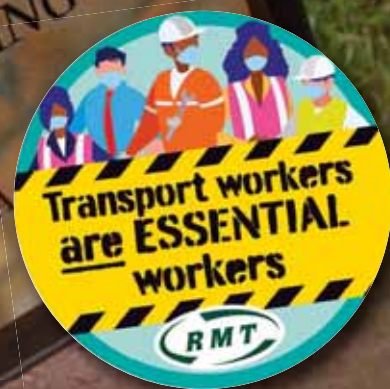


RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

REMEMBER THE DEAD FIGHT FOR THE LIVING



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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

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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.

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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

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different to a credit or debit card - you can only spend what you load so there's less chance of getting carried away.
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- No fees to amend your policy
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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

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CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



REMEMBER THE DEAD - FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

Welcome to this month's issue of RMT News where we turn the focus onto this year's International Workers Memorial Day.

The day is always a major event in the trade union calendar but a year in to the COVID pandemic it is probably even more relevant right now than its ever been.

We know that transport workers have been right on the front line since last March, keeping key workers and freight moving. Few occupational groups have been harder hit by the virus. We all know people who have either died or been left seriously ill by exposure to COVID 19. No transport workplace has been left untouched.

So we remember our colleagues on Workers Memorial Day but we also pledge again to make sure that the sacrifices so many have made are never forgotten. That is why we are continuing to push our TRANSPORT WORKERS ARE ESSENTIAL WORKERS campaign across the broad range of industries where we organise.

And it also why we as a trade union stand shoulder to shoulder with NHS staff and other groups who are fighting back against pay freezes and offers of pitiful increases. This insult to those who have given the most must be stopped and if that takes coordinated trade union action then of course RMT will play its part to the full.

There is a threat of massive changes where we organise. The hiring by the Department of Transport of a dedicated union buster to hammer down on jobs, pay and pensions shows us exactly what we are up against. We have to be preparing right now in every workplace for the battles ahead. If you know of non members persuade them to join us now. Density and organisation will be the keys to our success same as they ever were.

Mick Cash

RMT News is compiled and originated by National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD. Tel: 020 7387 4771. Fax: 020 7529 8808. e-mail bdenny@rmt.org.uk The information contained in this publication is believed to be correct but cannot be guaranteed. All rights reserved. RMT News is designed by Bighand Creative and printed by Leycol Printers. General editor: Mick Cash. Managing editor: Brian Denny. No part of this document may be reproduced without prior written approval of RMT. No liability is accepted for any errors or omissions. Copyright RMT 2016

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

TIME TO RENATIONALISE RAIL

RMT renews renationalisation call as government extends its public ownership of Northern Rail

RMT renewed its demands for all rail services to be taken into public ownership after the public owned Operator of Last Resort (OLR) was given a five year extension to its running of Northern Rail.

On the same day that the government increased regulated fares by 2.6 per cent, RMT published research that revealed that private train operating and rolling stock companies' profits from last year stand to be equivalent to 15p of every pound passengers paid on fares during the same period.

The union is demanding an end, once and for all to the rail privatisation shambles to allow all revenue profit to be reinvested in improving the rail network for passengers and ensuring a fair deal for rail workers.

Arguments for the government to take immediate action on public ownership also grew after the union revealed preparations had been ramped up in the past to pave the way for the Operator of Last Resort to step in on franchises across the country.

Companies House records show strategic changes were made to the structure of a series of shell OLR companies in readiness for them to take over at South Western Railway, C2C, Cross Country, Great Western Railway. Effectively the Operator of Last Resort – the public sector option – was now in the final stages of seizing control of Britain's railways.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was now clear that the final preparations for the public takeover of Britain's failed franchise system were being put in place so the



RENATIONALISE: Commuters and disabled groups demonstrating before lockdown for renationalisation at London Victoria train station. The union has revealed that preparations are being made by the government to pave the way for the Operator of Last Resort to step in on franchises across the country.

government should stop dithering and get on with it.

"All the operators are now effectively public operations anyway with the taxpayer taking responsibility through a network of management contracts from which the operators extract a profit for doing nothing. The final moves to full public ownership would be a mere formality.

"We should cut out the middleman, end the failed privatisation experiment and reinvest the private profits in a green railway fit for the future," he said.

He also said that the announcement to keep Northern public was good news and something that RMT had been campaigning on for many years after repeated failures by the previous privatised operators.

"Make no mistake that this announcement is a colossal admission of the failure of privatised railways by the government.

"Privatised rail operators that cream huge profits out of our railways whilst operating a

substandard service have no place in running our railways when looking to the post Covid-19 recovery and to fight the climate emergency. We need a functional and publicly owned railway more than ever," he said.

WILLIAMS REVIEW

However the union has warned that the government's long delayed rail review by Keith Williams was all about saving rail privatisation rather than saving the railways.

Previewing the results of the review Williams said that any new structure would facilitate efficiencies identified by previous reviews conducted by Sir Roy McNulty in 2011 and Richard Brown in 2013 including "workforce reform".

Ominously the DfT is also advertising for a Rail Pensions and Workforce Director to "strengthen the department's expertise on rail workforce, industrial relations and pensions policy" – a union buster.

RMT has warned that the primary way the TOC's will be

able to continue to make a profit is if these are directly paid for by the taxpayer and through attacks on the jobs, pay and pensions of rail workers.

"Instead of saving our railways it looks like Keith Williams is more interested in saving rail privatisation and rail profiteering that has continued even during the Coronavirus pandemic.

"We fear this will be largely achieved by continuing to use taxpayers' money to directly subsidise the profits of the rail fat cats whilst also declaring war on the livelihoods of rail workers who have risked and in some cases tragically lost their lives keeping the country moving during the pandemic.

"We will not stand by and see our railways and our essential workers exploited in this way and will use every industrial and political means at our disposal to oppose reactionary rail reforms cooked up between the government and vested corporate interests," Mick Cash said.



HALT ASSAULTS AT LEWISHAM RAIL STATION

RMT held a protest outside Lewisham rail station this month demanding urgent action in the wake of a surge of COVID-related assaults on staff.

Protesters unfurled a banner calling for an end to assaults on the key workers who run the station.

In one incident alone last month a member of staff was spat at in the face and two others verbally abused and threatened by a man who was vandalising the station. This is the second time the worker has been spat at and the third time he has been assaulted, leaving him terrified of returning to work.

The incident is merely the latest in a long line of violent assaults, threats, racial abuse and intimidation that staff report happens on almost a daily basis. The union says that the appalling situation at Lewisham is just more evidence of why transport

workers should be given the priority and protection that they so clearly deserve in the midst of the COVID pandemic.

RMT has issued a series of demands from station operator Southeastern:

- current weak risk assessments are shredded and replaced with ones that are strengthened and take into account the risk of assault
- the company takes appropriate steps to protect staff, including the request of an additional British Transport Police presence
- the company provides proper chain of care following incidents
- an end to lone working in the station which leaves workers vulnerable
- prominent publicity campaign and announcements at the station publicising zero



tolerance to assaults

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that rail staff were demonstrating outside the station to highlight the serious issue of COVID-related assaults and call on station operator Southeastern to take steps to protect to staff.

"It is a disgrace that frontline workers at Lewisham station have to go to work wondering if they will be spat at or face some other assault.

"RMT is calling on Southeastern to take

appropriate steps to protect staff, request additional British Transport Police presence, and take a zero tolerance approach to offenders.

"We are also calling for an end to lone working in the station which leaves workers both in fear and vulnerable.

"The union also reaffirmed advice issued to members at Lewisham station on personal safety including to "safe stop" and walk off the job if they assess they are at risk of assault," he said. ■

WALES LEADS THE WAY

A report from the Welsh Parliament's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee which calls for the Welsh government to publish a plan that can rebuild public transport has been welcomed by the union.

The report, which took both written and oral evidence from the union, called for the Welsh government to bring forward a plan based on understanding

and responding to passengers' needs, introducing new services and reforming fares and activity aimed at reassuring people that public transport is safe. The report also recognises the need to 'move away from traditional demand-led' and 'forecast-led' planning based on old assumptions.

"It's good to see the committee come out with

strong support for new thinking on public transport.

"We supported the Welsh government's actions in taking the Wales and Borders franchise into public ownership and insourcing its cleaners and we want to see the government bring forward a plan that recognises that the days of treating passengers as a cash cow for private companies are over. ■

BRING SCOTRAIL IN-HOUSE

The union has called on the Scottish government to stop playing for time with the on-going consultation over the future of the Scotrail franchise and follow the Welsh example

by bringing the services into public ownership.

"There is no excuse at all for the SNP to drag their heels over bringing Scotland's railways into public ownership.

Wasting time and money on consultations is just a smokescreen for their inaction.

"Rail is already back in public hands in Wales and moves are even being made in

England to pave the way to ditch failing franchises. The Scottish government are bang out of excuses and they should get on with it," Mick Cash said. ■



FUND LONDON TRANSPORT

RMT welcomes London Travelwatch report but warns it will go nowhere without government funding

The union has welcomed a London Travelwatch report into the future of public transport in the capital but warned that without a change of approach from government toward Transport for London it would go nowhere.

The independent watchdog, set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public, spoke to over 30 organisations and user groups to get their views on how the future might look, and what people need most from transport.

It was no surprise that the core issues in the report The Journey Ahead was service reliability, safety and accessibility came up as top

priorities along with a desire to focus efforts on sustainable, green transport and infrastructure.

This included the fact that the inequalities that exist across London continue to play out in transport, with some widening during the pandemic.

The union pointed to recommendations stressing the importance of rebuilding passenger confidence by increasing capacity, maintaining social distancing and making sure services are as safe and clean as possible. The report also calls for major investment in making public transport more accessible to disabled and older

passengers.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the report added to the overwhelming case for decisive action to rebuild passenger safety and confidence in London's public transport system but it will simply gather dust on the shelf if the government continues its politically motivated attacks on TfL.

"Delivering the kind of future London Travelwatch envisage needs long-term funding, abandoning the ideology that sees staff simply as a cost to be cut and an end to the failed outsourcing of supposedly 'non-core' cleaning.

London TravelWatch

director Emma Gibson said that it was safe to say that the pandemic had

thrown into question many of the assumptions and predictions about how people will travel in London in the future.

"We need to recognise the great inequalities that have become apparent in the last year and prioritise making transport accessible and affordable for all.

"This is our call to action to London's decision-makers and policy-makers. Transport is an integral part of life in London, and the voice of the travelling public needs to be included in any future vision of London transport network," she said. ■



SUSPEND ON-TRAIN TICKETING

RMT survey reveals that train operating companies operating through national contracts are putting staff at risk

RMT is demanding that the government immediately suspends on-train revenue protection and ticket inspection across all train operating companies (TOCs).

The call was made after a survey of RMT on-board staff indicates that seven out of 17 TOCs operating through national contracts are putting its staff at increased risk by still requiring them to undertake these non-essential duties in confined spaces such as on board trains, despite the current lockdown, rather than allowing staff to focus on passenger assurance, accessibility and safety.

The survey findings indicate that while 10 train operating companies operating under national contracts, including those managed by the Welsh and Scottish governments, had suspended on-train revenue protection and ticket inspection during the current lockdown, seven, which are managed by the Department of Transport, were still putting staff at increased risk of

coming into contact with Covid-19 by requiring them to undertake on-train revenue protection or ticket inspection duties, even though social distancing cannot be maintained.

This is in contrast to the first UK lockdown in 2020, when all on-train revenue protection and ticket inspection was suspended as a safety measure.

The seven TOCs that the survey indicated are currently requiring staff to undertake on-train revenue protection or ticket inspection duties are: CrossCountry; LNER; Northern; GWR; SWR; Avanti West Coast; C2C.

Of those workers who are still being required to do on-train revenue protection or ticket inspection, nearly 70 per cent believe these duties should be suspended. And shockingly, fewer than two in 10 are satisfied with the arrangements their employer has put in place to protect them from Covid-19 risks at work.

Nearly eight in 10 respondents said that they would be prepared to invoke their employer's 'worksafe' procedure if they had Covid-19 safety concerns whilst undertaking on-train revenue protection or ticket inspection duties.

In light of RMT's serious concerns, the union has written to the Secretary of State Grant Shapps to demand the immediate suspension of on-train revenue protection and ticket inspection duties for the duration of the current lockdown whilst also allowing staff to focus on safety, assurance and accessibility.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union survey findings revealed an inconsistent and unsafe approach to on-train revenue protection during the current Covid-19 lockdown.

"The findings suggest that while the majority of train operating companies have suspended these tasks, a significant minority are putting workers at increased and

unnecessary risk by requiring staff to undertake on-train revenue inspection and ticket inspection duties in confined spaces.

"This disparity is particularly inexplicable given the DfT is managing all rail franchises in England via Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements. The DfT needs to ensure, as a matter of urgency, that consistent measures are taken across the railway to protect these key workers.

"As recent passenger research by Transport Focus found, staff play a central role in helping passengers feel safe and secure on the train, and during the current lockdown, staff should be focusing on the core functions of assurance, accessibility and safety, rather than undertaking non-essential tasks that make it virtually impossible to social distance.

"Under no circumstances will RMT allow its members to be put at unnecessary risk of coming into contact with Covid-19 at work," he said.

TRAINING FOR RATINGS AVAILABLE



The Maritime Charities Group (MCG) is reminding ratings who've lost work due to Covid-19 that funding is available towards training courses that could help them get a new job in the industry.

Applications to the MCG Retraining and Redundancy Bursary, launched in November last year, have been coming in at a steady rate but the response from ratings has been lower than anticipated. Figures out this week show that over three quarters of successful applications came from officers.

The fund now stands at £40,000 thanks to generous contributions from MCG members Merchant Navy Welfare Board and Trinity House, and a successful application to the Nautilus Slater Fund.

Applicants can claim up to £500 towards training or qualifications of their choice. The fund is managed by the Marine Society on behalf of MCG.

Successful applicants John Jess and Peter Strachan couldn't praise the scheme highly enough. John has been at sea for over 20 years but was made redundant last October. He put the money



Peter Strachan

towards four STCW refresher courses which enabled him to take on a new contract, as he explained:

"I've been a marine engineer since I left school, working mainly in the deep sea merchant fleet and more recently in oil and gas, specifically offshore drilling. With the onset of Covid-19 the company I worked for made everyone on my rig redundant. I thought about getting a job ashore but decided I should renew my STCW courses and continue working at sea.

"I was unemployed at the time but needed to get my STCW courses refreshed urgently. The process was

quick and easy. Everything was clearly explained on the Marine Society website and in the application form. I filled in the forms and sent them off.

"I'd say to anyone in a similar position, take this opportunity and apply for a grant either for a refresher course or towards training for something new in the sector. It's a really good way to enhance your skills and improve your job prospects in these hard times," he said.

Peter Strachan was also out of work and used his grant to help him move into offshore wind.

"Almost all the work at the moment is through agencies

and you need to have all your certificates up to date and ready to go. At over £1,000 a time this is a considerable expense with no guarantee of a job. So when I heard about the grant I applied straight away for help with the windfarm industry courses.

"Applying for the fund was easy even for a technophobe like me. I used the grant towards the GWO basic course which cost almost £1,300," he said. ■

To find out more about the MCG redundancy and retraining bursary fund and how to apply go to <https://www.marine-society.org/redundancy-fund>

DECLINE IN UK SEAFARERS CONTINUES

Only a third of holders of Maritime and Coastguard Agency seafarer certification are UK nationals, with the overall number broadly stable at 42,920, according to the latest estimate from the Department of Transport.

The figures also revealed that UK nationals accounted for just 19 per cent of the 86,140 seafarers active at sea working for companies within the membership of the UK Chamber of Shipping.

RMT has long argued that this proportion was declining even as the number of jobs in the industry was increasing overall.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that while the shipping industry claimed that it was seeking a level

commercial playing field UK seafarers continued to face unfair competition from low cost labour.

"We must end shipowners' use of loopholes to exploit overseas seafarers with minimal employment rights on voyage contracts.

"The number of seafarer jobs in the industry actually increased by over 19,000 but the proportion held by UK seafarers fell to 19 per cent.

"This is no way to prepare for a green economic recovery and these figures do not include the near 1,000 UK ratings jobs lost in the second half of the pandemic as employers like P&O chose to slash local seafarers' jobs instead of furloughing these key workers.

"If 'levelling up' is more than a mantra, the government must take action now to train more seafarer apprentices and employ more British Ratings.

"A failure to do so will see the fall out from the crew change crisis drive down jobs, pay and training opportunities for UK seafarers, especially for younger people in our key port towns and cities," he said.

The number of UK certificates of competency issued was 27,400, and the number of certificates of equivalent competency 11,200. Of these certificates, some 15,370 were held by UK nationals.

The majority held CoCs (13,270), with a further 1,710

holding yacht certificates, 300 holding tug and inshore craft certificates and 90 holding CECs.

An estimated 22,970 UK seafarers were active at sea in 2020. These included 11,050 certificated officers, 1,210 uncertificated officers and 9,060 ratings, with a further 1,660 officer cadets in training at sea in the 2019/20 financial year.

The number of non-UK nationals with valid CECs has been stable since 2018, with 11,115 of these seafarers in 2020.

Together, Polish, Filipino, Ukrainian, Russian and Romanian nationals accounted for around 57 per cent of non-UK officers holding UK CECs.

FERRY SAFETY CALLED INTO DOUBT

RMT raises serious safety concerns over commercial pressures on seafarers and ferry services

RMT has said that a fire on the Lithuanian registered Finlandia Seaways in April 2018 which resulted in the withdrawal of the vessel from the Rosyth-Zeebrugge route by the owners, DFDS, was down to commercial pressures.

A recent Maritime Accident Investigation Branch's report said that the catastrophic main engine failure caused serious structural damage to the engine and a fire in the engine room. The vessel's third engineer, who was on duty in the engine room at the time, suffered serious smoke-related lung, kidney and eye injuries during his escape.

RMT general secretary Mick

Cash said that the hard working seafarers on board, some of whom were paid well below the National Minimum Wage, were lucky to avoid more serious consequences from an exploding engine.

"They were let down by a series of failures in the repair and maintenance regime overseen by the shipowner, DFDS and the classification society Lloyds Register which stemmed from the decision to outsource engine repair work.

"This avoidable accident led to the withdrawal of the Finlandia Seaways and the permanent closure of the Rosyth-Zeebrugge route.

"Scotland remains without a



regular roll-on roll-off ferry link to the continent as a result, whilst DFDS has re-deployed the Finlandia Seaways in the Baltic Sea. This raises serious questions over the affect of the business model in the ferries industry on crew safety and economic resilience.

"RMT will be calling on the Scottish and UK governments

to take action in light of this report," he said.

The MAIB made a recommendation for DFDS to take advice to minimise the risk of a similar catastrophic engine failure, and any other vessel operators whose MAN engines might have been subjected to similar maintenance practices. ■



SAFETY FOR WOMEN

RMT president Michelle Rodgers tells women's TUC that staff are key to making public transport safe and secure for women and girls

The TUC women's conference meeting earlier this month backed an RMT motion which highlighted the vital role that staff play in making public transport safe and secure for women and girls and seeks to fight cuts to jobs and services

on the public transport network.

The presence of transport staff deters perpetrators and provides a point of contact and safety for passengers – meaning workers should not be seen as just another cost to

be driven down

Sadly, sexual assault and harassment of women and girls on the public transport network remains a significant problem.

British Transport Police (BTP) figures show that

reported sexual offences on trains more than doubled between 2012-13 and 2016-17 and the majority of incidents were against females aged 13 and above.

Reported sexual offences on London Underground



increased by nearly 50 per cent between 2015-16 and 2018-19.

There have been efforts from BTP and the transport industry to encourage reporting of sexual offences on public transport, but it remains the case that the majority of incidents remain unreported and therefore official figures are likely to underestimate the extent of the problem.

RMT believes that presence of staff is key to ensuring women and girls' safety and security when travelling on the public transport network.

The presence of staff deters perpetrators and provides a point of contact and safety for passengers.

For instance, a survey of RMT guard members in 2018 found that a massive 50 per cent had prevented at least one sexual assault in the course of their work.

Despite this, transport operators and the government too often see staff as an expense to be cut in the pursuit of "efficiencies".

Across the rail network, there have been pushes from industry and government to remove the guard from the train and de-staff stations.

Across the UK, just 11 per cent of rail stations are fully staffed and around 45 per cent are totally unstaffed.

Yet evidence shows time and time again that passengers value the presence of staff on public transport,

and even more so in the Covid-19 era.

Passenger research published by the watchdog Transport Focus in October of last year found that "staff play a central role to helping passengers feel safe and secure on the train" and there was a "strong sense that the ideal response to the pandemic would be to see more staff on trains and at the station, rather than less".

RMT believes it is crystal clear that we need a complete reversal of current government and industry policy that sees staff as just another cost to be driven down.

RMT is also concerned that women and girls are disproportionately affected by the massive decline experienced in the bus industry outside London, since it was deregulated by the Tories in the 1980s.

Local bus services play a vital role in preventing isolation and keeping communities connected, yet since 2010, over 3,000 services in England have been withdrawn or altered.

RMT believes that the commercial bus operators, driven by their desire to maximise profits, will respond to the Covid-19 pandemic by making further cuts to services, with no regard for the impact on those who rely on these vital services.

A National Audit Office

report published last September highlighted that women and girls are one of the groups most likely to use bus services, and therefore they stand to be particularly affected by cuts to services which make it more difficult to access employment, healthcare, education and job opportunities.

This cannot be allowed to happen. The government's long-awaited National Bus Strategy must reverse the ideologically driven policy which prevents local authorities setting up publicly owned municipal bus companies, and it must give all local authorities sufficient ring-fenced national funding to provide the bus services their communities require.

Throughout the pandemic, front-line transport workers have kept services running for other key workers and

essential travellers.

They have been hailed as "heroes" by government ministers and transport operators.

Yet, like other front-line workers, they are now subject to a two-year pay freeze and are under threat by cuts to services and "efficiency" drives.

RMT believes this is completely the wrong response to the pandemic and will make our public transport networks less safe, secure and accessible for passengers.

That's why RMT wants to work with affiliates and the TUC to campaign against cuts to public transport jobs and services, and for a "New Deal" for public transport, which places public transport workers at the heart of a safe, secure and accessible transport network in public ownership. ■



CELEBRATION: A stained glass window in Belfast City Hall commemorating International Women's Day on March 8 every year.



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But don't just take our word for it.

“The RMT Legal Service has been fantastic. It shows
that RMT membership is worth every penny.”

RMT member, work accident claimant

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

LEGAL

RMT LEGAL SERVICES - SECOND TO NONE



RMT is fortunate to have one of the most committed in-house legal departments of any trade union in the country.

The RMT legal department is now firmly established and employs four solicitors and our dedicated team of solicitors fight a number of cases on a number of fronts. Unlike some unions, we do not rely exclusively on external providers. Instead we deal with all employment tribunal cases from assessment to the case's conclusion at a tribunal; except where it is a multiple action claim or the case warrants being referred out to panel solicitors, for example so that our member can have local representation.

RMT's legal team has also submitted claims to the Employment Appeal Tribunal for members who have been unsuccessful with their claim at the employment tribunal and the basis for an appeal has been identified. As well as providing excellent in-house coverage, our legal team have established great links with a network of lawyers throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland to ensure that members are best represented and get the best possible service.

Our legal team continue to advise and support members in their work-related criminal cases. This often involves

defending members against false allegations made by the public of assault, false allegations of theft and alleged driving offences. Furthermore, we continue to offer tailored advice and support for bus and taxi drivers, in respect of their licensing issues, licensing appeals before the Magistrates Court, driving offences, and in respect of appearances before Traffic Commissioners. Our panel criminal solicitors also continue to offer a first class service to our members at a time when Legal Aid is often denied to them.

The union's dedicated helplines for work and non-work matters continue to provide enormous benefit to our members. Due to the deep cuts in Legal Aid funding, the number of calls to our dedicated criminal helpline remains high. The Criminal Helpline is also open seven days a week, 24 hours a day and has proved valuable assistance to members.

We are therefore fully primed to ensure that members are in a position to be advised, supported or represented on a variety of matters including personal injury, employment rights, criminal, licensing and inquest cases. In addition we supply legal advice on a range of

matters to our NEC.

Our legal team are dedicated to assisting our members. Whilst we always look for ways in which we can fight a member's case, we have to advise on the law as it is and not how we would like it to be. This means that in practice we are unable to support every case, and are only able to support those cases where there are reasonable prospects of success.

However, the union is not averse to taking on cases even when the legal advice is that the case may not succeed. There exists an invaluable safety valve open to members, whereby they can appeal a decision to refuse legal assistance through their Branch. The Union can then run a case when the NEC deems that there are sufficiently important considerations to support it, irrespective of the legal advice on the merits of the claim.

As far as we are aware very few other unions offer this level of redress to its members. We remain a democratic, fighting union so it is no surprise that employers are using the law in an attempt to get rid of RMT members. Therefore our solicitors are routinely instructed to fight those cases where it is deemed necessary,

and they do so proudly.

The number of members seeking legal advice from our legal team has increased since the department began.

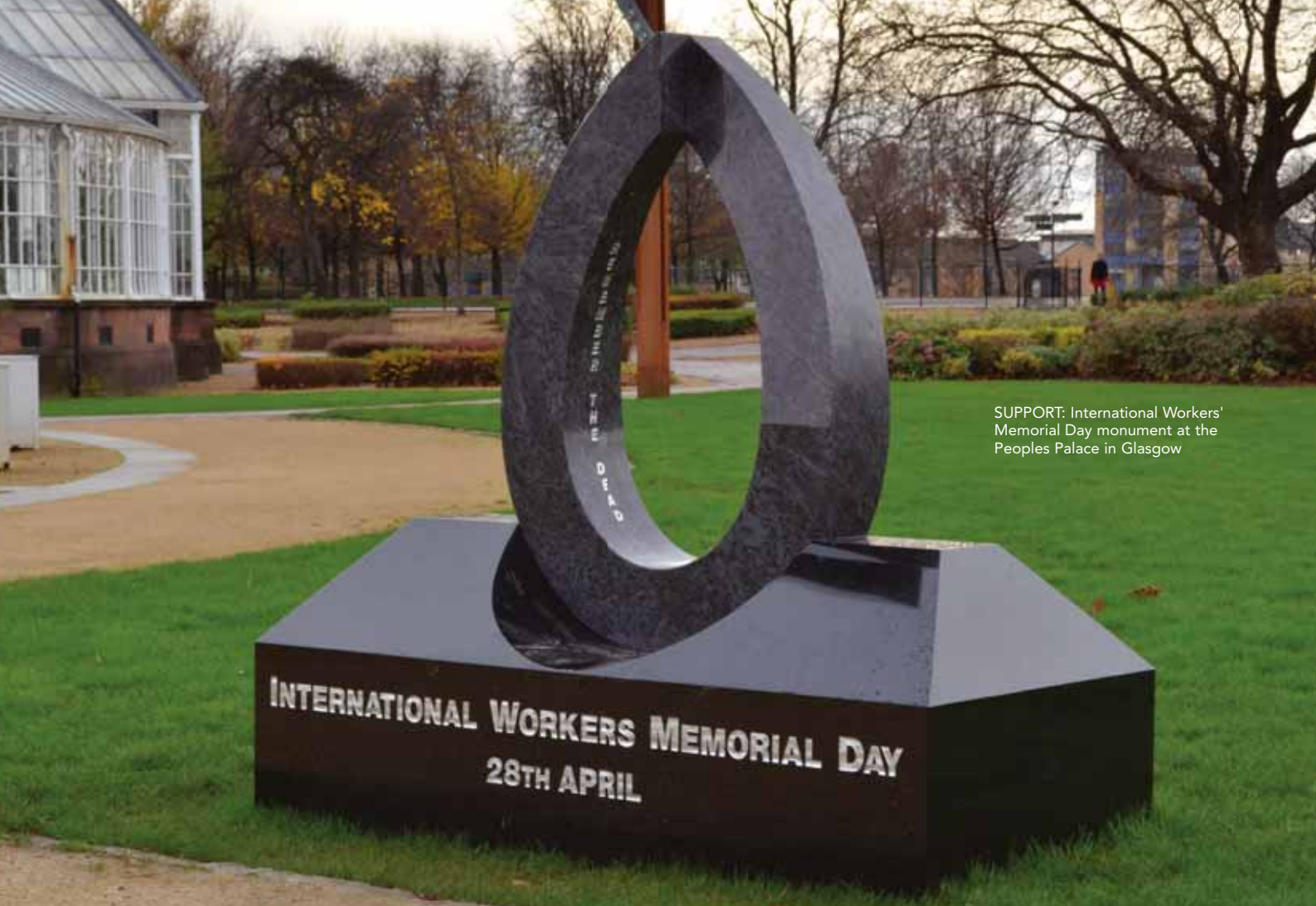
Over the last five years our referrals and requests for assistance have grown, and our legal team have more than risen to the challenge, delivering high levels of service and outstanding outcomes for our members.

The legal team have also been steadfastly reliable and have worked consistently hard for our members throughout the global pandemic. In these challenging times, RMT has ensured that we are best placed to serve our members and to develop the legal service that we offer.

Our legal team will continue to strive to deliver a first class service to all of our members. We are committed to provide a strong legal service to assist and support the Union through the ever-changing legal, political and economic landscape.

It is important going forward that we have a legal service fit for the challenges that we face, and through their excellent results and persistent dedication, our legal team continues to deliver this and to go from strength to strength.





SUPPORT: International Workers' Memorial Day monument at the Peoples Palace in Glasgow

REMEMBER THE DEAD, FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

Support International Workers' Memorial Day on April 28 this year and demand health and safety at work as a fundamental right

The theme for this year's annual International Workers' Memorial Day (IWMD) on April 28 is Health and Safety is a fundamental right at work.

Every year workers commemorate those who are killed or injured at work, when all around the world the trade union movement unites remember those who have lost their lives at work, or are made ill from work-related injury and diseases.

Never before has IWMD been more important or significant. This year, the Covid-19 pandemic has

exposed an occupational health crisis in workplaces worldwide. Workers have been routinely denied even basic health and safety protections, consultation with safety reps and safety committees on 'Covid-safe' policies and practices in some industries has been non-existent, enforcement of h&s legislation has been as disgrace. These same problems existed before the pandemic and resulted in the death of millions of workers worldwide. The pandemic demonstrates why health and safety must be a

right for everyone who works.

Suggestions as to how to take part:

Organise an online campaign. Host a video call or webinar. Organise a socially distanced event at your workplace to promote members health and safety issues. If you have vacancies for health and safety representatives in your workplace, contact RMT members who you know would make great safety reps and encourage them to take up the role.

Support the bereaved

As we come together to remember those who have lost their lives, as RMT activists we can also reach out to support those experiencing grief.

Please see the TUC IWMD web page <https://www.tuc.org.uk/international-workers-memorial-day-iwmd> which gets regularly updated with details of local and national events.

Never before has the slogan for Workers Memorial Day been more appropriate: Remember the dead – but fight like hell for the living.

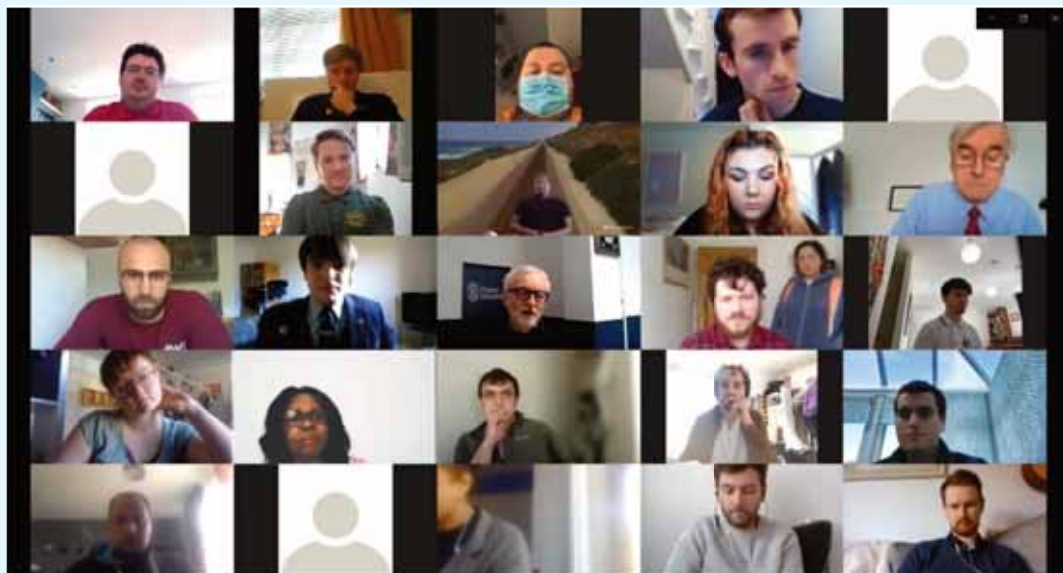
YOUNG MEMBERS MEET BY ZOOM

Over 40 delegates and guests took part in key discussions and debate over the current issues young workers face, politics in the Labour movement and at the workplace and what the future holds for trade unionists.

The conference had a clear focus on how the pandemic had affected both how we function as a trade union and how we have been able to quickly adapt to continue with democracy, organising and educating members.

In 2020 the Young Members Advisory Committee (YMAC) successfully produced a well attended six-part educational Autumn School programme run by the committee to encourage young RMT members to participate in union activity and understand the history behind the labour movement. This has led to higher involvement from young members within the workplace and their respective branches. This has led to the creation of a new three-part educational course on Women in Power to encourage young women to be more involved with our great union.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash opened up to the conference on how it has been a difficult time during the pandemic for transport workers and how the union has had to respond to reductions in passenger levels and with health and safety issues. However, the message was clear that it is crucial young transport workers not only join RMT but participate in trade unionism to fight for our future as previous generations have done.



This was followed by a panel: Politics in the labour movement and workplace – what the future holds for trade unionists with Millie Apedo-Amah (RMT NEC), Luke Elgar (CWU Youth NEC Rep), John McDonnell MP and Jeremy Corbyn MP who said: “Your union is strong, more than anything because of the education system Bob Crow brought in” referring to the National Education Centre in Doncaster that bears his name.

This is often forgotten when talking of the strength of our militant union as we face ongoing threats of cuts to our public services, casualisation of labour and the current pandemic. The education system we have in place allows industrial and health and safety reps to gain the knowledge and training needed to effectively organise their workplace in the best interests of our members.

The main topics covered by the panellists and discussed with the delegates were equalities issues within the workplace, industrial trade

unions and the importance of using an organising model, the history of the Labour Party, issues facing young workers and the important role of transport industries in creating a green future all of which young members have a vital role to play in to build for a better future.

Other talks were given to the conference by Mark Carden, newly re-elected Assistant National Secretary, on the issues faced by seafarers and the maritime industry, Tony Donaghey, ex-RMT President and representing the Retired Members conference on the importance of solidarity across generations of trade unionists and Lee Rundle, South West NEC member, with a catch up on progress of last year's motions.

The conference closed with South African trade unionist and international guest Zithuele Radebe talking about the casualisation of labour affecting young transport workers and how the pandemic has affected trade

union organising in South Africa.

The YMAC would like to thank Rae Lewis-Ayling who has put in a lot of work in the past year as Vice Chair of YMAC to organise young members nationally, put on zoom educational courses during the lockdowns and put on this year's successful conference and congratulate the newly elected liaison committee. Lastly, a thank you to all attendees who helped raise £120 for British Heart Foundation in memory of Bob Crow via a raffle in which the star prize was a book on Fidel Castro owned by Bob himself.

Rhys Harmer – Chair of YMAC

Niamh Ramsey – Vice Chair of YMAC



HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

RMT's annual health and safety conference discussed mental health, diving safety and the environment during the Covid



This year's RMT annual health and safety conference was held remotely through a zoom meeting and issues discussed included the role of safety representatives in the COVID pandemic and the effect of the lockdowns on the mental health and wellbeing of members.

Willie Strang, Edinburgh and Portobello, warned that the union must not fall into any traps that could well be hidden within the makeup of the Rail Industry Recovery

Group (RIRG) that was set up recently.

"The loss of any work as a result of policy decisions by the RIRG will impact greatly on mental health and we cannot allow this to happen and we must protect jobs. This will not be an easy task given the make-up of the group being heavily weighted towards employers," he said.

Delegates called on the union to conduct a survey of all employers to establish what measures they have in place to

protect the mental health and well being of members.

This should be combined with a survey of membership to see what knowledge was out there of these procedures and how effective they may be for members.

Darren Pilling, Liverpool No. 5 warned that depression was widespread in the maritime sector.

"Working hours can be as bad as a 14 hour split shift with the law offering little protection as you could legally

be asked to have a four or six hour break in any contributing 24-hour period.

"Ships can be a lonely place and individuals can feel isolated without friends and family. Quite often the combination of being away, fatigue and mental health issues can be enveloping and debilitating. On vessels and installations, it is difficult to rest due to work and home often being the same place," he said.

He also warned that

members within the bus industry are on the front line every day and are exposed to infection regularly.

"Anxiety brought on by this fact causes mental health deterioration on a scale that our generation have never witnessed.

"These members must also be afforded the same as far as organising for post COVID recovery and job retention is concerned as their mental health and wellbeing is equally important," he said.

Inshore divers

Delegates called on the union to lobby the Health and Safety Executive and the Association of Diving Contractors for the establishment of workforce elected Health and Safety representatives across the sector.

RMT regional organiser Jake Molloy said that recent engagement with a growing membership of inshore divers, to date 174 have joined to date, had brought into sharp focus the absence of any structures whereby these workers can engage with industry and the regulator around issues impacting their health and safety.

"These workers are largely

self employed have not been previously organised but they face very poor working conditions from Isle of Wight to the Shetlands.

"This needs to be addressed not only for the immediate urgency of concerns raised by members, but also to establish a system which drives continuous improvement in standards across the sector," he said.

Delegates called on the union to produce a report based on the concerns and issues raised by members which should serve as the agenda for future meetings.

Delegates also called for the creation of a 'union inspectorate' group which would act as a significant deterrent to the litany of bad practice being reported by our recently recruited Inshore diver members.

"Workers are reluctant to raise issues and challenge methods of working on site for fear of losing work. However an inspectorate group could carry out that role of raising issues in the name of the union," he said.

GREEN TRANSPORT

Delegates called on the union to campaign for a Green

Transport Revolution with its focus on integrating our transport system and focussing on the use of public transport and away from the car and air use.

Darren Pilling said that the uncoordinated privatisation and deregulation of many parts of the transport industry had contributed to a lack of coherent transport policy for freight and passenger movements.

"The strategy therefore should be based on a model of public ownership and publicly accountable regulation.

"During the current COVID 19 pandemic our health services have discovered that the capacity available in these services did not have the resilience to cope with such an event.

"One of the emerging policies being drawn up to contend with any future outbreak is that resilience and capacity should be built into any post pandemic health service," he said.

Delegates heard that air and road traffic are increasing sources of many of the worst pollutants, including carbon dioxide (CO2), carbon monoxide, carcinogenic

particles, and noise. These emissions cause massive damage to the natural and built environment and have serious effects on human health.

"When the pandemic eases there will be many who will look to decimate the industries we work in so we need to be arguing for an integrated transport network for freight and passengers under public ownership," he said.

Donnie M, backed the concept and called for cleaner energy idea and called for the electrification for the railway network.

Christine Willett, South Essex also called for all rail services to be taken in-house not just the franchises as part of the greening of the transport sector.

Paul McLauchlan, Paddington said that every form of transport worker from taxi drivers to bus drivers need to be taken into account when drawing up policy regarding the greening of the transport industry.

Nigel Holden, Derby Rail said that new green cars, buses and trains should be built in this country rather than being imported from abroad.



PREVENTING WORK-RELATED VIOLENCE



Joana Faustino, chartered psychologist and the Rail Safety and Standards Board's (RSSB) senior work psychologist talks about a new research project tackling work-related violence

A new research project aims to point the industry in the direction of effective practices for the prevention and management of work-related violence.

2020 saw a dramatic reduction in the number of passengers using the railway. Yet, RSSB's quarterly progress

report (December 2020), shows that the number of assaults reported per passenger journey have, in fact, increased.

The discussion around work-related violence in rail is not a new one. The rail industry has a dedicated platform to discuss and

strategically address the issue: the Work Related Violence Strategic Group (WRVSG) led by Rail Delivery Group (RDG). A work-related violence definition has been agreed for the rail industry: "Any incident, in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their

work".

Having an industry wide definition of work-related violence creates clarity around what it is we are referring to when we use the term and consistency in how work-related violence is measured.

In 2018, an RSSB report provided an insight into the

issue, identifying that 94.1 per cent of frontline staff had experienced workplace abuse. Out of these, 25.6 per cent described experiencing physical assaults. Similarly, RMT's survey on Violence Against Railway Staff (2018) found 72 per cent of frontline staff to have experienced work-related violence in the previous year, with 90 per cent experiencing violence on more than one occasion.

Yet, we still don't fully understand the phenomenon. Work-related violence is a complex issue, with many associated risk factors that can differ wildly depending on the context. The reasons behind violence perpetrated by a person intoxicated with alcohol may be completely different to the ones that impel a sober commuter, whose train has been cancelled, to attack rail staff. So need to be the interventions we put in place.

Companies are putting their best efforts into developing policies and commissioning training to address the issue, but in many the benefits of those are not systematically and robustly assessed. We don't really know if they work.

With this in mind, WRVSG requested support from RSSB in researching effective measures to prevent and manage work-related violence. And so T1173 (Identifying measures to prevent customer-on-staff work-related violence in the UK rail industry) was born.

In this project, which should be concluded by May, we are analysing two years of industry incident data to start to unveil work-related violence patterns and reviewing rail industry's policies to understand how well our processes and procedures align with good practice.

We are looking at developing guidance for



companies on how to choose the best work-related violence prevention and management training. We are ultimately working on identifying practicable interventions we can then tailor to the rail reality, to ensure our workforce feels safe and supported at work.

RMT is supporting RSSB's project T1173 with a member of the health and safety team at Unity House participating as a member of the Project Steering Group. The results of the research will feature in a copy of RMT News later in the year.

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President's column



DON'T FORGET TO VOTE

Well spring is upon us and it's time to look forward. Ballot papers are out for the general secretary election so please use your democratic right to vote for the candidate you want to see take our union forward, it's your choice use it.

Just as the year began the attacks from this disgraceful Tory government and their management spivs continue. We have seen attacks on several of our activists for standing up in their workplace in defence of terms and conditions and sacked for putting the safety of others first.

This is outrageous and despite the current climate and restrictions we must all support each and every member and activist that is in trouble in every way possible.

SWR guards are being pushed in to a difficult position, after 74 days of amazing strength and solidarity they are faced with a choice that must be difficult but, in real terms, one that has moved the company from no guard on a train to a guaranteed guard on every train.

After years of fighting from traincrew members and victories secured across various operators, the Tory government are finding new ways to turn the thumb screws. This is despite every poll of the travelling public showing they want to feel safe. The cutting of jobs should not even be an option as crime rises faster than inflation.

The attacks on jobs has sadly

already started and we have to prepare ourselves for a further onslaught as we hopefully move out of this pandemic. The mismanagement of the economy and wasting of billions by this government on a failing test and trace system for example means the workers will be expected to pay for their gross incompetence by way of pay awards at less than inflation, pay freezes, job losses and giving up hard earned terms and conditions. We are all better than just being grateful for having a job like the bosses and media will have us believe, we all have skills and we are worth a pay rise.

This is normally a time of year when we have our organising conferences, but again sadly this pandemic has made that impossible. That said we do have the electronic platforms to use and I'd urge everyone to give it a go and attend conferences. When we gather together we are stronger, and our collective conversation and debates help lay out the direction we want to take to shape our union. Whilst it is difficult hopefully these will be the last ones held electronically and we can all as comrades look forward to meeting next year.

We have also seen growth in our new campaign of inshore divers and I'm excited for the June statutory meeting, where we can look to include more maritime branches in to the campaign and see growth of an industry that will play a major part with offshore

workers in helping grow our union.

I am going to finish my column on a note of sadness and frustration. Whilst this union is still facing and has faced some difficult challenges the work to restore/repair that mechanism and relationships has always been ongoing, so it saddens me when a faction like the broad left continue to print and post about democratically elected National Executive Committee members in a derogatory way.

All this is doing is ripping the scab off the sore that was healing. It is poisoning RMT members minds by way of negative articles that are devoid of fact nor both sides of the story. Reporting over internal matters that have not been circulated nor even agreed in the minutes at the time of the article being written, whilst stating decisions will be appealed to the AGM, only puts our democracy at risk by potentially prejudicing debate. We get outraged at the right wing media propaganda and spin but is this really any different? This continual condemning and borderline bullying and harassment is destroying members faith in all our elected officials and completely turning members off so grow up, use the internal structures that are in place to air your grievances and stop washing your dirty linen in public.

Solidarity, Michelle

CONTENTS INSURANCE COVERS MORE THAN YOU

Millions of private renters don't have contents insurance because they think they don't own anything worth insuring, according to the latest Home Insurance Market Report from Mintel. This may be true for some, but it misses the point for all.

As a tenant, you're actually responsible for more than just your own belongings because you're expected to maintain your home to the standard at which you rented it. This

includes the landlord's fixtures and fittings as well as what you fill the house with yourself, so anything from a games console to the kitchen sink is potentially at risk of accidental damage, whether you own it or not.

The good news is that members and their families can find peace of mind with contents insurance from RMT's preferred insurer, UIA Mutual – and it covers more than you might think.

Taking it personally
Should the worst happen, whether it's to white goods or white sofas, certain items can be more expensive to fix or replace than others. That's why UIA's contents insurance includes things like personal liability and tenant's liability as standard. It's designed to protect you against those domestic disasters that can strike at any minute.

From the quirky glass window in the porch to those

lovely tiles on the kitchen wall, you can get covered in case you or anyone in your house happens to cause damage by mistake. ■



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PROTEST: National demonstration and rally against the proposed Industrial Relations Act in December 1970.

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'KILL THE BILL'

Railway workers played a crucial role in defeating the Industrial Relations Act 50 years ago

50 years ago this month on March 1 1971 as many as 1.5 million people across Britain took part in an unofficial day of protest against the Tory government's new anti-trade union Bill known as the Industrial Relations Act.

Large 'Kill the Bill' protests also took place in London and Glasgow against the Bill, which included proposals for compulsory strike ballots, cooling-off periods before any industrial action, a ban on solidarity action, an end to the closed shop as well as tighter controls on union agreements.

Unions represented on the march included rail workers, boilermakers, printers and electrical workers. Postal workers, who had been on strike for six weeks, also joined the protest and no national newspapers were printed.

Ever since the Trade Disputes Act 1906, which established legal rights and protections for trade unions, British trade unions had been largely free from excessive state control, so that they had been able to develop their own relations with employers,

negotiating directly over terms and conditions and dispute resolution.

Therefore the Industrial Relations Act 1971 effectively swept aside the main method of collective bargaining that had worked with varying degrees of success for both sides of industry for many decades. Nevertheless the Bill was approved by MPs in August 1971 but that wouldn't be the end of the story.

Edward Heath's Tory government had come to power in 1970 determined to make workers pay for inflation through the implementation of wage restraint in order to restore the profitability of British capitalism. However this was premised on the successful application of the anti-strike provisions of the Industrial Relations Bill, published in December of that year.

Sweeping aside the legal protection in place since the 1906 Trades Dispute Act, unions would lose all immunity from being sued by employers in the civil courts if they were not registered and their union

rule books had not been approved by the state. A National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) was established to hear cases relating to the Act.

The previous Labour government had also attempted to introduce legislation attacking union rights regarding strikes and collective bargaining, known as In Place of Strife, but had been forced to back down opposition from the unions.

The TUC refused to back strike action against the 1971 Act but backed a series of protest meetings. On February 21 1971 up to 200,000 trade unionists participated in a national demonstration from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square, the biggest since the Chartist protests 140 years earlier.

The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU), established to oppose In Place of Strife, played a key role in organising the action and attracted many militant shop stewards who, numbering over 200,000, played a key political role at the time.

In September 1971 the TUC voted to require its member unions not to comply with the provisions of the Act including registering as a union. The Transport and General Workers Union was twice fined for contempt of court over its refusal to comply.

Campaigning against the Act eventually coalesced around individual workers. When the Pentonville Five were arrested for refusing to appear before the National Industrial Relations Court and imprisoned in the summer of 1972, there was an outcry and their case received great publicity support. Eventually, the hitherto unheard of 'Official Solicitor' intervened to order their release.

RAIL WORKERS

The rail worker's pivotal role in the defeat of the hated Act began in early 1972 when the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) declared solidarity action in support of a strike by the National Union of Miners (NUM) for a pay rise and instructed its members not to carry out work normally

performed by miners or to transport oil to refineries.

The ensuing Wilberforce inquiry found in favour of the miners demands for better pay, forcing a Tory climb down on its economic policy of wage restraint. As a result of this humiliation the Tories were even more determined to face down similar demands from rail workers organised in all three rail unions the NUR, ASLEF and TSSA.

Through the direct meddling of the Secretary of State for Employment Maurice Macmillan, Viscount Macmillan of Ovenden, the government effectively took over pay negotiations from the British Rail Board and steadfastly refused to find a settlement. The government completely misread the resolve of the unions who, after negotiations broke down on April 18, launched joint industrial action including a work to rule, an overtime ban and no rest day or Sunday working which had an immediate effect.

The government had not realised that British Rail was largely dependent on key grades such as signallers, drivers and guards working more than the 40 hours of the standard working week to make up their weekly pay packet. As a result the network

was slowly grinding to a halt.

It was at this point that the government chose to use the Act to impose a cooling off period on the industrial action and eventually to impose a ballot on the union. British Railways Board chairman Richard Marsh had tried to warn the high handed Viscount Macmillan that such a course of action would be disastrous. The Eton-educated minister dismissed all advice and balloted members of all three unions on May 21, the same day as news broke that the BR chairman would be receiving an extra £4,000 a year.

Predictably, rail workers backed their unions. In an 87 per cent turnout members of all three unions backed the industrial action. In a comic touch, NUR staff even gave vote counters at the Royal Horticultural Hall a letter-opening machine from Unity House as they had only been given paper knives.

Even before the vote was announced an incensed Edward Heath made a speech saying that any settlement would be paid for in fare rises in an attempt to whip up hostility to rail workers. Nevertheless a settlement was made after a month of negotiations delivering varying



RELEASED: Two of the Pentonville Five, Vic Turner and Bernie Steer, are carried aloft after being released from jail. Five dockers were imprisoned under the Industrial Relations Act 1971 in Pentonville prison for leading a Dock strike.
© Peter Arkell/reportdigital.co.uk

pay rises of over 12 per cent for all grades.

This imposition of a 'cooling off' period and a ballot in the April-May railway dispute was the only time that the emergency powers granted in the Act were actually used under the guise of 'improving industrial relations'. Ultimately, it had completely the opposite effect as even TSSA took part in the struggle, the first time the union had taken industrial action since the 1926 general strike.

NUR biographer Phillip Bagwell noted that rail workers were carrying on a tradition from an earlier generation of

transport workers that had been instrumental in bringing into existence the Trade Disputes Act 1906 and the Trade Union Act of 1913.

"A later generation played a big part in undermining public confidence in the Industrial Relations Act 1971 and the government that introduced it," he wrote(1).

The incoming Labour government repealed the Act through the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974 but that's another story. ■

(1) The Railwaymen: The History of the National Union of Railwaymen Volume 2: The Beeching Era and After, page 268.



SOLIDARITY: Women marching during the one day strike and protest against the Industrial Relations Bill, Liverpool March 18, 1971.

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REMEMBER – RENEW YOUR FREE INSURANCE COVER

Thousands die every year in the UK due to accidents, which is why we've negotiated £5,000 of FREE Accidental Death Cover for every RMT member and their family, aged 18-69 and living in the UK for 7 months of the year. The cover is free of charge, and lasts 12 months, after which you can renew it again for free.

Many members forget to renew their FREE insurance, so please remember to go to www.RMTProtect.com/free-insurance to ensure you are protected by this benefit we have negotiated for you.

The money can be used for any purpose, such as paying off debts, bills or funeral expenses

and can provide financial support to your loved ones at a difficult time.

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RMT general secretary Mick Cash

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OBITUARY

DEREK MILBY

It is with sadness that Cumbria Lakes branch report the passing of Brother Derek Milby. He worked on the Heysham Ferries before moving to the Windermere Iron Steamboat Package Company (WISCO) now Windermere Lake Cruises, eventually becoming a full time engineer on MV Tern and working as part of the relief crew on-board MV Swan and MV Teal sailing around Lake Windermere until he retired.

He was RMT lead representative for many years at Windermere Lake Cruises and the members were at that time assigned to Liverpool Shipping Branch this enabled Derek to strike up a lasting friendship with the then regional organisers Ken Usher and the late Bill Anderson and regional office staff Andy Boyack and Andy Warnock – Smith amongst others.

Derek inspired some members to follow in his

footsteps and undergo training both locally and at the Bob Crow National Education Centre in Doncaster to become fully qualified reps and was thrilled to see his tireless work as a rep flourish even after his retirement when his successors founded the new Cumbria Lakes Branch 0393.

Derek was a keen railway enthusiast working with the Furness Railway Trust. He became a member of the Lakeside Railway Society which was supporting the initiative to open and operate the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway. Despite his limited availability during the running season, Derek became a loco fireman and was usually rostered on Saturdays when the boats had a reduced service in the early days.

Derek's cheerful demeanour and willingness to go the extra mile when meeting visitors to both the railway and the boats



MANY FRIENDS: Derek Milby pictured on the left next to the late Bob Crow and Cumbria Lakes Branch secretary Bernard Atkinson

resulted in him forming many lasting friendships, including with the late David Shepherd CBE.

He also had a wide circle of friends within the model railway world and particularly within the Furness Model Railway Club (of which he was a founder member) and the National Model Railroad Association. Derek was presented with a video camera on his retirement from Windermere Lake Cruises which he soon mastered.

He set about recording

steam specials, generously providing his many friends with copies of the subsequent DVDs. He also took it upon himself to record progress on the Furness Railway Trust's projects and made a monthly journey to Preston to film. Derek will always be remembered as a cheerful, generous and loyal supporter to the Furness Railway Trust, and RMT and a man with so many friends. We extend our sincere condolences to his brothers, Don and Ken.

LETTERS

WHAT ABOUT STATION GRADES?

I am the RMT platform staff representative at Taunton station and I have been on the railway for thirty-one years covering most of the station staff roles. Like me, you are probably been wondering what has happened to the station's harmonisation talks. For the last five years I've task to task both FirstGroup/GWR and union reps on why this subject has been almost forgotten.

2007 was the year of the last harmonisation talks and a fresh idea of taking Wessex Trains at that time and bringing staff together. At the time this was a FirstGroup/employee buyout run company to make all the grades across the board simpler, give fair balance of pay/leave and future promotion opportunities. Thirteen years have passed with some progress, but little is known to us as to

the current state of the talks. As station staff we have all seen all other grades had their harmonisation talks and some (mostly drivers and guards) over the same period.

They have had various updated talks and new agreed terms and conditions, leaving the station grades with no idea what the future holds. So now is the time to get your voice heard and join in on this discussion.

It's difficult at times in coming forward but I have taken this as far I can alone. We need all station grades to come forward and text/call/email your RMT rep or your local manager and ask them what they know or could find out about the stage we are at with harmonisation.

All our grades need updated agreements on annual leave, pay, job roles and an agreement on Sunday

working. The whole point of the 2007 harmonisation was to update the grades from the Wessex stations and to have a simpler grading system to work from across the network.

I understand that during the last twelve months talks have stopped but I feel this is the best time for RMT to meet with GWR in order to make progress. Speak up as it's your future and be part of getting a result for everyone in our station grades.

If, after reading this if you feel strongly about the harmonisation deal, please don't be afraid and get involved. Make your voice be heard and ask for representation on this important subject.

Paul Finnimore,
Station supervisor

PORTWEY - THE STORY OF A WEST COUNTRY STEAM TUG

RMT member Stephen Loeber tells the story of a vessel still going strong along the Thames after 93 years

The history of the coal-powered steam tug Portwey, named after The Portland & Weymouth Coaling Company it was made for, is fascinating as well as intriguing.

The company placed an order with the shipbuilders Harland & Wolff (H&W) in 1926 for a twin screw steam tug. H&W was famous for its engineering excellence, building the liner class ships Olympic, Titanic and Britannic. However, Portwey would not be built in its Belfast shipyard but on the river Clyde at Govan near Glasgow.

The bunkers on each side of the vessel hold 15 tonnes of coal each. She was also fitted with an auxiliary pump to intake and discharge water which made her a very good salvage vessel. When completed she was 80 foot in length, with an 18 foot beam, a nine feet draft and gross tonnage of 94 tonnes. She set sail on April 24 1928 from Govan and arrived in Portland

four days later to start her working life.

Her working routine was to take the coal barges from the quayside to the hulks, old vessels with decks removed until just the hull is left, and the larger ships could be replenished from there. She would also take coal to isolated communities as well as assisting vessels in distress.

In 1938 the Portwey was sold to HG Collins & Co Ltd of Dartmouth doing the same work that she did before as well as working over to the quay at Kingswear where the Great Western Railway would bring coal by rail to be

unloaded into barges that Portwey would take away again for the bunkering trade.

In 1942 Portwey was placed on Admiralty service for the war effort and came under the naval control of Plymouth Command. In April 1944 Portwey rescued damaged US vessels from the Slapton Sands disaster. The US forces had been practising D-Day landing exercises on the sandy beaches of south Devon. The

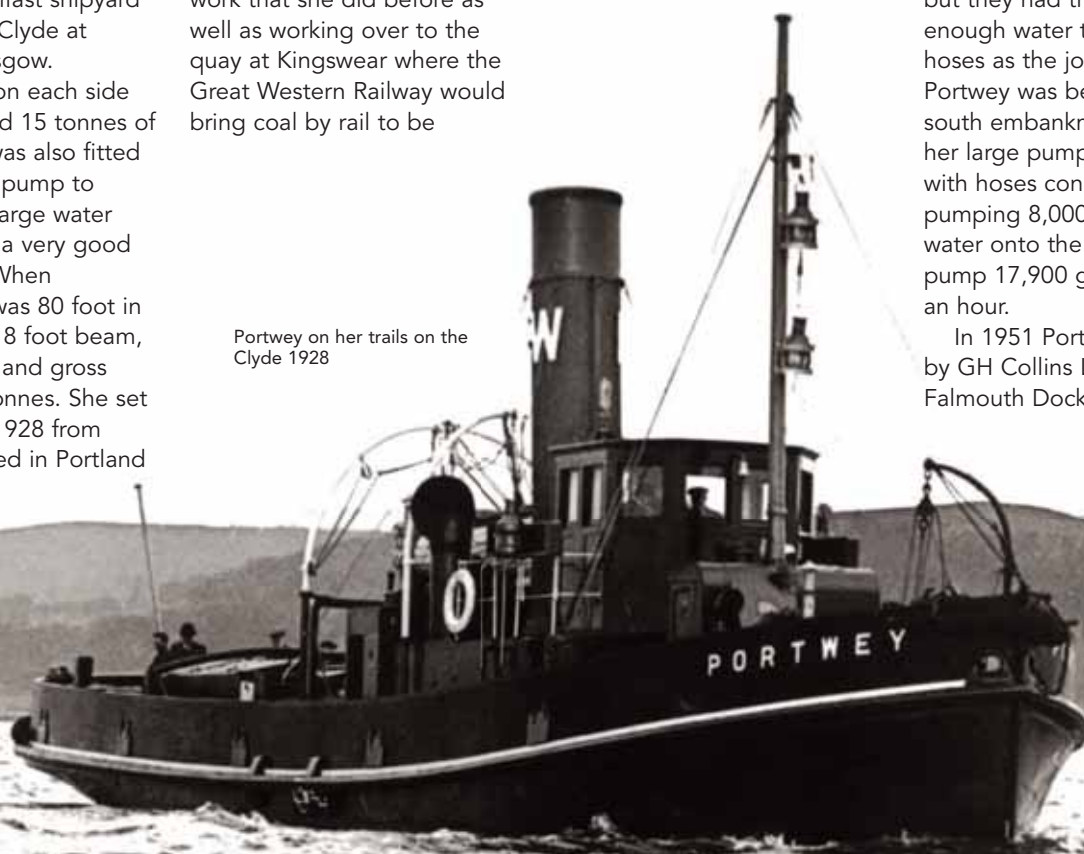
Germans found out about the exercises and a force of torpedo boats were sent over and decimated US forces.

Bn 1945 she was again being used as a harbour tug at Dartmouth, plus taking supplies and drinking water out to other vessels and continuing to ferry Channel pilots out to the large ships.

In May 1947 a large fire broke out at the Queen's Hotel Dartmouth. The fire services turned up in minutes but they had trouble getting enough water through their hoses as the joins leaked. Portwey was berthed on the south embankment and soon her large pump was in use with hoses connected and pumping 8,000 gallons of water onto the fire. She can pump 17,900 gallons of water an hour.

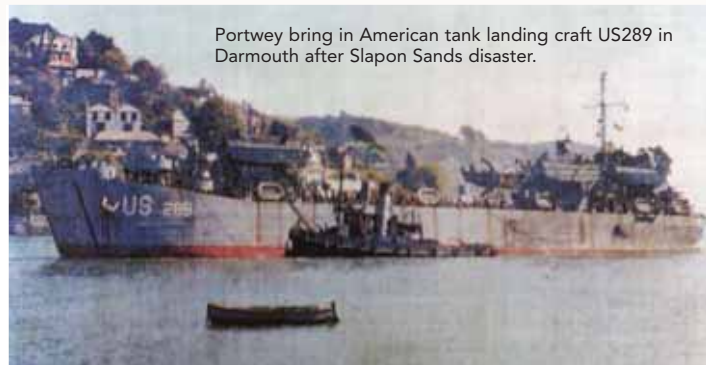
In 1951 Portwey was sold by GH Collins Ltd to the Falmouth Dock & Engineering

Portwey on her trials on the Clyde 1928





STOKED: the author Steve Loeber after passing out as a stoker on the Portway last year



Portway bring in American tank landing craft US289 in Dartmouth after Slapon Sands disaster.



Portway in 2020 in West India Docks

Co Ltd and she was used to move various barges and a floating steam crane called Mixtow about Falmouth harbour. She was also used to tow an oil tank barge named Shell Mex out to tanker ships to pump out their oil so they could be cleaned and repaired.

About this time she was upgraded by having a steam operated power steering installed, whereas before it had been chains and linkages to the rudder that were manually operated by the skipper. In 1959 she was sent to work on the construction of a new lifeboat station for the Lizard in Kilcobben Cove with the contractor firm of Conialys.

In 1965 she was towed to Holyhead, North Wales to assist with dredging for the new car ferry terminal at Admiralty Pier. She would also assist the ferry Normannia alongside the pier in breezy conditions. By this time Portway had been in non-stop service for about 38 years, except for the two weeks a year she was dry-docked for routine maintenance.

By 1967 Portway was laid up in Falmouth Harbour ready to be sold for scrapping. However, this is not the end of the story.

Richard Dobson who was the Assistant Harbour Master at Dartmouth purchased her

for the price of a new Rover car, as stated by current Chief Engineer Chris Nursey, for preservation. She came back to the River Dart and was based near Totnes near Richard's home. He then went about restoring her and over the years she did a number of events and trips in the area.

By the 1980s The Maritime Trust in Greenwich accepted her for their collection consisting of 17 other vessels including the Cutty Sark. Portway left Dartmouth on May 28 1982 for the 270 mile trip to London. There were stop overs at Weymouth, Portsmouth, Newhaven, Dover and Sheerness for coal and supply replenishment and then to London. The current chairman of The Steam Tug Portway Trust Ltd, Stephen Page, was one of the crew on this epic voyage.

On June 7 1982 she was handed over to The Maritime Trust and moved to St Katherine's Dock with a new support group called the Friends of Portway. As The Maritime Trust suffered financial difficulties, the Friends of Portway became a charitable trust called The Steam Tug Portway Association to keep Portway operational. For the last twenty one years the trust has operated and maintained Portway, so trips can be undertaken up and down the Thames from her base at West India Dock.

So, why not come on a trip back in time with us - just check the Portway events page on our website www.stportway.co.uk for dates, how to book and further information on the vessel or becoming a member of the trust. Alternatively please write to The Steam Tug Portway Trust Ltd, 4 Almond Avenue, Wickford, Essex SS12 0BN.

@Thanks go to Chris Nursey, Jill Nursey, Steve Page and Barry Smith of The Steam Tug Portway Trust Ltd for their assistance with the article and photographs.

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BAKERLOO BRANCH NOMINATES JOHN LEACH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	JUBILEE SOUTH BRANCH NOMINATES JOHN LEACH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTH DEVON BUS BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	BIRMINGHAM ENGINEERING BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
NEWCASTLE RAIL & CATERING BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARY	IPSWICH BRANCH NOMINATES MICHAEL LYNCH FOR RMT GENERAL SECRETARY	SWANSEA NO 1 BRANCH NOMINATES MICK LYNCH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	CENTRAL & NORTH MERSEY BRANCH NOMINATES STEVE HEDLEY FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
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COVENTRY NO.1 BRANCH NOMINATE STEVE HEDLEY FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARY	MORDEN & OVAL BRANCH SUPPORTS JOHN LEACH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	TFL NO.1 & LU MATS BRANCH NOMINATE STEVE HEDLEY FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	CARLISLE CITY BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
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NORTH STAFFS BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	ORPINGTON BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	GREAT NORTHERN RAIL BRANCH NOMINATE MICK LYNCH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY	BASINGSTOKE NO1 BRANCH NOMINATES JOHN LEACH FOR GENERAL SECRETARY
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EAST MIDLANDS CENTRAL
BRANCH
NOMINATES
JOHN LEACH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

SOUTH EAST ESSEX BRANCH
NOMINATES
JOHN LEACH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

PRESTON NO1 BRANCH
NOMINATES
JOHN LEACH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE COAST
BRANCH
SUPPORTS
JOHN LEACH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

EDINBURGH NO1 AND
PORTOBELLO DISTRICT BRANCH
NOMINATES
GORDON MARTIN
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

ASHFORD NO1 BRANCH
NOMINATES
MICK LYNCH
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

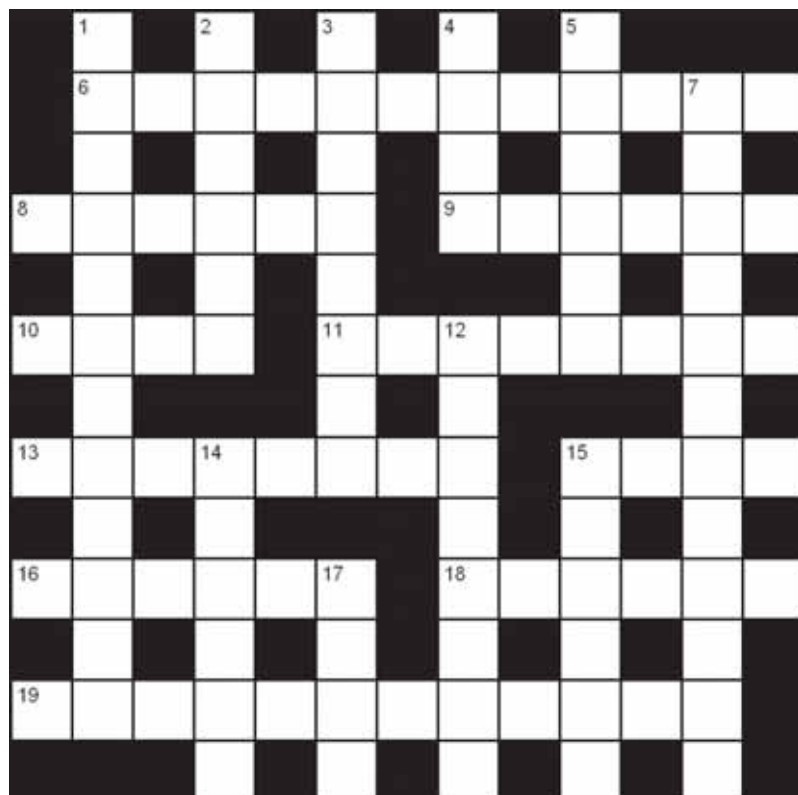
SALISBURY NO3 BRANCH
NOMINATES
STEVE HEDLEY
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

WIRRAL BRANCH
NOMINATES
STEVE HEDLEY
FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

EXETER RAIL BRANCH
NOMINATES
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GLASGOW SHIPPING BRANCH
NOMINATES
GORDON MARTIN
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£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



January's solution...



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

All winners will be announced at a later date as the Unity House offices are currently closed due to the pandemic.

Apologies for the printing of the wrong grid in last month's edition of RMT News. The correct one is printed here.



Crossword
sponsored
by UIA

ACROSS

- 6 Developmental (12)
- 8 Decomposing (6)
- 9 Farewell (3-3)
- 10 Fair (4)
- 11 Furtive (8)
- 13 Disability (8)
- 15 Corrosive (4)
- 16 Internal organs (6)
- 18 Pilot (5)
- 19 Having some authority (12)

DOWN

- 1 Lucrative (11)
- 2 Force (6)
- 3 Posh dead end (3-2-3)
- 4 Appendage (4)
- 5 Uncover (6)
- 7 Periodically (12)
- 12 Stress (8)
- 14 Term of affection (6)
- 15 Scared (6)
- 17 Settee (4)



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Date of Birth		National Insurance Number	

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

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Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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Date

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The UK Government ...

... is hiring a new transport industry 'union buster' with a brief to hammer down on jobs, pay and pensions.

... "Williams Rail Review" is due shortly and is expected to take the axe to guards, ticket offices and service levels.

... are clearly lining up a post-COVID attack on the transport sector despite the sacrifices we have made during the pandemic.



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