

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

FIGHTING BACK



INSIDE THIS ISSUE...



CHRRCHILL CLEANERS
FIGHT FOR JUSTICE
PAGE 6



STAFF OUR STATIONS
PAGE 12



POOR STANDARDS
IN THE NORTH SEA
PAGE 15



DEFEND RAIL JOBS,
PAY AND PENSIONS
PAGE 16



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, Motor, Travel and Pet Insurance to RMT members and their families.

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

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

HEALTH CASH PLAN

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

Join RMT by visiting
www.rmt.org.uk

Contents

Page 4

SAVE LONDON'S TRANSPORT

Page 5

RISING CRIME AND FEAR ON LONDON TUBE

Page 6

CHURCHILL CLEANERS FIGHT FOR PAY JUSTICE

Page 7

SOLID NIGHT TUBE ACTION

Page 8

NEW YEAR'S EVE SOLID STRIKE ACTION

Page 9

NO SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY CUTS

Page 10

THE GREAT NORTHERN RAIL BETRAYAL

Page 12

STAFF OUR STATIONS

Page 13

**CATERING STRIKE ON THE AVANTI WEST COAST
CONTRACT ROCK SOLID**

Page 14

SWANLAND TRAGEDY TEN YEARS ON

Page 15

**POOR SAFETY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS IN THE
NORTH SEA**

Page 16

DEFEND RAIL, JOBS, PAY AND PENSIONS

Page 18

LONDON UNDERGROUND DISCRIMINATION VICTORY

Page 20

SAVE SCOTRAIL SERVICES

Page 22

THE AVOIDABLE WILMCOTE TRAGEDY - 100 YEARS ON

Page 24

TOTON RUNAWAY FINDINGS

Page 25

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Page 26

AWARDS/ELECTIONS

Page 30

CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



FIGHTING BACK

As we move into the new year the union's pledge to fight on all fronts to halt a post-pandemic assault on jobs, pay and pensions has stepped up a gear.

As we go to press a ballot of over ten thousand members across all grades on London Underground has recorded a massive 94 per cent vote for strike action with even more signing up to other forms of industrial action.

This is a stunning mandate from a key group of our members and sets the tone for the year ahead which we know full well is going to be one of the toughest we have faced as cynical employers use the COVID crisis as a cloak to hammer down on the workforce.

Preparations to ballot across Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies are now well in place. We are challenging all employers to give us cast iron assurances that the same staff who have kept Britain moving for the past two years, often at considerable personal risk, are not being set up for a battering.

We know it's not just trains and tube where the threat lies. The maritime sector is facing parallel attacks, particularly on pensions, and our officials are taking that

issue head on.

Few groups of workers have found themselves in more workplace danger during the pandemic than bus staff and yet we know that the greedy private bus operators are eyeing them up as well. Their future livelihoods will be very much part of our developing national campaign.

From rail, tube, ferries and ports through to offshore, buses, taxis and freight we have to stand united as a union if we are to come through the battles ahead. This is no time for division and diversions.

As an industrial trade union our strength is in our workplace organisation. I would appeal to every single one of you to join a crusade to sign up any non-members in your work place. That extra density will be crucial.

If you need resources and campaign materials contact your local reps or your regional office.

We know the storm is coming. We have to be ready for it.

Michael Lynch,
RMT general secretary



Unions and transport campaigners protest outside Parliament against transport cuts

RMT protested outside Parliament alongside other trade unions last month opposing any attacks on pensions, the imposition of pay freezes and threats to services and jobs, imposed as part of the government's conditions for bailout out Transport for London.

Protesters backed by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) called for support for a petition that can be signed at www.megaphone.org.uk to Save London's Transport.

London's public transport system desperately needs a proper funding settlement from the government - but instead, it is attacking it:

threatening cuts to services, fare rises, and attacks on the TfL key workers who risked their lives to keep London on its feet during the pandemic.

Ordinary Londoners did the right thing during lockdown and stayed home, but this has led to spending on fares for London's public transport drying up. London's transport system is too dependent on passenger fares, far more so than most global cities, where government plays its part.

The government is now grudgingly offering extra funding, but that support looks set to come with disastrous strings attached - strings that will be bad for anyone who works or travels on London's

public transport.

But the public transport system is vital to getting Londoners moving after the pandemic. It's vital to the national recovery from Covid, and it's vital to creating a sustainable, green future.

Since the start of the pandemic, Transport for London (TfL) has secured more than £4 billion in funding through three government bailouts to keep its Tube and bus services running.

But its current deal ran out and Transport Secretary Grant Shapps is yet to meet with Mayor Sadiq Khan to discuss another rescue package.

If a deal isn't cut, it could mean bus routes will have to

be reduced by a fifth, while London Underground services would be cut by almost 10 per cent.

The cancellation of supply chain contracts is also expected to affect 43,000 jobs in Derby, Falkirk, Bolton, Liverpool, Yorkshire, and Ballymena, Northern Ireland.

Concerns also remain that the Bakerloo Line will be permanently closed as a way of cutting costs.

A £1.6 billion bailout was agreed in May 2020, followed by a £1.8 billion deal in November, which was extended until the end of May. A third deal in June provided a further £1.08 billion to keep the transport network afloat.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch told protesters that the demonstration made clear that attacks on pensions, pay freezes and threats to services and jobs was not an acceptable way to treat London's transport workers who have kept the City moving through a global pandemic.

He called on the Mayor Sadiq Khan to stand up and fight for the Capital's transport services as the full scale of the cuts being demanded by the government begins to emerge.

The union also accused the government of deliberately engineering and provoking a fight with unions over jobs,

services and pensions and of cynically using the COVID pandemic as a cover to unleash the most savage cuts package in modern times.

"It is clear from what we know that the government-driven wrecking ball would reduce transport in London to rubble. We will fight that assault with every tool at our disposal if ministers don't wake up and see sense.

"We are calling on the Mayor and the people of London to stand with the transport workforce in a campaign to secure the funding our services need. It would be a scandal if COVID

was used as a cover to drive through an unprecedented cuts package when we need to be building back for the future," he said.

RMT has written to London Mayor Sadiq Khan calling on him to scrap Transport for London's £12 million executive bonus scheme which will see senior staff rewarded for their success in delivering the government's attack on heroic keyworkers' pay, jobs and pensions.

"Our members, like TfL's executives, have been required to 'perform at the highest possible level to overcome the challenges to deliver their

goals'. But they are expected to do this for no reward, contemplating a future where their livelihoods are being threatened and their retirements thrown into precariousness.

"What makes TfL senior management so special – a breed apart – that they can only 'perform at the highest possible levels if they are given a bonus? How much more scandalous if their challenge is to attack the livelihoods of those who are expected to perform at the highest levels effectively for nothing?" he asked.



RIISING CRIME AND FEAR ON LONDON TUBE



New data from Transport for London has shown a rising rate of crime and anti-social behaviour and increasing passenger fear on the capital's transport system.

RMT has revealed that TfL's Customer Service and Operational Performance Panel were shown data indicating that:

- The rate of recorded crime and anti-social behaviour is up across all modes of TfL transport by 40 per cent from 8.4 per million passenger journeys to 11.8 per million passenger journeys.
- One third of passengers

surveyed said they felt worried on public transport in the last three months and nine per cent of Londoners were completely or temporarily deterred from using public transport due to a worrying incident.

- The level of hate crime on the Underground has nearly returned to Pre-Pandemic levels even though passenger numbers are still down. Around 20 per cent of hate crimes are against London Underground staff.

In November last year, the same panel heard a report

showing that passenger confidence depended on stations and trains being clean, orderly and safe with highly visible staff ensuring effective crowd management.

Yet London Underground has announced that it intended to cut around 600 station staff jobs.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that TfL knew that what London Underground was doing was wrong.

"They have the data that shows passengers want more staff, not less and they now have the data showing that crime and anti-social behaviour rates are up and

passenger confidence is shaken.

If they persist with these cuts it will further erode passenger confidence in tube travel and we risk seeing London Underground descending into a spiral of decline that will cause immeasurable damage to London.

"TfL's Board and the Mayor need to show some spine, do what they know is right and step in to stop these cuts and this government need to stop partying while London crumbles and provide the funds we need to get out of this growing crisis," he said.



CHURCHILL CLEANERS FIGHT FOR PAY JUSTICE



Cleaners on on Govia Thameslink Railways, HS1, Southeastern Railways and Eurostar contracts balloted for action

Low paid RMT rail cleaners who work for Churchill Group are being balloted on Govia Thameslink Railways, HS1, Southeastern Railways and Eurostar contracts to win justice for cleaners.

Many of the cleaners employed on the South-East's rail network are employed on the minimum wage while none of them have company sick pay or travel facilities equal to other rail staff.

The union sees these members as essential workers who did their duty throughout the Covid crisis and now they deserve justice. Therefore RMT is fighting for £15 an hour and proper sick pay and help with

travel to work.

Workers also led protests outside the offices of their employers and the train operating companies that contract as part of their fight for pay justice.

In a recent survey, 61 per cent of Churchill cleaners reported that they sometimes or regularly struggle to get by while 69 per cent reported that they have gone into work while sick because they couldn't afford not to work.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the members' case is unanswerable.

"They've worked through the pandemic on low pay, without sick pay, without travel

facilities, often short of equipment and increasingly understaffed and overworked.

"The train companies spend money on glossy posters and adverts saying how much they care about cleaning, but the dirty truth is that they turn a blind eye to the grossest exploitation from outsourcing companies like Churchill because it means bigger profits all round.

"Our members are sick of it and if Churchill don't address our cleaners' claim for pay justice, we'll be looking at balloting for industrial action before long," he said.

Protestors took their protest outside South Eastern



Trains Limited's offices at near London Bridge then on to Southeastern Trains, Govia's offices at Monument and finally Churchill's Fleet Street Offices.

The union also published an appeal to the judges of the Annual Cleaning Excellence Awards to recognise the plight of these cleaners and called on judges to recommend justice for shortlisted Churchill's railway cleaners.■



SOLID NIGHT TUBE ACTION

Union accuses London Underground of outrageous attempts to use pandemic to bully staff

Strike action by RMT members on the Central and Victoria Lines will continue every weekend on the Night Tube through to June in an on-going fight to prevent the ripping up of staffing arrangements that would wreck the work life balance of drivers.

The union has also made it clear that the mandate extends to other lines and will consider broadening the action if LU fail to respond. RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that if London Underground and the Mayor thought the fight for progressive and family friendly working practices was going away they need to think again.

"It's the failure of LU and Sadiq Khan to address the grievances at the heart of the dispute that leaves us no option but to confirm the programme of action goes ahead.

"RMT has repeatedly put forward cost neutral proposals that would repair the damage unleashed by deleting 200 driver posts and which would dig LU out of this mess. They have ignored us and that approach will have severe consequences for Londoners through to the summer," he said.

The union has already been locked in a bitter dispute with TfL for months over changes to the night Tube rota after TfL has scrapped the 200

part-time Night Tube drivers' posts and now requires drivers who work on the 'day' Tube to do the shifts instead. In a mass meeting of RMT reps, LU bosses were roundly condemned for an outrageous last-ditch attempt to use the pandemic to try and bully staff into accepting their plans.

In talks negotiators said that they could recommend suspension of the action if LU bosses agreed to step back from their current proposals, halted the demands being placed on drivers and gave the unions' cost-neutral alternative a chance to be put into practice.

LU refused point blank yet again to consider this serious

offer and it has become clear that the drive from tube bosses is all about cutting costs regardless of the impact on staff and the services they operate.

The union has also written to London Mayor Sadiq Khan to express its deep disappointment at 'incorrect statements' he made on Twitter that were a total misrepresentation of the facts around the dispute.

The union has warned that deliberately distorting the truth has had an incendiary effect when the Mayor should be putting pressure on tube bosses to get back round the table with RMT for serious talks.





Edinburgh

NEW YEAR'S EVE SOLID STRIKE ACTION

RMT members at Cross Country and Gate Gourmet stand firm for workplace justice

Strike action by members on Cross Country trains and by staff at Edinburgh Waverley Station was solidly supported.

Train managers and senior conductors on Cross Country are out in a fight to stop the company from watering down and undermining the role of safety critical grades and the Gate Gourmet staff in Edinburgh are striking again in a long running dispute over bullying and harassment in the workplace.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch paid tribute to the two groups of rail workers on Cross Country and at Edinburgh Waverley who are both standing firm in their fight to defend safety and a working environment free for bullying and harassment.

"Disruption to services is down to the private companies who think they can

treat rail workers with barely concealed contempt as they ride roughshod over them.

"RMT is well aware that an industrial relations storm is brewing across our railways and that this action is just a taste of what's to come in 2022.

"This trade union will stand up and fight wherever jobs, safety, pay and conditions are under attack and the employers need to wake up to that fact," he said. ■



Birmingham



NO SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY CUTS

Widespread political opposition to 'swingeing' cuts to South Western Railway services is growing following protests outside Parliament to mark twelve months before the government axes hundreds of peak and off-peak rail services across the South Western Railway network.

Over 265 local councillors and MPs from across every single political party in the South West of England have signed RMT's statement totally rejecting the cuts proposals as "regressive" and "entirely short-sighted".

250 local Councillors in the region from across the political spectrum have signed RMT's statement opposing the cuts to South Western Railway services including 95 Lib Dems, 59 Labour, 28 Conservatives, 26 Greens, and 32 Independents.



17 MPs including Conservatives, Labour and Lib Dems have either signed an Early Day Motion, statements opposing the cuts or have raised their concerns directly with Government and the train operator

RMT was joined by transport workers and MPs outside Parliament to protest these cuts and send a clear message to the government and privatised rail industry to stop the cuts to our rail services.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the scale of the political opposition to the cuts showed just how unpopular they are.

"It simply beggars belief that just weeks after this government hosts vital global climate change negotiations they are taking the axe to public transport across the UK.

"The very same public transport that needs massive investment if we are going to get anywhere near to achieving our climate goals.

"What we're seeing on South Western Railway and across the railways in the UK is the same old Tory austerity and a drive to make workers and passengers pay for the Covid-19 crisis.

"My message to the government and privatised rail industry is clear; our union will simply not tolerate this wholesale attack on rail services, jobs and pay and we will fight tooth and nail against them," he said. ■

CALEDONIAN SLEEPER SERCO PROTEST



Union demonstrates outside London headquarters of Serco for Caledonian Sleeper pay justice

More industrial action could be called at any point after RMT members backed additional stoppages in the latest ballot, which is required every six months during a dispute.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the London demonstration sent a clear

message to multinational corporation Serco that it cannot continue to deny these key worker's pay justice.

"These workers have kept vital rail links running throughout the pandemic and they deserve a pay award that recognises their commitment and the soaring cost of living.

"Serco recently announced its first interim dividend since 2014 and boasted of 'stronger than expected recent trading'.

"The Caledonian Sleeper franchise continues to be fully funded by the Scottish government under its emergency measures agreement, which also permits

the payment of fees to Serco.

"Serco could easily fund a proper pay rise for these front-line workers, but instead it has preferred to line the pockets of its private shareholders.

"Enough is enough. RMT is demanding pay justice for Caledonian Sleeper workers," he said. ■



THE GREAT NORTHERN RAIL BETRAYAL

Union slams Tory government cancellation of key rail projects in the north of England

RMT has described the government's long anticipated U-turn on promises to build the vital Eastern leg of the HS2 project and the cancelling of Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) as a "great northern rail betrayal".

The long-awaited Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) was finally published late last year after 12 months of delay and it set out the future of the country's major projects such as High Speed 2 (HS2) and NPR.

Government plans mean that the vital Eastern Leg of the HS2 project will be scrapped and that a new trans-Pennine line between Manchester and Leeds, a key element of Northern Powerhouse Rail, will also not be built.

It is the latest move that

tears up the Tories levelling up agenda and climate change commitments following the conclusion of the COP26 climate talks.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that it was no surprise that the announcement was made after COP26 as the cancelling of the Eastern leg of the HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail projects will become known as the great northern rail betrayal and a betrayal of commitments to fight climate change.

"Cancelling these absolutely vital rail projects is not just a kick in the teeth for the people of the North that have been promised mass rail investment for decades, whilst seeing very little delivered, but also for future generations of this entire country that are

relying on our political leaders to make the decisions and commit the investment we need in rail and public transport to stop the worst impacts of climate change.

"Our climate and communities cannot afford false political choices between different rail projects when what we need is all these projects to go ahead and a historic mass investment in our railways that gets people out of cars and trains and onto and public transport but, instead, we get more Tory austerity, cutbacks and attacks on rail workers jobs and rail services.

"Public transport investment pays for itself through the economic benefits it brings and it's time to the government took a proper long- term approach that

reflects that fact," he said.

A recent report by the Rail Industry Association showed that for every £1 spent in rail, £2.50 of income was generated in the wider economy, compared to £2.20 in 2016.

Northern Leaders grouped in Transport for the North (TfN) which includes Metro Mayors, Council Leaders and representatives of Local Enterprise Partnerships covering the whole of the North convened in Leeds to respond to the government's Integrated Rail Plan.

The Transport for the North Board expressed its disappointment and dismay at the inadequacy of the IRP.

It said that the plans as proposed were unacceptable to the North and noted that the proposals breach the

commitments that government had previously made on Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), and differ from the Board's preferred option, as set out in statutory advice to the Department for Transport (DfT).

The Board identified that the proposed government plan failed in three major areas: capacity; connectivity and disruption.

In proposing a motion that was unanimously supported by the Board, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham said: "As a Board, we have always prioritised east-west connectivity across the North. That is something that unites us. I would say it is the single biggest transport challenge facing this Country. It is not a sustainable situation.

"History would not look kindly on the Board if it just accepted this was all the North was going to get. We have been discussing these proposals for years and what

we got last week was a different solution imposed on us without discussion," he said.

TfN Chair Cllr Louise Gittins also said that the North had spoken with one voice to make it clear that the government's Integrated Rail Plan in its current form was not acceptable.

"That is why our statutory advice to government is clear that they must think again. Instead of this top-down centralised approach they need to reach out and work with local communities, and businesses.

"Despite our deep concerns that the IRP is woefully inadequate, the TfN Board unanimously agreed that it wishes to explore with government funding options for the delivery of the preferred NPR: options could include local contributions, including through harnessing local economic benefits," she said.



"We still believe that there is a way forward that will enable them to collaboratively move at pace to prioritise and sequence investment in a way that delivers the early foundations of a modernised rail system for the region. Instead of what looks like years of rail delays to build a network that by the time its finished will not be fit for purpose.

"TfN Board Members remain committed to the long-term ambition for improving

connectivity across the North and with the Midlands.

We remain firm in our collective belief that the Board's preferred approach to HS2 and NPR best reflects the unique opportunity to unleash the potential of the North, addresses the imbalance in the quality and extent of the rail infrastructure across the UK, and achieves real, positive, and lasting change for the region," she said.

PROTECT YOUR INCOME

RMT has negotiated with our benefit partner RMTProtect to offer an Income Protection plan, especially designed for union members, that includes cover for time off work due to accidents and illness.



RMT knows how working people can suffer if they suddenly find themselves out of work because of illness.

That is why RMT is here to fight your corner - negotiating the best terms and conditions and job protection. The new plan is designed to get to work when you can't. And you can choose the options which will work best for you.

Choose how much you'd need - up to £1,500 a month or 50 per cent of your monthly income before tax, whichever is lower. Once covered, Income Protection Cover pays out a monthly cash sum for you to spend when and how you like if an accident or sickness keeps you at home.

According to the consumer organisation Which?*

"The one protection policy every working adult should consider is the very one most of us don't have - Income Protection."

38.8 million

working days were lost between 2019-2020 due to work-related illness & workplace injury.[†]

You can choose when you need the benefits to start, from 30 days to 365 days after you find yourself out of work.

The longer you wait the lower your premium will be. The policy will pay out until you're able to return to work or you reach the end of your 12 month benefit period.

Visit

www.RMTProtect.com/IP or call 0343 178 1233

for a no-obligation quote and, if you like it, simple-to-set-up cover and make protecting your income your priority.

Allen Margrett, a 46 year old Support Worker from Coventry says,

"I took out income protection insurance for the security of knowing ... that there's something there that is going to protect us should the unforeseeable happen. Thankfully I've not had to use it, but to know that it is there is a reassurance."

*www.which.co.uk †Health & Safety Executive: Health & Safety Statistics, 2019/2020 (www.hse.gov.uk/statistics)

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Yorkshire and Lincolnshire regional council leaflet
Doncaster station against proposed cuts to LNER stations.

Union launches protests across the country against LNER ticket office cuts

Demonstrations have taken place up and down the country from Berwick to Kings Cross against plans to significantly reduce ticket office opening times on the train company LNER services.

RMT is stepping up its Staff our Stations campaign after LNER launched a consultations on proposals to reduce the ticket office opening hours at Berwick-upon-Tweed, Darlington, Doncaster, Durham, Edinburgh, Grantham, London King's Cross, Newark North Gate, Newcastle, Peterborough, Retford, Wakefield Westgate and York train stations.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the

demonstrations send a clear message to the government, and train companies such as LNER, that cuts to stations and ticket offices run counter to what passengers want and will do nothing to support the post-Covid recovery of the sustainable rail network.

"In fact, research by the government's own watchdog has found that passengers want to see more, not less, staff.

"RMT's is continuing to ramp up its Staff our Stations campaign to oppose cuts which make the railway less safe, secure and accessible for passengers," he said.

The proposals would see the ticket offices at major



MPs Ian Lavery and Chi Onwurah join LNER protest
at Newcastle Central station



stations open later and close easier, and in many cases would lead to a significant reduction in opening hours.

RMT is calling on the passenger watchdogs Transport Focus and London TravelWatch to oppose all of the proposed cuts to ticket office hours and for LNER to withdraw its proposals.

Staffed ticket offices make the rail network more safe, secure and accessible for passengers. Ticket offices and travel shops provide a wide range of services and advice in addition to ticket sales that passengers cannot access from Ticket Vending Machines and online ticketing platforms.

RMT believes that LNER's proposals to reduce ticket

office hours at these 13 stations would worsen passenger safety, security and accessibility and make it easier to reduce staffing at these stations.

The cuts would also make it harder for passengers to get the cheapest and most appropriate tickets and restrict the advice they can access at the ticket office.

The cuts will also deter passengers from using the rail network and are completely at odds with the government's climate change targets.

The cuts will be particularly damaging for some groups including disabled passengers, elderly passengers and people on lower incomes who may not have access to digital

ticketing.

Transport Focus' own passenger research, published in October 2020, found that 'staff play a central role in helping passengers feel safe and secure' and that passengers want to see more

rather than less rail staff. Cuts to ticket office hours run counter to this.

For these reasons, RMT believes that the proposals must be withdrawn and the current ticket office hours protected. ■



Kings Cross

CATERING STRIKE ON THE AVANTI WEST COAST CONTRACT ROCK SOLID



RMT members employed by DHL to provide vital catering services for the Avanti West Coast solidly supported a further day of strike action in their fight for pay justice.

This core group of staff are standing firm in their battle as analysis by RMT reveals that the companies' parent Groups paid out nearly £2 billion in the last year to shareholders – fuelling anger at the hypocrisy from the board room as the low paid employees who generate those profits get shafted.

RM ANALYSIS REVEALS THAT:

- In May 2021, DHL's parent company Deutsche Post

AG paid out around £1.4 billion in dividends to shareholders, an increase of 17 per cent from the year previous.

- In September 2021, Avanti West Coast's parent company First Group PLC confirmed it would return £500 million to shareholders.
- The latest accounts for the UK registered DHL Supply Chain Ltd reveal that over £2.7 million was paid to company directors in one year, with the highest paid director receiving an eye-watering £476,000, a rise of nearly eight per cent

from the year previous.

Despite this pandemic profiteering, DHL's frontline workers on the Avanti West Coast continue to be denied pay justice and voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action and are out in force on the picket lines this morning.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that RMT members working for DHL on the Avanti West Coast contract were rock solid in their industrial action again as they stand up for the basic principle of pay justice.

"They are a credit to the union.

"With inflation rocketing and national insurance set to

increase, these frontline workers are facing a cost-of-living crisis but it's another story for the Scrooge bosses who, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, have still paid out eye-watering sums in dividends and director pay, whilst treating the workers who generate their profits with complete contempt.

"Rather than continuing to line the pockets of shareholders and directors, RMT is demanding a fair pay award for these workers that recognises their vital contribution to our rail services and the soaring cost of living. The union remains available for talks," he said. ■

SWANLAND TRAGEDY TEN YEARS ON

On the anniversary RMT general secretary Mick Lynch pledges to campaign for more powers for onboard safety reps, risk assessments and training

The UK has a strong tradition in improving maritime safety standards, from the Plimsoll Line to hosting the International Maritime Organisation. That record has undoubtedly saved countless seafarer and passenger lives over time, as well as facilitating a rapid pace in economic growth and security.

But, as the tenth anniversary of the Swanland tragedy reminds us, this progress has not been without great cost to seafarers and their families. And my trade union, the RMT is concerned that the pandemic will further undermine rather than improve maritime and seafarer safety standards that were already under commercial pressure before the coronavirus struck.

RMT recently remembered the loss of six Russian seafarers on the Cook Islands registered cargo ship MV Swanland who lost their lives in the Irish Sea en route to the Isle of Wight on November 27 2011. In response to the serious regulatory failures that contributed to the loss of the vessel and six of the eight crew, RMT called for a public inquiry in the wake of this awful incident. Sadly, that inquiry did not happen, despite the official findings of the Maritime Accident Investigation Branch.

The anniversary of the Swanland tragedy should always be a time to reflect on its causes and the official

response to the deaths of Leonid Safonov, Yury Shmelev, Genadiy Meshkov, Mikhail Starchevoy, Sergey Kharchenko and Oleg Andriets. The fatal decision to re-classify the ship as a bulk carrier in order to avoid a full safety inspection is a fact that continues to cause deep unease amongst seafarers and their trade unions.

The case of the Swanland also reminds us of the direct relationship between seafarer employment conditions and maritime safety. On July 20 this year, the bosun on the Clipper Pennant tragically lost his life during cargo operations alongside in Bootle. Seatruck has now had three seafarer deaths in the last three years. This dreadful record points to broader problems around crewing levels and the safety culture at low-cost operators in the Irish Sea and at Flags of Convenience like Cyprus, who routinely ignore the concerns of seafarers and their unions.

In our view, the coronavirus pandemic threatens to seriously accelerate the sort of regulatory infringements that proved fatal for all but two of the Swanland crew. It may feel like we are at the tail end of a crew change crisis that has affected some of the lowest paid workers in our logistics supply chain whilst profits at container lines boom but the shipping industry cannot return to business as usual.

Under half of the world's one million ratings and



MEMORIAL: MV Swanland memorial at St Hywyn Church, Aberdaron, Gwynedd, Wales

857,000 officers have received a Covid vaccine. Coupled with seafarer fatigue and regulatory uncertainty at port level, the risk to maritime safety in UK and international waters is growing. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency revealed last month the extent of Covid-19's impact on maritime safety regulation – in 2020-21

surveys and inspections of UK ships were down by 43 per cent and 30 per cent respectively; and inspections of foreign flagged vessels, including Flags of Convenience for compliance with core safety and labour standards were down by an alarming 69 per cent.

We fully support and

respect the tough job that MCA and ITF inspectors do on behalf of seafarers and shipowners. Indeed, the MCA's detention of the Cypriot flagged container ship Athens Glory in London Gateway in October, due to several crew members working beyond the end of their contract of employment, shows that the system is still working. But it stands to reason that fewer inspections means that more sub-standard safety and employment conditions are being missed.

RMT welcome the emphasis on safety in the Maritime 2050 strategy and we have raised our concerns over safety standards with successive Shipping Ministers and at the National Maritime Occupational Health and

Safety Committee. The voice of seafarer Ratings is critically important in meeting these concerns and this includes greater co-ordination between port and shipboard safety representatives.

We will continue to campaign for onboard safety representatives, including our members, to have greater involvement in safety inspections, risk assessments and training. The first step in that is for shipowners to engage with trade unions to tackle the culture of long hours and the culture of misreporting of hours of rest and work uncovered before the pandemic in the World Maritime University's EVREST report.

The Health and Safety Executive, the TUC and



international bodies all acknowledge that trade union organised workplaces are safer workplaces. This needs to be reflected in working and crewing practices across the maritime industry too.

As we enter a post pandemic phase of decarbonisation and, hopefully, a return of

passenger volumes, RMT stands ready to work with shipping and port companies as these sectors evolve to avoid a repeat of the Swanland by supporting quality shipping registers and guaranteeing that all seafarers are protected at work by the highest possible safety standards. ■

POOR SAFETY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS IN THE NORTH SEA

The union has raised concerns over the government's failure to prevent a deterioration in safety critical and environmental maintenance standards in the offshore oil and gas industry.

In answer to Written Parliamentary Question 80982 last month tabled by Labour MP for Stockton North, Alex Cunningham, the government revealed that one in four inspections carried out by the Health and Safety Executive reveal poor standards of safety maintenance on installations. Since 2019, only three out of 67 inspections found full compliance.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the findings revealed the escalating threat

that commercial pressure and light touch regulation pose to the safety of offshore oil and gas workers.

"On top of these disturbing findings, duty holders including Total and their contractors are chipping away at jobs and terms and conditions when they should be tackling basic safety by clearing maintenance backlogs.

"Our offshore members are facing existential threats to their industry, no Just Transition and declining safety standards in a multiple hazard workplace. RMT called on industry to use the pandemic to clear these dangerous safety critical and environmental backlogs.

"These figures show that

some in the offshore industry are going in the opposite direction which increases the risk of a catastrophic safety or environmental incident offshore. RMT will continue to work day and night to prevent this."

Alex Cunningham MP said that it was unbelievable that of the HSE offshore inspections over the last three years shows one in four were judged poor or very poor and just three of the 67 were fully compliant. This is totally unacceptable – our offshore workers and their families need to know that their workplaces are safe and fit for purpose.

"It is clear that this isn't the case but my worry is that there could be many more which

haven't been inspected in recent times that may not be at the standard required.

"A more relaxed regime laid down by the Government followed by cuts to required maintenance doubtless led to these failures. It is time for Ministers to tighten up," he said.

The Health and Safety Executive has issued an Improvement Notice to Total's North Sea contractors following an alarming 57 per cent increase in the backlog of safety critical maintenance work over the last year. At the same time, these employers are also pressing ahead with a redundancy programme amongst maintenance staff on Total's Gryphon asset. ■

DEFEND RAIL, JOBS, PAY AND PENSIONS

Union launches campaign across Network Rail and Train Operating Companies to defend your pay, jobs, conditions and pensions.

The core of the campaign is:

- Protect your Earnings – BUST THE PAY FREEZE – you deserve a pay rise
- Protect your Job – NO Compulsory Redundancies
- Protect your working practices, terms and conditions
- Protect the Railway Pension Scheme – keep it open and affordable for members

The union is giving a clear message that it is prepared to campaign and fight, to protect members and win a pay rise and protect jobs, conditions, and pensions. This may culminate in coordinated industrial action across the rail network, in all affected companies.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Spread the word – that we all have to be ready to take whatever steps are necessary to defend our futures.
- Ensure that your colleagues

are RMT members. It's quick and easy to join online at www.rmt.org.uk/about/join-rmt/. Together we are stronger.

- Get involved in the campaign. Details are available at www.rmt.org.uk/campaigns/rail/defend-rail/
- Make sure we have your up-to-date details. These are not only your contact details but also your work grade and location. If you're not sure email info@rmt.org.uk or call 0800 376 3706
- Keep updated - Look out for RMT texts and emails and stay in touch with your local rep.
- Follow RMT on social media at @RMTunion

WORKING FOR LESS - WHAT THE PAY FREEZE MEANS

Rail workers have already been subjected to pay freezes and now an open-ended pay



freeze could be imposed on all members despite soaring inflation creating a cost-of-living crisis. National insurance is also due to rise.

Below is what a three-year pay freeze could look like. There is also a question mark over the very notion that there should be annual pay deals at all!

Rail worker pay has always been calculated using the Retail Price Index (RPI) measure of inflation. RPI inflation reached a thirty-year high of 7.1 per cent in November 2021, and independent forecasters are projecting RPI inflation to run at an average of 4.5 per cent

between 2022 and 2024. The table below shows how various salaries could look in three years' time after an annual pay rise in line with RPI projections and therefore how much worse off workers could instead be after a pay freeze, both in terms of the impact on salary and the total loss of salary earnings after three years.

Staff working for the majority of TOCs also did not get a pay rise in 2020, therefore, the total loss of earnings will be even higher for these workers.

WORKING HARDER, FOR LESS

Whilst cutting your pay, the employers want you to

increase your workload. That means:

- Cutting thousands of jobs across the industry on top of the on-going vacancy freeze.
- Even cutting jobs on the cheap offering voluntary redundancy on terms far below agreed rates.
- Refusing to meet your Union's demand of no compulsory redundancies.
- A special focus immediately on stripping out jobs from station and retail grades, control rooms and catering services.
- Closure of all ticket offices across the network.
- More attempts to introduce Driver Only Operation.
- Watering down of safety critical maintenance regimes at Network Rail with the loss of thousands of jobs.
- Radical changes to working practices in Network Rail maintenance such as pooling of operatives, new grading structures, overlapping skills, individual rostering, more unsociable hours and other measures.

- Network Rail also has plans for operations and stations with "21st Century Operations" and "Digital Railways".
- New arrangements for Network Rail customer service staff without agreeing a collective arrangement from the existing dispute.
- Deskillling, outsourcing, less direct employment, more agency and casual labour.
- Less staff means more work and flexibility demanded on those who remain.
- Across the industry - more unsociable hours and shift patterns and worse work-life balance.
- They will want to place Sunday automatically within the working week without compensation or enhanced payment.
- Accelerated implementation of new and digital technologies and remote monitoring, that again threatens jobs and working practices permanently.

WORKING LONGER, FOR LESS

Less pay of course means less pension when you retire. But if

that was not bad enough, the employers are preparing to attack the Railway Pension Scheme. That will mean:

- Increasing the proportion of your pay you pay into the scheme.
- Making you retire later.
- Reducing the value of your pension when you retire.
- Making it harder or impossible for new staff to join the scheme.
- Less staff paying in means you will have to put more in, just to keep the scheme going.

The TOCs are planning these changes now. Network Rail has not given a guarantee that their current pension arrangement will be maintained. RMT is demanding that the Railway Pension Scheme remains open and affordable with scheme benefits protected.

ONE RULE FOR YOU AND ANOTHER FOR THE FAT CATS

Whilst the employers are using the pandemic as a cover to implement less pay, pensions and job security for rail workers they have been engaged in shameful pandemic profiteering as

shown by the following nasty numbers:

- £174 million – the annual profit leakage from Network Rail outsourcing renewals.
- £10 million – the total earnings of the TOC and Network Rail directors in one year, over £4 million of which went to the highest paid director at each company.
- £98 million – the amount made in profits by TOCs during the 6-month Covid-19 Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) in 2020.
- £231 million – the amount the TOCs stand to make in profits under their 18-month Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements (ERMAs).
- £950 million – the amount the Rolling Stock companies paid out in dividends in 2020.

To put the above into context the TOC profits and Network Rail annual sub-contracting profits alone would be more than enough to fund an inflation-matching pay rise for all TOC and Network Rail staff at 7.1 per cent. ■

Sample salary	2021/22 salary (increased by November 2021 RPI – 7.1%)	2022/23 salary (increased by projected RPI)	2023/24 salary (increased by projected RPI)	Impact on salary of a 3-year pay freeze (compared to annual pay rises in line with RPI)	Total loss of salary earnings after 3 years (compared to annual pay rises in line with RPI)
£20,000	£21,420	£22,384	£23,391	-£3,141	-£6,695
£25,000	£26,775	£27,980	£29,239	-£4,239	-£8,994
£30,000	£32,130	£33,576	£35,087	-£5,087	-£10,793
£35,000	£37,485	£39,172	£40,935	-£5,935	-£12,591
£40,000	£42,840	£44,768	£46,782	-£6,782	-£14,390
£45,000	£48,195	£50,364	£52,630	-£7,630	-£16,189
£50,000	£53,550	£55,960	£58,478	-£8,478	-£17,988
£55,000	£58,905	£61,556	£64,326	-£9,326	-£19,786
£60,000	£64,260	£67,152	£70,174	-£10,174	-£21,585
£65,000	£69,615	£72,748	£76,021	-£11,021	-£23,384

LEGAL

LONDON UNDERGROUND DISCRIMINATION VICTORY

Union wins disability discrimination case against London Underground for terminating a phased return to work



An RMT member has won a successful claim of disability discrimination against London Underground Limited at a hearing in the Watford Employment Tribunal.

The Tribunal found that LUL discriminated against the member, represented by RMT's legal department, when it terminated a phased return to work and subjected the member to medical redeployment.

The member was employed by LUL as a Train Maintainer and involved in accident at work in May 2016. He returned to work on light duties nine months after the accident and initially undertook office-based work but he was keen to get back to his Train Maintainer duties.

In early 2019, he raised the possibility of returning to Train Maintainer duties with his then-line manager but he was referred to Occupational Health instead. The Tribunal found that it was "crystal clear" from the very outset that his limitations, resulting from his accident, could be considered as permanent. Occupational Health placed some restrictions on the work that he could do and LUL were advised to carry out a risk assessment of the specific tasks he was required to perform.

LUL carried out a risk assessment with the member

and an RMT health and safety representative. The Tribunal found that it was always contemplated that the risk assessment would be "reviewed and expanded as appropriate". Following the initial assessment, the member and LUL agreed that he would undertake a 20-week phased return to Train Maintainer duties.

He began his phased return to Train Maintainer duties in August 2019. The Tribunal found that it was "envisaged that the claimant's performance would be reviewed regularly and that he would be risk assessed as to whether he could safely increase the amount of tasks he could undertake".

However, within weeks of starting his phased return, LUL referred him back to Occupational Health. The Tribunal found it "curious" that a referral was made at this time.

Shortly afterwards, the member was informed that the phased return was no longer an option, that it was LUL's view that he was not fit for perform his full duties and that LUL had therefore decided to subject him to medical redeployment. The member's team leader had not even been consulted about his performance prior to the decision being made.

LUL's evidence to the

Tribunal was the latest Occupational Health report had been a "game changer" and lead them to conclude that there was no point in the phased return to work continuing and that he should be medically redeployed. However, the Tribunal found that there was "no change at all" from the previous reports. The Tribunal went on to say:

"It is clear to us that the claimant was physically able to undertake more work than was contained within the original risk assessment. We find that the reviews that were intended to take place were not happening. We would have expected further risk assessments to be undertaken to see if the claimant was capable of safely undertaking more and more of his full-time duties. This did not happen."

Despite representations from trade union representatives, LUL pressed ahead with the decision to subject him to medical redeployment. At a further meeting, he provided supportive medical evidence to LUL. Despite this, he was told that he had until 4pm that day to indicate whether he accepted redeployment. He was also told that if he declined or did not respond then his employment would be medically terminated a few days later.

The member raised a

grievance about LUL's decision to subject him to medical redeployment and he appealed against an unsuitable job offer that had been made to him. The redeployment process was therefore placed on hold. He completed his phased return to Train Maintainer duties and carried on in the role; he even worked overtime - yet LUL continued to argue that he was unfit to perform the role.

RMT's legal department were instructed to act in his claim of disability discrimination at the Employment Tribunal. At a four-day hearing in October 2021, the Tribunal found that terminating the phased return to work half-way through was a failure to make reasonable adjustments and that the member should have been allowed to complete his full agreed return to work programme and a final risk assessment undertaken before making any decision on whether he should be redeployed. The Tribunal also found that LUL had treated him unfavourably because of something which arose in consequence of his disability. The case has been listed for a further hearing in order for the Tribunal to determine the level of compensation to be awarded to him.



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SAVE SCOTRAIL SERVICES

Failed operator Abellio proposes service cuts from May after ScotRail has passed into public ownership

RMT is calling for Abellio ScotRail's proposals to cut 12 per cent of services, or around 100,000 a year, to be withdrawn and for the Scottish government to commit to protecting ScotRail services.

The Failed ScotRail operator's "Fit for the Future" document includes plans to drop from its pre-Covid number of 2,400 services a day to 2,100 in line with new travel patterns and overcapacity on some routes.

Please sign and share the RMT petition available at <https://www.megaphone.org.uk/petitions/stop-the-cuts-to-scotrail-services>

Abellio is consulting on the proposed timetable from May 2022, despite the fact that it will not even be operating the franchise by then, as ScotRail will pass into public ownership from April 1 2022.

Abellio currently runs the franchise but the Scottish government will take over from the Dutch firm, using a "break clause" in the franchise contract to end it three years early after the company revealed losses of over £64 million.

RMT believes that it is unfathomable that the Scottish government, which is already managing the franchise under

its Emergency Measures Agreement, is overseeing drastic and damaging cuts to the sustainable, low carbon, rail network.

This will do nothing to make Scotland a 'Net zero nation' and will just push more people into cars, despite the Scottish government's goal of reducing car miles by 20 per cent by 2030.

It is clear these rail cuts will be bad for passengers and bad for Scotland's climate change goals.

In a joint statement from all rail unions including RMT said: "It is incredible that in the year that the world comes to

Scotland to debate the very future of our planet that ScotRail is proposing cuts to rail services in a transparent attempt to use the pandemic as cover for cuts.

"These plans would not only cull jobs, they would hit the most vulnerable hardest including elderly and disabled people. All the while diverting many passengers back onto the roads and increasing pollution, congestion and greenhouse gases.

"It is exactly this type of short-term thinking that has contributed to the climate crisis," the statement said.

PEOPLE'S SCOTRAIL: Unions and supporters launch a report calling for a People's Scotrail outside the Scottish parliament and to demand a commitment block proposed cuts to ScotRail services. The Scottish government manages the ScotRail franchise under its ongoing Emergency Measures Agreement and has the power to block the service cuts being proposed.



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THE AVOIDABLE WILMCOTE TRAGEDY - 100 YEARS ON

In March 1922 four more track workers were killed just months after a similar disaster had taken six lives

Last October's RMT News featured a piece on the tragic incident at Stapleton Road in Bristol in 1921, which cost six track workers their lives. Even more tragically, this wasn't to be the last incident of the kind. Just six months' later, in March 1922, four more track workers died in a single incident, at Wilmcote in Warwickshire. It seems that little had changed since Stapleton Road.

On March 24 1922, the gang of four was hit by a light engine, running past their work site. Edward Sherwood (43), George Booker (43), Lewis Washburn (40) and William Bonehill (27) were killed. All were members of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), the union which became part of RMT when it was formed.

The safety of track workers was an industry-wide problem – but what made the Wilmcote incident particularly galling was that it involved the same company as at Stapleton Road: the Great Western Railway (GWR). It wasn't noticeably any more or less safe than the other railway companies of the time, but to have suffered two bad incidents like these in a short space of time exposed the problem.

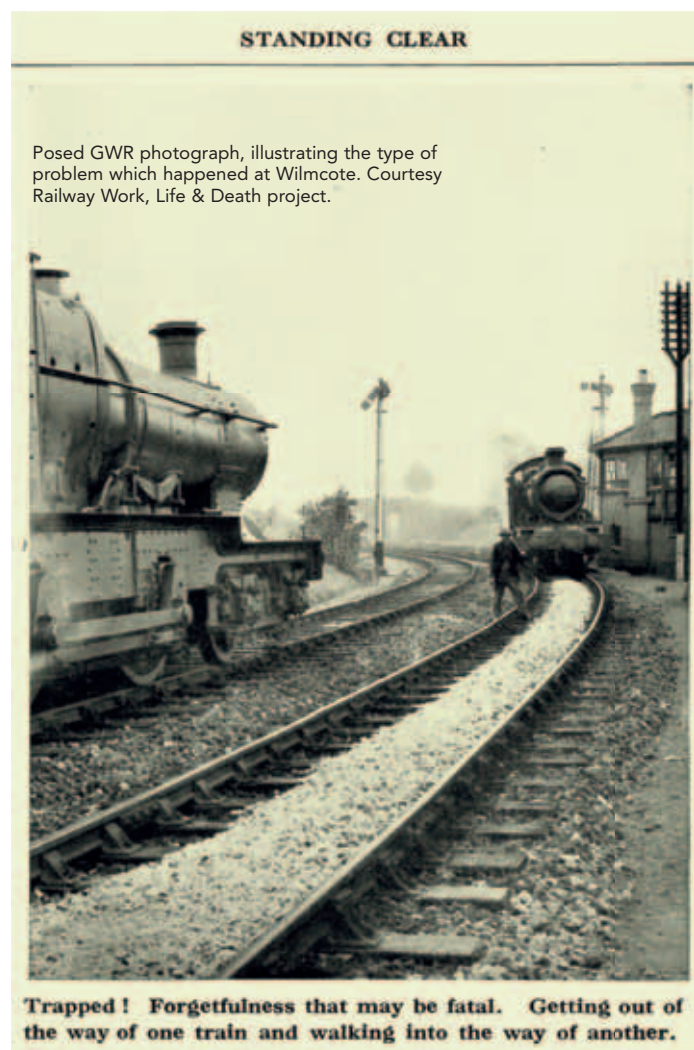
This problem – the safety of railway workers – is at the heart of the 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project, which has uncovered the Wilmcote incident. The project has been set up to help us all find out

more about railway worker accidents before 1939 – including Wilmcote. Usually these incidents happened in ones and twos, out of sight of the public; Wilmcote was unusual in that it killed four in a single moment.

At 7.40am on the 24th of March, the men were packing a rail joint on the up line, to the south of Wilmcote station. At this point the line was in a cutting, on a curve, limiting visibility. The approaching down goods train was seen, and the men moved clear. It was thought that the gang then resumed work on the up line – facing each other, and bending over – as they were hit by a light engine on their line.

The ganger for the section had left instructions to 'to keep a sharp look-out, and to appoint a look-out man "if necessary."' Afterwards he said that he meant this to mean that a look-out should be appointed when men were working on the track. Tragically one of the men, George Booker, was qualified look-out – and had been acting as a look-out when the men had been working at the same location the day before.

The men were held responsible for the incident, as they didn't stand clear of all lines until satisfied that both directions were free of trains, and the sub-ganger hadn't appointed a look-out. As ever, the fact that this would have involved taking one of the four men from the gang, with a



knock-on impact on the time it took them to complete their work, wasn't mentioned in the official state report into the deaths.

The relationship with the Stapleton Road incident was noted: 'Such a failure to comply with instructions and Rules and Regulations which have been drawn up for the men's own safety, is the more incomprehensible in view of the fact that almost exactly six month's previously, under very similar conditions, six platelayers were run down and killed near Stapleton Road on this same railway. Harris [the ganger] tells me the circumstances of this accident were discussed amongst his gang only a week previously,

and the need for watchfulness emphasised.'

The state accident investigator, JAA Pickard, urged the railway companies to better educate staff and to supervise them more closely. Following Stapleton Road, the GWR had been preparing a booklet specifically aiming at track staff – though this of course didn't address the deeper problem of staff working on track amongst moving trains and without any protection. However, the booklet did include specific mention of both Stapleton Road and Wilmcote, a sad legacy of the incidents.

The men each left a widow, and between them 14 children; it looks like another

might have been born in the months after the accident. Each of the widows would have received a maximum of £300 in compensation from the GWR – around £14,000 today. That would hardly be enough to support the families, and the Mayor of Stratford opened a fund for donations for the families.

The GWR paid the funeral expenses; all four men were buried together at St Andrew's church in Wilmcote. They were all Wilmcote men, so the impact on the community must have been particularly marked. Hundreds attended the funeral, and reportedly thousands lined the route of the cortege. The bodies were brought from Stratford by special train; coffins were carried from Wilmcote station by fellow track workers from their district. As well as the Mayor and Mayoress of Stratford, NUR

representatives featured in the cortege.

As unassisted look-out working finally comes to an end on the UK's railways, it seems incredible to think that only 100 years ago unassisted look-outs were seen as the solution to track safety – and weren't even guaranteed to be provided. Whilst we still have some distance to go on making track and other railway work as safe as it might be, we have at least made progress – and the NUR, and now RMT, have consistently pushed for change.

On the centenary of the incident, we're hoping to mark the four men who died, including ideally with a permanent plaque. At the time of writing, we're at the point of discussions, so whatever we're able to do to ensure the men are remembered, we'll publicise when we have more details. ■

NUR cartoon, from the Railway Review of 20 April 1928; the same issue as at Wilmcote was clearly still a problem six years later. Courtesy Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.



Dr Mike Esbester: Mike is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Portsmouth. He is co-leader of the 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project, a collaboration between the University of Portsmouth, the National Railway Museum and the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick (www.railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk). Twitter: @RWLDproject). The website will feature more on the Wilmcote incident and the men involved as we approach the centenary.

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£150,000 cover for just under £4 per week!

But it's not just at home - from tripping up on the pavement to being involved in a more serious road traffic incident, there's no knowing when, why or where an accident might happen.

RMTProtect have developed a plan which can help you protect yourself and your loved ones against the financial consequences of accidents.

The Accident Protection Plan provides £150,000 in a cash lump sum to help family members cope if you were to die as a result of an accident.

Of course, that's the bleakest scenario. But hospital stays as the result of accidental injury are also covered by the policy, with payouts of £75 for every 24 hours spent as an inpatient as

the result of an accident* – cash which could help tide you over a difficult time.

With RMTProtect Accident Protection Plan there's guaranteed acceptance for UK residents aged 18-69.

The policy covers you 24 hours a day, anywhere in the world, plus you can insure your partner too and save 10%!

An accident can make us feel completely out of control. RMTProtect's Accident Protection Plan could help you and your loved ones stay on track.

"...it kept my head above water....stopped me from drowning whilst I was in hospital, it made up for it because I was able to borrow the money knowing that I was getting money back."

Samantha, 48, from Merseyside

Illustrative Example:

- ✓ £150,000 accidental death cover
- ✓ Plus £75 daily hospital cash benefit†
- ✓ For just under £4 a week

To find out more and get a quick quote visit:
www.rmtprotect.com/accident

RMT is an Introducing Appointed Representative of RMTProtect which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority to distribute non-investment insurance products, register number 307575. This policy is underwritten by Advent Insurance PCC Ltd - UIB Cell. Terms and conditions apply. Cover is not provided for injury or death due to natural causes. *Maximum 180 days for any one stay.

TOTON RUNAWAY FINDINGS

Report finds DB Cargo had no processes for tasks required when trains arrived or confirm they had been carried out

In its report into the runaway and derailment of wagons at Toton, Nottinghamshire on January 17 2021, the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) has found that DB Cargo had no clear processes in place.

At 04:42 hrs on the day of the incident a rake of 22 wagons, 21 of which were loaded, ran away from Old Bank sidings at Toton.

As it ran away, the rake passed a red signal, which generated an alarm that alerted the signaller. The rake

passed a second red signal and, a short distance later, the leading four wagons derailed at the end of the run-out rails associated with a set of trap points.

The trap points worked as intended to derail the unauthorised movement. The leading two derailed wagons stopped foul of the adjacent running line, although no trains were nearby when the derailment occurred. The rake of wagons travelled a total distance of about 0.6 miles during the runaway.

RAIB's investigation found that the rake of wagons ran away because it had not been secured with either handbrakes or scotches after it was stabled in Old Bank sidings the previous evening. This meant that the wagons were only being held by air trapped in their brake systems, which subsequently leaked away.

The wagons were free to move because the incoming train they were part of had not been secured before its locomotive was uncoupled and

because there was miscommunication between the ground staff on duty about who would secure the train.

An underlying factor was that staff at Old Bank sidings were routinely leaving trains unsecured for short periods of time, but this was not identified by DB Cargo's safety assurance activities. A second underlying factor was that DB Cargo had no clear process in place that defined the tasks required when trains arrived, and no process to provide confirmation that these tasks



had been carried out. The consequences of the runaway were made potentially worse because the leading two wagons fouled the adjacent running line after derailling at the trap points.

RAIB found that Network Rail's risk assessment processes for both new and existing trap points only considered mitigations that were not applicable to uncontrolled runaway vehicles. These assessments also did not consider that runaway vehicles, once derailed, could travel as far as they did in this accident.

Recommendations

RAIB made four recommendations. The first was that DB Cargo should establish the extent to which vehicles are being left unsecured in its yards and sidings and identify and address the possible reasons for this. The second recommendation was that DB Cargo should review and improve its processes for trains arriving at its yards and sidings so it is clear when tasks should be undertaken, who is responsible for them and how their completion is communicated.

The third recommendation was that DB Cargo should review its current arrangements for supervising, monitoring and auditing safety in its yards and sidings. The fourth recommendation called on Network Rail to revise its risk assessment process for trap points, so that it considers the risk of an adjacent running line becoming fouled when uncontrolled vehicles run away.

RAIB also identified two learning points. The first reminded drivers and staff carrying out ground staff duties of the importance of securing vehicles prior to detaching locomotives. The second was a reminder that the primary purpose of trap points located on the exit from sidings, or on the exit of a goods line which connect to sidings, was to protect running lines from runaway vehicles. ■

President's column



BUST THE PAY FREEZE WITH INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

Welcome to 2022. A new year, but workers face familiar struggles.

It has been 10 years since I wrote the President's column for RMT News. As your new RMT President, I wish all RMT members and your families a safe, happy and prosperous 2022.

How we achieve this, given a public sector pay freeze and unprecedented cost of living increases, is what this column is about.

I am truly grateful for the messages of support and encouragement, too numerous to mention, I have received since being elected RMT President.

Two weeks ago, I was booking on duty to drive trains on the Great Western mainline. Today, I will be joining RMT general secretary Mick Lynch and other members of our National Executive Committee to take forward the essential business of our union.

In case there is any doubt about what that essential business is, let me be clear, it is you - your job, your safety, rights and dignity at work, your pay and conditions, and your pension.

I want to place on record my thanks to all RMT representatives, officers and staff for the great work you continue to do protecting and defending RMT members throughout the year.

Our union is not a rabble. We are a disciplined, intelligent organisation of transport workers, part of a mass labour movement. We can change the world when we act together in unity.

In the past year we have seen why we need to change the world. The crisis of Britain's capitalist system has been laid bare. You and your family are now paying the price for Tory corruption and incompetence in the form of a two-year pay freeze - a real-terms pay cut.

The rate of retail price inflation shot up by 7.1 per cent in the year to November 2021. The price of essential goods and services you

need to put food on the table is going up. Your wages are not.

The RPI inflation figures due to be released this January are predicted to be even higher, with the Bank of England interest rate increase in December 2021 pushing up rents and mortgages.

In the words of Charles Dickens' Mr Micawber: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds and six, result misery."

The cartel of privatised energy companies that control Britain's rigged energy market have warned of sharp energy price rises this winter and in April 2022 an increase in National Insurance contributions of 1.25 per cent will hit every worker's pay packet.

It is no exaggeration to say that the working class is paying for the failure of capitalism.

All RMT members will clearly understand by now, the only way we can bust the pay freeze and deliver real material security is by standing in unity and taking determined action.

We need a pay rise. We need free travel for transport workers. We need proper sick pay for all.

To win we must build and strengthen our industrial union. As a great American industrial trade unionist, William Z. Foster wrote in 1937:

"Unions sign agreements with bosses and carry them out loyally; but behind these agreements a relationship of power always exists. Unions are able to secure concessions from employers in direct ratio to their strength."¹

Happy New Year. Join the union.

Alex Gordon

1. William Z. Foster, 'A Manual of Industrial Unionism: Organizational Structure and Policies' www.marxists.org/archive/foster/1937/08/10/manual-industrial-unionism/index.htm

FIFTY YEARS FOR FRANK

Liverpool Shipping Branch member Frank Murphy belatedly received his 50 year medal recently from retired national secretary Steve Todd two years after he retired in 2019.

Frank had been an active member of the NUS and RMT for over 55 years and was the eighth longest active member in the entire union and the longest active seafarer member at time of retirement.

He first went away to sea on July 20 1964 on The

Empress of England as a laundry boy. He then went on to work on various cargo ships until 1966 when the National Seamans strike began.

His first job after the strike was onboard the 'Golfito' to the West Indies. He then went to work for Cunard and Empress ships with former RMT National Secretary Tony Santamera and union activist Frank Fearon.

Frank then worked on various ships including the brand new Cunard flagship

'QE2' before he settled on 'home trade' ships sailing from Hull, Felixstowe and finally Harwich onboard Stena Britannica.

He took part in another bitter National Strike in 1988/89 and stood solidly with

his Dover comrades through terrible intimidation by P&O Ferries who tried to destroy the NUS by sequestration of its assets. His comrades and colleagues wish him a long and happy retirement. ■



25 FOR IAN



RMT organiser Ian Boyle receives his 25-year badge from assistant national secretary Mark Carden and retired national secretary Steve Todd

Election of RMT relief regional organiser

GLEN HART (Morden & Oval)

Andover & Salisbury Rail; Bakerloo Line; Basingstoke No. 1; Bristol; Camden No. 3; Central Line East; Central Line West; Croydon No. 1; Dorset Rail; Dover District General Grades; Dover Shipping; East London Rail; Euro Passenger Services; Exeter Rail; Finsbury Park; Hammersmith & City; Harlesden Engineering; Jubilee South; LU Engineering; LU Fleet; Morden & Oval; Neasden; Newport IOW No. 2; Piccadilly & District West; Plymouth No. 1; Portsmouth; Reading; RMT Heathrow Express; South East Essex; South Hants & Eastleigh Workshops; Surrey & Hants; TfL No. 1 & LU MATS; Waltham Cross & District; Wimbledon

IVOR RIDDELL (Medway & District General Grades)

Ashford No. 1; Bletchley & Northampton; Bridgend Llantrisant & District; Bridgwater Bus, Cardiff No. 7; Chiltern Line; Colchester & District; Dartford & District; East Kent; East Sussex Coastway; Euston No. 1; Exeter No. 2; Falmouth Bus; Feltham; Gloucester; Great Northern Rail; Hastings & Tonbridge; Ipswich; Kings Cross; Lewisham Southwark & District; London & Orient Engineering; London Anglia & Midland Transport; March & District; Medway & District General Grades; North Thames LT&S; Norwich; Orpington; Paddington No. 1; Ramsgate Workshops; South Devon Bus; South London Rail; Southampton Shipping; St Pancras; Swansea No. 1; Three Bridges; Transport for Cornwall; Watford; Wolverton

Election of RMT Midlands regional organiser

JOHN WATSON (Derby Rail & Engineering)

Birmingham Engineering; Birmingham Rail; Burton-on-Trent No. 1; Coventry No. 1; Derby Rail & Engineering; East Midland Central; Leamington; Nuneaton; Solihull Taxi Drivers; Wolverhampton; Worcester No. 1

SHREWSBURY VICTORY

Shrewsbury 24 campaign thanks union after winning case for all convictions from all three trials nearly 50 years ago to be quashed



VICTORY: Harry Chadwick from the victorious Shrewsbury 24 campaign at head office with Mick Lynch, Eddie Dempsey and EC member Steve Shaw.

"We won!" was the message from the long-running Shrewsbury 24 campaign to overturn the unjust prosecution of 24 building workers following the first ever national building workers strike in 1972. They picketed building sites in Shrewsbury and were prosecuted in 1973 and became known as the

'Shrewsbury 24'.

The pickets' case was heard by the Court of Appeal in February 2021 and the judgement was released on March 23 2021, which announced that the pickets' convictions had been quashed.

As part of winding down operations Harry Chadwick

from the victorious Shrewsbury 24 campaign visited RMT head office and met with general secretary Mick Lynch, assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey and NEC member Steve Shaw to thank the union for all its support over the years.

Harry paid tribute to RMT's support for the campaign: "I

want to thank RMT, without your solidarity, and the support of the wider trade union movement, we would never have won our historic victory. It was that financial and practical support that sustained us through the long hard year's and we can't thank you enough".



A new pictorial history of the union from 1871 to 2021

Copies of *RMT - 150 Years of Trade Unionism* are available from your branch or the RMT website.

rmt.org.uk/shop/miscellaneous





WIGAN AWARDS



Wigan branch welcomed RMT general secretary Mick Lynch to make long service awards to Steve Rennox, who is retiring after 44 years, and a 40 year badge to Kevin Melling and a 25-year badge to serving national executive committee member Steve Shaw.



NEWCASTLE AWARDS

Newcastle Rail & Catering branch members recently long service awards presented to them by outgoing president Michelle Rodgers. Brian Tait and Brian Tucker received 40 year badges. Carol Wass and Nigel Lamb received 10 year badges and Kevin Copeland received a 25 year badge. ■



Kevin Copeland



Carol Wass



Brian Tucker



Brian Tait



Nigel Lamb

101 NOT OUT ON THE MERSEY

RMT Central and North Mersey branch recently held celebrations for two long serving branch members, branch chair Peter Creaby who reached 50 years service and Alan Traynor at 51 years service.

It was a great turn out for both members who remembered their time on the railway quite fondly, sharing some great stories throughout the evening.

Peter spent most of his career as a member of station staff, whilst Alan spent most of his track side, often bumping into each other at Kirkby station, on the outskirts of Liverpool.

It was by chance that they bumped into each other on a train travelling to Hillsborough on that fateful day on April 15 1989. Peter explained that he was walking through a train to Sheffield when he spotted Alan playing cards with some colleagues, Alan invited him to



101: Left to right- Darren Pilling Regional Council Secretary, Alan Traynor, Michelle Rogers, Peter Creaby, John Tilley regional Organiser.

join in and Peter likes a bet but stays away from cards so politely declined the invitation. "Just as well you did" said Alan, "they were all cheating".

Peter went on to say that he had a match ticket for the same ground a year early and felt the force of the

overcrowding then, he was fortunate enough to get a ticket for the stands that year. Alan was not so lucky and ended up in the Leppings lane. He only survived by climbing over the iron railings and scrambling to safety. Both members surviving to tell their

story, so it was great to see them enjoying themselves on their special evening.

Both members were overjoyed to receive their special inscription plaques, presented on the night to acknowledge their service and dedication to the union. ■

AWARD FOR LAURA

Recently elected regional organiser Kathy Mazur presented head office employee Laura Rolles with her 10-year badge.

Kathy said that it was an honour to present the award to Laura who worked in the union's finance department for many years and is now looking after the unions property portfolio.

"Euston No 1 branch members would like to put on record their appreciation the work our RMT office staff like Laura do day in day out for our members.

"Well done Laura and thank you for all the support you have given me as your branch secretary and my branch members," she said.

Kathy, the union's first female regional organiser and long-standing Euston No 1

branch secretary, has been an RMT member for 25 years including as a local rep and company council rep for catering members for Virgin trains West Coast and up until recently Avanti trains West Coast.

She has always fought hard for all grades and organised the low paid grades making sure that reps were in place in every sector so that no-one got left behind. ■



ANN JOSS AWARD

Aberdeen No1 Branch chair Ann Joss receives her 25-year RMT membership badge from

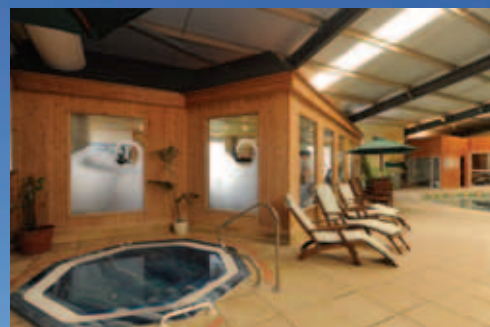
RMT Scottish Regional Council secretary Jim Gray and regional organiser Craig Johnson. ■



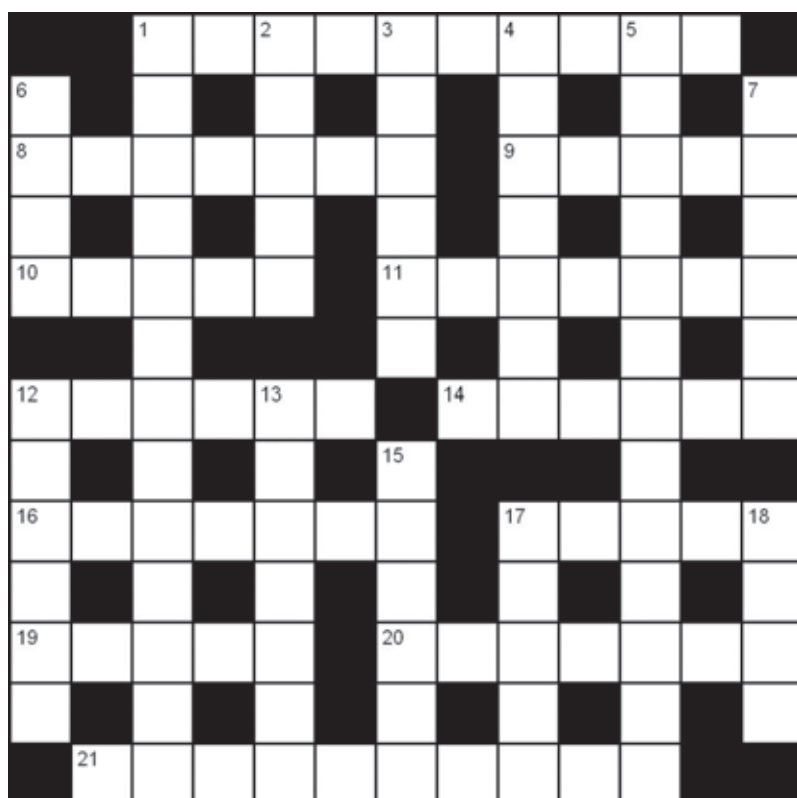
CROYDE BAY CALLING

RMT members get five per cent off for holidays at this trade union-owned holiday resort in beautiful North Devon

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£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



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

Winner of last month's crossword was Winner Doug Thomson, Dumfriesshire



Crossword sponsored by UIA

ACROSS

- 1 Regretful (10).
- 8 Eightsome (7).
- 9 Evade (5).
- 10 Express (5).
- 11 Dig up (5).
- 12 Three times (6).
- 14 Oblique angle (6).
- 16 Offensive (7).
- 17 Bend (5).
- 19 Birds (5).
- 20 Chief (7).
- 21 Replicable (10).

DOWN

- 1 Going back (13).
- 2 Not reflecting light (5).
- 3 Regretful (6).
- 4 Unlimited (7).
- 5 Chassis (12).
- 6 Discharge (4).
- 7 Glowing heat (3,3).
- 12 Middle region (6).
- 13 Wash (6).
- 15 Warm again (6).
- 17 Upward slope (5).
- 18 Sighted (4).



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

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RMT CREDIT UNION APPLICATION FORM — please complete your application along with the attached Direct Debit.

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

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

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

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

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

5 Membership Status

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

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

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

8 **Next of Kin**

Address

.....

.....

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

Your signature

Date

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

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

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



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Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

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This is not part of the the instruction to your Bank or Building Society.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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





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