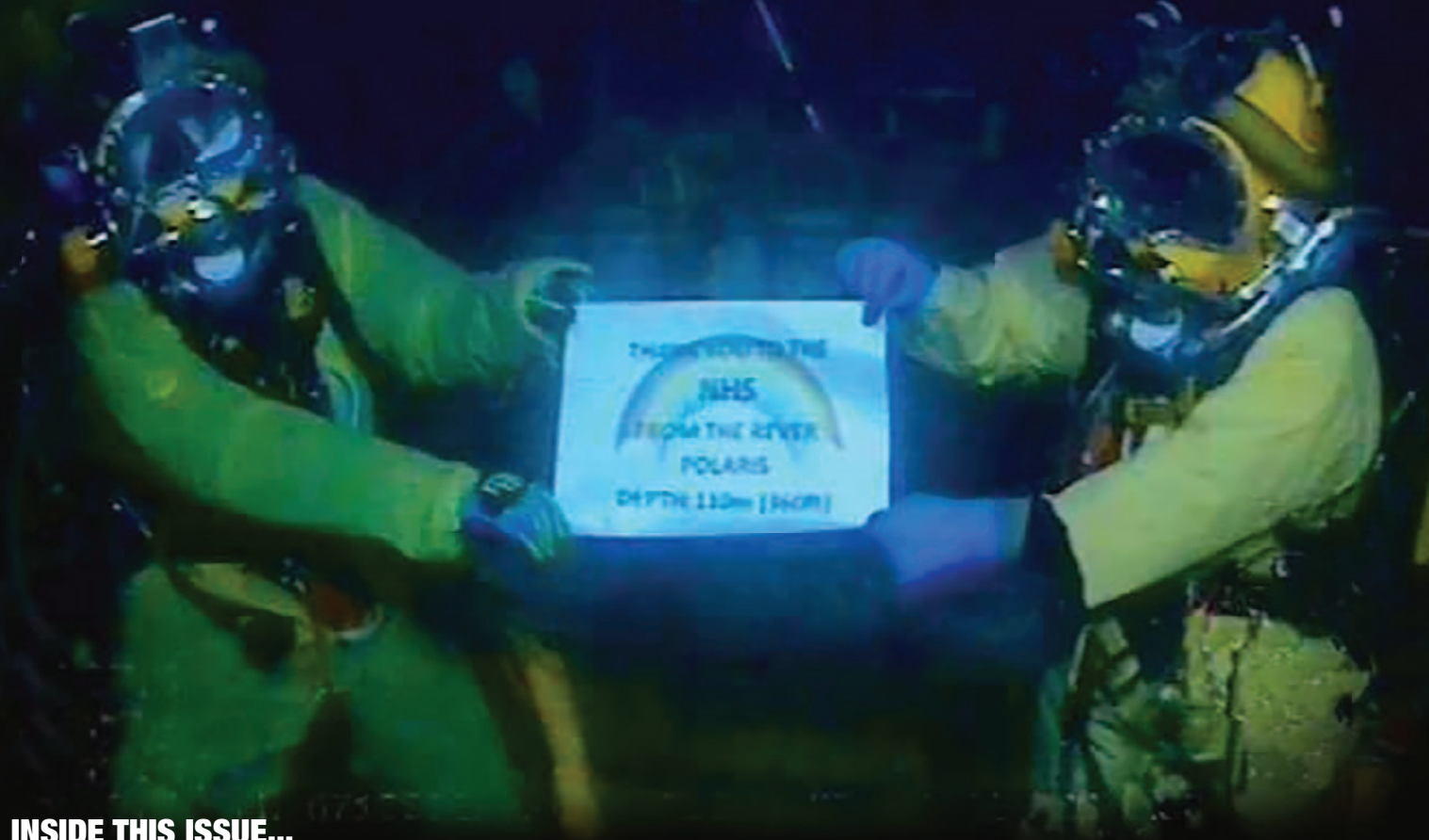


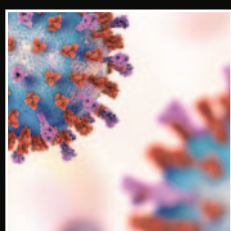
RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

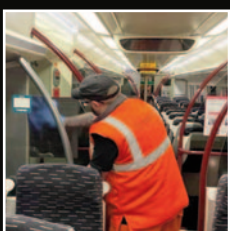
RMT SALUTES ESSENTIAL WORKERS



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CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



STAYING SAFE

Welcome to this latest issue of the emergency electronic edition of the RMT News which the union is producing to keep you informed during the COVID-19 emergency.

As well as summarising the on-going work of the union across the various transport and energy sectors where we organise, it also sets out details of the on-line information and support resources we have set up to help you through this crisis.

I would urge you to log the RMT web pages and, if you haven't already, take this opportunity to sign up to the RMT App.

RMT has continued to work flat out to protect members' jobs, health, safety and wages despite the challenging conditions. Some employers have reacted and engaged positively with us and others have cynically used the emergency to threaten jobs and working conditions and even to withdraw previously agreed pay increases.

The union has sought to publicly shame any employer who has either failed our members on safety or attack their jobs and livelihoods.

I want to take this opportunity to put the bad bosses in our industries on notice that any cynical manipulation of this crisis to gain an advantage over the workforce will be met head on by RMT.

Finally, I want to pay tribute again to all of our activists, reps, officers and staff who have responded so magnificently to this unprecedented situation to keep the union functioning in order to serve our members.

Our diver members over three hundred feet below the surface of the North Sea who still found a way of sending a message of solidarity to our sisters and brothers keeping the NHS running are the best of our movement.

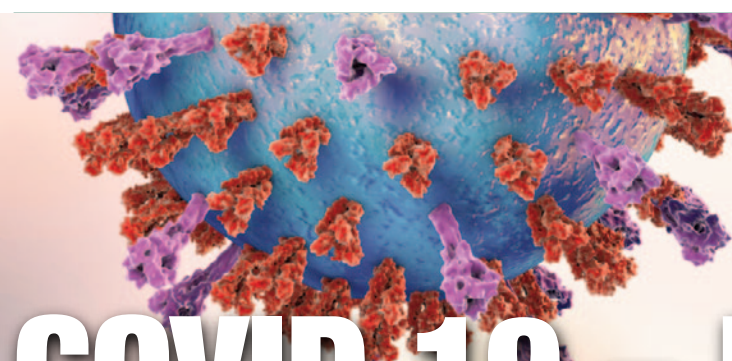
If we stand together our unity and sense of common purpose will see us through and we will emerge stronger and fitter when the current lockdown is eventually lifted.

There will be many challenges ahead in the long road to recovery but this union will be fighting for your interests every inch of the way.

Mick Cash

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



COVID 19 – RMT ADVICE AND INFORMATION

The coronavirus crisis represents an unprecedented challenge for the transport and offshore energy industries. Throughout the country, and in every sector, transport and offshore energy workers continue to go to work and provide vital services, transporting key workers and essential goods and supplying energy.

RMT's priority now and throughout this crisis is protecting members health, safety, jobs and conditions and this dedicated web page has been set up to help give you the information to do just that.

Together and united, we will defeat coronavirus.

All the documents below are available at rmt.org.uk/about/covid-19/

SAFETY ADVICE AND INFORMATION

[RMT advice to members employed in the rail industry and London Underground](#)

[RMT advice to members employed in the bus industry](#)

[GOV.UK Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): transport and travel guidance](#)

[Preventing Domestic abuse during Coronavirus – a TUC guide](#)

[Stay at Home Guidance for the Household](#)

[Social Distancing advice for Vulnerable people incl list of those declared vulnerable](#)

[Protecting Vulnerable people \(Shielding\)](#)

[Coronavirus Scottish government advice page](#)

[Coronavirus Welsh government advice page](#)

EMPLOYMENT ADVICE AND INFORMATION

[RMT Circular on furlough arrangements](#)

[RMT Furlough update](#)

[RMT Furlough Update 2](#)

[RMT briefing note – self-employed income support scheme](#)

[Thompsons Solicitors Coronavirus legal advice](#)

[TUC advice on maternity rights](#)

[Maternity action advice](#)

[Government advice for employees](#)

[Getting Signed off for Self Isolation \(via 111 website\)](#)

[Employment Tribunals](#)

SCHOOLING AND CHILDREN

[Professions declared key workers for school closures](#)

GENERAL RMT INFORMATION AND ADVICE

[RMT Trade Union Education and Learning](#)

[Education Circular - Circular outlining RMT current position on education and](#)

[learning during the pandemic.](#)

[Members Circular - Circular outlining RMT services during the pandemic.](#)

RAIL AND LONDON UNDERGROUND INFORMATION AND UPDATES

[Prioritising Work and Minimising Exposure document](#)

[COVID - Safe Work Principles Document](#)

[Network Rail Covid-19 Safe Working Circular](#)

[Rail Industry Coronavirus Forum](#)

[London Transport Update](#)

ROAD TRANSPORT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

[RMT response to Government announcement on COVID-19 funding for bus industry](#)

[RMT calls on government to mobilise taxis as an emergency service for isolated families](#)

[RMT on Bus Industry appeal for £1 billion rescue package from Government](#)

MARITIME INFORMATION AND UPDATES

[Coronavirus – updated MCA guidance for seafarers on passenger ferries -](#)

[MCA Updated Guidance for Ro Pax vessels COVID19](#)

[Seafarers' ENG1 renewal – Maritime & Coastguard Agency \(MCA\) update](#)

[Seafarers' ENG1 renewal – MCA update \(2\)](#)

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE – SEAFARERS AND PORT WORKERS

[Payment of Wages and Sick Pay Arrangements, Coronavirus – Stena Line](#)

DOCKERS INFOGRAPHIC

[Offshore energy information and updates](#)

[Offshore Infographic](#)

[Divers' medical fitness certification – Clarification](#)

[Update on Coronavirus and the Offshore Energy Industry](#)

TRANSPORT WORKERS WITHOUT ADEQUATE PROTECTION SHOULD STOP WORK

RMT has issued advice to tens of thousands of workers in the rail and bus sector throughout the UK saying that members should stop work on safety grounds if employers do not provide protection from COVID-19.

The message to members follows escalating concerns that many employers are not taking steps to protect transport workers despite rail and bus staff playing a key role in keeping people and goods moving in the fight against COVID-19.

The advice says rail and bus workers should stop work and invoke the "safe work procedure if employers do not follow key protection measures" including:

- Employers to only conduct activities and tasks that are necessary for running the essential services for key workers and movement of freight during the

emergency. Staff to only be deployed to tasks that are deemed as essential.

- Avoid large and small gatherings to maintain two metres of separation between workers; and with the public, including when travelling in vehicles and trains; meaning that employers have to provide for single occupancy in work vehicles and for passenger vehicles, an isolation zone including zoning-off seats; and screens around drivers and crew.
- Maintain two metres of separation between all individuals when on task. Where the task is essential to the safe operation of the service, and cannot be performed with two metres of separation, then personal protective equipment such as gloves, eye defenders and masks to be utilized by all workers in close proximity to provide mutual assurance and the time spent within two metres must be minimized and only for the purpose of the task. If full appropriate PPE is not available then work should not commence.
- Members who have an underlying condition who are exercising "particularly stringent social distancing", as advised by the NHS, should observe the two metres distance at all times and should decline any task where the two metres distance could be breached.
- As a temporary measure – minimise cash transactions when working, wherever possible.
- All companies in the rail and bus sectors need to ensure that toilet and washing facilities are open and

readily available for transport workers at all locations so that they can comply in full with government advice.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that advice to members in the rail and bus sectors was that they should stop work on safety grounds if employers do not provide protection from COVID-19.

"That means that if they are not provided with PPE, including masks, eye defenders and gloves where necessary they should not be working.

"Our members are increasingly concerned that many employers are not taking steps to protect transport workers despite rail and bus staff playing a key role in keeping people and goods moving in the fight against COVID-19," he said.



RMT KEEPS UP PRESSURE FOR FULL PROTECTION FOR LONDON TRANSPORT STAFF

RMT is continuing to apply pressure in discussions with Transport for London for full support and protection for London Transport staff as the Covid-19 emergency continues.

RMT has identified a number of serious concerns around which discussion with TFL are still on going:

- Social distancing and universal application of the two metre rule
- Availability of PPE for all staff who require it including approved masks, gloves and

eye protection

- Support for vulnerable staff and clear guarantees that they will be given every assistance and protection
- A universal and supportive approach to sick pay which does not discriminate against or disadvantage any individual or group of staff
- All furloughed and laid off contractors staff to have an absolute assurance that their wages will be met in full with no detriment to their service or other employment

conditions.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that since this unprecedented crisis unfolded London Transport workers have responded magnificently and are a credit to the City.

Engineering and station staff, cleaners, train drivers, control staff, Docklands Light Railway, cable car, river boat, support staff and the rest of the huge team that move London's essential workers around the capital have risen to the occasion

"Let's be clear "all in it together" means nothing without full support for the workforce who have kept London moving since this crisis began.

"All of the issues RMT has outlined are critical as the emergency continues and we will not rest whilst our members in the front line are still raising concerns with us .

"All of them have to have their safety, health and livelihoods properly protected and that is exactly what we will continue to fight for," he said. ■



PPE BUS SCANDAL

First South West Buses refuse to fit adequate protection for workers

RMT has been alerted to the most inept steps they have ever seen from an employer to protect their workers from Covid 19.

After making strenuous representation to First South West Buses to fit suitable Perspex screens to their fleet of buses in order to provide a physical barrier between the driver and their passengers, the company's first action was simply to ignore the unions representations.

What they then did beggars belief. In a video shared with RMT, what can best be described as a shower curtain has been screwed to the ceiling of the drivers cab and hangs well short of the bus wind-screen.

The union has had reports from driver members that the curtain is so flimsy members of the public have been pulling it to one side in order to speak to the driver. This brings passengers into even closer contact with the driver and puts them at still greater risk.

In a letter to the company's managing director, RMT general secretary Mick Cash commented that shops are clearly far more concerned with the safety of

their staff than the company appear to be.

"Within 24 hours Sainsbury's had sourced and fitted to multiple check outs high quality Perspex screens that give a good level of protection and they were fitted to check outs at a maximum time of 20 minutes per unit.

"I would urge you to reconsider your approach to this matter and show that you can step up to protect your staff in this time of national emergency," he said.

RMT has also raised their general concerns over the bus industry's approach to safety of staff with Public Health England which is conducting a review of transport safety in relation to Covid 19.

"RMT also has other concerns about the bus industry including issues for engineering staff in depots and the facilities provided for employees in mess rooms. Many bus drivers on rural routes have no access to facilities to wash their hands – a key risk control measure as advised by Public Health England," he said.

FINANCIAL BUS SUPPORT

Responding to the government's

announcement of financial support for the bus industry, RMT said that the aid must be linked to a new national charter of protection of safety and services for bus workers and passengers.

In a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport RMT general secretary Mick Cash will set out the following national charter of protection.

- transition to cashless travel during the emergency where feasible
- enhanced cleaning and sanitisation regimes on buses, buildings, mess rooms, facilities etc. especially on common touch points.
- ensure that toilet and washing facilities and hand sanitisers are readily available so that staff can comply with government guidance
- where screens are not currently fitted to buses, these to be installed to give drivers greater protection.
- The safeguarding of essential bus services and for bus journeys only to be undertaken by essential workers and those who rely

on the bus to access essential services.

- Full pay and job protection for bus workers not required to work due to reduced bus timetables or because they are self-isolating or unwell.
- Regulation and public ownership of buses to help achieve these objectives.
- Buses are an essential service being run for and by frontline workers. It is therefore crucial bus services are safeguarded whilst the health risk to both the workers that run the buses and the passengers who have to travel are kept to an absolute minimum.
- Whilst the rail industry is at least seeking to adopt a joined up approach to the Coronavirus crisis the national bus industry in contrast is a complete free for all and we are calling on the government to use this national funding to also enforce a national charter of protection for bus workers and bus passengers as part of the fight against the spread of Covid-19," the letter said.



DHL BLASTED FOR 'INADEQUATE' SAFETY

Logistics unions have blasted DHL for 'endangering thousands' with 'inadequate' coronavirus social distancing and safety measures and by forcing self-isolating workers to survive on statutory sick pay (SSP).

Unite, GMB, USDAW, RMT and URTU trade unions called on DHL, which employs around 41,000 people in the UK, to work with them to resolve its workforce's concerns over Covid19 safety and the rate of pay for staff who are self-isolating or have been furloughed.

The unions said DHL's refusal to acknowledge 'urgent

concerns' over a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE), and the possibility that symptomatic and at-risk staff may stay at work because of the dramatic drop in their incomes on SSP, showed an 'utter disdain' for its workforce.

The joint trade unions statement said: "DHL is one of the largest and wealthiest logistics companies in the world and during the Covid19 pandemic should be leading by example.

"Instead the company is showing utter disdain for its workforce by disregarding the urgent concerns of its staff over

a lack of PPE and a failure to carry out safety and social distancing measures across its operations.

"DHL's refusal to grant full company sick pay to symptomatic workers who need to self-isolate, or to those with underlying health conditions, is also a huge cause of concern.

"There is a real danger that staff who should not be leaving the house will continue to go to work because they cannot afford to pay their bills on the basic SSP rate of £95.85 a week. All DHL staff should be entitled to full company sick pay if they are forced to self-

isolate.

"A company that is worth tens of billions should also be topping up the wages of those staff who have been furloughed, instead of simply taking advantage of the government's job retention scheme.

"DHL's inadequate response to the pandemic is endangering thousands. We call on the company to meaningfully negotiate with the joint trade unions to address the concerns of its loyal workforce, many of whom are exposing themselves to risk to ensure essential services keep running."



FIRSTGROUP PLANS TO "MAXIMISE SUBSTANTIAL RETURNS TO SHAREHOLDERS"

RMT has expressed dismay at revelations that rail and bus owner FirstGroup is taking steps to maximise pay outs to shareholders and will also profit from the Coronavirus pandemic.

It was announced in April that FirstGroup was set to benefit from millions in taxpayers' cash to prop up its bus business on top of being bailed out by the government on its rail operations, including a new direct award contract for the Great Western Route.

FirstGroup shares were up by 3.86 per cent on the back of the announcement.

Whilst even the big four high street banks have said that they will not be paying

dividends this year, extraordinary comments by FirstGroup bosses at a recent "Investors' conference call" indicate that the company remains laser-focused on paying out to shareholders, despite the current health pandemic.

The call, which was held on March 11, the day that the eighth British citizen died of Coronavirus and 460 cases were confirmed, included discussion of how the pandemic would affect the company.

FirstGroup Chair David Martin told investors that: "At the moment, in my experience, this is one of the most exciting times, with potentially real deliverables there and money

standing behind it."

"We are all in violent agreement, is the only thing I can say. Everybody is on the same page in the one direction of maximising shareholder value and providing the ability to create substantial returns to shareholders in the short term, or within the second half of this year. That's our plan of action, we're extremely robust about it, and we're looking forward to moving forward."

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that FirstGroup executives were crowing over shareholders' payouts for this year, all ultimately courtesy of the tax payer.

"This is appalling stuff even by the standards of the privatised rail and bus

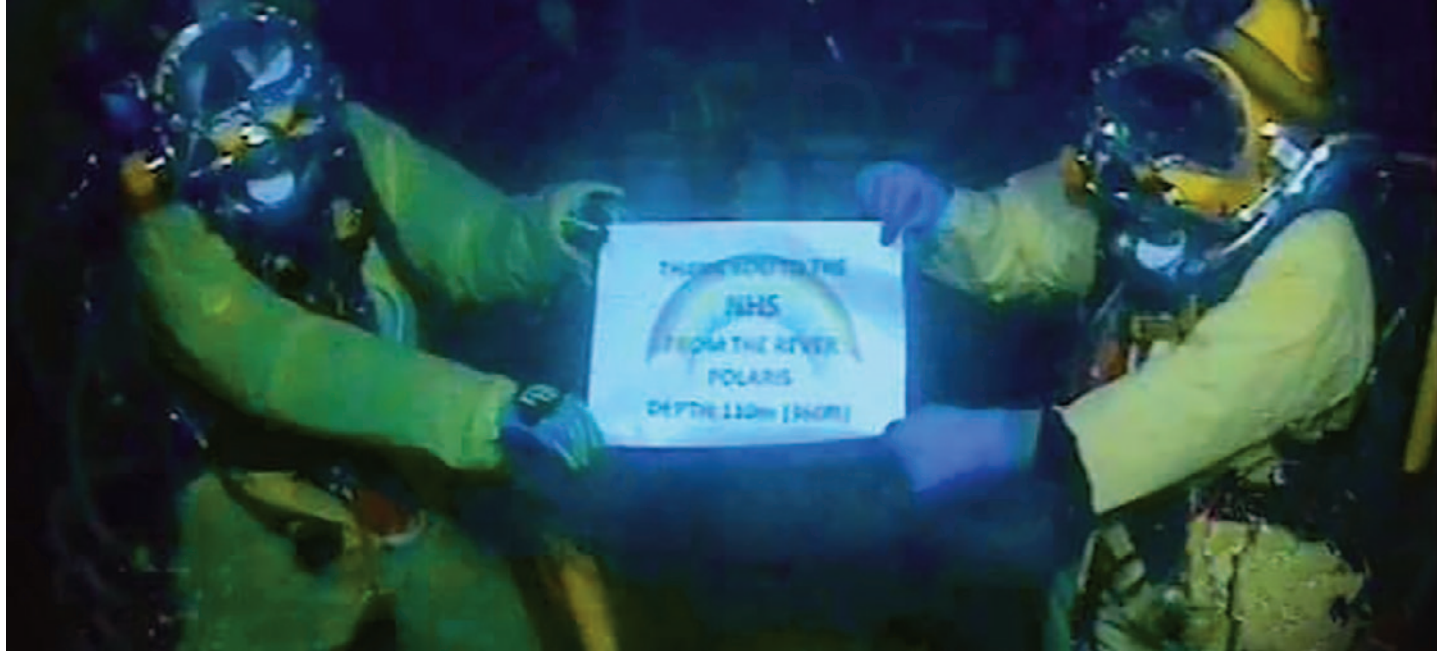
industry. In the midst of the worst crisis this country has faced since the Second World War even the banks are saying they won't pay dividends.

"While rail and bus workers are putting their lives on the line to keep Britain moving FirstGroup are looking to line their pockets. Transport workers and the public will be disgusted and dismayed. This kind of behaviour shames Britain and makes the case for a new, publicly owned transport system even stronger.

"In the meantime, First Group should do the decent thing and immediately rescind their decision to pay out dividends this year," he said.



RMT DIVERS JOIN MILLIONS CELEBRATING ESSENTIAL WORKERS



With millions clapping as a mark of solidarity with Britain's essential workers and NHS heroes, RMT members sent their own message of support from over 300 feet below the North Sea.

The picture linked below is of RMT professional divers on the Jura Field for Total from the support vessel Rever Polaris

sending their personal thanks to the NHS.

In addition, RMT has had reports of over 100 diver medics signing up as volunteers to help ease the pressure on NHS staff during the Covid-19 emergency.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union was proud of members who are

carrying out their own essential work deep below the North Sea taking the trouble to send out their own message of support to our NHS workers.

"This is what trade union solidarity is all about.

"RMT members are keeping the energy supplies flowing, the trains, tubes, lorries and buses running and the ships

bringing essential supplies sailing.

"It is the efforts of a huge army of essential workers across a wide range of services that will pull us through this crisis and they deserve every bit of the public support that will be on display each Thursday evening," he said.



MERSEYRAIL CONTRACTOR MITIE BETRAYS WORKERS

RMT has blasted Merseyrail station cleaning and facilities' contractor Mitie for using the cover of the Covid-19 crisis to withdraw a pay award dated back to July last year.

The union said that it was a profiteering move that displays the most disgraceful and cynical opportunism in the midst of the current emergency.

The pay offer, which RMT had fought hard for through a long campaign, would have lifted pay rates to £9 per hour, an important staging post in the union fight to get the workers onto the Real Living Wage.

The union had accepted the back-dated offer but staff have now been informed by email that it has been pulled, denying

them £500 in back pay and leaving them with the prospect of being £1,000 a year worse off per annum.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was "disgusting and disgraceful opportunism" by Mitie on Merseyrail to use the cover of the coronavirus crisis to kick these low paid cleaning and facilities staff in the teeth.

"We know that the public in Merseyside will be as outraged as we are and will want to join us in a campaign to reverse this sickening decision.

"The union will be mounting and rest assured we will fight tooth and nail for pay and workplace justice for the Mitie Merseyrail workforce," he said.





WHAT IS THE FURLOUGH SCHEME?

RMT explains the emergency scheme to protect the income of workers during the coronavirus

The government has introduced a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Furlough Scheme, and the union is currently negotiating with the various companies members work for to put it into place. Furloughed employees are those being kept on but with no work to do.

Essentially employers will be able to recover 80 per cent of their employees' wages through HMRC. At present this is with effect from 1 March 2020 for a three month period, but this may be extended. It is a temporary scheme.

The Furlough Scheme only applies to PAYE employees on the payroll on March 19 2020.

THE FURLOUGH SCHEME

The intention of the Furlough Scheme is to save jobs and protect employees' pay by paying part of their salary for those employees that would otherwise have been laid off.

WHAT IS IT?

The Furlough Scheme only applies to employees on PAYE whereby the employer will be re-imbursed by HMRC 80 per cent of the employee's wages, subject to a cap of £2,500 per month. The employee's payment would be subject to the usual deductions for tax and NI. The employer can top up the difference but does not have to, (subject to employment law and renegotiating any contractual entitlements).

At present the systems at HMRC are not set up to facilitate payments to employers and this may take a number of weeks to implement which will cause a delay in employers receiving payments from HMRC. Government Guidance suggests that HMRC will be ready to facilitate payments by the end of April 2020 and claims can be backdated to 1 March 2020. Employers can only claim once every three weeks.

Government Guidance refers

to "all employment costs" which does not include employer's NI and minimum auto-enrolment pension contributions on that wage. Fees, commissions and bonuses are not included.

The Furlough Scheme only applies where the employee stops working and does not apply if the employee reduces the hours or days that they work. Even if the employee works for an hour they will not be eligible.

The Government Guidance states that the Furlough Scheme is available to all UK businesses, the government does not expect public sector employers to use it as long as central government continues funding wage costs in the normal way.

IRREGULAR EARNINGS

For employees whose pay varies the 80 per cent will be based upon the higher of: the same month's earnings from the previous year; or average monthly earnings in the 2019-

20 tax year. If the employee has been employed for less than one year the furlough pay will be 80 per cent of their average monthly earnings since they started work.

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE (NMW)

Employees are only entitled to the NMW for the hours they work. So, if they are furloughed and do not work and 80 per cent of their normal earnings would take them below the NMW based on their normal working hours, they will still only receive 80 per cent as they are not working. However, they will be entitled to be paid the NMW for any time spent training.

WHO CAN BE FURLOUGHED?

Employees can be on any type of employment contract, including full-time, part-time, agency, flexible or zero hours contracts. Those caring for children, shielding or with

someone in the household who is shielding can be furloughed.

APPRENTICES

Apprentices can be furloughed in the same way as other employees and they can continue to train whilst furloughed (but must be paid the Apprenticeship Minimum Wage, National Living Wage of National Minimum Wage – as appropriate) for the time they spend training.

Eligible individuals who are not employees

As well as employees, the furlough grant can be claimed for the following groups, providing they are paid via PAYE (and were on March 19 2020): office holders (including company directors); salaried members of Limited Liability Partnerships; agency workers (including those employed by umbrella companies); and 'limb b' workers.

EMPLOYER MUST CONFIRM THE FURLOUGH IN WRITING

An employer must notify employees of their furlough status in writing and keep a record of that written notification for five years.

MULTIPLE FURLOUGH PERIODS

The government has clarified that the minimum furlough period of three weeks means that work places can, if they are able to, run a rotation scheme provided each employee is furloughed for a minimum of three consecutive weeks.

ALTERNATIVE WORK

Employees are able to start a new job when on furlough, meaning they could obtain 80 per cent of pay in their old salary and 100 per cent of their new salary. However the guidance says that it must be allowed under the old employment contract.

CONTRACTUAL BONUS, COMMISSION AND FEES

Furlough pay includes regular payments that an employer is obliged to pay the employee. This includes wages, past overtime, fees and compulsory

commission payments (presumably contractual). However, discretionary bonus (including tips) and commission payments and non-cash payments should be excluded.

EMPLOYERS IN ADMINISTRATION

The government has said that it would expect that an Administrator would only access the furlough scheme if there is a reasonable likelihood of re-hiring the employees.

AGREEING TO BE FURLOUGHED

Unless there is a lay-off clause in the contract of employment, the employer will still be liable to pay 100 per cent of the wages, which is fine if they agree to top up the difference.

However, the employee will need to agree to be furloughed, it is likely that they will as the alternative is lay-off or redundancy. Where there is no lay-off clause in the contract of employment and the employer does not want to top up the pay, the employer will need to negotiate with the employee. Some employers have already started preparing 'Agreements for Furlough Leave'. This is likely to include agreement of a reduction in pay to 80 per cent.

However, such an agreement is likely to affect an employee's right to claim the 20 per cent shortfall in wages as an unlawful deduction from wages as they have agreed to the reduction.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Annual leave will continue to accrue during furlough leave. However, employees should be careful as to what they agree to during the furlough leave to avoid a situation that they are paid their full pay during the annual leave and not the 80% rate.

Caution: Any agreement to take furlough leave by an employee with their employer should not include a variation to their pay when taking annual leave.

Employers can require employees to take annual leave during furlough leave, subject to the provision of the Working

Time Regulations requiring twice as much notice to be given than the period of annual leave.

MATERNITY LEAVE

Employees on maternity leave (or similar) can continue to draw SMP (or similar payments). The guidance does not prohibit women on maternity leave agreeing to return to work early and then being furloughed, or electing to change to shared parental leave and then being furloughed.

EMPLOYEES ON UNPAID LEAVE

Employees on unpaid leave cannot be furloughed unless they were placed on unpaid leave after March 19 2020.

HOW WILL AN EMPLOYER DECIDE WHO TO FURLOUGH?

The employer is likely to apply a very basic and simple selection process if not all employees are to be furloughed. This is likely to only be able to be challenged if the selection is unlawful, for example discriminatory.

It is thought that vulnerable employees and employees over 70 may be prioritised when an employer decides who is to be furloughed.

CAN THERE BE MULTIPLE PERIODS OF FURLOUGH?

Furlough Leave must be taken in minimum blocks of three weeks to be eligible for funding. There is nothing in the Guidance which prohibits rotating Furlough Leave amongst employees, provided each employee is off for a period of at least three weeks.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

Employers are able to switch employees from sick-pay to furlough and vice versa, although this should not be abused by using furlough to 'top up' small amounts of SSP for short term absences. Also, it has been clarified that employers can furlough 'shielding' employees, and they do not have to be placed on sick-pay.

WORK VISAS

Employees with certain work

visas will not be regarded as breaching their visa conditions if they receive funds under the Furlough Scheme.

TUPE

Employers of newly TUPE'd employees can put them on furlough. The new employer is able to claim under the Furlough Scheme in respect of the employees of a previous business transferred after March 19 2020 if either the TUPE or PAYE business succession rules apply to the change in ownership.

EMPLOYER'S NATIONAL INSURANCE AND PENSION PAYMENTS

The reclaimable National Insurance and pension elements are on the furlough salary, not normal salary.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Employees cannot work for organisations that are linked to the employer, as well as not working for the employer, when on furlough.

THE ENTIRE GRANT SHOULD BE PAID TO THE EMPLOYEE

No part of the reclaimed grant can be siphoned off to fund benefits; the entire grant must be paid to the employee with no deductions for fees, admin charges etc.

DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Legislation is likely to allow activities associated with employment (for example grievance and disciplinary processes) to continue.

AGENCY WORKERS

The Furlough Scheme is only available for agency employees who are not working.

DEATH IN SERVICE BENEFIT

This depends on the terms of the insurance policy. However, such payments are often based on the average salary of the preceding three years.

More information is available on the RMT website and is being continually updated as more information becomes available ■

SELF-EMPLOYED INCOME SUPPORT SCHEME

The government has announced a rescue package in the form of a new self-employed income support scheme.

Those who are a self-employed individual or a member of a partnership will be able to apply for a taxable grant worth 80 per cent of their average monthly income over the last three years. The income of those who have only submitted a tax return for one or two years will be calculated on the basis of those returns.

The maximum amount that can be claimed is £2,500 a month for a period of at least three months. The first payment will not, however, be paid until the beginning of June so a self-employed worker will actually receive a one-off lump sum payment.

To apply people must have traded in 2019-2020 and be trading when they apply, or would be except for COVID-19.

Those struggling now can apply for Universal Credit but that can take at least five weeks to process.

The scheme is only open to people who have submitted a tax return for 2019, although the government has said it will give those who didn't file their tax return at the end of January a further four weeks from the date of the announcement to do so (i.e. 23 April 2020). They will then be covered by the scheme.

People who have only just become self-employed and have not filed any returns are therefore excluded. The government has made clear that it will not be able to help them, meaning that their only option is to claim Universal Credit.

Also excluded are those who have average annual trading profits of more than £50,000, those who earn less than half their total income from self-employment and those who operate through a limited company.

An application cannot be submitted at this point. HMRC will contact those who are eligible directly asking them to fill in an online form.

The self-employed cover a wide range of occupations. In total, it is thought that they number about 5 million people, equating to about 15 per cent of the total UK workforce. ■

President's column



A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL ESSENTIAL WORKERS

I would like to start by remembering all those who have lost their life to Coronavirus families, friends, colleagues and strangers the virus doesn't discriminate and I often think how much longer this will go on for .

RMT and other trade union families have been hit hard while providing a service which is vital to communities to get other key workers to there place of work be that by Bus, Train, Tube, Taxi, shipping and offshore. You have all stepped up and I hope when this pandemic is over it's remembered by the powers that be that essential travel, maritime transport and Oil and gas exploration was key to keeping the country going!

It's also important to mention our seafarers whose deliveries to our country of food supplies and other goods have been attacked and treated appallingly by some companies like Stena and P&O to protect their profits asking for Government handouts while flying flags of convenience to keep conditions and pay as low as possible.

An important "THANK

YOU" to all those that are still working "Stay safe and look after your own safety first as you can't provide for your families if your no longer here.

We are continually let down with promises of personal protection equipment employers when workers have to provide their own or worse still recycle to ensure the work environment is as clean as possible. Let your reps know your issues even in these times your union has your back.

I also what to say well done to those working behind the scenes in our union, the staff for getting the relevant information out, the officers for continuing to perform in their roles despite the difficulties. Each and every part of this union has been functioning at 110 per cent during this pandemic and it's folk like these that often don't get the credit they deserve.

We are the leaders in the trade union movement working together during this pandemic has shown me that. Chin up and let's do what we do best.

In unity brothers and sisters,

Michelle Rodgers

RMT APPLICATION FORMS GO DIGITAL

To streamline our application form processes and to minimise personal contact during the COVID19 pandemic RMT have reproduced all our application forms in a digital PDF format.

RMT application forms can now be downloaded from the RMT web site and completed completely on screen and emailed back to us. These forms can also be partially completed, saved and forwarded to others for full completion, e.g. your branch secretary. This process avoids postage, unnecessary contact and speeds up the whole process. These are industry standard

enabled PDF documents that have auto formatting and validation to help completion. These documents are completely consistent across all computers and platforms, very small in file size (for emailing) and only require Adobe Acrobat Reader software which is a standard software on the vast majority of computer operating systems. If you do not have Adobe

Acrobat Reader it is a free download from Adobe.com and is totally safe and secure. We would encourage members to use these forms digitally but if members still prefer to complete by hand these documents can be printed out, completed and posted in the traditional way. Forms are downloadable from rmt.org.uk/member-benefits/benefit-forms/

HOW TO COMPLETE THE RMT PDF FORMS

1. Download the required PDF form from rmt.org.uk/member-benefits/benefit-forms/ and save to your computer.
2. Open with Adobe Acrobat Reader (this should be the default software for this file)
3. Enter the required data in the entry fields (usually highlighted in blue). You can use the 'tab' key to jump from the next field.
4. Once the required fields are completed you can sign the form using the following process...
 - a. Click on 'Fill & Sign' in the Tools pane on the right.
 - b. Click 'Sign', and then select 'Add Signature'.
 - c. A popup will open, giving you three options—Type, Draw, and Image. You can either use the draw function or place an image if you have your signature scanned in. Once you're done, click the Apply button.
 - d. Drag, resize and position the signature in the correct space inside your PDF file.
5. Save file, then if completed send the PDF via email to c.sharpe@rmt.org.uk or forward on if more than person is required to complete the form.

Please note: If you are having problems please make sure you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed (available free at adobe.com). Remember, these forms can also be printed out and completed by hand if preferred.

BRITAIN'S LAST MECHANICAL SIGNALING

Salute to the semaphore

Gareth David

Pen & Sword Books

This book is a pictorial celebration of mechanical signalling which still exists despite the introduction of colour signalling around one hundred years ago.

Colour signalling was originally intended to replace all mechanical signalling by the millennium. However, numerous outposts remain on the national network where semaphore still reigns supreme. Network Rail

aimed to eliminate the last of its mechanical signaling and move control to a dozen railway operating centers, but its pace has been severely limited by the cost.

This quirky but lovable book details the last mechanical signalling on the British railway network which may well be with us some time yet. A visual feast that will be enjoyed by train crew and signallers alike. ■



CAMBRIAN RAILWAYS GALLERY

A pictorial history through time

David Maidment & Paul Carpenter

Pen & Sword Books

This pictorial history is a very timely book as The Cambrian Heritage Railway is currently extending and repairing track northwards from Llyncllys South towards the historic border town of Oswestry, to enable trains to run back into the former Cambrian Railway headquarters.

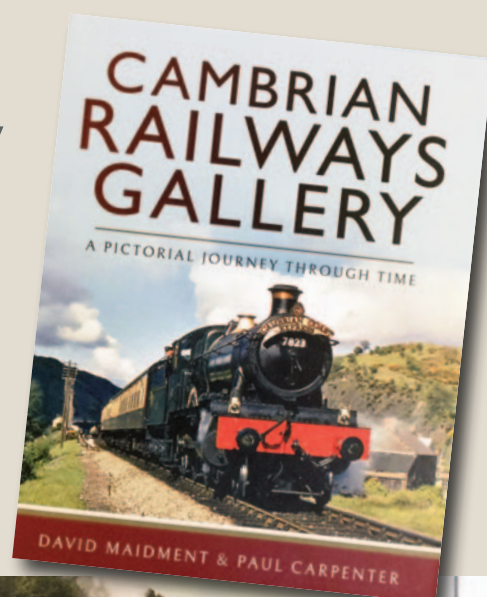
It begins with a brief history of the Cambrian Railways' early years, followed by a comprehensive set of early photographs of Cambrian engines and Oswestry Works made available by the former Chairman of the Manchester Locomotive Society and the National Library of Wales.

A tour of the scenery of mid

Wales follows taken from Andrew Dyke's collection and some photos are so expertly 'colourised' that most find it difficult to distinguish these from the many genuine colour photographs.

The book holds other treasures including stories from a number of former railwaymen who worked on the Cambrian system. The book finishes with a description of the progress towards restoring part of the closed section of the line closed by Beeching in the 1960s.

The Cambrian Railways Museum already exists in Oswestry and this book can only ignite renewed interest and support for bringing back steam to Cambria. ■



THE GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY IN SOUTH ESSEX

A Definitive History

Charles Phillips

Pen & Sword Books

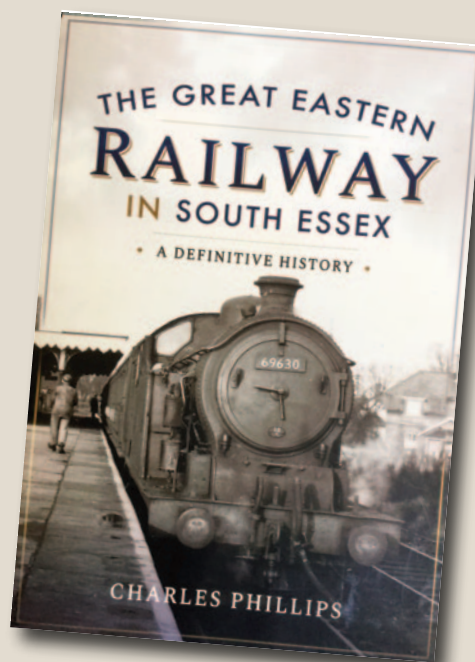
This book is a history of the railway lines that slowly stretched out from London in the 19th century to reach parts of rural Essex and connect towns like Chelmsford, Maldon and Southend to the capital.

It is the only comprehensive history of all three lines and was researched using both previously published and unpublished material. After many false starts Southend finally received its railway in 1856 when the final section of the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway was completed. This was

the start of a railway boom that covered areas to the north.

The history covers not only the history of the lines in question but also a sample of services from the opening of them to the present day, the motive power that was and is used on them and a topographical description of them. It chronicles the end of steam and the diesel multiple units that were to follow.

The book is intended to appeal to wide audience including those with an interest in the local history of the area served by the lines.



TWENTY FIRST CENTURY NARROW GAUGE

A pictorial journey

James Waite

Pen & Sword Books

This book is a visual feast produced by very talented railway photographer who has managed to chronicle steam narrow gauge around the world still operating today.

These amazing pictures are accompanied by extensive notes containing much historical information about the railways and their locos. He has scoured every continent to find these little gems which are still serving local communities. The photography is outstanding taken in stunning landscapes and beautifully reproduced by the publishers.

He also offers many fascinating insights into the regions he visits, along with anecdotes about his adventures while visiting them which are often amusing and always informative, a real tour de force for the narrow gauge enthusiast. ■



P&O LAUNCHES ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON JOBS, PAY AND WORKING CONDITIONS

RMT has reacted with fury at P&O Ferries proposals for restructuring the business launched during the Coronavirus pandemic.

In a consultation document issued to RMT, the union organising Seafarer Ratings on P&O Ferries' Irish Sea, North Sea and Dover-Calais fleet, the company proposes a series of changes to Ratings' terms and conditions, including pay cuts, replacement of UK seafarers with foreign crew, no strike clauses, statutory redundancy, cuts to the sick pay scheme, scrapping benefits for long service, leave restrictions.

The company is attempting to apply all re-negotiated crewing and terms and conditions including on new ferries they have ordered from China that were due for delivery in 2023 and 2024. P&O Ferries Limited's ultimate owner is the global



corporation, DP World, based in the United Arab Emirates.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that threatening permanent cuts to seafarers jobs, pay and conditions and the maritime supply chain at a time of national crisis sent a message of utter contempt to RMT members and the country as a whole.

"Job cuts, pay cuts, taking annual leave in rest periods, replacing UK seafarers with cheaper foreign crews, statutory redundancy, cuts to sick pay –

it's all of the things that P&O Ferries have always wanted to do to our members and the UK economy.

"To use the temporary market conditions created by the Coronavirus to attack our members, the maritime workers this country will always need, is nothing short of contemptuous and the Government need to step in here to provide more guarantees to protect British seafarers' jobs and apprenticeships for the future.

"P&O Ferries say that no one

is going to bail them out. Maybe they should go back to their corporate masters at DP World in Dubai who will pay a \$332m dividend to private shareholders on 29 April. That would easily cover the £28.4m P&O Ferries want to rip out of the hands of my hard working members and their families.

"If P&O think that holding a gun to our members' heads whilst sprinting towards the cliff edge is 'consultation,' then they've got another thing coming," he said. ■

STENA LINE ISSUES REDUNDANCIES

Over 600 Stena Line staff from its 2000 plus strong seafarer, docker and port service workforce in the UK and Ireland will be furloughed and a further 150 redundancies will be sought, despite a lack of certainty over seafarer access to the UK government's Coronavirus Job Retention Schemes.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that another major employer of UK seafarers was reacting to flat lining demand by gambling with key workers' jobs and future at a time of national crisis.

"Redundancies are a serious development and must not be used to avoid other alternatives that would save

jobs. We seek further discussions on that as part of the mandatory consultation process.

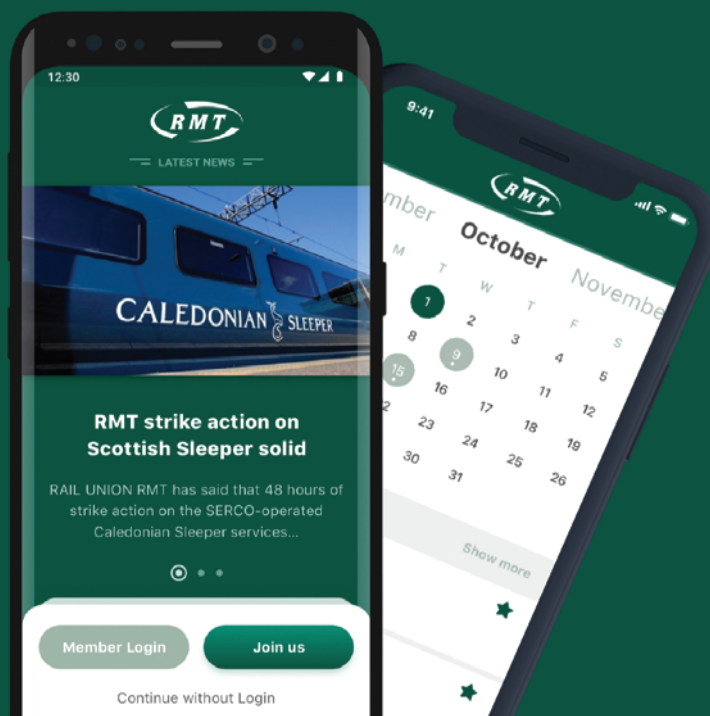
"Dock and port workers are eligible for state support but we cannot agree to 'furlough' for our seafarers when the government guidance does not give UK seafarers at Stena Line or other major employers

clarity on eligibility.

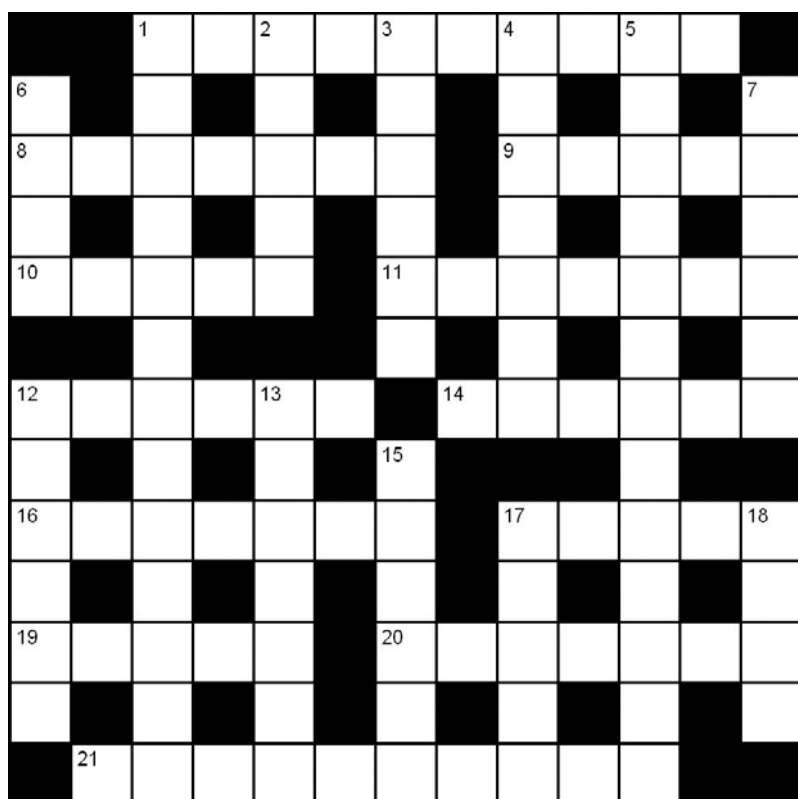
"The furlough scheme will be retrospective so Stena Line should commit to covering 100 per cent of wages for everyone affected by this announcement, as well as reinstating the company sick pay scheme for all employees," he said. ■

RMT union app

Packed with exciting features the new app allows you to update your personal details, follow all the latest news, campaigns and events and keeps you in contact with the union and your branch.



CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



ACROSS

- 1 Help (10)
- 8 Bill (7)
- 9 Attain (5)
- 10 Sweet sticky liquid (5)
- 11 Laugh quietly (7)
- 12 Bird house (6)
- 14 Impede (6)
- 16 Barge for clearing a channel (7)
- 17 Fruit (5)
- 19 System of beliefs (5)
- 20 Protective helmet (4,3)
- 21 Gradually (4-2-4)

DOWN

- 1 Public promotion (13)
- 2 Work hastily (5)
- 3 Preliminary drawing (6)
- 4 Landing and take-off area (7)
- 5 Skill in a trade (13)
- 6 prejudice (4)
- 7 Breathe with difficulty (6)
- 12 Kidnap (6)
- 13 Organise anew (7)
- 15 Roguishly (6)
- 17 Worth (5)
- 18 Solemn promise (4)



Covid-19

Fighting for all Rail Cleaners

Your priorities are our priorities



1

SAFETY

- Winning better workplace protection against COVID – 19.
- Advising members of their legal rights to refuse work if they are at risk. Backing members against employers who put our members at risk.

2

SECURITY

- Winning guarantees to protect jobs, pay and conditions.
- Campaigning for equal employment conditions and for all cleaning to be brought in-house.
- Fighting to make sure employers don't make you pay the cost of the crisis.

3

SUPPORT

- All rail workers are key workers and deserve free rail travel now. RMT is fighting to achieve that.
- Professional advice and supporting each other at work. Together we are stronger.

Key workers. Keep strong!

For RMT protection join at www.rmt.org.uk/join



Fighting for Rail Agency & Subcontracted Workers

Your priorities are our priorities

Covid-19

1

SAFETY

- Winning better workplace protection against COVID – 19.
- Advising members of their legal rights to refuse work if they are at risk. Backing members against employers who put our members at risk.

2

SECURITY

- Winning guarantees to protect jobs, pay and conditions.
- Campaigning for equal pay and conditions with directly employed staff and for all work to be brought in-house.
- Fighting to make sure employers don't make you pay the cost of the crisis.

3

SUPPORT

- Rail agency workers are key workers and deserve free rail travel. RMT is fighting to achieve that.
- Professional advice and supporting each other at work. Together we are stronger.

Key workers. Keep strong!

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Covid-19

Welcome to
Birmingham
New Street Station

Fighting for all Rail Workers

Your priorities are our priorities

1

SAFETY

- Winning better workplace protection against COVID – 19.
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