

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

Staff our Stations



FREE INSIDE!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...



TUBE CLEANERS
PROTEST OUTSIDE
PARLIAMENT
PAGE 4



NORTHERN RAIL
RENATIONALISED
PAGE 5



SAVE OUR
SEAFARERS
PAGE 10



REMEMBER THE
MERCH
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.
www.rmtprepaid.com

FREE £5,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH COVER

As a benefit of your RMT membership you can register for £5,000 Free Accidental Death Cover. Cover is for UK residents aged 18-69.

12 months free cover. Annually renewable and always FREE. The Cover is underwritten by Advent Insurance PCC Ltd - UIB Cell.
www.rmtprotect.com

INSURANCE

UIA Mutual offers great value, low cost Home, Travel and Pet Insurance to RMT members and their families.

- Interest free direct debits (spread over 10 months)
- No fees to amend your policy
- Accidental damage to TVs, laptops and game consoles covered
- Cover for damage caused by subsidence
- Alternative accommodation for family and pets if needed

Call on 0800 030 4606 to talk to UK-based call centre agents from 8.30am to 8pm Monday to Friday.

HEALTH CASH PLAN

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

Join RMT by visiting
www.rmt.org.uk

contents

Page 4

TUBE CLEANERS PROTEST OUTSIDE
PARLIAMENT

Page 5

NORTHERN TAKEN INTO PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Page 6

SUPPORT FOR LIVING WAGE AT MERSEYRAIL

Page 7

END TUBE VIOLENCE

Page 8

RAILWAY PENSION SCHEME THREAT

Page 10

SAVE OUR SEAFARERS

Page 13

NO TO BULLYING AT SEA

Page 14

THE VIRGIN STORY: 22 MARVELOUS YEARS...
FOR SHAREHOLDERS

Page 16

STAFF OUR STATIONS

Page 18

REMEMBER THE MERCH

Page 21

ARE YOU KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR PENSION?

Page 22

GLOBAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Page 24

DISABLED WORKERS - KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Page 25

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Page 26

BOOK REVIEWS

Page 28

AWARDS

Page 30

CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



RENATIONALISE ALL RAIL

The fact that the government has been forced yet again to mount a public sector rescue operation on a collapsed franchise – this time Northern Rail – shows that the whole broken private franchise model must be swept away and replaced by an integrated, publicly owned railway.

Northern has become a signal for everything that is wrong on Britain's broken, privatised railways and opens the floodgates towards wholesale public ownership of our railways as other franchises fall like dominoes or simply choose to cut and run in the face of the inevitable.

The return of Northern to the public domain, joining the East Coast Main Line, should not be seen as a short-term fix and a holding operation pending another punt on another bunch of private speculators.

This has to be a permanent move followed up with the investment and planning needed to deliver the rail services that passengers deserve after years of privatised chaos.

RMT will take whatever action is required to protect our members, their jobs and their conditions, caught in the crossfire of the rail franchise meltdown.

A recent rail passenger satisfaction survey found that the lowest ratings for overall satisfaction were given to failing franchises including Northern Rail, West Midlands Trains, South Western Railway, TransPennine Express.

Year after year passengers are asked to pay more for their tickets when their shameful service is getting worse.

Boris Johnson must stop flogging the dead horse of privatised rail and bring these charlatan train companies and the rest of the network back into public ownership.

Train operators Stagecoach, Virgin Trains and French operator SNCF and German operator Arriva have also launched legal actions against the government for kicking them off the franchise tender

processes for refusing to accept large risks associated with funding the Railways Pension Scheme (RPS).

Right on cue, the Financial Times last month began suggesting that the RPS should be closed with railway workers' being moved into inferior pension arrangements. Make no mistake this is a battle that won't go away and we must be prepared to fight to defend decent pension provision on the railways.

The union is also shining a light on the unknown world of the 2,000 workers who keep the Underground clean and hygienic for the two million passengers who use it every day.

The privatisation of cleaning on London Underground has been a disaster and we are demanding the renationalisation of these important contracts.

It was great to see so many station staff reps and activists from across the country joining together last month for the Staff our Stations conference in London as part of the campaign to fight cuts to station staffing, ticket office hours and closures of ticket offices.

Delegates quite rightly emphasised the need to maximise recruitment and organise within station grades as a way of building a strong resistance to damaging cuts.

RMT also began the new decade by taking the SOS2020 seafarers' campaign to the National Assembly for Wales in Cardiff Bay to address the employment, equality and immigration law loopholes driving a decline in jobs and training for Welsh and UK seafarers.

We are determined to raise this issue with politicians across the UK because by engaging with them they begin to understand the problems seafarers are facing.

Finally RMT is now entering its organising conference season for various grades up and down the country and I hope to see many of you there as possible.

Mick Cash

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



TUBE CLEANERS PROTEST OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT

New RMT report expose scandal of treatment of workers who keep the Underground clean

RMT held a demonstration outside Parliament last month and launched a new report into the scandal of privatised cleaning on London Underground.

The report, *Dirty Work: ABM and the outsourcing of London's Underground cleaners*, shines a light on the unknown world of the 2,000 workers who keep the Underground clean and hygienic for the two million passengers who use it every day. The report shows that:

- More than one in three cleaners treated unfairly and discriminated at work or by their employer
- 68 per cent believe their employer put profits before working conditions or passenger concerns
- 68 per cent said that they sometimes or regularly struggle to make ends meet
- 76 per cent said that they believed passengers would benefit more if their jobs were brought in-house

- 91 per cent said they would rather be employed in-house

The protest takes place as the current Mayor Sadiq Khan consults on his Manifesto prior to the forthcoming Mayoral election in May. Mr Khan handed the multi-million-pound five-year cleaning contract, employing 2,000 cleaners to ABM in 2017.

RMT's report will form part of the union's responses to the consultation calling for all cleaners on London Underground and Overground to be brought in-house.

MPs joined RMT members for the demonstration and tabled Early Day Motion 71 in Parliament calling on the Mayor to bring cleaning workers on London Underground and the Overground network into direct employment.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that London Transport cleaners were the hidden hard-working workers struggling to get by and still battling to do their jobs properly while the

private companies that employ them cut corners in search of profits.

"Now we learn London Underground cleaners are reporting widespread discrimination while their US employer ABM also stands accused of putting profit before passengers.

"This should not be happening under a Labour Mayor and this report should be a wake-up call for Sadiq Khan to end the scandal of cleaning privatisation on London Underground and London Overground and bring these workers in-house," he said.

THE EARLY DAY MOTION 71 OUTSOURCING OF TFL UNDERGROUND AND OVERGROUND CLEANERS

"That this House pays tribute to cleaners employed on London Underground and Overground who keep the capital's transport network clear of obstructions, and maintain it in a hygienic state while working unsocial hours in dirty and hazardous conditions; notes that Transport for London continues to use outsourcing companies ABM and Vinci to employ cleaners on London Underground and the Overground rail network; notes with concern that a recent RMT survey of ABM cleaners revealed that the overwhelming majority struggle to make ends meet on low pay, have far worse working conditions than directly employed staff and believe that ABM puts profits ahead of passenger and staff concerns; further notes that the overwhelming majority of cleaners want to be directly employed and brought in-house and believe that bringing all cleaning staff on London's Underground and Overground network in-house will help improve working conditions for this vulnerable group of workers, improve the quality of service for passengers and represent greater economy and efficiency; and urges the Mayor of London to commit to bringing these workers in-house and to convene a working group with the RMT union and other stakeholders to discuss how this can be achieved."

Tabled January 16 2020



RENATIONALISED: Northern Rail 142 Pacer diesel train at Doncaster station. The Department for Transport is putting the government-controlled Operator of Last Resort (OLR) in charge of running Northern Rail services on March 1.

The Tory government will renationalise the failed Northern rail franchise on March 1 and take it off Arriva, part of German state-owned railway company Deutsche Bahn, and place it in the hands of the government's "Operator of Last Resort".

The renationalisation of Northern rail would be the second such move by the Tory government in under two years, after the East Coast main line collapsed and was taken over in June 2018.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps had previously said that

he might allow the current franchisees to run it on a short-term management contract. But one government figure said: "You wouldn't give the keys back to the people who crashed the car".

RMT demanded full public ownership of Britain's failing private railways as the bi-annual rail passengers satisfaction survey laid bare the state of the franchise chaos. It found that the lowest ratings for overall satisfaction were given to failing franchises including Northern Rail, West Midlands Trains, South Western Railway,

TransPennine Express.

Arriva has run Northern since 2016, when it replaced a consortium of Serco and Abellio with a promise to upgrade the network with a fleet of new trains, replacing its old-fashioned "Pacer" rolling stock.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the return of Northern to the public domain, joining the East Coast Main Line, should not be seen as a short-term fix and a holding operation pending another punt on another bunch of private speculators.

"This has to be a permanent move followed up with the

investment and planning needed to deliver the rail services that passengers deserve after years of privatised chaos.

"RMT will take whatever action is required to protect our members, their jobs and their conditions, caught in the crossfire of the rail franchise meltdown and the union will now be stepping up the campaign for the whole industry to now be brought back together as an integrated, national public service shaking off the grim legacy of 25 years of private profiteering," he said. ■

GOVERNMENT COP OUT ON SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

RMT has slammed the government for its failure to bring crisis-hit South Western Railway back into public ownership after Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announced that SWR was not 'not sustainable in the long term'.

The company is currently in crisis talks with Grant Shapps, demanding yet more corporate welfare from the taxpayer as they teeter on the brink of collapse.

However, rather than taking the obvious step and bringing in

the public sector operator, he has asked the failing private franchise owners to submit a proposal for another contract.

He also sought to blame railway workers taking strike action in defence of safety for the failures of the private companies after RMT members voted by over 80 per cent to continue with the current action on SWR despite the legal hurdles erected by the Tories and the tens of millions of pounds of taxpayers money they have lobbied at the

company to sustain them through the strike action.

This is the sixth time that the union has been forced to ballot, with the company stringing out the process every six months in the hope that their constant undermining of their own safety-critical workforce will impact on staff morale.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was a disgrace that South Western Railway had opted to play for time yet again rather than nailing down a solution to this dispute that puts safety and the guard guarantee

centre stage.

"This government is acting like a puppet for the rail companies, throwing good public money after bad and trying to breathe life into the rotting corpse of privatised rail.

"Instead of dreaming up new ways to subsidise private sector profits by attacking civil liberties, he should stop pushing cost-cutting driver only operation and bring SWR into public ownership, running it in the interests of passengers and workers not his mates in the City," he said. ■

SUPPORT FOR LIVING WAGE AT MERSEYRAIL

Liverpool City Councillors backed a motion calling for an end to low pay at Merseyrail and pay cleaners the living wage last month in a major breakthrough in the union's long-running campaign.

Merseyrail has contracted out its station cleaning work to the outsourcing giant Mitie, who pay their cleaning staff at below the level of the Real Living Wage. RMT has been fighting to end this scandal as part of its 'Justice for Cleaners' campaign and has already received the support of Liverpool's Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram.

As a result, Liverpool City Councillors Elizabeth Hayden and Angela Coleman won support for their motion calling on Merseyrail to bring the cleaners' pay up to the Real Living Wage and bring them back in house at the end of the contract.

Merseyrail, which holds a 25-year concession from Merseytravel, made

a profit of £14.3 million last year and has paid out more than £111 million in dividends to Serco and Abellio since 2010.

Mitie Group plc made an operating profit of £88 million in 2019 and has paid out more than £177 million in dividends since 2014.

The union will continue to lobby politicians for decent pay for cleaners.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was time to call an end to the disgrace of low pay on the railways.

"It's no wonder that companies who are siphoning off millions from our railways, while paying poverty wages, have run out of public sympathy.

"Merseyrail and Mitie need to do the right thing and bring an immediate to poverty pay on their watch," he said.



RMT 2020 GRADES AND EQUALITY INDUSTRIAL ORGANISING CONFERENCES

Signalling and Operations Grades conference	February 22/23 - Folkestone
Health and safety conference	February 26 - Doncaster
Young Members' Conference	February 28/29 - Glasgow
Women's conference	March 7/8 - Barrow-in-Furness
Supervisory and associated grades conference	March 7/8 - Southampton
Station Staff and associated grades conference	March 20/21 - Durham
Black and ethnic minority members conference	March 24/ 25- Liverpool
Hotel and catering grades conference	March 28 - Blackpool
Engineering grades conference	April 16/17 - Edinburgh
Train Crew and shunting grades conference	April 16/17 - Bournemouth
Disabled Workers Conference	April 17/18 - Manchester
Freight and logistics conference	April 18 - Middlesbrough
Bus workers conference	April 24/25 - Southampton
Transport cleaning workers conference	May 2 - Blackpool
Maritime conference	May 13/15 - Hull
RMT LGBT conference	May 21/22 - Birmingham
Offshore conference	May 19/20 - Aberdeen
Branch and regional council secretaries conference	June 7 -Aberdeen
Annual General Meeting	June 21/26 - Southend

END TUBE VIOLENCE

RMT demands immediate action as violence against London transport staff hits shocking new levels

RMT stepped up its 'Stop Violence Against Tube Staff' campaign last month as shocking new figures show that assaults on staff have risen by almost a quarter over the past three years with more than 600 attacks last year and with 35 incidents involving a knife.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that violence on the tube network was now out of control.

"I am sick and tired of hearing warm words from the politicians and bosses running the system while my members are risking their lives every time they book on for work. The situation is that serious and RMT is demanding real action right now.

"That means an end to lone working, a reversal of the damaging staff cuts and a culture that supports and protects tube staff rather than the toxic atmosphere that has been allowed to fester for too long.

"RMT has made it clear that we will take whatever action is required, including industrial action, to protect our members safety, their status and their working conditions," he said.

RMT's campaign to fight for a safe workplace by ending lone working, to demand that all existing Revenue Control Inspector vacancies be filled and to carry out an audit of all

stations to ensure safe staffing levels.

RMT also opposes the creation of a new revenue grade on inferior terms and the deployment of non-LUL staff on LUL infrastructure.

A recent RMT study which involved more than 300 workers also revealed that one in five station-based Tube workers have been physically assaulted, including being threatened with knives, suffering racial abuse and being shoved towards train tracks.

One worker told the union that abuse was "a constant and common occurrence working on the Underground", while another said that ticket inspectors were "regularly assaulted".

RMT's research also suggested one in 10 Tube workers had been sexually harassed by passengers.

Mick Cash said that RMT members were in the front line without the staffing resources and back up that they need to deal with this appalling situation.

"Be under no illusions, RMT will take whatever action, including industrial action, to guarantee a safe working environment for our members and to protect their status and conditions against this background of violence," he said. ■





RAILWAYS PENSION SCHEME THREAT

RMT responds to recent attacks on pension provision for rail workers

Before the dust has even settled on the December 2019 General Election the right-wing media has already begun sharpening the knives to attack pension provision for rail workers.

This is exemplified by an article which appeared in the *Financial Times* on January 8 asking why are railways pensions, ie the Railways Pension Scheme (RPS), were so “toxic” and suggests that RPS should be closed with railway workers’ being moved into inferior Defined Contribution pension arrangements.

While it is true that many RMT members across the railway industry are still

members of the final salary pension scheme in the shape of the RPS, it is a fact that there are tens of thousands that do not enjoy such benefits. While the union has done everything to protect members retirement benefits since the railways industry was privatised in 1994, it is opportunist employers across the industry that have closed pension sections to new entrants and done the most damage to the RPS.

Indeed, the union has, at times, reluctantly agreed to change future service benefits, such as increasing the retirement age or contributions, to keep RPS sections affordable

and open to new employees. *The Financial Times* article suggests that stakeholders of the RPS, which includes unions, have done very little to keep the RPS affordable and sustainable. Yet this claim could not be further from the truth.

This inaccurate attack was partly provoked by RMT members’ defence of safety on South Western Railways and the Department of Transport decision to disqualify Stagecoach from bidding for three railways franchises as a result of them putting in a non-compliant franchise bid. However, much of the article concentrated on attacking the

very core of the RPS and how it is valued which has been stirred up by the Pensions Regulators (TPR) intervention into the RPS 2016 Actuarial Valuation of Train Operating Companies (TOC) sections.

The 2016 Actuarial Triennial Valuation draft results were due to be published in the middle of 2017. While the initial results for TOC were showing all of these Railways Pension Scheme (RPS) sections in surplus, the Pension Regulator (TPR) has raised its concerns with the RPS Trustee Board that the assumptions which have been used for TOC sections are overstated.

While there is currently little information available in respect of the ongoing discussions between the RPS Trustee Board and TPR the union is led to believe that in the event that the assumptions are changed, particularly in regards to covenant status, this could potentially result in liabilities being increased and TOC sections moving from surplus to deficit.

It goes without saying that a greater concern to this union is that if sections were to move into deficit this could have serious consequences for members because, based on the fact that the RPS is a shared cost arrangement, members could be faced with increased contributions or/and changes to future service benefits.

While TPR interference would normally be welcomed,

certainly when you consider what has happened at Carillion, such interventions need to be in the interest of all parties not just government departments wanting to make up for the mistakes made in the past.

It is also worth adding that many in the rail industry believe that the view of TPR in respect of formulating of the assumptions is based on a lack of understanding of the way in which the RPS is structured and how it operates. The article suggests that the scheme actuary has a “magic pencil” to over inflate the investment assumption which is frankly nonsense. Such assumptions can only be based on fact not magic.

Clearly TPR has a job to do in protecting pension scheme members’ benefits and the approach being taken is from

their perspective of a “proactive” position. However, if TPR’s intervention is to result in members paying more in contributions or/and receiving lower future service benefits then this is not in the best interest of members.

Contrary to the views expressed in the article that the TPR’s intervention is some way due to the RPS being badly run, it is a fact the union’s view that TOC sections and the RPS in general is well run and generally well-funded with members paying their share of the past and future cost.

Make no mistake if TPR intervention results in TOC sections moving from surplus to deficit the union will do everything within its powers defend member pension rights whether this be attacks on contributions rates or/and

changes to future service benefits.

However, RMT and TOC employers have been discussing TPR intervention for a number of months through the joint Pensions Working Group and it is hoped that an agreeable solution can be found which will result in the conclusion of the 2016 Actuarial Valuation.

Of course, there is a simple solution to the article’s perceived problem of “pass-the-parcel” of pension deficit, where a franchise holder passes on the pension deficit to the next franchise holder, and that is to bring the railways back into public ownership. This, of course, is something the author of the *Financial Times* article does not even consider.



FRANCE RESISTS MACRON’S ATTACKS ON PENSIONS



FRENCH RESISTANCE: Thousands of protesters demonstrate in Toulouse for the seventh demonstration called by trade unions including CGT, SUD, UNL, UNEF, FO, CFE-CGC last month. It was also the 51th day of protests, strikes and actions demanding the withdrawal of a raft of measures attacking pension provisions. Macron’s government is demanding the downgrading of all pension systems in France except for police, military, congressmen, senators and ministers.

SAVE OUR SEAFARERS

Union holds protest and lobby of Welsh Parliament for policies to increase seafarer and dock jobs in Wales

RMT took its SOS2020 seafarers' campaign to the National Assembly for Wales (Senedd) in Cardiff Bay last month to address the employment, equality and immigration law loopholes driving a decline in jobs and training for Welsh and UK seafarers.

The union had already raised the alarm following another case of seafarer pay abuse on a Cyprus registered freighter working on a domestic route in Cardiff, uncovered following an inspection of the ship requested by the union.

An inspection of the *MV Maris* carried out recently by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) found Filipino ratings employed on a contract for up to ten months for basic pay of \$2.12 per hour.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the new decade had started with another example of the shipping industry's long-standing exploitation of foreign seafarers between ports in Wales, England and Northern Ireland.

"Paying seafarers \$2.12 per hour for the first eight hours of work is not only scandalous, it damages the economy of Wales and the UK.

"My union is lobbying the Senedd in Cardiff for pro-seafarer actions and we will be



highlighting the appalling case of the *MV Maris*.

"It is also very troubling to see that this ship of shame is on the Cyprus maritime register, a flag of convenience that attracts shipowners by holding crew wages down to levels akin to modern slavery.

"We're looking forward to working with the government of Wales to stamp out this appalling abuse of seafarers' rights which undermines good maritime employers and excludes Welsh seafarers from work in the maritime transport sector," he said.

RMT's SOS 2020 campaign was launched in 2016 in response to the ongoing failure of successive governments to address these issues.

In the 1980s there were over 30,000 UK ratings in the shipping industry. That number has fallen to just over 9,000, with an average age of 48 years despite there being more ratings jobs in total and growth in the demand for seafarers forecast to continue.

The shipping industry makes the largest direct contribution to jobs and the economy of all the maritime sectors in Wales. In 2017, this amounted to nearly 1,400 jobs and £127 million respectively.

Welsh seafarers are part of the 9,140 UK ratings workforce

in the UK shipping industry recorded in June 2019 and who are aging. However, over 31,000 non-EEA Ratings, comprising 65 per cent of total ratings jobs are employed in the UK shipping industry. The vast majority of European Economic Area (EEA) and non-EEA Ratings working in the UK shipping industry are paid a basic rate below the UK National Living Wage of £8.21 per hour for over 25s.

Shipping companies use loopholes in domestic laws governing the shipping industry to exploit seafarers; specifically, a lack of application and enforcement of the National Minimum Wage, a failure to protect foreign seafarers from nationality-based pay discrimination and the uneven application of immigration and work permit rules.

As a result, regular ferry, coastal freight and offshore support vessels from Welsh ports, are crewed with seafarers from outside Wales and the UK who are paid below the legal minimum on land, as well as lacking holiday, sick pay and pension rights on contracts which require them to work at sea for months on end with little access to shore leave when in port.

This is a common practice across the UK shipping industry. The main culprit in Wales is

Irish Ferries, who do not recognise trade unions on their Holyhead-Dublin or Pembroke-Rosslare roll-on roll-off fleet.

For example, a Latvian Ordinary Seaman is paid a basic rate of €5.51 (under £5) per hour on the *MV Ulysses*. Despite this, Irish Ferries is one of the companies recognised in the UK government's £86 million Freight Capacity Framework Agreement. Although it has yet to carry out any publicly funded work under this contract, it is in place until 2023.

The ports industry also employs over 800 workers in Wales and there is clear evidence of the need for sustained investment in skills, services and ports facilities if workers and the economy in Wales are to benefit from growth in key areas such as maritime trade and transport, as well as offshore wind developments.

Major ports in Wales moved over 49 million tonnes of freight in 2018, a 4.7 per cent fall on the previous year and the lowest for decades. Over 2.5 million passengers, mainly between Dublin and Holyhead were also transported by ferry from Welsh ports in 2018, a very slight reduction on the previous year.

RMT received good support on the day from AMs, including Finance Minister Rebecca Evans



SOS: Rebecca Evans AM and Mick Cash

and Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport Lee Waters. RMT members and supporters were addressed by Mick Cash, RMT national secretary Darren Procter, as well as Mick Antoniw AM who co-ordinates the RMT Wales Assembly Group. Deri Bevan from Wales TUC also spoke in support of the campaign's following aims:

- Crew working on ships from Welsh ports must be covered by RMT collective bargaining agreements, in line with the Fair Work Commission's recommendations on collective bargaining.
- Welsh government support for stronger laws on the application and enforcement of National Minimum Wage rates for seafarers on ships regularly plying trade from Welsh ports, including international routes.
- Development of an apprenticeship system that trains the next generation of seafarer Ratings in Wales.
- Apply the Fair Work Commission's

recommendations on ethical employment in supply chains applies to the maritime and offshore energy sectors.

RMT activity in briefing Ministers and AMs on these campaign points have achieved the following outcomes:

- Commitment from the First Minister Mark Drakeford AM to meet RMT to discuss support for proposals to increase Welsh seafarer employment and training, particularly at ferry companies.
- Working with government of Wales and Wales TUC on legislation that delivers sectoral collective bargaining in the maritime sector.
- Work with Welsh government and Wales TUC on maritime apprenticeships for the next generation of Welsh seafarers.
- Link Welsh government procurement and supply chain policies, particularly in ports and offshore energy to seafarer employment.



RMT Wales Assembly Group chair Mick Antoniw AM



Lee Waters AM



SOCIAL DUMPING CONTINUES AT HULL

Union demands urgent meeting as P&O dump Portuguese ratings for even cheaper Filipino seafarers

RMT has demanded an urgent meeting with the government after it emerged that P&O are planning to dump Portuguese ratings from their Pride of York and Pride of Hull ferries next week and replace them with Filipino crews, flown in half way round the world, on punishing working conditions that the union says will seriously compromise the safety of passengers and crew on busy ferry routes to Zeebrugge and Rotterdam.

In the letter to Business Secretary Kelly Tolhurst, RMT general secretary Mick Cash pointed out that, as with other ratings grades on these ships, the OBS crews were currently

paid below National Minimum Wage rates to work two-month tours of duty, with no pension provision.

"The Filipino seafarers scheduled to replace them will be on the same conditions, but will be contractually obliged to work for tours lasting up to six months, raising major safety as well as employment concerns.

"The exploitation of existing crew on the Pride of York and Pride of Hull was raised with you at BEIS Questions in the Commons in June last year.

"In your response, you agreed that the crewing practice described on these two ferries is 'unacceptable.' Those

practices have now worsened and it is clear to us that P&O sees the recent General Election result as an opportunity to profit from doubling down on seafarer exploitation on international ferry routes from the UK to the Continent.

"This case lays bare the failure of successive Governments to offer people in our maritime towns and cities the chance to work as Ratings in the UK shipping industry. As such, I seek an urgent meeting with you to discuss this case and the wider issues of UK seafarer employment which it raises," the union wrote.

Mick Cash said that it was appalling that just over a month since the Tories won the General Election promising to help northern cities like Hull that they are sitting on their hands while a major local employer smashes apart working conditions and denies local people the opportunity to take up decent jobs in the shipping sector.

"I am seeking an urgent meeting with the Government demanding an intervention that stops this scandal on the P&O ships of shame and which delivers for the communities who are cast aside while this race to the bottom is allowed to let rip," he said. ■

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- Pet minders: a registered pet minder while you are away from home

<https://www.uia.co.uk/rmt/pet-insurance/>

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Mick Cash, RMT general secretary.

† Except clothing and household linen

* Family cover – up to two adults and any number of their children, step children or foster children aged under 18, accompanying the parents or legal guardian insured on the same policy travelling on any trip to the same destination. The children are only insured when travelling with one or both of the insured adults, (or accompanied by another responsible adult) and must be living at the same address as the policyholder.

† Based on claims received by Thornside Pet Healthcare Insurance during 2010.

‡ Trustpilot rating correct as at 23/12/19.

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RMT MEETS NORWEIGIAN OFFSHORE WORKERS



RMT sent a delegation to meet shop stewards of Norwegian offshore union Industri Energi recently. RMT

and Industri Energi have an agreement to work closer together and meet on a regular basis to discuss areas of concern

and influence within the offshore sector. The RMT delegation included RMT regional organiser Jake Molloy,

offshore branch secretary Robbie Wyness, member Scott Agnew and RMT national secretary Darren Procter. ■

NO TO BULLYING AT SEA

Bullying and harassment has been highlighted by a number of RMT shipping representatives as a concern at various companies over the past 12 months.

When seafarers and offshore workers are subject to bullying it is often intensified due to the fact that the workplace is also their home and there is no escape. More often than not the victim will be bullied by line managers and it is difficult to report.

One member told RMT News: "working on a vessel in the deep sea sector, being away from home for months at a time and being subject to bullying, made my life a misery for months, often deep in thought and confined to my

cabin outside of work for fear of bumping into the individual who bullied me. I considered leaving the company but I would not like to give them the satisfaction of victory".

Another welcomed the RMT initiative: "within my ferry company has been a constant battle, with colleagues being victimised for raising genuine health and safety concerns and are now being made to feel like they have a target on their back".

RMT national secretary Darren Procter said that bullying and harassment over a period of time can leave members emotionally broken, contributing to increased absence from the workplace, relationships breaking down

and a lasting impact on the victim's personality in general.

"Shipping companies often say the right things and have policies and procedures in place but in most cases those individuals who are supposed to be ensuring the policies and procedures in place are adhered to are often those that are bullying our members," he said.

"RMT recognises bullying and harassment as a concern within the maritime sector and is initiating a campaign so that members are aware that they don't have to suffer in silence and that this is a concern the union is placing on our national agenda and we will not tolerate bullying in the workplace," he said.





SAME OLD SYSTEM: Avanti West Coast trains took over the West Coast Main Line (WCML) franchise from Virgin Group and Stagecoach last December.

THE VIRGIN STORY: 22 MARVELLOUS YEARS... FOR SHAREHOLDERS

Virgin carpetbagged nearly £720 million out of the rail network during its involvement with the industry

Virgin Trains, which began running the West Coast Main Line in 1997, was replaced by Avanti West Coast at the end of last year. Avanti West Coast is owned by First Trenitalia, a partnership between FirstGroup and Italian state railways Trenitalia.

The end of the Virgin franchise came after partners Virgin Group and Stagecoach had their bid to continue running trains on the line disqualified by the Department for Transport (DfT) last April because they did not meet pension rules.

In a legal action launched last month by Stagecoach, Virgin Trains and French state rail operator SNCF, the government is accused of

illegally kicking franchises out of tender processes for refusing to accept risks associated with funding the Railways Pension Scheme. German operator Arriva has filed a similar complaint.

The row hinges on who picks up the bill for contributions to the RPS that go above and beyond the “cost-sharing” agreement in place since privatisation in 1994, which sees employers contribute 60 per cent and members 40 per cent.

‘EMOTIONAL’ FAREWELL

Virgin Trains bid an ‘emotional’ farewell to the rail network by taking out a 24-page supplement in *Modern Railways* magazine in order to list their many achievements.

One achievement which they

were much more coy about, but that will surely comfort them as it leaves the sector, was the fact that they were able to extract nearly £720 million in dividends for Virgin in their time running the West Coast Mainline.

£720 million is a lot of money in anyone's books, but for a sense of scale, this represents 76 per cent of the operating profits made by Virgin on the West Coast Mainline. That means that precious little of the profit they made was being re-invested directly in the railway. This confirms the candid view expressed by the CEO of FirstGroup recently when he said that 'Rail is cash generative, with profit after tax equating to dividends available for the Group, albeit with some phasing of the funds flows'.

Nor did Virgin invest much in the franchise at any point. One of the ways we can see this is by looking at its Return on

Capital Employed (ROCE), a measure that investors use to assess how hard the money they put in is working to generate profits. The higher the ratio of profit to capital invested in the business, the better for investors. West Coast Rail Ltd's 'ROCE' averaged 102 per cent. What this means is that it was making as much if not more in profits than it was investing in the business as capital. And as we saw above, more than 75% of that profit was turned into dividends for Virgin.

So, for all the flash and fanfare associated with Virgin, it was in fact taking very few risks and getting a lot of money out for what it put in.

In other words, Virgin was taking few risks and not putting much in but it was making a lot of profit and taking the vast majority of it for Virgin's shareholders. Trebles all round! ■

BRANSON: Laughing all the way to the bank



Total dividends 1995-2018	£718,100,000
Dividends as a percentage of Operating Profits	74 per cent
Average ROCE	102 per cent

Accounts year	Operating Profit (£)	Pre-Tax Profits (£)	Dividends paid to Virgin (£)	Capital employed (£)	ROCE
28/02/1998	21,193,000	20,967,000	0	20,167,000	104%
06/03/1999	38,863,000	40,042,000	0	42,011,000	95%
04/03/2000	50,118,000	51,394,000	37,000,000	43,054,000	119%
03/03/2001	37,892,000	39,898,000	24,000,000	43,366,000	92%
02/03/2002	8,877,000	71,041,000	69,500,000	22,679,000	313%
01/03/2003	67,452,000	66,782,000	0	67,457,000	99%
28/02/2004	5,007,000	24,881,000	8,000,000	78,617,000	32%
05/03/2005	27,186,000	30,175,000	13,800,000	93,354,000	32%
04/03/2006	-15,821,000	-13,276,000	20,000,000	63,159,000	-21%
03/03/2007	10,824,000	16,668,000	34,000,000	67,640,000	25%
01/03/2008	72,749,000	81,254,000	64,000,000	58,694,000	138%
28/02/2009	98,689,000	104,548,000	74,900,000	59,506,000	176%
06/03/2010	68,282,000	69,440,000	67,000,000	41,920,000	166%
05/03/2011	52,569,000	55,712,000	30,500,000	49,232,000	113%
31/03/2012	36,329,000	40,755,000	26,000,000	49,827,000	82%
31/03/2013	20,370,000	24,911,000	39,750,000	27,455,000	91%
31/03/2014	3,783,000	9,292,000	9,650,000	24,447,000	38%
31/03/2015	46,101,000	52,393,000	6,000,000	51,007,000	103%
31/03/2016	65,706,000	67,161,000	55,000,000	48,142,000	140%
31/03/2017	65,097,000	66,127,000	47,000,000	54,281,000	122%
31/03/2018	63,143,000	63,953,000	51,000,000	57,562,000	111%
31/03/2019	51,258,000	52,818,000	41,000,000	64,339,000	82%
Total	975,667,000	1,036,936,000	718,100,000		Average ROCE 102%

Source: Companies Accounts filings for West Coast Trains Ltd



STAFF OUR STATIONS

Staff our Stations conference vows to fight cuts to staff and ticket office hours and closures



Over 100 RMT station staff reps and activists from across the country joined together for a Staff our Stations conference in London as part of the campaign to fight cuts to station staffing, ticket office hours and closures of ticket offices.

The conference was kicked off by RMT general secretary Mick Cash who emphasised the need to maximise recruitment and organise within station grades as a way of building a strong resistance to damaging cuts.

“Only today the *Daily Mirror* has exposed the fact that only one in ten stations are fully staffed and nearly half are totally unstaffed, putting passengers and staff at risk of violence every day.

“It has never been more apparent that the privatised and fragmented railway has failed to deliver an affordable, accessible and reliable service for passengers.

“Violence on the railways is soaring, yet the private train companies continue to close

ticket offices and cut staffing at stations. These damaging cuts only serve to benefit their shareholders’ profits, not passengers.

“RMT is calling on the government to prove that it is serious about improving the rail passenger experience and ensure that its review commits to a fully staffed and accessible railway,” he said.

Shadow Labour Transport Secretary Andy McDonald told the conference that he fully supported the campaign and

would join forces with the union to fight the government’s draconian plans for minimum service level agreements on the railway.

Emily Yates of the Association of British Commuters (ABC) said that passengers and workers across the were organising together to resist this government’s regressive transport policies.

“The RMT’s ‘Staff Our Stations’ campaign is the perfect opportunity to show how our struggles are connected.

"We believe that the de-staffing of the railways is a mercenary attempt to keep shareholders interested in the UK's failing public transport system. The trade-off is not only rail workers' jobs, it's the equality and human rights of millions of people - especially disabled, older and rural passengers," she said.

Paula Peters of Disabled People Against Cuts agreed and said that it was really important and vital transport union members, disabled people, older people, ABC and other groups to fight back to Save Our Stations.

"Platform and ticket office staff play a vital role in helping disabled passengers to board and exit the train, give vital journey planning information & ticket advice.

"With planned station staff cuts to jobs this will severely impact on everyone's ability to travel and live our lives. For disabled people it will cause further barriers to make life even more difficult and further marginalise us in society.

"Violent crime towards disabled people has risen 41 per cent on the rail network.

"Passengers feel safer when they know ticket office and platform staff members are there. This is an important campaign to get behind.

"RMT is fighting for our safety and our access and disabled people are fully behind them in this fight," she said.

Speakers and delegates were united in the view that RMT must join forces with commuter groups, disabled people, pensioners groups, politicians and the wider trade union movement to build a strong alliance.

RMT members, reps and branches were encouraged to make contact with local groups in their area, involve them in the campaign and build links.

VIOLENCE

Another key issue addressed at the conference was the unacceptable rise in violence and assaults against staff on the railways. Many delegates shared examples of how cuts to

staffing have made stations less safe and secure and led to a rise in violence. One member told the group how he had been physically assaulted just days before.

Delegates shared shocking examples of the impact of cuts on passengers, particularly groups of passengers such as the disabled and elderly who rely on staff to get tickets, advice and board and exit trains. One delegate spoke of how disabled passengers at unstaffed stations were failing to receive assistance onto trains.

There were great ideas from reps about how the union can organise within station grades including making regular visits to all stations, during all shifts, expanding the use of social media, making clear the benefits of joining a union, engaging with staff from other TOCs and visiting depots, engaging with younger staff, planning at branch level and being visible and proactive.

As one rep put it: 'being an advocate and promoter of 'staff our stations' starts with awareness!'

Closing conference, assistant general secretary Steve Hedley said that the conference was a starting point and all regions will be encouraged to hold similar events with station staff members and establish station grades committees.

How can you support the campaign?

EARLY DAY MOTION

A new Early Day Motion has been tabled by MPs in support of the campaign.

Please contact your MP, and ask them to sign Early Day Motion 38

A model letter you can send to your MP is on the RMT website

PETITION

An online petition has been set up, calling on Train Operating Companies, Department for Transport, Transport for London to ensure fully staffed and accessible stations across the rail network and on London Underground. Please sign the

petition on the RMT website, share it with colleagues and members and publicise on social media.

CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

A new campaign poster and postcard has been produced. If you would like copies of these please email Sophie Ward (s.ward@rmt.org.uk) advising your branch and the address you would like materials sent to.

The postcards can be distributed to passengers and the public, asking them to raise this issue with their MP, and asking them to sign an Early

Day Motion 38.

RMT will be holding campaign action days in the coming months, details of which will be shared in due course.

CONFERENCE

This year's Station and Associated Grades National Industrial Organising Conference is taking place from March 20/21 at Durham Miners Hall, Durham, DH1 4BE. The theme of the conference is violence and assaults. Please speak to your branch if you are interested in attending.



THE DEFEAT OF FASCISM - 75 YEARS



REMEMBRANCE: Russia erected a monument to the men of the WWII Arctic Allied Convoys in St Petersburg in 2017 on Bolshoi Smolensky Prospekt Street in gratitude for the sacrifice they made in the struggle for the defeat of fascism.

REMEMBER THE MERCH

Union backs appeal for a memorial in Liverpool dedicated to all Merchant Navy personnel who perished in the Battle of the Atlantic

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest continuous military campaign of the Second World War which raged from 1939 until the defeat of fascism in 1945 in a theatre covering millions of square miles of ocean.

The savage battle pitted U-boats and other German warships and the Luftwaffe against the Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Navy, United States Navy, and Allied merchant shipping. Convoys, coming mainly from North America and predominantly going to the Britain and the Soviet Union, were protected for the most part by the British and Canadian navies and air forces. These forces were aided by ships and

aircraft of the United States beginning September 1941.

The Nazis were joined by Italian submarines after their Axis ally Italy entered the war in June 1940.

As an island nation, the United Kingdom was highly dependent on imported goods. Britain required more than a million tons of imported material per week in order to be able to survive and fight.

Battle of the Atlantic memorial committee chairman Bill Anderson, a former RMT regional organiser, said that the proposed plinth would be dedicated to all combatants, men and women of all nationalities and be, hopefully, situated at the Pier Head on

Liverpool's water front.

He said that RMT and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) have already expressed full support for the memorial.

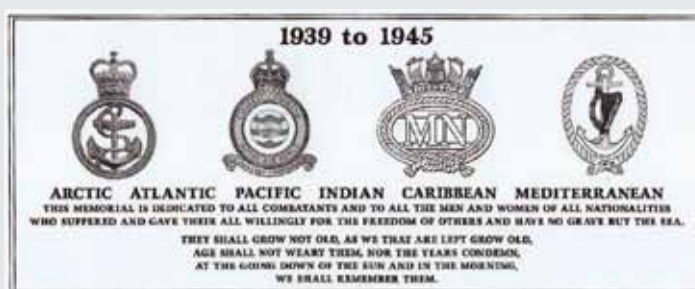
"It will cover all the battles across the world from the Arctic, Pacific, Caribbean and Mediterranean seas.

"Over 3,500 merchant ships were lost during the conflict and over 38,000 seafarers from all

over the world including around 9,000 lascar Indians, 6,000 Chinese and many other nationalities all serving under the Red Ensign," he said.

The Battle of the Atlantic has been called the "longest, largest, and most complex" naval battle in history which involved thousands of ships in more than 100 convoy battles and over 1,000 single-ship encounters,

The situation changed



LEST WE FORGET: Proposed memorial front

constantly, with one side or the other gaining advantage, as participating countries surrendered, joined and even changed sides in the war, and as new weapons, tactics, counter-measures and equipment were developed by both sides.

Early in the war, U-boat fleet commander Admiral Karl Dönitz developed a system known as the "wolf pack" in which U-boats would spread out in a long line across the projected course of a convoy. Upon sighting a target, they would come together to attack en-masse and overwhelm any escorting warships.

While escorts chased individual submarines, the rest of the "pack" would be able to attack the merchant ships with impunity.

In July 1942, convoy PQ 17 suffered the largest loss of any convoy in the war. Under attack from German aircraft and U-boats, the convoy was ordered to scatter, following reports that a battle group, which included the battleship Tirpitz, had sailed to intercept the convoy. Only 11 of the 35 merchant ships in the convoy succeeded in running the gauntlet of U-boats and German bombers.

As the war progressed the Allies gradually gained the upper hand, overcoming German surface raiders by the end of 1942 and defeating the U-boats by mid-1943, though losses due to U-boats continued until the war's end.

The Battle of the Atlantic also included The Arctic convoys, known as 'the worst

journey in the world' through freezing waters and ice floes, which sailed to northern ports in the Soviet Union – primarily Archangel and Murmansk in Russia.

There were 78 convoys between August 1941 and May 1945 of about 1,400 merchant ships delivering essential supplies to the Soviet Union to help them resist the Nazi onslaught and eighty-five merchant vessels were lost often with all hands.

Bill Anderson said that merchant seamen suffered all over the world.

"It is important to remember that while there were surrounded by fire or ice as your vessel was sinking as soon as you got into the water or a lifeboat your wages were stopped and no money was sent home to feed families or pay the rent.

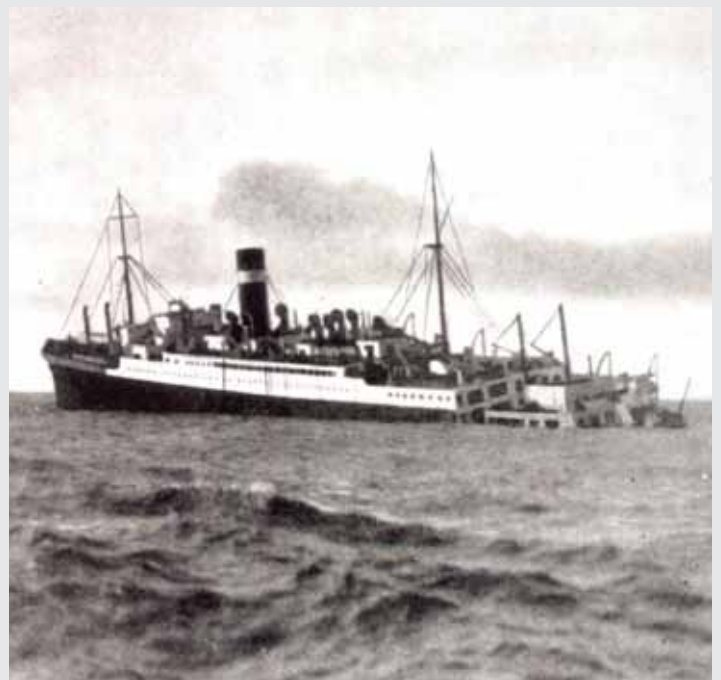
"German and Japanese U-boats often surfaced after a kill and machine-gunned unarmed survivors, committing war crimes for which many were later punished.

"I mention this to let people know the suffering that these heroes endured in the battle to win our freedom from fascism," he said.

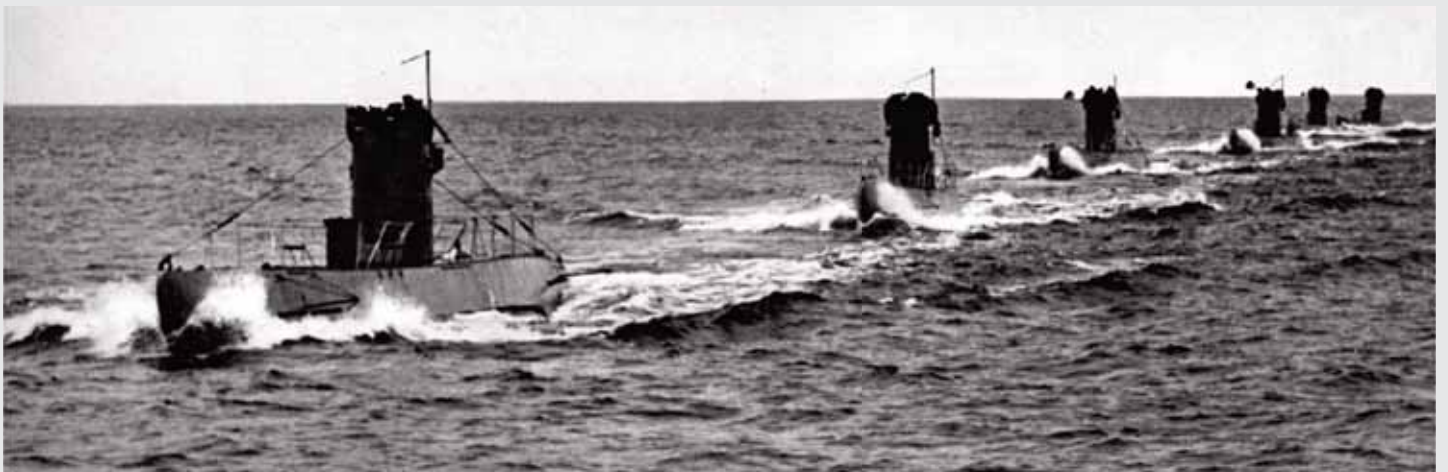
For more information and also to donate to this appeal, please visit their Go Fund Me page, or alternatively, cheques can be made payable to The Merchant Navy Association Liverpool Branch and sent to Bill Anderson, 53 Redington Road, Allerton, Liverpool, L19 4UB.



PQ-17: Torpedoing of a ship by a Nazi U-boat, during the battle of convoy PQ-17, North of Norway.



BATTLE: SS Athenia was the first UK ship to be sunk by Nazi Germany during World War Two when a torpedo from the German submarine U-30 sank her in the Western Approaches.



WOLFPACK: The first operational Nazi U-boat flotilla also known as the Weddigen flotilla



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RMT member, work accident claimant

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ARE YOU KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR PENSION?



Carolyn Stanton of First Actuarial has some solutions

There is so much to fit in to our busy lives and things like pensions can slip right off the radar. Nowadays many people have several pensions as we tend to change jobs a number of times during our working lives.

You are likely to be receiving annual communications from the pension scheme you are contributing to with your current employer, so you may have a recent statement or newsletter to hand should you need to contact the scheme.

Have you checked whether the address they hold for you is correct? And what about any changes to your personal circumstances such as a new partner?

While your current scheme is important, you shouldn't forget about those pension benefits with former employers. Do you have previous statements filed away safely so you would know how to contact them? Can you remember who you worked for 20 or 30 years ago and if there was a pension scheme? And have you got what the pensions industry calls a 'deferred' or 'preserved' pension with that scheme?

We tend to move house several times over our lives, so that company you worked for 30 years ago might not have your current address. Did you update them when you last

moved house? And did you tell them about any change in partner?

When we move house, updating our pension providers about a new address is often not top of the list of things to do, and many people don't realise that they need to do it. But it is important that we do this, like we would update our bank of a change of address, so the administrators of the current or previous schemes know how to contact us when we're approaching retirement, or if the trustees want to send us important information about our benefits.

If you have lost track of your pension, there is a useful website called <https://www.gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details> that you can go on to find out who to contact for your previous employers' pension schemes, as long as you have details of the name of the company you worked for. Your HR department will know who to contact for your current scheme.

'EXPRESSION OF WISH'

And what about that 'Expression of Wish' form that you filled in when you started working for your current employer, or the one you completed 30 years ago when you joined your then new employer's pension scheme?

Maybe you nominated your parents or siblings to receive any lump sum on your death, but have since been in a relationship for a while? Maybe you were in a relationship before but have changed partners? Did you update your wishes when your personal circumstances changed? And if so, did you do this just for your current pension scheme? What about your previous pensions?

When a pension scheme member dies and there is a lump sum payable, the trustees of the scheme must decide to whom to pay the lump sum. While trustees are not bound by your Expression of Wish form and the person(s) you nominated, it can assist them in making their decision, but only if it is up to date. The beneficiary(ies) named on your historic Expression of Wish forms may not be the people you would want a lump sum to be paid to now in the event of your death.

A common example of this is where an historic Expression of Wish form has the deceased member's ex-spouse or partner as the beneficiary, but the member's personal circumstances had changed and they had a new partner at the time of death. The member would likely want their current spouse / partner to be the recipient of any death benefits.

However, in this case, trustees would have to gather full information relating to the member's current circumstances to be able to reach the right decision.

In such cases where there are death benefits payable, trustees have a duty to gather all relevant information relating to a member's current circumstances, and close family members and colleagues can assist them in establishing the current position. However, this can take time and can be very difficult for relatives and friends when dealing with a bereavement.

So, the solution is:

1. keep your address and Expression of Wish form up to date with your current employer,
2. find your previous pension schemes, update them with your current address and complete an up-to-date Expression of Wish form for them too.

You can also contact the Pensions Tracing Service to find old pensions at:

Pension Tracing Service
Telephone: 0800 731 0193
Address:
The Pension Service 9
Mail Handling Site A
Wolverhampton
WV98 1LU ■



GLOBAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

International Bob Crow health and safety conference held in Portugal

Transport unions from across the world gathered in Loures, Portugal recently for the sixth international Bob Crow health and safety conference hosted by FECTRANS, the transportation section of the CGTP union.

Conference was held at a regional school run by both the local authority and the trade unions where students get their final three years of secondary schooling along with specialist subjects relating to transportation and logistics. Some of the students sat in on both days of the conference as part of their studies.

Two days of medical, physiotherapy and related economic and political presentations with trade union responses focused on respiratory issues and work-related cancer within the context of struggles in Britain, Brazil, Spain, Portugal and the United States.

Work sociologist Dr Joao Areosa opened a discussion on

the experiences of workers in the rail industry and work life balance. Daniel Mestre, professor at a nautical school and a member of FECTRANS, spoke about the effects of working in shipping on long haul trips, insufficient rest whilst at sea and the issue of stress and mental health issues which only the unions were taking seriously. He said that companies were increasingly adopting a 'as long as the job is done' attitude and failing to take care of workers' welfare.

Delegates from FECTRANS and Spain spoke at length about the economic struggles in their countries with governments trying to drive down wages and terms and conditions and the effect of this on employees trying to achieve a work/family balance.

There was a presentation from Dr Kenneth Spaet, a physician based in New York and an independent witness on



diesel exhaust and asbestos risks for workers which were rising yearly particularly among maintenance engineers and fitters.

Physiotherapist Sara Costa gave a presentation on the issues of posture, especially amongst drivers in the bus industry and road freight.

Problems, which included poorly fitted seats, long turns between breaks along with inadequate education for employees on exercise and life balance, were affecting the life span of workers. Many were working 12-hour shifts and little time for home life which in turn had an adverse effect on mental health and stress issues.

This complimented the earlier presentation of the Brazilian delegate who had spoken about the risks from on the impacts of whole-body vibration on urban bus staff in Sao Paulo.

Delegates agreed that the international situation was marked by the structural crisis of the capitalist system and all across the world employers were attacking trade union freedom, the right to strike, the right to collective bargaining and workers' fundamental rights.

"Capital is seeking - with the pretext of introducing new

technologies - to attain the material basis for a new leap forward to a new phase of economic growth and wealth accumulation and centralisation.

"This explains why - at a time of unparalleled advances in science and technology and outstanding development of the workforce capacity - workers are being forced to intensify their struggles against repression.

"Capital is trying to introduce new elements to weaken workers' rights: more precarious labour contracts, longer working hours and longer on-call periods, increased use of technologies.

"As a result, employers determine where and when work is done while threatening not just the existence of jobs but also unions themselves.

"All these factors have a

profound effect on the increase of risks related to different types of work in different industries and on the emergence of new risks, namely psycho-social ones, which mostly derive from the harassment, the permanent insecurity and pressure applied on the workers in the companies, both physically and psychologically," a statement said.

All participants in the sixth Bob Crow conference also resolved that combined efforts were needed to enhance the study and research on the area of psycho-social risks and how to characterise, identify and evaluate them, in order to enable trade union officials to directly intervene in the workplace.

"Occupational health and safety cannot be separated from working conditions or from

decent work and workers' dignity. Therefore, its dimension must be highly valued and included in collective bargaining and in a global perspective of workers' needs and working conditions;

"We need to develop our cooperation and exchange experiences on our trade union action and outcomes in each country.

"Only organised workers' struggles promoted by class organisations and supporters can attain changes that value work and the workers.

"Accordingly, participants convey their militant solidarity to the struggles of workers and peoples against the imperialist offensive and against neoliberal policies that plunder nations' wealth and increase workers' exploitation," a statement said.



DISABLED WORKERS— KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Enclosed with RMT News is a small card which summarises disabled workers' rights

Disabled workers have rights – not as many rights as RMT thinks we ought to have, but more than many of us think we have!

The government and employers are in no hurry to tell you what your rights are, but RMT will. The union's Disabled Members' Advisory Committee is running a 'Know Your Rights' campaign so you know what you are entitled to.

When workers know our rights, we are better equipped to assert them. The best way to do that is together, through our union.

The small card you have received is designed to fit in your wallet. If you are not disabled yourself, perhaps you could give it to a workmate and explain the benefits of joining RMT.

ARE YOU DISABLED?

Under the law, you are disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial, long-term, negative effect on your ability to carry out normal daily activities.

- 'Substantial' means anything more than minor or trivial.
- 'Long-term' means lasting, or expected to last, twelve months or more (or less if you are dying).

The law automatically includes some conditions (HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis) and excludes some others (eg. hay fever, alcohol addiction). Everything else is judged on a case-by-case basis.

WHICH DISABLED WORKERS ARE COVERED BY THE LAW?

Every disabled worker is



covered, whether temporary or permanent, part-time or full-time, agency or directly-employed. You might even be covered if you are self-employed, depending on the circumstances.

You are protected against some forms of discrimination if you are associated with a disabled person, if you were disabled in the past, or if people think you are disabled even if you are not. For example, if a manager shouts and swears at you for asking for time off to look after your disabled partner, this might be unlawful harassment.

There is no qualifying period for these rights. They apply from Day One of your job. In fact, they apply even before you start working, as they cover the application process too.

WHAT RIGHTS DO DISABLED WORKERS HAVE UNDER THE LAW?

The right not be discriminated against directly. It

is unlawful for your employer to treat you worse because you are disabled. If, for example, you tell your manager that you have cancer and they respond by stopping you working overtime, that would be unlawful.

THE RIGHT NOT TO BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST INDIRECTLY

Employers are not allowed to set criteria that it is harder for workers to meet. For example, if your employer pays a bonus to everyone who attends an event held in a venue accessible only by stairs, and you do not attend because you can't climb stairs, that would be unlawful.

The right not to be discriminated against because of something you do because you are disabled. For example, giving a worker a negative reference because they took sick leave because they are disabled amounts to unlawful discrimination.

THE RIGHT TO REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

If a feature of your job places you at a disadvantage compared with non-disabled workers, then the employer must make suitable changes to help you do your job. These might include providing auxiliary aids, or adjusting your hours, or reallocating some of your duties. The employer has to pay for the adjustment, but government funding is available towards this.

THE RIGHT NOT TO BE HARASSED

You are entitled to attend work free from unwanted conduct that humiliates, distresses or offends you on the basis of your disability. So, for example, if you have a stammer and a workmate or manager mocks you, that would be unlawful harassment.

The right to complain about discrimination without being punished in any way for doing so (known as 'victimisation'). People who support your



complaint, for example by giving a witness statement, are also protected from discrimination.

DENIED YOUR RIGHTS?

You have the right to join RMT and be represented by your union. And you have the right to confidentiality.

Not surprisingly, employers have some 'get-out clauses' and will try to argue their way out of upholding your rights. So it is even more important that you get the support of the union in fighting your corner.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

RMT supports the social model of disability. We understand that society disables people by creating barriers to people with impairments or differences.

So we support individual members who are denied their rights. We also fight for more equal and accessible workplaces and working conditions. We do this by organising together. Get involved.

You may like to come to our Disabled Members' Conference, learn more about disability in the workplace by attending a training course, or campaign against disability discrimination in your workplace. ■

To contact the Disabled Members' Advisory Committee, email Janine Booth j.booth@rmt.org.uk

President's column



SOLIDARITY

I would like to start this month by giving my personal congratulations to all traincrew at South Western Railways for returning another magnificent ballot result for the sixth consecutive time.

In the face of the anti-trade union laws this will go down in history, 64 days strike action including 27 consecutive day during December/January.

Now it's time for us all to help burden the cost a donation of £5 per member will generate around 400,000 pounds a month if we do this for a year we have a strike fund fit to fight and keep the great name of RMT as a militant fighting trade union leading from the front!

We all need to be signing up and digging deep into our pockets as many more fights come our way we need to be prepared as this government rip up agreements, we will be defending our work and conditions. Let's not have our proud members starved back to work by greedy bosses lining their own pockets at our losses.

We know this government will want to bring in a two-tier workforce to weaken what we have and we must be prepared to fight to protect our Industry to keep safe working and conditions with a pay packet that provides a wage to support our families, and keep the travelling public safe, with access for disabled passengers and a safe network for workers and passengers alike.

Just like rail workers before us built an industry to be proud of

we must fight to protect the future.

The threat of minimal service levels from this rotten government means workers right to withdraw their labour becomes more difficult not because it affects other workers but because it threatens their greedy capitalist chums.

We need to organise and increase membership across all our sectors so no-one, no matter grade, will be left to suffer. We must organise industrially to defend each other as an attack on one is an attack on all. 'Proud to be RMT' defending from the front for the members!

I'm also proud we held our first national industrial meeting to defend station staff from the on-slaughter of cuts by stealth and the greed of employers to provide shareholders bonuses to undermine the importance of such roles and down grade staffing levels to meet their own agenda.

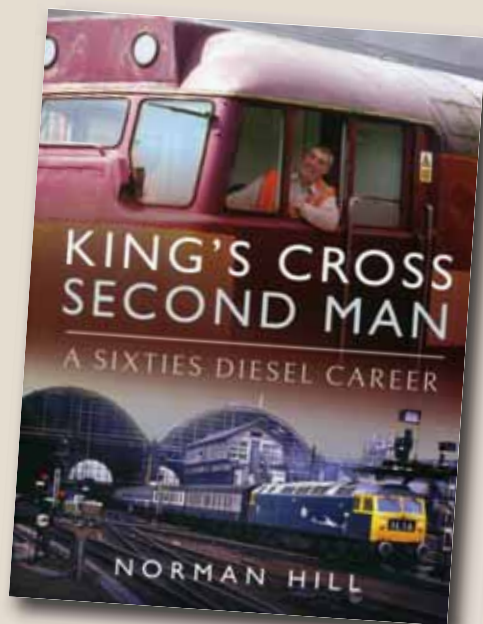
Solidarity with all those in attendance to engage with other on an industrial agenda and build a movement with a multitude of grades campaigning together with ideas of how we address the imbalance.

I was also honoured to be invited to give Bro Mick Tosh his 40-year membership award and to join him at his retirement to wish him and Alison all the very best for a long happy retirement.

Solidarity

Michelle Rodgers

BOOK REVIEWS



KING'S CROSS SECOND MAN A Sixties diesel career

Norman Hill

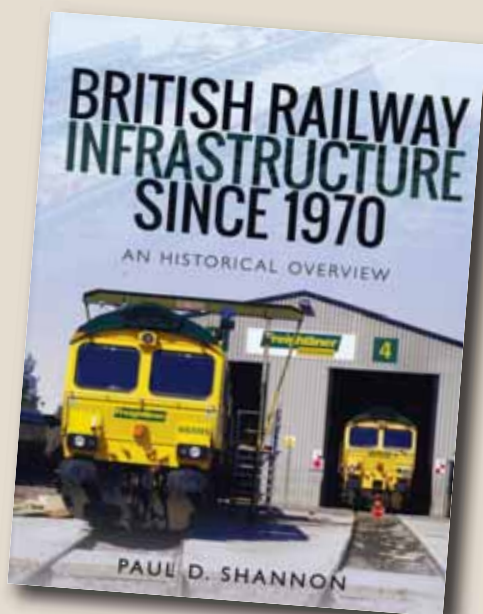
Pen & Sword Books

The author made a career change in 1964, moving from clerical railway grades to the Motive Power Department at King's Cross. Starting off as a locomotive cleaner he became eligible for second man duties, a roll he carried out for four years.

Norman made records of his time there, experiencing the end of steam and the growing prevalence of diesel and electric. He takes us through the southern section of the East Coast Main Line and a world which no

longer exists except in the minds of rail workers that passed through it themselves.

He tells stories of these characters and their work, including Roy Head the philosopher train driver who inspired Norman to go back into full-education in 1968. Finely-illustrated and well put together, this tome will spark a million memories from those who worked on the railways during this period.



BRITISH RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE SINCE 1970

An historical overview

Paul D Shannon

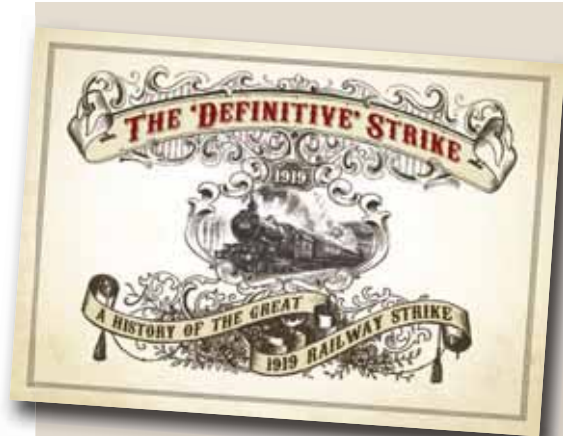
Pen & Sword Books

This book examines in words and pictures the huge changes that have taken place in the last fifty years on Britain's rail network.

In this time the steam age gave way to a streamlined railway after Beeching closed thousands of miles of railway. However numerous lines and stations have since joined or rejoined the network as the need for rail

continues to grow.

It charts the changes in signalling, freight and shunting and looks at the move towards urban passenger networks taking in heavy rail, light rail and tramways. It is clear that fundamental changes will continue in unpredictable ways, just as it has since 1970.



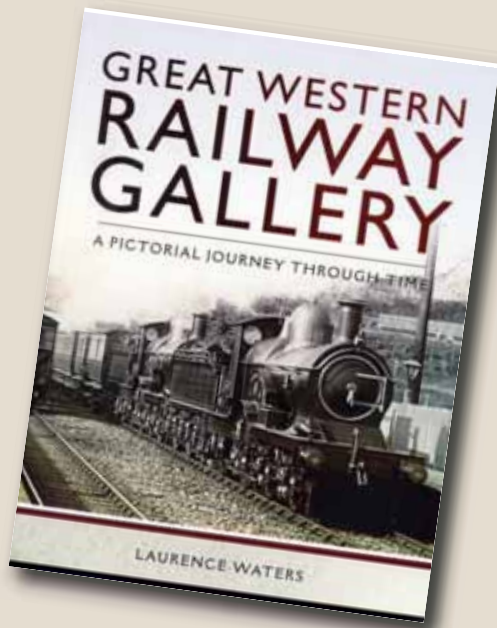
THE 'DEFINITIVE' STRIKE A history of the great 1919 railway strike

RMT has published a new history of the 1919 railway strike, known as the 'definitive' strike. It describes how the strike was the culmination of the long struggle to win guaranteed hours, standardised wages, paid holidays and overtime payments among other demands. It also deals with the twists and turns of the conflict which saw the NUR harness ever widening solidarity and support from the labour

movement and the public at large before the government of the day capitulated after ten days of strike action.

Ultimately, the strike showed that rail workers were determined to equip themselves with the tools to resist poor conditions and low wages, a lesson for today.

Copies are available on the RMT web-shop for £5



GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY GALLERY

A pictorial journey through time

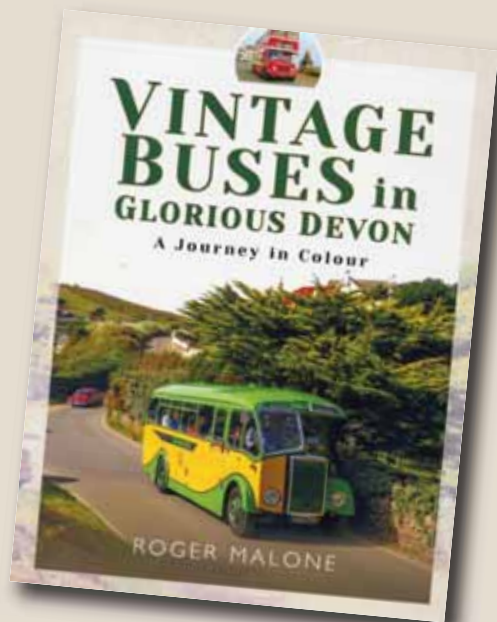
Laurence Waters

Pen & Sword books

God's Wonderful Railway, as the GWR was known, is one of England's most famous railways built by the world's most well-known Victorian engineers.

This book is a beautifully produced visual history cataloguing, amongst other things, GWR's groundbreaking publicity output between the wars as the route to the Cornish Riviera and other holiday destinations.

It deals with GWR's amazing infrastructure of bridges and viaducts, a vast array of rolling stock, grand stations and its accidents all lovingly illustrated using previously unpublished material from the extensive collection at the Didcot Railway Centre. ■



VINTAGE BUSES IN GLORIOUS DEVON:

A journey in colour

Roger Malone

Pen & Sword Books



Who could resist a beautifully illustrated book on vintage buses in glorious Devon? Both subjects evoke nostalgia by the beach bucket and spade loads.

Every year since 2007 vintage buses of every size and shape appear for one day only on the Kingsbridge Vintage Bus Running Day, sending

the clock back with a riot of vintage vehicles that could turn any head.

This is largely a pictorial publication but does include fascinating insights into the world of vintage buses and the devotees that restore and run these extraordinary beasts, completely absorbing and a colourful read on a rainy day. ■

FIGHTING CANCER IN SCOTLAND



David O'Donnell of Fife and District branch reports on a course dealing with cancer in the workplace

The Equality Act 2010 plays a major part in having cancer or being diagnosed and treated as it contains a legal right for victims and carers who are working to

make reasonable adjustments at work.

A recent RMT workshop at RMT's Glasgow office with tutor Mary Jane dealt with one of the scenarios such as representing a member in the workplace on a personal level and in support with meeting management which stimulated some interesting and varying views of previous experiences.

Participants rounded off

the course by looking at the effects of austerity, politics and RMT policy which they found very educational. I am sure I speak on behalf of the other delegates who attended that we all thoroughly enjoyed the course and would like to think that there will be a big uptake from everyone who would like to find out more about this very important subject.

INFRASTRUCTURE CAMPAIGN IN SCOTLAND



RMT in Scotland has been campaigning across the rail infrastructure companies in Scotland to recruit and organise this vitally important sector and to ensure the bosses attempts to drive down conditions and pay are resisted.

RMT regional organiser

Gordon Martin said that due to the efforts of the union there had been an upturn in membership at a number of companies.

"We are also on the verge of securing a voluntary recognition agreement with Story Plant.

"The campaign will

continue in 2020 with a number of renewals and enhancement sites already identified for visits by the campaign team as well as some good progress being made at the Rail Systems Alliance Scotland, Story Plant and other companies," he said.

STENA VISIT



RMT national secretary Darren Proctor met with shipboard reps John Foley, Petrina Cadman and Karlson Lingwood recently onboard Stena's new vessel the Stena Estrid to discuss members concerns.

FORT WILLIAM AWARD



John Smith Crianlarich P-way section manager receiving his 40 year award from Ronald Wegner Fort William branch Secretary.

I HEART UNIONS



RMT activist Steve Loeber of Colchester and Direct branch and Chelmsford and District Trade Unions Council attended career events at schools and colleagues in the Chelmsford area recently to promote the benefits of trade union membership.

PALESTINE

Paul Clyndes, RMT's stand-in health and safety officer, has been selected to take part in a 240 km fundraising cycle ride through Palestine in April. Paul is raising funds for the charity Medical Aid for Palestinians. The ride will see a group of 30 cyclists starting off in Jenin and then visiting Nablus, Taybeh, Jericho, Bethlehem, Hebron and ending in Jerusalem.

RMT supports the rights of Palestinians to self-determination and further supports the struggle for peace and justice for Palestine. RMT branches and individual members are asked to consider sponsoring Paul who has agreed to write a report on his trip to Palestine which will be published in RMT News in the summer.

The charity MAP delivers health and medical care to Palestinians affected by



conflict, occupation and displacement. Today, MAP is able to reach the most vulnerable communities and ensure they receive the best healthcare available in difficult conditions.

MAP have a number of areas of expertise: Essential Primary Healthcare; Women and Children's Health; Emergency Preparedness and Response; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and

Disability.

Raising money to support MAP's vital work is very important but Paul also hopes that showing solidarity with the Palestinian people will show them that they are not isolated from the international community.

Please donate to Paul's fundraising target of £2,500 via the Just Giving website: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paul-clyndes1> ■

MERSEY AWARD



Mersey RMT Health and safety rep Ronnie Furey of Central and North Mersey branch receives his much deserved 10-year badge from regional organiser John Tilley. ■

HUMBER AWARD



Humber Shipping branch secretary presents A 40-year medal to shipboard representative Tony Kilmore. ■

LICHFIELD TAXI DRIVERS GAIN RECOGNITION

Lichfield taxi drivers Assad Mubashir, Sheeraz Anwar, Rashad Mahmood and Ayaz M Khawaja with RMT Midlands regional organiser Ken Usher after Lichfield City Council Officers agreed to discuss formal recognition after over 50 per cent of local drivers joined the union. ■



DOVER AWARDS

RMT national secretary Darren Proctor presented Bob Marsh with his 50 years service medallion and Dover Shipping branch member Andrew Christopher with his 40-award. ■





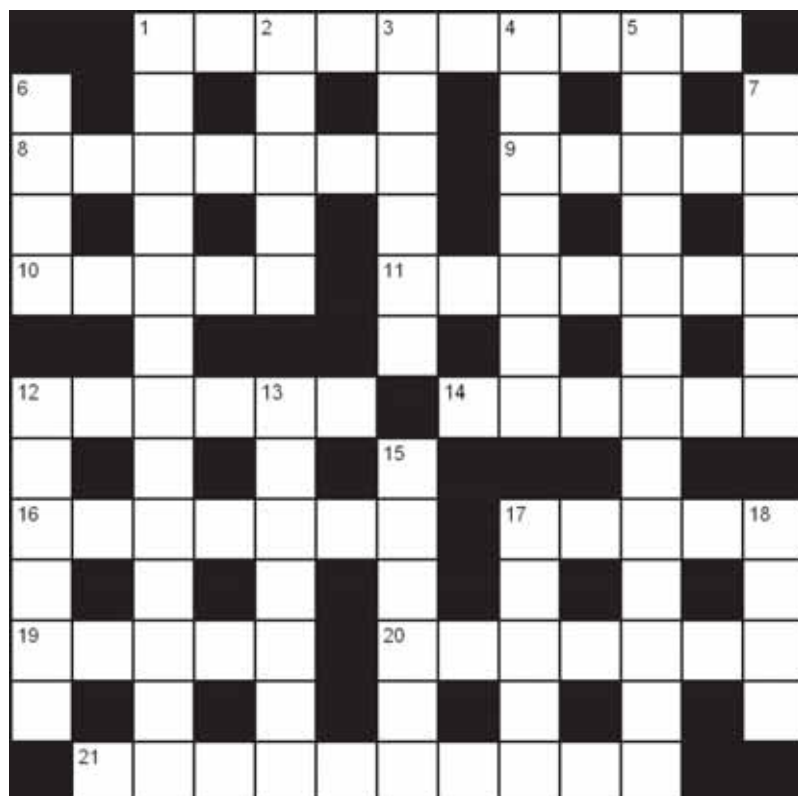
RMT
RMT Credit Union Ltd

Our wedding was incredible.. and with the help of the RMT CREDIT UNION, we were able to make it a wonderful family time with memories that will stay with us all forever! Thank you... xx

Natalie Rose McGarragh

Contact RMT Credit Union
Tel: 020 7529 8835
FB: RMTUnion

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Winner Doug Thomson, Dumfriesshire.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by March 3 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



insurance for trade union members

Crossword sponsored by UIA

ACROSS

- 1 Outlaw (10)
- 8 Unleavened biscuit (7)
- 9 Really bad (5)
- 10 Blockade (5)
- 11 Arm bone (7)
- 12 Abseil (6)
- 14 Arrival (6)
- 16 Cocktail (7)
- 17 Loop (5)
- 19 Type of leather (5)
- 20 Quiet (7)
- 21 Government building (10)

DOWN

- 1 Correct (6-7)
- 2 Entwine (5)
- 3 Reverberate repeatedly (6)
- 4 Spooked (7)
- 5 Fizziness (13)
- 6 Leader (4)
- 7 Small room (6)
- 12 Neglectful (6)
- 13 Apparent (7)
- 15 Tawdry (6)
- 17 Rice dish (5)
- 18 At that time (4)



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MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

Surname		Address	
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 ☐

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

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

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....
.....

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

Your signature

Date

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

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

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



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Please fill in the whole form including official use box using a ball point pen and Send to: RMT Credit Union Ltd., 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

Please pay RMT Credit Union Ltd Direct Debits for the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with RMT Credit Union Ltd, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions from some types of account

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit RMT Credit Union Ltd will notify you seven working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If you request RMT Credit Union Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by RMT Credit Union Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society. — If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when RMT Credit Union Ltd asks you to.
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