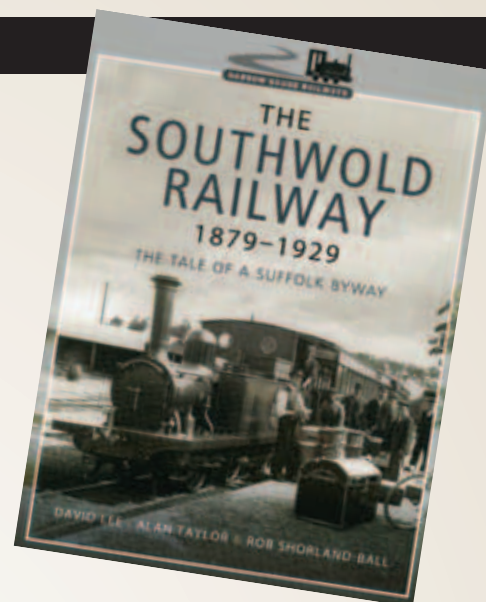
Tickets
£15

RMT★CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Free bar, buffet and music celebrating freedom
for The Miami Five and solidarity with Cuba

BOOK REVIEW

A HISTORY WITH A FUTURE?



The Southwold Railway: 1879-1929 The tale of a Suffolk byway
David Lee et al, Pen and Sword publications

This beautifully illustrated book reveals the fascinating history of the Southwold Railway, a remarkable narrow gauge line that once linked the Suffolk seaside resort of Southwold with the Great Eastern main line at Halesworth nearly nine miles inland.

After opening in 1879 it was closed suddenly 50 years later but the Southwold Railway Trust is today dedicated to re-opening as much of the old route as possible.

Remarkably, after nearly one hundred years, much of trackbed is still intact as it gently winds its way towards the sea through the beautiful valley of the River Blyth and former stations at Wenhaston, Blythburgh and Walberswick.

At the turn of the 20th century there were even plans to link up the Southwold Railway with the Mid Suffolk Light Railway on the other side of East Anglia – which still operates as tiny heritage line today – but by then the railway boom was already on the wane.

This historical coffee table book, complete with stunning contemporary pictures and stories of personnel and infrastructure, also looks like a manual for re-creating an incredible little railway which would be a boon for the local



STAFF: An undated picture of Southwold Railway staff left to right – King (Porter), Stannard (Driver) Steadman (Goods Clerk), Fisk (Porter), Moore (Foreman Porter), Jackson (Loco Foreman).

economy.

The latest venture is the Southwold Railway Steamworks at Blyth Road, Southwold where you will find an office and shop and a Trackbed Office which looks even further into the future.

Whatever the future holds for the Southwold Railway, this book is a well-researched little gem of railway history.

SR is always grateful for support from volunteers who are able to offer skills and help in a variety of ways. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer contact:

mail@southwoldrailway.co.uk to help bring narrow gauge steam back to Suffolk after a gap of over 90 years. ■



REBUILT?: A visualisation of the Southwold Railway by local architect John Bennett.

EURO PASSENGER SERVICES BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

GLASGOW 5 BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

WALSALL BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

EAST SUSSEX COASTWAY
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

EUSTON NO1 BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

BURTON ON TRENT BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

NORWICH BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

WATFORD BRANCH
NOMINATE
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

SOUTH WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

BIRMINGHAM ENGINEERING BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

BRIDGEND LLANTRISANT & DISTRICT BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

THREE BRIDGES BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

HULL RAIL BRANCH
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MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

WATERLOO BRANCH
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FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

SOUTH LONDON RAIL BRANCH
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FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

NEATH BRANCH
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MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

SWINDON RAIL BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

NORTH THAMES LT&S BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

DERBY RAIL AND ENGINEERING
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

ORPINGTON BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

CHILTERN LINE BRANCH
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WIGAN BRANCH
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MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

BLETCHLEY AND NORTHAMPTON BRANCH
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MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

MARCH AND DISTRICT BRANCH
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WARRINGTON & DISTRICT BRANCH
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FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

KINGS CROSS BRANCH
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MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

CARLISLE CITY BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

FELTHAM BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

MEDWAY AND DISTRICT BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

GREAT NORTHERN RAIL BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK CASH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

SOLIHULL HACKNEY DRIVERS BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY WISHAW &	SHEFFIELD AND DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	MANCHESTER SOUTH BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
MOTHERWELL BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	WARRINGTON AND DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	LYMINGTON BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
SALISBURY NO 3 BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	OILC BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	READING BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
BARROW IN FURNESS NO1 BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	PADDINGTON BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	EDINBURGH NO1 AND PORTOBELLO BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
NEWPORT IOW NO2 BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	PICCADILLY AND DISTRICT WEST BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	BOB CROW BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
DOVER SHIPPING BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	AYR BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	WIMBLEDON BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
THREE BRIDGES BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTH HANTS BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	LIVERPOOL 5 BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	CAMBRIDGE BRANCH NOMINATE MICK CASH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
DONCASTER BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	CREWE BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	OBAN BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
LINCOLNSHIRE ROADCAR BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	LEEDS CITY BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTH EAST ESSEX BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

NEWCASTLE RAIL & CATERING BRANCH NOMINATE MICK CASH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY	LONDON TAXI BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	SALISBURY NO 3 BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
WALTHAM CROSS AND DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATE MICK CASH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY	NORTH EAST SHIPPING BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	NUNEATON BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
LU FLEET BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	FINSBURY PARK BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	MANCHESTER VICTORIA BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
LINCOLN NO 1 BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	FELTHAM BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	MORDEN & OVAL BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
DOVER DISTRICT GENERAL GRADES BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	POOLE & DISTRICT BUS BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	CENTRAL LINE EAST BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
CAMBRIAN BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	NOTTS AND DERBY BUS BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	ABERDEEN NO 1 BRANCH SUPPORTS MICK CASH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
BIRMINGHAM ENGINEERING BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	BASINGSTOKE NO1 BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	HASTINGS BRANCH NOMINATE MICK CASH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
SWINDON RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES MICK CASH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	BRIGHTON AND HOVE CITY BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	RAMSGATE WORKSHOP BRANCH NOMINATE MICK CASH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
DORSET RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	JUBILEE SOUTH BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY	ASHFORD NO 1 BRANCH NOMINATE MICK CASH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY
EAST MIDLANDS BUS BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	EIRE SHIPPING BRANCH NOMINATE SEAN HOYLE FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY	HARWICH SHIPPING NOMINATE MICK CASH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY

RUGBY FAREWELL

Long-standing RMT rugby branch stalwart Mick Hardiman passed away earlier this year after over 40 years service to the NUR then RMT.

Branch member Adrian Fricker said that Mick had been as active branch member even though he had retired many years ago, regular attendee of the NUR/RMT Welfare Committee.

The branch sent in a picture of Mick at the annual Rugby NUR/RMT Welfare Retired Members Christmas party with general secretary Mick Cash.



90 NOT OUT



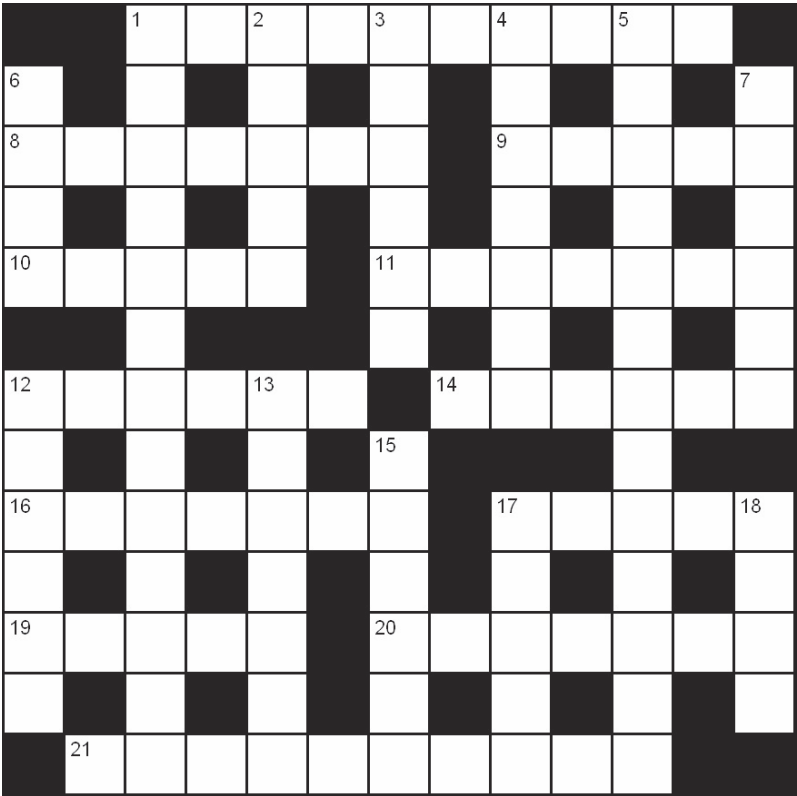
RMT general secretary Mick Cash attended a very special 90th birthday party for Bill Kerrigan. Bill was formerly S&T at Euston. He is in the yellow tie in the photograph with Mick Cash, Mick Ryan and Sean Kenny.

Bill started as railway worker

at the signalling department in Euston no1 box in 1951, at the time there were 12 signallers working the box.

In 1952 Bill moved into Euston Power Signal box, he remained there until he retired as a Technician Officer in 1994 aged 65. ■

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is M Harris, Denbighshire.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by June 7 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



Crossword sponsored by UIA

ACROSS

- 1 Pollution (10)
- 8 Admire (7)
- 9 Nervous (5)
- 10 Praise (5)
- 11 Glorified (7)
- 12 Dictator (6)
- 14 Withdraw (6)
- 16 Sound in a language (7)
- 17 Grasslike plant (5)
- 19 Headdress (5)
- 20 Increase (7)
- 21 Easily seen (10)

DOWN

- 1 Unemotional (13)
- 2 Nimble (5)
- 3 Froth (6)
- 4 Greenhouse gas (7)
- 5 Absence (13)
- 6 Desire (4)
- 7 Interfere (6)
- 12 Assistant (6)
- 13 Daunt (7)
- 15 Return to normal (6)
- 17 Colonial term (5)
- 18 Open vessel (4)



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Finance Department, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

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Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **black ink**.

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

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

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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

5 Membership Status

RMT TU Member ☐ Retired RMT TU Member ☐ RMT Family Member ☐

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

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Address

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

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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Date

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- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
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- If you request RMT Credit Union Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
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- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.





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Mick Cash, RMT General Secretary

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