

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

BOYCOTT DOVER IRISH FERRIES



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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

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

PERSONAL INJURIES

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

INDUSTRIAL DISEASES

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

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

Should a member find themselves unfairly dismissed, discriminated against or have any claim which has reasonable prospects of success at an Employment Tribunal, RMT will provide

legal representation and pay the fee. Even if the union is advised that the claim is unlikely to succeed, members who make a claim are eligible to receive free legal advice.

ACCIDENT BENEFIT

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

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

RETIREMENT BENEFIT

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

TAX AND WILL PREPARATION

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

DEMOTION COMPENSATION

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

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

ORPHAN FUND

The beneficiaries of this fund would be any child of a member or spouse if the member dies in service or if a members' spouse dies and the member has responsibility of the children.

Benefit is paid while a child is

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

RMT CREDIT UNION

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

ONLINE SHOPPING DISCOUNTS

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

FINES POOL

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

BEREAVEMENT BENEFIT

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

CASHBACK PREPAID CARD

Fancy cashback on your everyday shopping? Use your RMT Prepaid Plus Cashback card at over 50 partner retailers, including Sainsbury's, ASDA and Boots, and earn unlimited cashback! It's

different to a credit or debit card - you can only spend what you load so there's less chance of getting carried away.
www.rmtprepaid.com

FREE £5,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH COVER

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

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

INSURANCE

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

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

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

HEALTH CASH PLAN

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

Join RMT by visiting
www.rmt.org.uk

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CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



COVID CHAOS

Nothing underlines the chaos at the heart of government and the consequences for our industries better than the shambolic approach to continuing COVID safety measures on transport services from end of July.

We now have a ludicrous and fragmented approach that means that laws and regulations will change at the Welsh and Scottish borders and passengers travelling through London will have one rule on commuter rail services and another on the buses and London Underground. Other cities are likely to find themselves in the same situation.

Not only is this confused and inconsistent approach to basic safety absurd it is also downright dangerous. We all know that it will be front line RMT members who will be expected to try and enforce the impossible in what is already a tense and hostile environment.

The dangers to staff of being thrown into the centre of this shambles are all too obvious and the union has made it absolutely clear that we will back our members to the hilt. Everyone has the legal right to a safe place of work and we will be supporting our members who

feel threatened and exposed because of these blatant political failures. If you feel that your personal safety is being compromised it is essential that you contact your local RMT rep immediately.

As this issue of RMT News goes to press there is a developing situation with the Rail Industry Recovery Group as we await clarification from the employers on their view of the shape of the industry post-COVID.

All of the indications at this stage are that they will be seeking major and fundamental changes that will represent a massive challenge to this trade union. Your union executive has decided to engage in a cross-industry discussion through the RIRG so that we are in a position to defend your interests.

By the next issue of this magazine the picture should be much clearer but what we already know is that we will require the maximum unity across all grades to consolidate our industrial leverage. Every single member will have a crucial role to play.

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

ANTI-TRADE UNION: Ratings on the Irish Ferries 'Isle of Inishmore' vessel operating out of Dover work at least 12 hours per day, every day and paid below the National Minimum Wage with no pension provision



BOYCOTT ANTI-TRADE UNION OPERATOR IRISH FERRIES' DOVER SERVICES!

Ratings work at least 12 hours per day and paid below the National Minimum Wage with no pension provision

RMT has launched a boycott campaign against Irish Ferries passenger and freight ferry services on the Cypriot-registered *Isle of Inishmore* operating between Dover and Calais.

Ratings on the *Isle of Inishmore* are employed on voyage contracts to work at least 12 hours per day, every day. Some are paid below the National Minimum Wage with no pension provision but are still required by Irish Ferries to carry out five times more Channel crossings than their colleagues at P&O before they can take a period of rest.

A voyage contract only applies to that voyage and Irish Ferries require seafarer ratings to re-apply for work at the end of each contract. A ferry sails five round trips per day between Dover-Calais. That is 35 round trips per week. Seafarers doing 12-hour shifts per day will, as a result do 18 round trips per week.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that seafarer fatigue remained a threat to safety standards across the shipping industry, despite the progress made since the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster thirty-four years ago.

"Part of that progress has been the agreement of safe roster patterns between employers and local trade unions.

"Make no mistake, Irish Ferries crewing practices undermine maritime safety and employment standards on ferries which cross the world's busiest shipping lane up to five times a day. We have written to Irish Ferries CEO, Andrew Sheen to raise our concerns but have not even had the courtesy of an acknowledgement.

"Irish Ferries expansion is a direct threat to the future of British seafarer jobs on strategically vital ferry services and clearly demonstrates the UK government's neglect of local seafarers during the pandemic and in the post-Brexit maritime supply chain,"

he said.

RMT has called on passengers and businesses to think again before using Irish Ferries and to keep in mind the appalling employment and questionable safety practices at an operator that puts profit before safety.

The current National Minimum Wage in the UK is £8.91/€10.40 per hour and the National Minimum Wage in France is €10.20 ph.

The union has already written to Irish Ferries CEO Andrew Sheen to discuss Irish Ferries proposals for operations on the Dover-Calais route. The letter was copied to the UK Chamber of Shipping. No acknowledgement or reply has been received by the union from Irish Ferries to date.

The Irish Continental Group's annual report for 2020 shows an annual loss of €10.4m. A plan to make a dividend payment of €17m was scrapped and no dividend was paid. ■



AN INSPECTION OF THE IRISH FERRIES VESSEL WB YEATS IN CHERBOURG BY THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS FEDERATION REVEALED THE FOLLOWING TOTAL MONTHLY SALARIES (BASED ON 360 HOURS PER MONTH) SEAFARER GRADES

Grade	Total monthly salary (€)	Hourly rate (€)
Steward (Bar & Galley)	2,330	6.47
Able Seafarer	2,481	6.89
Cook	2,674	7.42
Plumber	2,673	7.42
Reception	2,771	7.69
Bosun	3,382	9.39

IRISH CONTINENTAL GROUP FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Year	Pre-tax Profit (€)	Annual dividend (€)
2010	40.1m	25m
2011	26.4m	33.3m
2012	21m	24.7m
2013	23.7m	18.4m
2014	56.7m	18.8m
2015	54.1m	19.9m
2016	60.4m	21m
2017	87.7m	22.2m
2018	59.2m	23.5m
2019	61.5m	24.7m
TOTAL	490.8m	231.5m



RMT has warned of threats of violence to all transport staff over botched and confused approach to face coverings on public transport.

RMT has warned that staff on services will be placed at danger of abuse and assault due to the botched, confused and inconsistent messaging over face coverings.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the union had welcomed the approach from the London Mayor, which was consistent

with the policies currently adopted in Scotland, Wales and on Eurostar.

"However, we now have the ludicrous position where a passenger travelling through London will have different rules on the tube and the main line services.

"There will also be a change of policy on trains at the Welsh and Scottish borders which is a total nonsense and will leave staff right at the sharp end and dangerously exposed when it

comes to enforcement.

"As a result of this chaotic approach we now have a situation where the London measures are not enforceable by law which means RMT members will be thrown into a hostile and confrontational situation at heightened risk of abuse and assault.

"That is wholly down to the confused, inconsistent and botched messaging from the Government.

"RMT will continue to support and advise our

members in their legal right to a safe place of work.

"The train operators, bus companies and, most importantly, the government should be following the best practice on face coverings in the name of consistency, common sense and public safety and that should be backed by law.

"They cannot step back from this critical issue and leave our members set up as punch bags," he said.



AUGUST NIGHT TUBE STRIKES

RMT has announced strike action across the Tube network in August over plans by London Underground to abolish the Night Tube Train Drivers' grade.

Following a solid vote for action late last month and subsequent talks that failed to resolve this issue RMT has instructed members not to

book on for duty for four 24-hour strike dates in August.

LU proposes to axe the grade from May 16 in what the union said was a cash led move aimed at shunting staff around the combine at will which will threaten the loss of 200 jobs and destroy the work life balance of 3,000 Tube drivers.

RMT general secretary

Mick Lynch said that London Underground's proposals to rip up an agreement that protects 3,000 Tube drivers work life balance had caused uproar in the depots amongst drivers.

"This breach of trust by an out of touch management abolishes the part time jobs of workers – mainly women – who want

them.

"This is the thanks that Tube drivers have been given for keeping the service running through the Covid pandemic. This is a blatant attempt to now use that pandemic to start bulldozing through a savage programme of cuts.

"The union remains available for talks," he said.



BUS FUNDING CRISIS

Union warns that the end of Bus Service Support Grant must not lead to a service cuts from August

RMT has warned that with bus passenger numbers still far below pre-Covid levels and action must be taken to prevent the commercial bus operators slashing services following news that the Covid-19 Bus Services Support grant (CBSSG) will end in August.

The government plans to replace the CBSSG with a lower level of 'recovery funding' from September.

Under the CBSSG, rolling funding of up to £27.3 million per week was provided to bus operators in England, outside London, whereas the recovery funding commits £226.5 million for the seven months from September to next April, averaging less than £8 million per week.

With bus passenger numbers currently averaging around 64 per cent of pre-Covid levels, RMT is demanding that the government take action to ensure that the commercial operators do not look to cut services that are not guaranteed to make them a profit from September.

At the same time, the government is still in the slow lane over its commitment to reverse the illogical ban on local authorities establishing new municipal bus companies.

RMT is calling on the government to urgently reverse this ban to ensure that local authorities are best placed to deliver the local bus services their communities

require without needing to rely on commercial operators whose main motivation is maximising private shareholder profit.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the government must take action to ensure that the commercial operators, which have received significant amounts of public money throughout the pandemic, do not prioritise profits at the expense of bus services and passengers when the CBSSG ends in just a matter of weeks.

"The National Bus Strategy acknowledges that the UK's bus market has been in decline for many years, and that local bus services have a key role to play in maintaining

social cohesion and fighting climate change, and any cuts to services will only worsen this decline and run counter to our climate change goals.

"Two months ago, an RMT survey of local councillors warned of an impending bus cuts crisis, with just 12 per cent of councillors believing that the commercial operators would not cut services in their area, and with the end of CBSSG fast approaching, the government needs to set out as a matter of urgency how it will ensure that services are protected from September 2021 and when it will reverse the irrational ban on new municipal bus companies," he said.

■

PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY ON THE MARCH

The People's Assembly marched through central London last month to demand an end to the Tories' ongoing attacks on working people. Tens of thousands of trade union activists and political campaigners made their voices heard outside parliament, where speakers addressed the crowd.

Workers were urged to reject the Tory agenda of privatisation, defend the NHS from underfunding and unite in the common interests of worker solidarity, including an end to 'fire and rehire', a guarantee of safe, secure

jobs, a welfare system that protects vulnerable people and affordable housing for all.

In addition to those demands, the People's Assembly insists that key industries are renationalised so that they be run for public benefit instead of private profit. RMT believes strongly in the benefits of a renationalised rail network, and several RMT branches were represented at the demonstration, including South West Midlands branch (pictured).



ASSEMBLY: Noel Doyle, Piccadilly & District Line West branch member (L) and Daniel Kennedy, South West Midlands branch member (R).
Picture credit: Daniel Randall

COTA OFFSHORE BALLOT

Members working for Caterers Offshore Trade Association (COTA) member companies in catering, accommodation and ancillary services on offshore installations are being balloted with a recommendation to reject a base pay offer of just one per cent.

RMT negotiators tried to convince employers that members' worth was far greater than the abysmal

pay offer following a pay freeze last year and the significant pressures placed on them during the pandemic where workers kept installations operating.

Not only did employers refuse to move on the pay offer but set conditions which would see several significant changes including the removal of enhanced redundancy entitlement and weather

delay payments. A new training rate would also be applied cutting the current eight-hour entitlement to four hours in return of an additional 1.21 per cent on base rates.

The union did secure agreement on an improvement to sick pay entitlement and an improvement to bereavement leave, but the employers refused to consider a night shift

allowance.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the union did not believe the pay offer reflected the true worth to the industry over the last year and into the future and called on members to reject it.

"We also believe the offer to buy out significant and long-established entitlements is well below their true value," he said.



PRAISED: A special train run by Network Rail for clearing and to maintain track seen at London Bridge station, London

RAIL REGULATOR REPORT PRAISES RAIL INDUSTRY RESPONSE TO COVID

RMT warns regulator it has omitted plans for jobs cuts and attacks on conditions, safety and pay

RMT responded to rail regulator the Office of Rail and Road's annual report into Network Rail's performance and safety which said that the whole industry had reacted quickly to the challenges posed by the pandemic and kept workers and those members of the public needing to travel moving.

The report, which details Network Rail's record over the last 12 months praised the rail industry for its response to the Covid19 crisis whilst highlighting the role of health and safety on our railways following several tragic and

avoidable fatalities over the last year.

The train derailment at Carmont was a stark reminder of the need for continued focus on safety management and the report stresses the need for Network Rail to ensure it mitigates the impact of climate change and extreme weather.

Sadly, three rail workers lost their lives in 2020-21 including two track workers at Surbiton and Roade. The report notes that Network Rail has achieved a reduction in the work that relies on human lookouts to seven per cent but it must

now increase the speed with which it adopts new technology that can further reduce safety risks.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the rail regulator was right to highlight the role rail workers had played during the Covid-19 crisis to keep our railways moving and ensure people, food and medical supplies get to where they need to be safely.

"However, there is a huge glaring omission in this report and that is the fact that Network Rail backed by the government is planning to

introduce the biggest attack on jobs, conditions, safety and pay in generations.

"Cutting jobs, increasing workloads, reducing and diluting standards, inspections and safety critical disciplines is a toxic cocktail of measures which could have disastrous consequences for safety.

"Network Rail is importing danger and returning to the dark days of Railtrack where cutting corners and staffing led to fatal accidents and it is vital the rail regulator ensure this simply is not allowed to happen," he said.

EDINBURGH RAIL GOURMET STAFF STRIKE

RMT Rail Gourmet staff at Edinburgh Waverley took 24-hour strike action in July following a 100 per cent vote by members in support of strike action.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the action was all about respect

and justice in the workplace and the company's continued refusal, even in the face of a massive 100 per cent vote for strike action, to do anything about it.

"A culture of bullying and harassment has been allowed to develop at

Edinburgh Waverley which has led to a wholesale breakdown in industrial relations and our members have had enough.

"It's now down to Rail Gourmet to listen to the strength of feeling of its workers and address these

long running and deep-seated issues.

"RMT will be backing our members with all means at our disposal to ensure they are no longer confronted with this toxic working environment," he said.

RMT EXPOSES SAFETY SCANDAL AT PENTLAND FERRIES



NOT SAFE: MV Pentalina at St Margarets Hope, Orkney, Scotland

Pentland Ferries' catamaran *Pentalina* will not be introduced onto CalMac operated Clyde and Hebrides ferry routes after RMT demanded that a safety inspection was carried out by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on the vessel.

The inspection revealed that the vessel's owner had personally altered the superstructure, compromising safety provisions at the intersection between the galley kitchen and passenger accommodation on the vessel.

Transport Scotland was seeking to charter from anti-trade union operator Pentland Ferries for service on CalMac routes in western Scotland.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the union been proved absolutely right to demand an investigation.

"We of course recognise the difficulties caused to people and businesses by the ongoing failure of the Scottish government's vessel procurement programme. But bringing an unsafe vessel onto Clyde and Hebrides ferry

services is in no one's interest.

"We strongly believe that a cavalier approach to safety and seafarers' rights, hallmarks of Pentland Ferries, have no place on Scotland's lifeline ferry services.

"It is a fact that workplaces covered by trade union agreements are safer workplaces. On-board safety committees with crew representatives work well in CalMac Ferries but the buccaneering owner of Pentland Ferries, Andrew Banks clearly regards maritime

safety regulations with the same suspicion he regards trade unions.

"This vessel had been declared fit for relief service on four CalMac routes by the MCA before the RMT's intervention.

"Rather than working with the vessel's dodgy owner to gloss over this shocking case, we need an inquiry into how the Scottish government's ferry procurement strategy has exposed crew and passengers to this unacceptable level of risk," he said. ■

ACCIDENTS AT SEA

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has published its Annual Report for 2020 receiving notification of 1,217 marine accidents and incidents involving 1,307 vessels.

The MAIB commenced 19 investigations, 10 of which involved loss of life and published 20 investigation reports, two safety digests and two safety bulletins during the year.

It made 42 recommendations, with an acceptance rate of 92.9 per cent, and two recommendations were

partially accepted, none were withdrawn, and one was rejected.

Two commercial fishermen lost their lives compared with five in 2019 and six in 2018. Regrettably, six commercial fishermen have lost their lives so far in 2021, so the low figure for 2020 cannot be viewed as marking a significant improvement in fishing safety.

The Annual Report includes statistics on accidents to UK ships and seafarers worldwide, and to foreign flag vessels and their crews in UK waters.

It also contains an overview

of the work of the MAIB, details of reports published and contains analysis of the safety recommendations issued during the year and the status of outstanding recommendations from previous years.

Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents Captain Andrew Moll said that the MAIB had published two investigation reports into the collapse of container stacks on large container ships.

"There have been more accidents involving large losses of containers since, and more general concerns about large container vessels were already being raised before *Ever Given* grounded in the Suez Canal earlier this year.

"There is no doubt that accidents involving Ultra Large Container vessels will continue to receive intense focus, but it is too early to say what common themes might

emerge from accident investigations and whether these could have wider implications for the sector.

"On paper, 2020 was a safer year for the UK fishing industry, with only one accident resulting in fatalities. Regrettably, six commercial fishermen's lives have been lost already in 2021, meaning that eight commercial fishermen have lost their lives in the six-month period November to May. While the investigations are ongoing, the indications are that five lives were lost as a result of small fishing vessels capsizing or foundering quickly," he said.

The role of the MAIB is to contribute to safety at sea by determining the causes and circumstances of marine accidents and working with others to reduce the likelihood of such accidents recurring in the future. ■

DAY OF THE SEAFARER 2021

SEAFARERS – JOIN A UNION

RMT marked Day of the Seafarer on June 25 by making a call for ratings to join a trade union to secure a fair future in the shipping industry.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that seafarers in the UK had a bleak future let alone a fair one as investment in training for the next generation of ratings was practically non-existent.

“Seafarer exploitation is endemic, from the offshore energy supply chain to the short sea ferries which sustained our economy throughout the pandemic.

“The number of UK ratings in employment or training has fallen by an estimated 10 per cent during the pandemic but those jobs have not left the

country for ever, they are returning but are now filled by seafarers on sub-minimum wage, anti-union voyage contracts with little or no protection.

“RMT urges all ratings and officers in the UK and across the world to join a trade union to deliver the fair, safe and sustainable shipping industry that is in all of our interests.

“The current path is set by shipowners and they are banking on the current generation of Ratings leaving the industry without a fight. That would lead to a disastrous future of even

longer hours, job cuts, fatigue and low pay for seafarers.

Joining a trade union is the best way for seafarers to fight back collectively against this

race to the bottom.

“We know that shipowners and crewing agents rely on discrimination against seafarers to profit from an economically essential industry, yet governments across the world sit back and let it happen. A concerted industrial response from seafarers is essential to end nationality-based pay and other forms of seafarer discrimination which the Maritime Labour Convention does not currently address.

“International regulations should not deter domestic governments from investing in jobs or training for Ratings on international routes.

“The government here has extended the National Minimum Wage to seafarers

on domestic routes but cases like the Glomar Wave, the growth of low cost operators like Irish Ferries and exploitative rates of pay being offered by crewing agencies demonstrate the need for further legislation and increased enforcement of current National regulations to close the many loopholes within the industry to secure a fair future for Ratings in the UK with quality jobs, decent rates of pay, pension provision and safe roster patterns.

“On Day of the Seafarer 2021, RMT sends a clear message to seafarers in the UK and across the world that the road to a fair future will only be travelled together – join a union,” he said. ■

FREE ACCESS TO MARITIME WELFARE TRAINING

The World Maritime University (WMU) and the ITF Seafarers’ Trust has launched the ground-breaking online Maritime Welfare Professional Development Programme (MARI-WEL) to be offered free of charge in recognition of the Day of the Seafarer and the ongoing sacrifices seafarers are making during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year’s Day of the Seafarer theme, ‘A Fair Future For Seafarers’, recognised that seafarers deserved much greater appreciation for the essential work they do and a much better treatment as “key workers” as they enable global trade.

Those charged with promoting the welfare and wellbeing of seafarers, and

especially those serving the needs of seafarers during the global pandemic, must also be recognised and applauded.

As a result, WMU and ITF Seafarers’ Trust are offering free access to the complete MARI-WEL programme.

Developed by WMU, in collaboration with the ITF Seafarers’ Trust, MARI-WEL is delivered by distance learning via an innovative online portal consisting of a series of videos, lectures and activities – enabling participants to follow the programme from anywhere in the world.

MARI-WEL is designed to meet the needs of anyone who works with or interacts with seafarers, both onboard and onshore. This includes ship management companies,

crewing agencies, port chaplains, and welfare providers. The MARI-WEL programme is comprised of three in-depth modules that provide a wealth of invaluable information covering:

- International/Interagency regulation and collaboration relating to seafarers
- Psycho-social and occupational health relating to seafarers
- Crew and resource management and land-based welfare relating to seafarers

WMU president Cleopatra Dombia-Henry said that the course was designed to develop people with an interest in seafarers’ welfare.

“With the dire situation seafarers have been facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, now, more than ever, seafarers’ welfare should be of great concern to all. It is their dedication and perseverance that has kept global trade moving despite a pandemic that has substantially changed our world,” she said.

Katie Higginbottom of the ITF Seafarers’ Trust said that the course would be particularly useful for those wishing to improve their skill set and get a better understanding of the challenges facing the world’s seafarers. ■

To learn more and to register for the MARI-WEL programme email: katie@seafarerstrust.org or phone 07909 806647.

CLEANING UP THE RAILWAYS



RMT's organising conference for transport cleaning workers launched new report on the importance of these core workers

"Our campaign is centred around the idea that you are core workers and you are important," RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said as he launched the RMT's *Cleaning Up the Railways* report. He said that the cleanliness of stations and rolling stock, along with health and safety more widely, had been shown to be "vital" during the pandemic.

"They are a core service," he added. "They're just as core as collecting the revenue, they're just as core as driving the trains, they're just as core as maintaining the track and serving the meals on board.

And largely these sectors are still in house."

The report highlights that outsourcing of railway cleaning - with more than 30 contractors employed across Britain's national network - "has created a low paid cleaning workforce" and "often leads to a thinning out of cleaners as companies strive to cut costs and create profits in a labour-intensive industry". It argues that in spite of the corporate spin, "many companies are not conducting more frequent deep cleans of trains or stations".

A survey conducted by the

union to feed into the report revealed that a third of cleaners are still worried that they are not getting the right PPE. Almost half the cleaners working on the network don't think they have enough staff to do their jobs properly, and a third said that the number of cleaners had fallen in the last three years. One in five reported that the number had fallen even since the start of the pandemic.

With the Rail Industry Recovery Group reviewing the status of the cleaning workforce, the report calls for TOCs to "insource their cleaners, as ScotRail have

already done".

It also calls for Network Rail to "bring its entire station and estates cleaning service in-house as the contract ends in 2022".

Delegates at RMT's national industrial organising conference of transport cleaning workers unanimously voted to support the report and "urged the union to use it as a basis for campaigning politically and industrially for the aim of in-sourcing all cleaning work and for our basic demands of justice for cleaners, improved safety, pay, conditions and pensions along with dignity & respect for

cleaners in transport”.

Opening the conference, which was held online this year due to Covid-19 restrictions, Mick said: “We’ve got to concentrate on the basic premise that we’ve got more in common - we agree on more - than the stuff that divides us.

“I want to get the union to 100,000 members, I want to get the union present in every workplace, whether you’re working for a TOC or Network Rail... or a minor concern... you should be able to exist in RMT, have a place in the structures, and get your voice heard.

“We’ve got to motivate all of the people in our industries to join the union, so we make the non-members members, we make the members active members.”

Stressing that the union would always support its members in taking industrial action where necessary and when the timing was right, the general secretary urged: “The most pressing thing we’ve got in rail, and in the other sectors as well, is the recovery of our transport system.

“We will keep fighting and we will keep organising and promoting change to our members and promoting the agenda we’ve got.

“We’ve got to give our people the confidence, the knowledge, the desire to support industrial action ballots.”

Mick said that the union would be aiming to win the support of other TUC-affiliated unions for a “mass movement of cleaners”.

“They’ve been telling you they’re the unsung heroes. You’ve got colleagues doing the vital work you do, in the NHS, in the care homes, in the educational establishments, and they’re just as exploited as you are,” he said.

Craig Johnston, RMT’s relief regional organiser (north), reported to the conference: “The challenge for the union isn’t to forget the agenda



we’re setting for persistent and consistent improvement for our cleaners.

“We need confidence to fight and we need to make sure we are well organised to take that fight to the employers,” he said.

Amen Charles Usiomoifo, Euro Passenger Services, raised the alarm over the impact of government cuts to UnionLearn funding.

“What are some of the measures that RMT is looking to adopt towards compelling the government to stop, especially as the funding comes to an end?”

He said that UnionLearn had an invaluable role in assisting workers to re-train when they found themselves out of work. “With additional knowledge, through UnionLearn, they could find themselves a job in another area, in another sector of the economy,” he added.

Mick Lynch responded: “It’s not a proposal to stop, it’s actually stopped - it ceased in March. There is no more money put forward by the government for union learning and workplace learning. We’ve taken a recent NEC decision that we go to the company. There’s nothing stopping us reaching arrangements with the companies on union learning, getting them to release representatives to still run programmes in the workplace.

“At Eurostar we do have a union learning agreement, that was put in place before we had full-time release union learning officers, and it continues now. The controversial part was that it only covers directly-employed people.

“We’ve got hundreds of people working for catering companies, working for security companies and working for the cleaners, that may need assistance on all sorts of things including English as a second language and so forth. The NEC has decided to go back to the companies and fully implement the union learning agreements that we’ve got.”

Bella Fashola, Hastings highlighted that employers were willing to provide workers with travel permits when attending company activities - but claimed they were unable to grant free travel to workers. “Could you not use my document of a permit to travel to try and help us all? If they can do it for me for a meeting, they can do it for all of us. For some people free travel is a pay rise”.

Mick Lynch said: “What they’re probably given by the TOC is a number of them per

year. It does illustrate that if you want to do it you can do it, but it won’t be the answer”.

Marian Dmitrov, Central Line West raised London mayor Sadiq Khan’s manifesto pledge to review the outsourcing of cleaners on London Underground. The union is pressing for this review to lead to free travel for cleaners and ending the outsourcing of cleaners on the tube.

“How are we going to approach the mayor about his manifesto? I would like we reps to be involved in those conversations in the future”.

The general secretary committed to suggesting that London deputy mayor Heidi Alexander should “meet with the representatives of the cleaning staff directly”, adding: “I will put to her that she should meet with people like yourselves and others to hear the first-hand experience of being a London Transport cleaner”. ■



Mick Lynch



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QUIET FLOWS THE DON

Britain's longest serving railway worker Don Buckley waves goodbye to Waterloo station

After 68 years of service, Waterloo-based RMT member Don Buckley is finally retiring from the railway.

Following his formal retirement in 2004 at 65, Don had been working three shifts per week for South Western Railway providing assistance to visually impaired and disabled passengers at Waterloo station.

Don joined the railways in 1953 at just 14 years of age and has been awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award for his services to London Waterloo and the railway.

At 82 years old, Don has been working at London

Waterloo for almost seven decades. Most recently, providing unrivalled London knowledge to passengers needing directions around the city.

Don, who was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Rail Business Awards two years ago, was given an official send-off at an event at Waterloo station last month.

Don started working at London Waterloo by coincidence. When he was 14 years old, he travelled from County Kerry, Ireland, jumped in a taxi and asked the driver to take him to "the big station in London", expecting to be

taken to Euston, but subsequently arrived at Waterloo. Too young to be working on the trains, Don started his career as a station message boy and remains working at "the big station" today, 68 years later.

Throughout his years of service, Don witnessed the last steam train leave Waterloo in 1967, a cinema in the station which was in operation up until 1970, the great train robber Buster Edwards setting up a flower stall outside following his release from jail in 1975 and scenes from Skyfall and the Bourne Ultimatum being

filmed.

Commenting on his years in service Don Buckley said: "I have loved working at Waterloo for all these years. The station may have changed a lot since the 1950s, but it's still such a special place and I feel so lucky to have had so many wonderful experiences working here.

"The people are what make the station special and I will miss my colleagues and customers immensely. While all good things come to an end, Waterloo will always have a very special place in my heart," he said.



ORGANISING IN THE NORTH EAST



An intense week of organising transport workers ended with an outdoor meeting of activists and politicians in Newcastle

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch addressed a rare public meeting in early July in Newcastle after activists visited workplaces across the region including Network Rail, LNER, Cross Country, the Tyne ferry and Churchill cleaners in a very successful organising and recruitment drive.

"We need more socialist politicians that we can work with to deliver for working people.

"We are going to show transport workers that if we fight we can win. We reject cuts to terms and conditions and we are on a dispute footing with every employer

that to attack us.

"We will not tolerate a pay freeze and we want a united front across the union and the labour movement to tackle this onslaught head on," he said to applause.

RMT Parliamentary Group conveyor Ian Mearns and MP for Gateshead spoke about how the parliamentary group was working with the union to oppose job cuts and pay restraint and argue for improvements to people's terms and conditions.

We are fighting living wage campaigns for contract cleaners working for Mitie on their Network Rail contracts



Mick Lynch addresses Newcastle meeting

and the RMT Group of MPs is right behind you," he said.

Another member of the RMT Parliamentary Group Jarrow MP Kate Osborne talked about the attack on jobs, pay and conditions.

"Transport workers are key workers who had worked throughout the pandemic but now they are being treated with contempt by the government and employers," she said.

Former MP Laura Pidcock, said that it was great to be at

a public meeting - albeit outdoors and with social distancing - to talk to each other about how to respond to the challenges that face transport workers.

She paid tribute to the work done by transport workers keeping Britain moving throughout the pandemic - and condemned the government for its attacks in those very workers.

North of the Tyne Mayor Jamie Driscoll spoke about the opportunities for jobs and

connectivity through effective regional government structures and how his time as mayor was already reaping rewards in terms of job creation.

"We have seen the re-opening of the Blyth and Tyne line to passenger services which is something that had

been worked for over many years and now we must demand the re-opening of the Leamside line.

He also spoke about how the RMT north east region was working closely with him on numerous issues affecting members.



Kate Osborne



Craig Johnstone with Billy Douglas



Ian Mearns MP speaking



Cross Country rep Julie Wilson



Micky Thompson



ORGANISING: RMT team heads out onto the Tyne and Wear Metro, Stadler, Nexus, Churchill cleaners and Tyne Ferry

STILL ORGANISING



SHOWCASE: Exeter City Council is working directly with Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) to create a "showcase of what inclusive public realm development could look like" in the form of a brand-new Bus Station for Exeter.

Far from putting his feet up retired RMT regional organiser Phil Bialyk is now Exeter City Council Leader

Exeter City Council Labour leader Phil Bialyk is a hard man to pin down and when RMT News finally caught up with him on his 65th birthday we could see why with such a busy schedule.

Many readers will remember Phil as the affable RMT regional organiser for the South West who was always ready to share a funny story in his distinctive Devon accent.

After retiring from his job at RMT after 40 years of service in 2017, Phil threw himself even further into local politics as he was already a Labour city councillor for Exwick ward for some years.

"Apart from watching my

children grow up the best thing to happen to me was being elected, as a bus worker in Exeter, as a full-time organiser for what was then the National Union of Railwaymen in 1987 and to do what I love, representing people and make positive changes to people's lives.

"The NUR and then RMT gave me the opportunity to learn skills which I still use every day as leader of a Labour council," he says.

Exeter has a long tradition of electing Labour councillors who are also active trade unionists and Phil is actually the fourth Labour council leader from NUR/RMT over

the years including his predecessor Peter Edwards, another stalwart of the bus grades conference.

This is maybe why Labour enjoyed the highest vote in Exeter for 20 years winning 11 out of the 14 seats up for grabs this year taking its total to 28 labour councillors and half of them are women.

"Most of the senior positions in the council are held by women and I believe that they are the best people for the job," Phil explains with some pride.

Another reason for Labour's success here, while its fortunes have declined in other areas including the so-called Red

Wall, is the vision Labour councillors have for the city particularly in developing policies on housing, regeneration and climate change.

"It would be easy to scale back our ambitions as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. But I will not let that happen. I am absolutely determined that the success our city has enjoyed over recent years will continue.

"We will protect and maintain the services that we as residents all depend on. At the same time we will pioneer transformational programmes designed to address active lifestyles, clean growth, active travel, innovation, housing

supply and a carbon neutral city," he says.

This includes building new council housing and upgrading the rest of the housing stock as well as a new bus station and a new leisure centre offering cheap rates to give corporate health outfits a run for their money.

"We have a lot of plans – the buildings that we are creating here in Exeter are to super energy efficient standards, reducing carbon by up to 90 per cent and reducing the bills for households. We are bringing forward 500 council houses in the coming years all built to that standard.

"We will be at the forefront of retrofitting existing properties across the city to be highly energy efficient and low carbon, reducing fuel bills and bringing clean growth to Exeter, with good skilled jobs and new apprenticeships in the technology of the future," he said.

This is the message that is



EXETER CHIEF: Labour Leader of Exeter City Council Phil Bialyk outside the new bus station which opened in July, his motto is "Our city, our future"

resonating with voters in Exeter the only Labour council in the region. Nevertheless, due to his work in Exeter, Phil has won cross party support to go on the board of South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) designed to develop economic growth, job creation and prosperity across the region.

"We have pledged to Build

Back Better – that means facilitating a sustainable recovery which builds on our commitment to delivering a carbon neutral city. Since we declared a Climate Emergency in Exeter last year a lot of work has taken place with our partners at Exeter City Futures to create a roadmap to a carbon neutral future," he says.

Phil's message is clear, to make things happen you have to organise and get your message out there that you can make a difference by setting out a vision for a better future for all. It is a message that should make the labour and trade union movement nationally sit up and listen.



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MIND THE LEARNING GAP

The Lowlands and Uplands Learning Project secured funding and developed a learning programme called Mind the Gap, Creating pathways for Professional Development in Rail Operations.

The course equipped learners with the confidence, skills and familiarity of studying and learning in a university setting. As a result of this course they can enrol into one of the Higher Education streams of the Institute of Rail Operatives programme.

The course will ensure that all students are supported in the development of the academic skills required for study at university preparing for University Study and Entry into the Railway Operations Management. This will introduce them to work-based students to a range of academic skills required to demystify university and to support them to become a successful graduate. In this pre-induction module the team, using an interactive teaching and learning style, will introduce learners to the fundamentals of developing a clear writing style for university as well as referencing and sourcing.

There was online activities and a Community of Practice for students undertaking the learning. This allowed the students to engage in networking and peer support in the six weeks between the dedicated teaching days.

In the six-week period

learners undertook a small research task to develop their study and research skills using the academic library and other research functions. They were also asked to complete a small essay for a second block of learning. Each learner was provided with a dedicated tutor to support them with an estimated three hours of study per week.

The RMT Lowlands and Uplands Project ran three courses called Mind the Gap. Through SUL Funding we had 58 workers participate with 36 workers mainly RMT members complete the course and gain a University Certificate.

Out of the 36 who passed the Mind the Gap course 12 decided to take a further step into academic study and the rail workers enrolled on to the IRO (The Institution of Railway Operators) Certificate course. Through negotiating with the Glasgow Caledonia n University, we secured a unique course for 12 rail workers. This course cost £3,840 per student at the time (The course cost has now increased dramatically).

The course continued through COVID-19 Lockdowns and RMT Lowlands and Uplands project organised Sunday evening Zoom session so as the group could have visual contact and give support and solidarity for each other. There were also continuous WhatsApp meetings organised by the group to support each other. The students came from various grades within Scotrail,

NetworkRail, Caledonian Sleeper and LNER

Quotes from tutors at Caledonian University:

"I'm glad to write that all 12 students have completed the programme, and all were awarded the Certificate at the Assessment Board on Thursday 23rd June– one with merit and two with distinction!

"As you can imagine It has not been easy for them as, due to covid, delivery had to

go online, which was not what they had originally signed up for. So their tenacity should be commended.

"We were particularly impressed with the work they produced for their Project module. Most of the class received marks 70+".

"Unfortunately, Graduation Ceremonies are not taking place at this time, but hopefully they will find a way to celebrate". ■



RMT REMEMBERS PIPER ALPHA

Union marks Maritime Safety Week by remembering those who died in the North Sea disaster in 1988

RMT marked the inaugural Maritime Safety Week between July 9-13 by remembering the 167 offshore workers who died in 1988 in the explosions and fire that destroyed the Piper Alpha Platform in the North Sea.

The union requested that offshore employers allowed all workers to take a moment to remember the 167 offshore workers and the devastating effect that this disaster had on their families and communities, especially in north east Scotland.

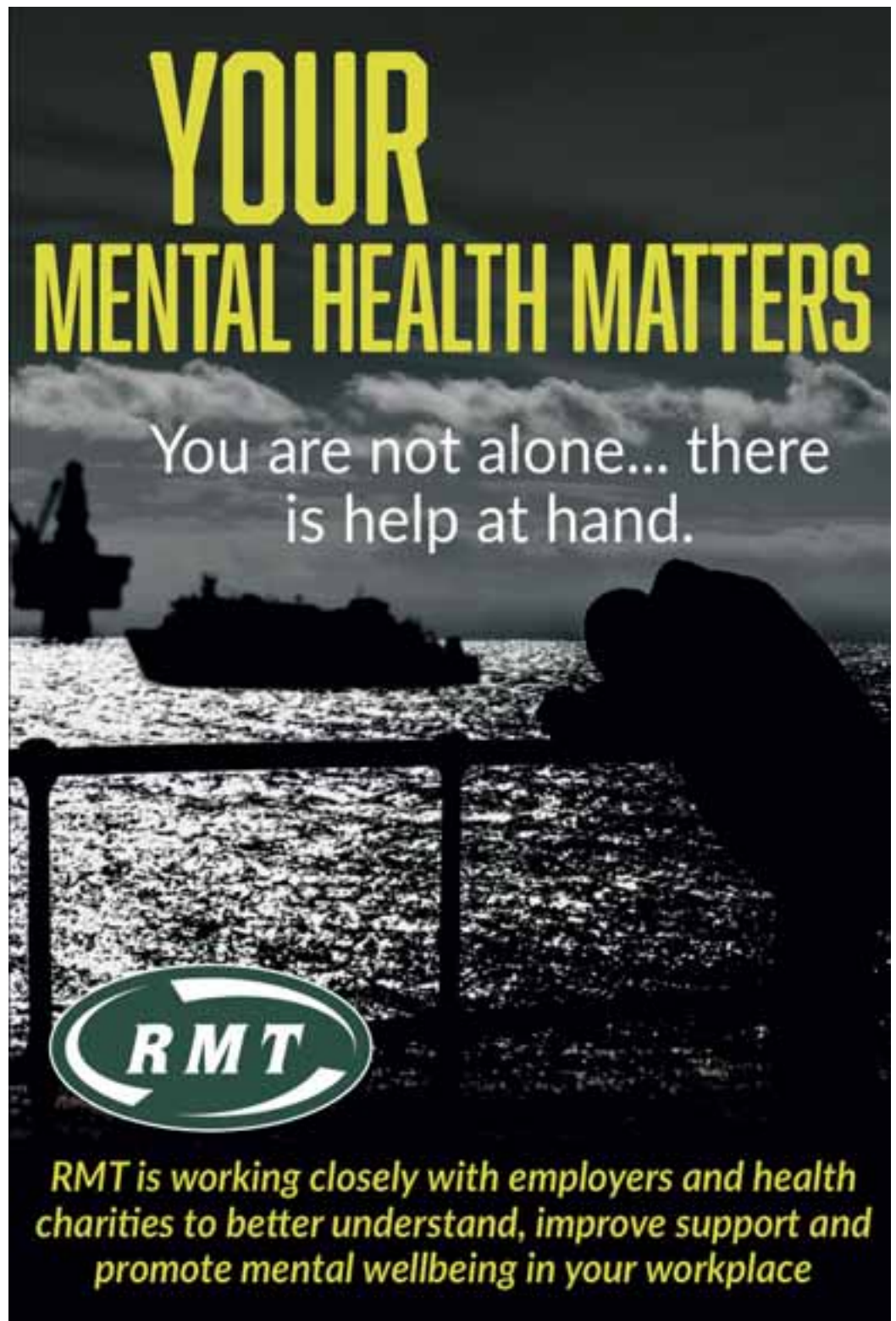
RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the men of Piper are gone but will never be forgotten.

"This year, the anniversary of Piper Alpha takes place during the UK government's Maritime Safety Week in July.

"We call on Ministers to respect the memory of Piper Alpha's victims by delivering the offshore safety culture of continuous improvement recommended in the Cullen Report into the disaster," he said.

As part of the week's activities the union has also produced new posters about Maritime Mental Health and a template letter asking companies whether they have an Employee Assistance Programme in place and emphasised the issue of sleep problems as a result of mental health issues in safety critical roles.

The Department for Transport said that Maritime Safety Week would provide an opportunity to share the wealth of knowledge, experience and best practice to increase understanding of what the sector was already doing to respond to the safety challenges it faces as well as plans for the future. ■





RETRAINING FOR SEAFARERS

Maritime Charities Group (MCG) manager Ben Gibbons talks about the Redundancy and Retraining Bursary Fund and calls for more applications from ratings, women and ferry crew.

Way back in 2020 at the height of the Covid pandemic MCG was approached by RMT assistant national secretary Mark Carden, a long-time supporter of the maritime welfare charities.

He was worried about potential redundancies and seafarers losing work because of Covid-19. He wanted to know what we could do. His idea was that help with the cost of training or upskilling would enable seafarers who'd lost their jobs to stay in the

industry – and that would be good news for everyone.

MCG was set up in 2003 to foster collaboration between maritime charity funders, to share information and encourage best practice. Founding members Trinity House and the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB) responded straight away with a promise of £10,000 each and we had the support of the Marine Society to administer the fund. That was soon followed by £10,000 from the

Nautilus International Slater Fund and a further £10k from Trinity House, bringing the total to £40,000.

Launched at the end of last year, in the first six months we awarded almost £23,000 to 48 applicants. So far, less than a third of applications have been from ratings, most applicants are working offshore or deep sea, and they are almost exclusively male.

So we want to see more applications from ratings, women and ferry crew, which

is why we're talking to you now. With changes to the furlough scheme on the horizon more jobs could be at risk, so now more than ever we need to get the message out.

WHO'S ELIGIBLE?

The fund is aimed at UK-based Merchant Navy seafarers who have been made redundant or lost work due to Covid-19. A maximum of £500 is available to fund training that will help them secure a new job in the

industry, including refresher training for certification, CV writing and interview skills, training in a new skill or even training for a different part of the industry such as wind farms or renewables.

The fund really is making a difference. It's definitely helping seafarers get back into work. By the end of June, we knew of 18 out of 48 successful applicants who had got back into employment in the sector. That's a 37 per cent success rate and we anticipate more to come.

And it's not just the numbers that are important - the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive:

"Once I got your help to pay for the tuition on my Ship Security Officer, I applied for my licence on February 10th, it was granted on February 15th, and since then my career has taken off."

FS (Chief Officer Unlimited)

"I completed the STCW refresher courses at the Maritime Training Centre. As a result I had a call from my existing cruise company and started my 3-month contract on May 11th. I would like to express my thanks for the funding which provided me with a platform when I needed it most."

TH (Ship Security Officer)

SPREADING THE WORD

Maritime charities often struggle to reach potential beneficiaries, especially Merchant Navy seafarers. Unlike fishermen and their families they don't necessarily cluster around certain areas and can live far from any port. We know that word of mouth and recommendation is what works best in the sector so we're asking your readers to help us spread the word.

The message is this: If you work on the ferries or in the cruise industry and have lost your job due to Covid; if you



were in catering, retail or ancillary services; or you were a rating in any other aspect of merchant seafaring, the MCG Redundancy and Retraining Bursary could help you get back into work.

And if you or anyone you work with can help us reach out to our target group please let us know. In the meantime please help us spread the word:

Tell your crew, tell your colleagues, tell your mates.

CASE STUDIES

Peter Strachan wants to move into offshore wind

I've been at sea since I left school over forty years ago. I started out as a fisherman then moved on to standby, supply, dive ships and then drill ships, where I've been working for the last 12 years.

In October 2020 my contract came to an end. That was the first time I've ever been unemployed. I want to move into offshore wind - I think it's a good direction to go in as opposed to oil and gas.

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.

At the moment I'm still trying to get into the windfarm industry but thanks to the MCG bursary I think I have a much better chance.

John Jess did his SCTW refresher courses so he could stay in the industry

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 by October 2020.

Having been at sea for over 20 years I thought about getting a job ashore but decided I should renew my STCW courses and continue working at sea in some

capacity, either in oil and gas or back within shipping.

I saw the adverts for the bursary fund in the Nautilus Telegraph and, as my certificates were due for renewal in March, thought I would apply. I was unemployed at the time and had an offer to start work again soon but needed to get my STCW courses refreshed urgently.

So I paid for the courses myself and applied for the grant at the same time. The process was quick and easy and very flexible. I received £500 towards my STCW refresher courses - 4 of them in total - and this paid the majority of the fees. Once I'd passed the courses I was able to accept a contract.

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.■

HOW TO APPLY

Applications to the MCG Redundancy and Retraining Bursary Fund are managed by the Marine Society on behalf of MCG. To find out more about the scheme and how to apply go to <https://www.marine-society.org/redundancy-fund>

President's column

SOS CAMPAIGN, STENA, SCOTRAIL, CALEDONIAN - RMT FIGHTS ON

I would like to report this month on the fantastic response we are having to our SOS campaign for all station staff. If you haven't managed to attend a meeting please contact your local or second stage representative or branch if your regional meeting has taken place, there are still lots of regional council areas to be covered so check when we are in your region!

This government continues to play Russian roulette by removing restrictions at a time Covid cases continue to rise. Rest assured your union is stepping into the arena's and stating your case and fighting your corner and I also want to remind members RMT is still saying if it's not safe evoke your

work safe procedure. As Covid restrictions are being lifted your employer has a responsibility for your welfare and keeping you safe. You have a responsibility to make sure you keep yourself and others safe that's why the work safe procedure was implemented Covid 19 means additional risk assessment were carried out and remain until new assessments are in place!

Take care of yourself as these restrictions are lifted.

I want to highlight the work our reps have done at Stena. This group of workers like loads of others in membership have had a pay rise removed by their employer prior to Covid then their new sickness policy was

attempted to be thrust upon however this group of essential workers have come together stood up to the employer and won an improved pay offer. Hopefully now Stena will work with us as a union and not against us.

I also want to pay tribute to Scotrail members fight for equality and fair treatment continues to grow, to build and show you will not stand for the contempt that has been pushed your way is fantastic.

Also the Caledonian sleeper members who have staged 11 days of strike action! Amazing, I hope the company are going to sit round the negotiating table and resolve the dispute! Our



members on EMR who are also stepping up and defending their hard fought for terms and conditions these fights of will be the only way we win so as pressure builds to get workers paying for the pandemic the message is clear from the RMT we will not stand by and watch you destroy our industries!

Solidarity to all,
Michelle Rogers

DISABLED MEMBERS SPEAK OUT



LIVING WITH DIABETES

I'm Sanna Jensen and I work as a Signaller in Network Rail. I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in 2017. Night shifts caused a problem for me as they stopped me being able to control my blood glucose, which could make me very unwell.

So, I requested to not work night shifts as a reasonable adjustment. An occupational health report supported the view that I should not work nights.

However, management seemed reluctant to think 'outside the box' and expected me to provide solutions. Fortunately, I had

made the wise decision to be a member of RMT and to take a representative with me to meetings with management.

When local management seemed unable to deal with the situation adequately, I had to escalate it to higher management and when I mentioned "employment tribunal" and "discrimination" they took some notice! Eventually, the company agreed to my adjustment and I no longer have to work nights. This has helped me to manage my condition.

Sometimes, colleagues do not understand your situation and think you are getting

preferential treatment, which creates extra pressure. Please remember that if a workmate gets a reasonable adjustment there is a good reason for it, even if you don't know what that reason is.

My advice to others in a similar position to me is get an RMT rep involved, prepare solutions to present to management and keep all paperwork. Do your research – make sure you know what your rights are, and what the employer's responsibilities are. There is information about this on the disabled members' section of the RMT website.

Remember that

management are very uninformed about your legal rights to reasonable adjustment, despite Network Rail (and most other companies) having policies on this. Management also appear unaware of the Access to Work fund, from which they can claim money from the government to help pay for your adjustments. So, tell them about it! Use the Diversity and Inclusion Human Resources Business Partners (D&I HRBP) to assist you.

Most of all, be involved and active in your union. I am now a Route Council Rep and Equality Rep.■

RMT WINS JUSTICE FOR OSIME

RMT's disabled members' advisory chair Janine Booth explains how the union defended a young disabled man

RMT members have helped to win justice for Osime Brown, a young, black, autistic, learning-disabled man.

Osime Brown moved to Britain from Jamaica with his family when he was just four years old. He has never visited since and knows no-one there. The only home he has ever known is with his mum in Dudley, in the West Midlands.

Osime is autistic and has learning disabilities. But the authorities did not identify this and did not provide the support that he needed. When he did not engage with his schooling, he was written off as a 'naughty black boy' rather than having his needs addressed. He became distressed and unwell and began to get in trouble.

In 2018, Osime, then aged eighteen, was with a group of teenagers who stole a mobile phone. Even though Osime had told them not to steal it, the court convicted him under the 'joint enterprise' law, which holds a person responsible for doing something even if they did not, just because they were there.

In prison, Osime became more unwell, both mentally and physically. He was subjected to racist abuse. And he was told that once he was released, he would be deported to Jamaica. Under British law, any foreign



national who spends more than a year in prison is automatically served with a deportation order, no matter the circumstances.

Osime's family knew that this would be catastrophic for him, so they asked for support in persuading the Home Office not to deport him. Autistic rights groups got involved, and then, via Neurodivergent Labour, trade unions got behind the campaign.

An RMT branch asked its regional council to support Osime, the regional council asked the national executive committee and the union backed the campaign. RMT's disabled members conference

held a live link-up with young RMT member Joe Booth at a demonstration in support of Osime. Delegates returned to their branches and spread the word.

Union members took part in further protests, with black and ethnic minority activists in particular turning out to show support. The online petition for Osime circulated widely around the union, helping it to get nearly half a million signatures. Labour and other MPs raised Osime's case in Parliament.

Finally, in June, the Home Office backed down and withdrew the deportation order. Although there is an

ongoing campaign to have his conviction overturned, winning his right to remain in the UK has brought huge relief to his family.

Osime's experience shows how unjust the justice and immigration systems can be – perhaps especially for young, black and/or disabled people. Osime is not a transport worker, but what happened to him could happen to RMT members' friends and family members. That's why we felt inspired to join this crusade for justice, and why we will continue to campaign against laws which, in practice, are unjust and discriminatory. ■



THE GREAT REBELLION OF 1381

A new research project is seeking to deepen our understanding of the Peasants' Revolt 640 years ago

1381.online is the website of an innovative new research project set to produce the most comprehensive interpretation of the Great Rebellion to date. The revolt was one of the largest popular uprisings in medieval Europe and rocked the country in the summer of 1381.

The Peasants' Revolt, as it became known, began as protests against a poll tax requiring all adults to pay twelve pence (the average daily unskilled wage was three pence). This was the third such tax in four years and was needed to finance wars against France.

The epicentre of the protests lay in south Essex and north Kent. A contemporary report describes how 'A

certain Thomas Baker of Fobbing (so-called because of his trade) took courage and began to exhort and ally himself with the men of his village. Then these men in turn leagued themselves with others and in turn they contacted their friends and relations so that the message passed from village to village'.

In north Kent, disturbances began with an attack on Lesnes Abbey and riots in Dartford. Under their leader Wat Tyler, the rebels attacked unpopular officials and tax collectors in Maidstone, Rochester and Canterbury. The rebellion spread throughout East Anglia and the Home Counties. There were disturbances as far afield as Yorkshire and Somerset.

As the rising spread, rebel demands widened. They asked that forced labour on the land be abolished and replaced by cash rents. They protested labour laws introduced after the Black Death to artificially keep down wages and many craftsmen, traders and townsmen joined the rising.

The rebels from Essex and Kent descended on London where they were joined by many Londoners. They burnt the palace of John of Gaunt, the unpopular uncle of King Richard II. They stormed the Tower of London and seized royal ministers who were immediately beheaded.

King Richard gave the rebels letters granting them freedom, but at a meeting between the King and Wat

Tyler, the rebel leader was killed. The revolt was swiftly suppressed and the royal letters of freedom withdrawn.

REVOLUTIONARY RIVER

In the middle ages, waterways and rivers helped people keep in touch and were an important means of communication when roads were difficult and dangerous. As protests against the poll tax grew in 1381, rebels moved backwards and forwards across the Thames estuary and co-ordinated their movement towards London.

We know about the role of the estuary in the development of the revolt from information in confessions and prosecutions of rebels. Among the crowd



REVOLT: Plowing the land, from The Luttrell Psalter, England, 1325-35 Dorking Museum

led by Thomas Baker of Fobbing in an attack on royal officials sitting at Brentwood at the beginning of the rising on May 30, 1381 were men from such Essex villages as Fobbing, Ockendon, Mucking, Rainham, Corringham and Thurrock.

The Kent rebels lost no time in crossing the river to contact their comrades in south Essex. A group from Erith crossed the Thames to Essex to seek support. They forced John Chandler of Prittlewell to try and persuade local Essex gentry to join them. They recruited a band of 100 Essex supporters who returned with them to north Kent.

Julia, the wife of Richard Poucher of Maidstone, met with a joint band of rebels from Essex and from Canterbury. She persuaded them to attack Maidstone gaol. At Julia's request, this Essex-Kent band destroyed the gaol and released the prisoners, threatening the keeper of the gaol.

It is possible that Wat Tyler himself was among the rebels who crossed the river from Essex even though he achieved fame as leader of the Kent insurgents. Some documents state that Tyler was from Essex and one claims that he came from Colchester.

Several boatmen and people who had naval experience took part in the rising. Their skills perhaps

helped the rebels to use the estuary to spread the rising.

The sermons of the radical chaplain John Ball inspired the rebels, including what would become the slogan of the rising: 'When Adam Delve and Eve Span, who was then the Gentleman?'

On June 12, 1381, Ball preached to the Kent rebels assembled on Blackheath, declaring that 'matters goeth not well to pass in England nor shall do till everything be common' and urging them to seek remedy from the king.

After Wat Tyler's death, Ball fled and was arrested at Coventry. He was tried for treason at St Albans and hanged, drawn and quartered on July 15, 1381.

RESEARCH

'The People of 1381' project seeks to shed new light on the complex economic, social and political dynamics of the rebellion, to enhance our understanding of its cultural impact.

In addition to developing case studies of individual rebels, the project will be a unique 'history from below', using an unparalleled set of medieval records to investigate the participation of social groups whose role has been little investigated, such as household servants, soldiers and women. It will use Geographic Information Systems to map the development and structure of

the revolt, to identify differing levels of community protest and examine how these fitted together.

Community engagement with the project is encouraged via two key pathways. A travelling exhibition will visit locations closely linked to the events of 1381, while an education collaboration programme with the Historical Association will include training and materials to be used in schools, as well as a children's poetry competition arranged with the Poetry Society. ■

For more information go to: <https://www.1381.online/>



REVOLT: An exhibition of the 1381 project set in Wat Tyler Park, Pitsea, Essex at the epicentre of the great rebellion

WISHAW & MOTHERWELL
BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

EDINBURGH NO1 AND
PORTOBELLO DISTRICT BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

WAKEFIELD AND HEALEY MILLS
BRANCH SUPPORTS
PAUL WARD
FOR THE NEC POSITION
FOR YORKSHIRE & LINCOLNSHIRE
REGION

BRIDGEND LLANTRISAND AND
DISTRICT BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALEX GORDON
FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

EAST LONDON RAIL BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

EXETER RAIL BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

MIDLANDS BUS BRANCH
SUPPORTS
PAUL WARD
FOR THE NEC POSITION
FOR YORKSHIRE & LINCOLNSHIRE
REGION

SOUTH WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH
NOMINATED
ALEX GORDON
FOR PRESIDENT

NORTH STAFFS BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

PICCADILLY AND DISTRICT WEST
BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

OFFSHORE ENERGY BRANCH
SUPPORTS
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

BIRMINGHAM RAIL BRANCH
NOMINATED
ALEX GORDON
FOR PRESIDENT

SOUTH WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH
SUPPORTS
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

HAMMERSMITH & CITY BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

LU ENGINEERING BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH
SUPPORTS
SEAN HOYLE
FOR PRESIDENT

CAMDEN 3 BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

SOUTH HANTS & EASTLEIGH
WORKSHOP BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

WIMBLEDON BRANCH
SUPPORT
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

MANCHESTER VICTORIA BRANCH
SUPPORTS
SEAN HOYLE
FOR PRESIDENT

EUROPEAN PASSENGER SERVICES
BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

NOTTS & DERBY BUS BRANCH
NOMINATION FOR
PAUL WARD
FOR THE YORKSHIRE AND
LINCOLNSHIRE NEC POSITION

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

CHESTERFIELD BUS BRANCH
SUPPORTS
SEAN HOYLE
FOR PRESIDENT

BIRMINGHAM ENGINEERING
BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

ORPINGTON BRANCH
SUPPORTS
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

NORWICH BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

IPSWICH BRANCH
NOMINATES
KATHY MAZUR
FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER FOR
LONDON & ANGLIA

WATERLOO BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALAN POTTAGE
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

CHESTERFIELD BUS BRANCH
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REGION

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NOMINATES
ALEX GORDON
FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

IPSWICH BRANCH
NOMINATES
ALEX GORDON
FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

PADDINGTON NO1 BRANCH
SUPPORTS
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

LEEDS CITY BRANCH
SUPPORTS
PAUL WARD
FOR THE NEC POSITION
FOR YORKSHIRE & LINCOLNSHIRE
REGION

BRIDGEND LLANTRISAND AND
DISTRICT BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY

ST PANCRAS BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL
SECRETARY.

ST PANCRAS BRANCH NOMINATES KATHLEEN MAZUR FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER LONDON & ANGLIA REGION 10.	MANCHESTER VICTORIA BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	KINGS CROSS BRANCH NOMINATES KATHY MAZUR FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER - REGION 10 (LONDON & ANGLIA)	IPSWICH BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
WORCESTER BRANCH NOMINATES ALEX GORDON FOR PRESIDENT	DORSET RAIL BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	EAST SUSSEX COASTWAY BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	THREE BRIDGES BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
WIMBLEDON BRANCH NOMINATES SEAN HOYLE FOR PRESIDENT	BASINGSTOKE NO1 BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	EAST SUSSEX COASTWAY BRANCH NOMINATES ALEX GORDON FOR PRESIDENT	LEEDS CITY BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
COLCHESTER & DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATE ALEX GORDON FOR PRESIDENT	LIVERPOOL 5 BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	EXETER RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES ALEX GORDON FOR PRESIDENT	BRISTOL BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
WORCESTER BRANCH NOMINATE EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	DARTFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	NUNEATON BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
COLCHESTER AND DISTRICT BRANCH SUPPORTS KATHY MAZUR FOR REGION 10 REGIONAL ORGANISER	BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE COAST BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	CARDIFF RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	BARROW IN FURNESS NO1 BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
WATFORD BRANCH SUPPORTS KATHY MAZUR FOR REGION 10 REGIONAL ORGANISER	WARRINGTON & DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SHEFFIELD AND DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	TFL NO1 AND LU MATS BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
MARCH & DISTRICT BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	GREAT NORTHERN RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	FINSBURY PARK BRANCH NOMINATES ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTH LONDON RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY
MANCHESTER SOUTH BRANCH SUPPORTS ALAN POTTAGE FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	KINGS CROSS BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	COLCHESTER BRANCH NOMINATES EDDIE DEMPSEY FOR ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY	SOUTH LONDON RAIL BRANCH NOMINATES ALEX GORDON FOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

INTERNAL ELECTION ADVERT CHANGES

As part of the ongoing review of union structures the RMT National Executive Committee (NEC) agreed that the current arrangement for election adverts in RMT News should be updated, with a view to streamlining arrangements for advertising branches' support of their selected candidate to coincide with the receipt of a bona fide

nomination under Rule by the union's Constitution section. It was therefore determined that all branches that have submitted a valid nomination by the agreed RMT News deadline for inclusion in its editions will be listed against their preferred candidate in the journal. This measure will replace the need for branches to submit separate paid election advert requests.

FAREWELL JANET

Wolverhampton branch regret to announce the passing of branch member Janet McDonald (Campbell) who worked as an ASM for Avanti and was the branch equalities officer.

Janet had just been re-elected into her second term as local rep and developed a passion for the Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee and was pleased to have been elected on to the liaison committee. She was a regular attendee at the branch and always remained true to herself and lived her best life, but the pandemic took its toll.

Like many reps we were flat out in the first few months including supporting shielders with food parcels outside of work and looking after her two sons who both work on the

railway. In all the years I have worked on the railway I have never known shock and grief on a national level following the death of a member of staff, which is testament to her and the respect everyone had for her.

She will always be remembered for her infectious personality and drive to get things done, but most of all as a friend and for the support she gave to us all. ■

Wolverhampton branch secretary Steve Smith



LETTERS

DISABLED TAXI DRIVERS CLAIM

As a driver with Gett and an RMT member I was disappointed with the article that implied that a disabled driver was not allowed to join Gett. Given the use of the word "claimed" a greater check should have been made before publishing the article.

Due to the pandemic and severe downturn in work Gett stopped recruiting drivers at the time in order to protect the income of existing drivers. All be it with the caveat that you could join for a payment of several thousands of pounds which was a technical device to comply with restraint of trade legislation

no drivers were taken on at this time. So, the disabled

claim is specious.

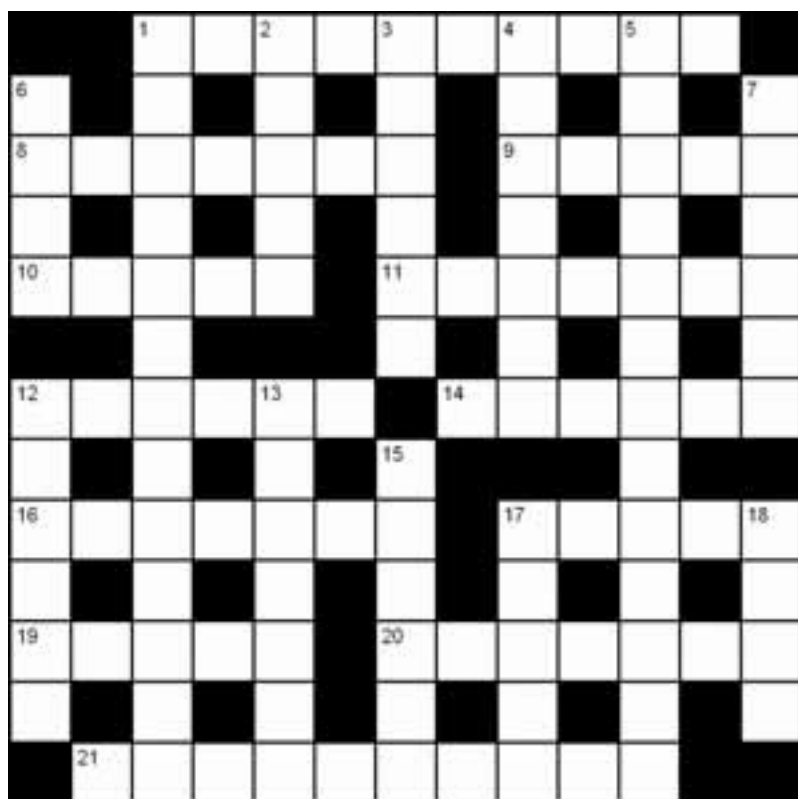
Having a driver that has an exemption certificate for carrying wheelchairs does not affect the 100% wheelchair accessible fleet claim either.

The vehicle remains wheelchair accessible even if the driver cannot take a wheelchair. Additionally, if the person in a wheelchair has a helper that helper can put the passenger in the cab. I contract Gett as an agent to find me work. They do not employ me.

Finally, it should be noted that whilst the London Taxi trade is 100% wheelchair accessible our competitors in the Private Hire industry are 0.5% wheelchair accessible.

Regards, Michael Epstein

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by August 24 with your name and address.

Winner of last month's crossword was Roger Stone, Andover.



Crossword sponsored by UIA

AACROSS

- 1 With regard to society (10)
- 8 Festoon (7)
- 9 Rate (5)
- 10 Brief (5)
- 11 Voter (7)
- 12 Fame (6)
- 14 Fame (6)
- 16 Gain with effort (7)
- 17 Malicious burning (5)
- 19 Rejoice (5)
- 20 Urgent (7)
- 21 Incessant (11)

DOWN

- 1 Central collection place (8,5)
- 2 Graceful (5)
- 3 Rough (6)
- 4 Female performer (7)
- 5 Boundlessness (13)
- 6 Sharp blow (4)
- 7 Bad (6)
- 12 Lecturer (6)
- 13 Struggle (7)
- 15 Desert (6)
- 17 Dwell (5)
- 18 Crazy (4)



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