

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker



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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, 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

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EDITORIAL



FIGHTING FOR JOBS

If anyone needed hard proof of the brutal nature of industrial relations in Britain in 2022 they will have had it in spade loads after the brutal jobs massacre meted out to our members on P&O Ferries.

Millions of working people the length and breadth of the land will have been watching in horror as the ships were tied up, staff sacked by Zoom call and hard-working crew removed by balaclava clad, hand cuff welding security in what can only be described as a paramilitary operation. The scandal has shaken even some of our traditional opponents in the media and political world's in its brutality. But what people also saw was the trade unions immediately springing into action to defend our members and demand justice for the P&O workforce. The message has rung out loud and clear that your only way of fighting back against this workplace barbarism and gangster capitalism is collectively, through your trade union.

Every sinew, industrially, politically, legally and publicly, of our organisation will be strained in a relentless campaign to secure justice for the P&O workers. If this kind of industrial vandalism can be slammed down on them then it can be slammed down on anyone and we need to send the clearest

message to the employers that we are here and ready for the fight. Only days before the ferry scandal broke the employers and politicians were talking publicly about "workforce reform" on rail. We know what that means. It means a bonfire of jobs, pay, pensions and working conditions at the behest of the bosses. I've been saying since I was elected that there's a storm coming. Well, it's rattling at the windows now and we need to be ready to push it back. In the coming weeks and month's a new phase of campaigning will be kicking off and I will be asking each and every one of you to support it, to vote yes for action and help us to build our strength in every single workplace.

We have seen by the magnificent recent action by our cleaners, our TPE conductors and our tube staff what solidarity and the fighting spirit of this trade union is all about. But that's just a start. We need to harness the full collective strength of every part of our organisation if we are to repel the attacks ranged up against us. I'm confident we can count on every single one of you.

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

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WEST COAST TRAIN CLEANERS STRIKE AGAIN

Heroic train cleaners working to keep Avanti West Coast trains clean and safe for passengers took further 48-hour strike action this month in pursuit of their campaign for fair pay.

The cleaners, who have worked throughout the pandemic to keep essential transport services running, are employed by Atalian Servest Limited, a multi-national outsourcing company based in France.

The outsourced cleaners are paid £9.68 per hour, less than the Real Living Wage and have no company sick pay, meaning that they frequently come into work when sick

because they cannot make ends meet.

Atalian Servest has refused to make an offer that would raise pay above the Real Living Wage rate of £9.90, with their latest offer amounting to an insulting additional 6p per hour for most staff (especially those outside London).

According to RMT research, last year Atalian Servest Ltd's holding company paid a dividend to its French parent company of £10.8 million, a sum that would pay for more than 300 cleaners to get a pay rise to £11 an hour 12 times over and £15 an hour three times over.

RMT general secretary Mick

Lynch said that cleaner members on Avanti West Coast trains had been left with no choice but to take further strike action.

"We have called these two further 48 hour strikes to remind the Atalian Servest outfit that this issue is not going away and that their latest paltry offer to the staff who generate their profits is an insult to our members.

"The people who clean our railways are heroes who risk their lives and health every day to keep our essential services running but the way Atalian Servest is treating its workers on West Coast trains is an utter disgrace. This latest

action is part of our national fight for pay justice for rail cleaners.

"While the profits and dividends are siphoned off abroad, cleaners are expected to put up with poverty wages and live in fear of destitution if they get sick. It's a scandal that we're driven to strike action to win the most basic workplace justice.

"Atalian Servest need to make these cleaner heroes on one of our main intercity rail routes a better offer and Avanti need to take responsibility as well because they are complicit in this gross exploitation," he said.



TUBE WORKERS STRIKE FOR JOBS AND PENSIONS

Union calls on London Mayor to stop attacking workers and implementing government funding cuts

Over 10,000 tube workers took strike action earlier this month after London Underground bosses refused to rule out job cuts and detrimental changes to pensions.

Pickets were out in force at all key locations and that the action is being solidly supported the length and breadth of the tube network.

Under the plans at the heart of the dispute, LU will cut 600 frontline jobs for starters and wants to scrap the final salary pension scheme in a bid to drive down costs. However, RMT research has shown that there is no financial crisis in the Transport for London pension scheme and it is currently fully funded, a position that's likely to be confirmed at its valuation. London Underground is planning to cut 600 station staff jobs further damaging passenger safety and

confidence at a time when assaults are on the rise.

As a result the union has called for Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan to keep promises he made to LU workers.

He told Labour Party members last year: "Telling those people responsible for heroically keeping London moving throughout the pandemic that now is the time they need to pay more into their pension funds strikes me as neither fair nor reasonable. it is not their fault the pandemic struck and they have acted heroically".

The union also pointed out that in May last year, the Mayor also said that it would be "ill judged" to rush through pension changes, warning that it could lead to an industrial dispute.

Yet the government has announced the Mayor had agreed he would submit proposals to the government

to cut tube workers' pensions.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that Sadiq Khan should be standing up to Tory ministers who wanted to needlessly attack jobs, pensions and conditions of key transport workers.

It is this political failure that has left tube workers with no choice but to strike this week. Our members have been left paying the price for a turf war between City Hall and the Government and they are not having it as can be seen right across London today.

"The Mayor knows the plan to attack our members' pensions and conditions is wrong and would leave our union no choice but to take industrial action.

"However, only this month the Mayor agreed to submit proposals to the government that will result in detrimental changes to pensions.

"The Mayor has to decide if he is on the side of key workers who have kept London moving during the pandemic or Tory ministers hellbent on punishing tube workers.

"This dispute can be solved if the Mayor meets the reasonable demands of his own workforce," he said.

The union also calling on London Underground to end its deafening silence over continuing negotiations as the latest phase of Night Tube weekend strike action continues.

"RMT has proposed simple and cost free options that would enable the suspension of the action which should be a priority for the Mayor and his officials and that means showing a willingness to recommence the talks process," said Mick Lynch.





CHURCHILL BATTLE

Biggest ever rail cleaners strike rock solid in fight for pay justice

Hundreds of rail cleaners were out in force on picket lines this month in the biggest ever coordinated wave of strike action in the fight for pay justice.

The cleaners, who are all employed by the outsourcing company Churchill and have worked throughout the Covid-19 crisis to clean trains and stations on Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern, Southeastern, Eurostar and HS1 services, walked out for 24-hour strike action in the

largest such action by rail cleaners yet.

Turnout on the picket lines was fantastic, with pickets at Kings Cross Station, Eurostar Temple Mills, Brighton Station, Hastings, St Pancras Station, Kings Lynn Station, Victoria Station, Cannon Street, Dartford, East Croydon, Kings Cross, Brighton, Dover Priory, Grove Park, Ramsgate and many more besides.

Hundreds also descended London for a mass rally outside the Houses of Parliament

where they were joined by a host of MPs including Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour MPs Ian Lavery, Apsana Begum, Richard Burgon, Grahame Morris, Andy McDonald, Kim Johnson, Rachel Hopkins, Nadia Whittome, Tony Lloyd, Chair of RMT's Parliamentary Group Ian Mearns and Shadow Transport Minister Sam Tarry.

Messages of support were sent from many other MPs on social media and 24 MPs have also signed an Early Day Motion in Parliament

supporting the Churchill cleaners' campaign: Fair pay and conditions for rail cleaners.

After the rally, the Churchill cleaners marched on the Headquarters of the Go-Ahead Group who control the franchise on the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchises for a short rally demanding that Go-Ahead meet RMT representatives.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the support from Churchill cleaners for the action was extraordinary and

showed that these vital members of the rail team were prepared to stand up and fight for workplace justice.

"Support from their colleagues on the picket lines has given the action a massive boost.

"Pickets are out in force and it's now down to Churchill's and their host company's to take note and offer these key workers a fair deal.

"Churchill can afford to pay, so they need to get back to the table with a proper offer, and the government need to tackle the cost-of-living crisis by ending their callous pay freeze on the railways," he said.

■



GO-AHEAD 'UNFIT' TO RUN FRANCHISES

RMT has called once more on the Secretary of State for Transport to nationalise the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise prior to the Department of Transport making its decision on the future of the services this month.

The Go-Ahead Group had announced that it has repaid almost £50 million to the government for money that it owed from the Southeastern franchise and expects to pay back more and has also set aside £30 million for a potential fine.

Go-Ahead's new announcement of the true scale of their breaches came just days after the government admitted that despite believing that the group had intentionally concealed money from the department, it was still in negotiations with Go-Ahead over a possible new contract to continue running the biggest franchise in Britain.



Kings Cross

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that it was simply beyond belief that just before this mega rail contract expired that the government, even with its history of dodgy contracts, could consider awarding it to a company that has repaid £50 million in

money it hid from the taxpayer and which it believes worked to conceal this fact.

"As we've said time after time, Go-Ahead are demonstrably unfit to operate our railways.

"They can't be trusted with public money. The publicly

owned Operator of Last Resort stands ready to take over the franchise and it is the government's public duty to nationalise it and put an end to this scandal once and for all," he said.

■

P&O FERRIES SACK HUNDREDS



Dover protest

Union calls for four-point plan to protect jobs, services and basic employment standards

P&O Ferries halted operations this month in order to sack over 800 workers and replace them with cheap foreign agency staff causing chaos at British ports.

It also sparked demonstrations across the country as the union revealed that the government knew of the plan to sack workers and disrupt services the day before but failed to act.

The company suspended all services and told ships to

return to port where workers were removed by private security officers and replaced by low paid agency personnel waiting to board the company's ships.

The ferry company, owned by logistics operator DP World controlled by the government of Dubai, was accused of slavery back in 2019 over the wages it paid to Polish and Portuguese crews of as little as £1.83 an hour.

RMT general secretary Mick

Mick Lynch and John McDonnell MP





RMT regional organiser Gary Jackson and Karl Turner MP lead the protest in Hull

Lynch said that security guards at Dover had boarded ships with handcuffs to remove crew so they could be replaced with cheaper labour.

"We have been overwhelmed by the widespread public and political support for our campaign to protect our members jobs and these vital services.

"We welcome the fact that the government's own MPs are calling for radical action and yesterday's events should also mark a sea change in how we treat workers in this country.

"The fact that the government knew the day before that a foreign owned company planned to cause major disruption to UK ports but did nothing to prevent it is shocking.

"But there is still time reverse this shameful decision and we are presenting a plan of action which needs to be acted upon immediately and if necessary, the government should introduce enabling legislation to make it

happen," he said.

The plan includes:

- The government to demand P&O reverse its actions or the government should use powers to take over the P&O vessels.
- * Remove any government support for P&O owners DP World, including future contracts, including Freeports, and directly support the retention of P&O jobs.

- A widespread boycott of P&O until the jobs are reinstated.
- New legislation to ensure this can never happen to other workers and new laws to protect the future of workers in the maritime industry

P&O is one of the country's leading ferry companies transporting passengers and freight on four routes: Dover to Calais, Hull to Rotterdam, Liverpool to Dublin and

Cairnryan, Scotland, to Larne, Northern Ireland.

P&O Ferries paid out £270 million in dividends but failed to secure a £150 million bailout from the government. DP World is a multi-billion pound operation owned by the government of Dubai via a holding company. This holding company is under the direct control of the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who is also Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates. ■



RMT CALLS FOR LONG-TERM BUS FUNDING

The government's extension of local transport Covid-19 funding until October was not enough and the union called for a long-term expansion of bus services.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the government has provided financial support to the bus sectors, in England outside London to ensure services kept running to enable access to jobs, education and healthcare.

In the recovery period, the latest packages, the £226.5 million Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) which had been due to end in April have supported the sector following the re-opening of the economy and the lifting of social distancing guidelines. A further £29 million uplift has been provided to the BRG, to mitigate the impact of Omicron.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the Department of Transport's



extension of local transport Covid-19 funding until October 2022 was welcome as numerous bus operators were warning that services face the axe from April.

As a result, it must be a condition of this funding that all bus services and jobs are protected, and any cuts already being considered must be withdrawn.

"Of course, this

announcement does not give local authorities the certainty over long-term funding for local bus services that they desperately need.

"If the government is serious about levelling up and delivering improvements to bus services, it must as a matter of urgency, provide local authorities with ring-fenced, long-term funding, to enable them to protect and

expand their local bus services.

"The government must also put passengers before profit and create a publicly controlled and owned bus service, including reversing the nonsensical ban on new municipal bus companies to enable local authorities to directly deliver the bus services their communities require," he said.

■

NO FIRE AND RE-HIRE AT WABTEC DONCASTER

RMT is opposing Wabtec Doncaster from making 80 jobs redundant and insist staff re-apply for their jobs on inferior terms and conditions.

RMT members in Doncaster have negotiated for the last 12 months to try and find a solution to the financial problems faced by the company.

However, Wabtec bosses have shown a complete disregard for serious talks and have now informed the union they are implementing fire and rehire.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that Wabtec had behaved disgracefully in negotiations and wanted members to pay for the company's financial problems

by sacrificing their terms and conditions.

"Staff at the company have rejected new working arrangements repeatedly and now the move to fire workers and re-hire them on worse contracts than before, is a kick in the teeth which will not go unanswered.

"Wabtec Doncaster has a proud history, where

predecessors built the Flying Scotsman and Mallard locomotives.

"This management are doing a disservice to the current workforce and soiling its past reputation by wanting to throw 80 skilled workers on the scrap heap. RMT is open to talks and will not rule out an industrial response," he said. ■

NO TO SEXISM IN THE WORKPLACE

RMT women members met for their annual conference in Swansea, urging male colleagues in the transport and maritime sectors to do more to tackle misogyny and discrimination.

Delegates spoke of their negative experiences in the workplace and wider society, saying that sexism was still commonplace despite equalities legislation and small changes in culture.

Chair Mandy Evans even suggested that a nearby labour club didn't allow women to enter the premises - a claim that shocked conference.

Conference delegates also discussed the most pressing industrial issues involving women members across the union, including Network Rail and the Churchill cleaners' dispute.

Thandi Mabodoko, who works for Network Rail, looked ahead to the impending battle with the track operator, suggesting that if planned maintenance cuts of 2,000 job losses went through, the safety of the railways would be put in jeopardy.

"The trains will come off the tracks and we are sitting on a timebomb."

"They want to de-skill and reduce our pay. And they [the bosses] want to run the railway like it is a marketing company," she said.

Bella Fashola - a leading RMT rep and campaigner for Churchill cleaners - told conference she was languishing on £8.91 an hour at the behest of the multi-million-pound contractor but would not give up.

Looking ahead to future strike action, she said: "We have to stand together and fight the bosses."



Conference also discussed the need to tackle domestic violence and to counter the negative affects suffered by women who survive such ordeals.

Cllr Erica Kirchner told delegates of the experiences she had had helping women who had survived domestic abuse.

"Working with Women's Aid over the last few decades, we now have several hubs run by women all trained, to deal with domestic abuse. We can respond quicker and all the major departments such as NHS and police have a place in those hubs," she said.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said the battles for women's equality had achieved success in a number of areas but acknowledged more needed to be done.

"This union is still dominated by men and most branch meetings and most company councils are dominated by men."

"We need to rebalance. I am not going to tell you how to do that but I am keen for people to find their way in the union not just to be present in the room but take the levers of power."

"We have had some

breakthroughs. We have had a woman president for the first time and we have our first woman regional organiser Kathy Mazur," he said.

Reflecting on his early working life, Mr Lynch said that his first job in a factory in 1978 was an eye opener in terms of racism and sexism.

"It was a totally male dominated environment. the only women we had there were in the canteen or doing the wages. The amount of filth you saw - racist language, racist propaganda, racist graffiti - there was a tolerance by men of frankly disgusting behaviour."

"Pornography was rampant and you were expected to participate in sharing it. It was a terribly embarrassing period," he said.

Explaining how his own views had been challenged and influenced by the growth of the anti-racist and women's movement, Mr Lynch said that men have changed to some extent.

"Even if men stay silent, they are at least not to same extent, mouthing the stuff they used to mouth. But what we need to do is complete the process and keep moving forward."

"So, it is not just acceptance that women are in the union but that women lead and are taking their full role," he said.

Mr Lynch also spelled out a vision for RMT which will involve change and keeping the union "nimble" as it faced new challenges.

"We are faced with the most enormous challenges since privatisation. They intend to on Network Rail, to change the maintenance roles and cut it by half."

They will do 50 per cent less work on track and that is a danger for our members, whether you are catering, train crew or train driver. And let's remember at Hatfield and Stonehaven, train crew - our people have died in those accidents.

"They call it risk based maintenance and it will strip out hundreds of jobs," he said.

Promising the biggest industrial response in the union's modern history, Mr Lynch added: "RMT has to be a beacon of hope - that if you organise through proper industrial organisation, proper networks of reps and activists, with the support of head office, you can win these battles". ■

HEALTH AND SAFETY ON THE AGENDA



RMT general secretary Mick Lynch looks back at 20 years of the union's annual health and safety conference and its relevance today



This month saw the twentieth annual RMT national health and safety advisory conference, one of the largest-attended conferences in the union's diary, addressed by delegates, campaigners, experts and politicians.

In March 2003 80 RMT safety reps met at the first health and safety conference in Birmingham where they passed a resolution to establish the annual conference.

This resolution acknowledged the need for safety to be recognised within the union's constitution and for a network to educate and empower health and safety reps.

The RMT advisory health and safety committee was established at the same time as the annual conference, so

that RMT could take up health and safety issues on a much more serious and sustained basis - something which is necessary as health and safety is key part of the union's work.

The conference has gone from strength to strength since this time - and continues to improve and build on the support given to RMT reps. Ensuring that members are safe at work is a huge priority for the union. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown the importance of the safety rep role in the workplace. An army of safety reps battling away to keep members safe.

RMT continues to improve support given to safety reps and the union's safety reps charter will shortly be reissued in which I explain what the RMT will be doing to support our safety reps and how they

can use the rights afforded to them under the Safety Representative and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 to build the union in their workplaces. I will also be updating the health and safety section of our web site so it can be better used as a resource for our safety reps.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the conference delegates were given new RMT safety reps materials, including a clip board, with "RMT safety rep" emblazoned on the back of it and a RMT safety reps HV vest so that they can carry out safety inspections and other safety rep's functions while advertising the union to their fellow workers.

This year's conference theme is the role of the Safety Representative in the

Covid/post-Covid 'brave new world'. Conference will, as in previous years, feature a wide range of speakers from the movement and the industries in which our members work including former Shadow Transport Secretary Andy McDonald MP, TUC Health and Safety Policy Officer Shelly Asquith, Bakers' Union General Secretary Sarah Woolley, Hilda Palmer from the Hazards Campaign and Graham Petersen from the Trade Union Clean Air Campaign; who will lead debate on the issue of clean air/air quality and ventilation, Health and Safety coming out of the Covid-19 and the role of the safety rep.

The conference comes at a time when RMT members are facing huge attacks from the government and the

Department for Transport on their jobs and terms and conditions. This union will do everything in its power to resist these attacks and we will need all RMT reps to play their part in this fight back.

As the latest government announcements have shown, you are on the frontline once again being placed at serious risk and given the lack of protection they have in the face of potential infection from passengers, RMT will continue to press all employers to have the best quality ventilation systems in place.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is stark. At the end of last year, the union conducted a "Mental Health in a COVID-19 World" survey of all RMT members, something which came about as a result of a resolution passed at RMT's health and safety conference in

2021.

Over 4,000 members responded to the survey and some of the comments from members were shocking:

One wrote of the impact of the pandemic:

"It's affected it pretty badly to be honest and coming out of lockdown seems to have made my mindset worse towards people with how we are being treated as front line staff".

Another wrote that:

"It has been very stressful with constant roster changes etc and confidence knocked in large crowds now social distancing doesn't exist. Constant concern about what I may be taking home to spread to family and friends".

Others wrote of anxiety they had never had before and of feeling anxious when dealing with passengers.

Our bus driver members

have faced abuse verbally and physically for just trying to do their daily work, leaving them feeling vulnerable and suspicious when people board their bus.

Our maritime members, working offshore with poor internet connections and not being able to contact family have found it hard mentally; not being allowed off the vessel when in port has led to many members feeling very much like being in prison being on the vessel for three months without being allowed to leave.

It was very noticeable from the survey that many members feared for their job security.

RMT's national executive committee recognised that when employers threaten job cuts this will impact the mental health of our members.

During the onset of coronavirus in 2020, measures

were extremely slow to be brought in to protect traincrew. Masks were at first discouraged and then subsequently various insufficiently protective masks have been supplied by the company. Not having correct PPE caused both anxiety and danger to my members.

The government has been slow to react, slow to put in measures, inconsistent and has broken its own rules: it says one thing and does the opposite. So many deaths could have been prevented with better controls and restrictions.

In the post-Covid scramble by employers to recoup the profits lost during the pandemic, RMT will continue to fight for the health and safety of our members.

■

WHERE DOES IT HURT?

Delegates were asked to 'put a sticker where their work makes them hurt' on a 'body' stand specially designed for the conference. Delegates placed by far the most stickers on and around the head of the body, something which could indicate that many were suffering from headaches and stress, eye strain or neck ache.

This very simple form of body mapping can help identify health problems. Body mapping is where groups of workers map out their aches and pains on a drawing of a body to look for any common problems and to make links with the jobs they do. Body mapping can easily be done in the workplace or at branch meetings.

You could just make up an 'ouch' sticker and stick these on a colleague where you are experiencing pain due to your

work. Or sketch a body and ask members to attach stickers to this to indicate where work in causing them health problems.

Body mapping can be used to show to colleagues that they are not alone in the pain they are experiencing caused from work. Health and safety is very often a collective issue – and problems should be addressed as such. Body mapping often throws up some surprising results, something which would not be captured otherwise.

In relation to what's hurting members. You could ask questions through body mapping about substances being used, possible causing vapours, liquids, fumes, mists, solvents, dusts. Or about the workplace environment, so for example noise, vibration, radiation, dry, wet, hot, cold, ventilation and indoor air. It

could be a question about the job design, so are there problems with control, stress, bullying, ergonomics, work pressure, insecurity, harassment, discrimination or violence. If looking at welfare, maybe ask questions about

toilets, facilities, cleanliness. If looking at accidents, think about trips, falls, slips, cuts, scalds, burns, lifting, reaching. Work patterns could include overtime, long hours, shifts, homework, rest breaks/PNB's and rushing jobs. ■



More information on body mapping can be found on the National Hazards Campaign web site <https://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/>
Why not organise a body mapping event/meeting/stand for International Workers Memorial Day <https://www.tuc.org.uk/wmd> on 28th April?

YOUNG MEMBERS MEET

Incoming young members conference chair Rupert Pickering reports on a successful meeting in Inverness



Young members conference delegates travelled up to beautiful Inverness where we were warmly welcomed by representatives of Inverness branch members Conor Cheyne, Glen Cameron and Kim Gibson.

Conference was opened by RMT general secretary Mick Lynch who spoke about inflation eroding the value of our wages and the cuts that the Department for Transport are planning for the rail network.

This was particularly poignant given our relative proximity to the recent Stonehaven disaster. He also spoke about the upcoming possibility of balloting for strike action across 15 different TOCs to resist these cuts to wages, terms and conditions, and infrastructure.

RMT president talked about the importance of understanding the Marxist concept of alienation and how this makes us discontent by disconnecting us from our work. He also explained how industrial democracy can remedy this. Delegate Kim Dennis made the point from the floor that many members and potential activists feel alienated from their union in various ways. This prompted a discussion about the use of titles like 'brother' and 'sister'.

Three MPs addressed the conference including two over Zoom. SNP MP Drew Hendry spoke, in person, about how an independent Scotland might diverge from Tory rule, reversing things like anti-trade union laws and privatisation which weakens trade union bargaining power for their

members.

Labour MP Olivia Blake spoke about how the Policing, Crime and Sentencing Bill will impact trade unions' ability to protest, a keystone of a democratic society. She also pointed to the hypocrisy of the Conservative Party to be praising the anti-war protestors in Russia since Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

The Tories are seeking to criminalise these protests in the UK, with higher maximum sentences for the offense here, than in Russia. She also addressed the need for strong unions on the railway following an increase in physical and verbal abuse directed at rail staff.

She also spoke of the opportunity of the climate crisis to strengthen the labour movement as the process of

decarbonising will, realistically, require a large expansion in mass public transit.

Andy McDonald MP was warmly received as he resigned from Keir Starmer's shadow cabinet because he was instructed by the leadership to argue against a £15 minimum wage. Mr McDonald spoke extensively about a white paper he had published a few years ago, called GB Rail, which he worked with a number of senior rail executives and unions to produce. The document called for the nationalisation of the rail industry under one publicly run company.

RMT regional organiser for Scotland Gordon Martin criticised the SNP in his speech as not a "worker-friendly" party in government

Mick Lynch



in Holyrood and emphasised the need for a strong trade union movement to hold all MPs to account.

He addressed the domination of over-50s in the union, noting that in Scotland 52 per cent of RMT reps are over the age of 50, and only three per cent of reps being under the age of 30.

He said that the union needed to focus on the organising of outsourced staff and infrastructure workers for which membership rates were far below what is to be expected. He finished his speech arguing that Scotrail was in desperate need of investment.

Stephen Nolan, a political educator from Trademark, an anti-sectarian political education unit, spoke of his work with both nationalist and loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland to avoid conflict.

He also covered the history of neoliberalism, capitalism and socialism. He spoke of the CIA's involvement in the Chilean Coup that ousted the socialist Salvador Allende to protect US business interests, the economic crises of the

1870s, 1930s, 1970s, and the 2010s, the 2008 financial crash and the social-democratic compromise reached in the post-war years.

Steve Shaw, NEC rep for the North West and North Wales addressed some cultural issues that arise from demographic issues within the union, particularly its domination by white males. He spoke of the necessity of creating an environment that

was welcoming to LGBTQ+ people, people of colour, women and young people as there was a consensus in the room that the union can sometimes feel like quite a 'blokey' union that can be slow to move with the times.

"It has to change to properly represent the great diversity within the working class and I would like to see a young member replace me on the NEC or as branch secretary.

"We also cannot overstate the importance of organising outsourced workers so that the union doesn't become a 'club' of the insourced that alienates agency workers, such as Churchill cleaners," he said.

As newly elected conference chair for next year I spoke about the need for young members to recruit new members, generate new activists and prepare activists to be reps.

This work is most effective at the branch and regional level but isn't always done as well as it could be.

We must be able to commit our section to filling the gaps left in the rest of the union structure to ensure the future of the movement across the countries we work in.

I also spoke about the need for young members to

understand and take a view on the Industrial organising document put forward by the general secretary.

The structure of the union was created when the transport industry was very different and we should be ready to influence the re-organising of the union so that it is fit for the 21st century.

Conference's final speaker was a Brazilian transport trade unionist who spoke to us via Zoom. Cristiana Paiva Gomes is a member of CUT spoke of the attacks of the Bolsonaro government on trade unions and labour rights and the campaign of terror left-wing activists have faced in Brazil. This includes harassment of trade union leaders and even assassinations of socialist activists.

As conference closed, Rhys Harmer thanked outgoing chair Andy Gilchrist for his service as head of the RMT's education department and wished him well on his retirement. On behalf of the young members, Rhys presented Andy with a copy of *Forged in Fire: History of the Fire Brigades Union*. Andy didn't actually own a copy until now, despite having been extensively interviewed for the book.

■



Omari Antony takes a selfie with some delegates at Loch Ness



ORGANISING SIGNALLERS

Signalling and operations grades to discuss recruitment, training and organising

The national industrial organising conference of signalling and operations grades launched a new strategy to organise signallers, crossing keepers, Mobile Operating Managers (MOM), Shift Signalling Managers (SSM), Area Operation Possession Controllers (AOPC), roster clerks operations clerks, Trust Delay Attribution Clerks (TDA) and even major station staff.

Moving the motion to set up an organising committee Bob Cross, Stockport and District said that the primary role of conference under Rule 12 (4) was to report and make recommendations to the union to increase membership penetration.

This included measuring the strengths and weaknesses of union structures which have a role in organisation, making resources available for organisation and education

work, increase data handling skills and best practice for early recruitment via schools and first contact.

"An important feature of this work is the mapping exercises required to measure the density of membership.

"For instance, if 15 out of 30 signallers in an area are members then density would be 50 per cent and I'm sure we can all do

better than that," he said.

He also covered the importance of data protection as trade union membership was a private matter and, as a result, care should be taken to delete old lists and membership records should be kept up to date.

"We must also cover all inductions at signalling schools and local reps must speak to new starters when they arrive

in an area as a matter of course," he said.

RMT assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey backed the call by warning that maximum membership would be required in the upcoming fight for jobs and decent conditions as the government was demanding a reduction of state funding to Network Rail by two billion pounds.



As the lead union officer for Network Rail, he said that the government, which was clearly wedded to the ideology of privatisation and cuts, was seeking to take 400 million pounds out of the industry in the current control period through slashing jobs and vacancies.

However, he pointed out that there were many other ways to save money than attacking pensions and jobs as was being planned.

"If Network Rail took renewals back in-house they could save £115 million and in-sourcing cleaning contracts would also save money.

"Even more interesting is that if Network Rail executives were paid the same as Boris Johnson, we could save £500 million," he said.

He insisted that to fight these cuts required the widest possible unity across all grades by pulling together.

"The union is looking at industrial action and even civil disobedience if we have to in order to alert the membership and the general public about the effects of the cuts coming down the line," he said.

He said that it was no good for NR to blame the covid crisis to justify massive cuts in funding to the industry while refusing to give workers a pay rise.

"If this continues then we must declare ourselves in dispute in order to defend our industry, defend our terms and conditions, defend our pensions and defend jobs," he said to applause.

Speaking for the national executive committee, signaller Ian Allen backed the call for militant industrial action across the network to defend the rail industry.

"I believe that this is a defining moment for how the rail industry will look in the future and we need to fight to defend our members," he said.

Alan Pottage of the organising unit congratulated conference for contributing to

keeping workers in the union and reiterated the importance of increasing membership density among signalling grades.

Delegates expressed their full support for victimised and sacked Network Rail rep Mick Knox who addressed conference about his trade union activism and the trumped-up charges laid against him which led to his sacking. He was not suspended and was never given the opportunity to give his side of the story.

NR lead rep Mark Bellinie said that it was one of the worst miscarriages of justice he had ever seen and the union has threatened industrial action and an appeal has been lodged. Conference expressed full support for Mick Knox in the usual manner.

Delegates called on the union to highlight the matter of signaller pre-employment tests with Network Rail.

Mariam Spittlehouse, Stockport & District said that the requirements of such tests had changed over the years and used to be arranged at a Network Rail test centre which was a controlled environment.

"The tests are now taken from home without any checks and balances or support for potential candidates.

"There clearly should be an even chance for all applicants in any testing and that it should be conducted fairly without the risk of cheating," she said.

Delegates also agreed that trainee signallers should not be taken off their training packages to cover any post except in a dire emergency.

Alan Rogerson, Newcastle Rail & Catering said that all forms of cover for such posts must be completely exhausted before such requests are made.

"This is clearly detrimental to the training of signallers as such training is very important and should be treated as such without disruption.

"However, a change of

management attitude has given rise to the need to clarify what you can and more importantly what you can't do," he said.

Dave King, Stirling said that if trainees were not fully trained they should not be working any box.

Delegates also called on union to re-examine the management and planning of line blockages including the timing and the numbers of the same line blockages being booked and not taken.

Dave Filby, Three Bridges said that a number of line blockages were not fit for purpose and either badly written or too long.

"Many do not understand the area that is being blocked and often just read parrot fashion the information on their forms, when challenged they say 'That's what my form says'.

"One case led to staff being on an open road when a train went through on a line they thought they had blocked but in fact it was the other line they had blocked," he said.

Alan Rogerson said that while agreeing with the no red working on track there should be an overhaul of the whole line blockage system as the pressure on signallers was affecting their health.

"The size of blockages should be reduced to aid the safe granting of blockages as a matter of urgency," he said.

Delegates also expressed 'serious concerns' with signaller workload and made clear that no additional workload should be forced on signallers or via the back door by bringing in new methods of working like railhub or line blockage data collection.

Dave Bethall, Wrexham said that additional workload had been placed on signallers without any financial rewards or national pay award for many years.

Delegates agreed that the 2023 organising conference should take place in Newcastle. ■



Eddie Dempsey



SOLIDARITY: Mick Knox states his case to conference beside lead NR rep Mark Bellinie



Richard Morley



Bob Cross

CARMONT DISASTER REPORT



Union calls for urgent safety summit and halt to job and budget cuts to prevent more rail tragedies

The report into the fatal derailment of a passenger train at Carmont, Aberdeenshire, August 12, 2020 by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) has made 20 recommendations for the improvement of railway safety including the better management of construction activities by Network Rail and its contractors.

In response RMT called for an urgent rail safety summit of the Scottish and UK government's, rail unions, Network Rail, the rail infrastructure companies and operators to prevent another tragedy on the railways.

RMT also called on Network Rail to halt plans to cut thousands of safety critical rail jobs and for action to protect jobs in the rail infrastructure supply chain.

The report published earlier this month studied the causes of the derailment of a passenger train at Carmont in which the conductor Donald Dinnie, driver Brett

McCullough and passenger Christopher Stuchbury were killed and six other passengers were injured.

The union said that the report showed that there were systemic and structural failures in safety caused by fragmentation, poor communication and management and also the failure of the now defunct contractor Carillon.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that it was shocking that although the failure of the sub-contractor Carillon was one of the key causes of this tragedy the fact that the company was now defunct means those responsible may not be properly held to account.

"There were also systemic and structural failures in railway safety caused by fragmentation with different companies responsible for the management and implementation of safety critical work, signalling, operations and rolling stock.

"Ultimately risks will be reduced by creating one unified railway, but meanwhile we are demanding an urgent safety summit, between governments, Network Rail, Operators and the railway infrastructure supply chain to agree steps to ensure this type of tragedy can never happen again.

"And we are calling for an immediate halt to plans by Network Rail to cut thousands of safety critical maintenance jobs and guarantees that the necessary investment in the rail infrastructure and modern communication systems to keep the railways safe will take place," he said.

The report found that in the morning of the accident there was near-continuous heavy rain at the site of the accident. As a result, Train 1T08 derailed because it struck debris that had been washed out of a drainage trench. This trench, which had been constructed between 2011 and 2012, contained a perforated pipe

that had been installed as part of a project to address a known problem with drainage and the stability of a cutting in that area.

However, the drainage system and associated earthworks had not been constructed in accordance with the original design and so were not able to safely accommodate the water flows that morning.

RAIB's investigators found that a low earth bank (bund) had been constructed that ran across a slope leading towards the track. The presence of this bund significantly altered the flow of water such that extreme rainfall would cause a concentrated flow into the steeply sloping section of trench.

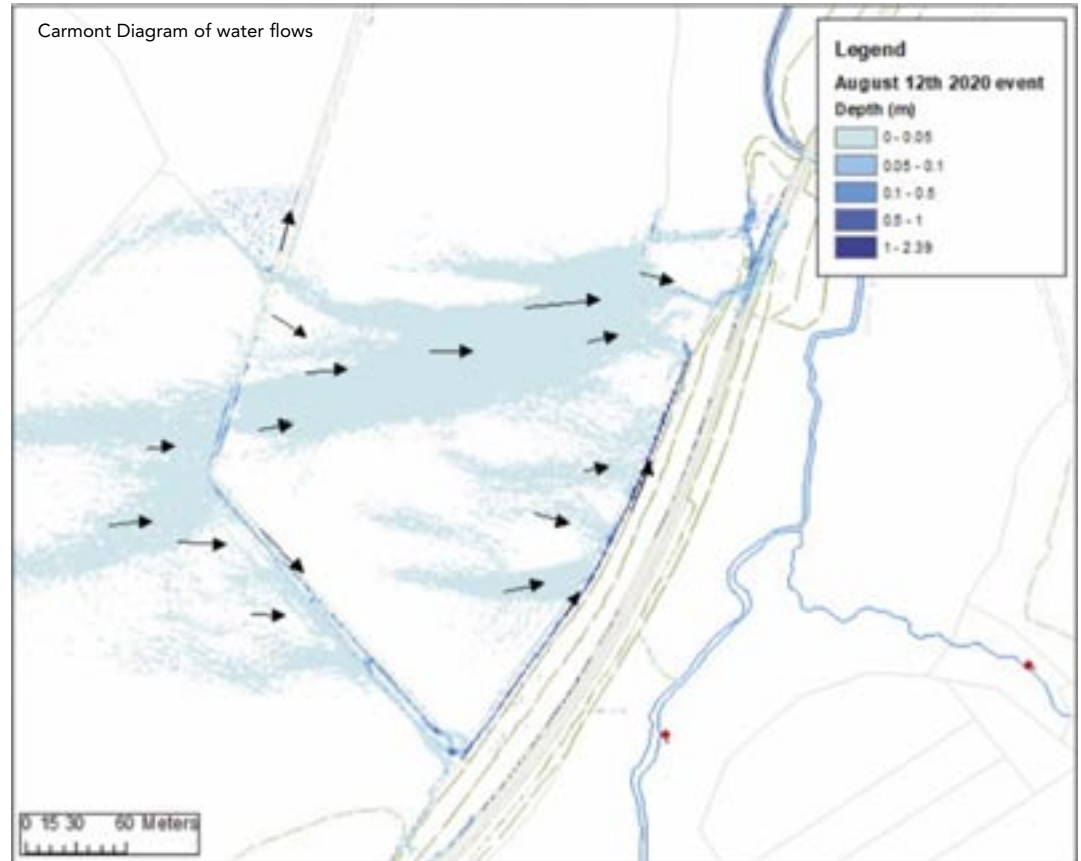
The evidence indicates that the intensity and duration of this rainfall would have generated water flows into the trench that were sufficient to wash away the gravel fill and the ground immediately surrounding the trench.

No instruction was given by route control or the signaller that train 1T08 should be run at a lower speed on its journey between Carmont and Stonehaven. At that time there was no written process that required any such precaution in these circumstances.

Consequently, normal railway rules were applied to the train movement. The RAIB's investigation found that the 'route controllers' (who were responsible for the operational management of Scotland's railway network) had not been given the information, procedures or training that they needed to effectively manage complex situations of the type encountered.

The RAIB's investigation also identified that Network Rail's management processes had not identified or addressed weaknesses in the way it mitigated the consequences of extreme rainfall events. Furthermore, despite an awareness of the risk, Network Rail had not completed the implementation of additional control measures following previous events involving extreme weather and the management of operating incidents.

A train built to modern standards would have had a number of design features that are intended to minimise the damage to the train in case of collision or derailment. However, the refurbished HST



that derailed at Carmont was designed and constructed before some of these standards came into force. While it was not possible to be certain about what would have happened in the hypothetical situation with different rolling stock in the same accident, RAIB considered it more likely than not that the outcome would have been better if the train had been compliant with modern 'crashworthiness' standards.

Simon French, the Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents,

said: "RAIB doesn't have all of the answers but is urging the railway industry to think about ways of guiding derailed trains, and to think about the longer-term implications of continuing to operate rolling stock that pre-dates modern standards."

20 RAIB RECOMMENDATIONS

- better management of civil engineering construction activities by Network Rail and its contractors
- additional standards and guidance on the safe design of drainage systems

- improved operational response to extreme rainfall events, exploiting the full capability of modern technology, and based on a detailed understanding of the risk associated with extreme rainfall
- enhancing the capability of route control offices to effectively manage complex events
- extending Network Rail's assurance regime to encompass route control offices
- addressing the obstacles to effective implementation of lessons learnt from the investigation of accidents and incidents
- measures to prevent derailed trains from deviating too far from the track (equipment fitted to track and/or trains)
- addressing train design issues identified by the investigation and better understanding the additional risk associated with the operation of older trains. ■



TRANSPENNINE CONDUCTORS STRIKE SOLID

TransPennine Express conductor members took further strike action in the fight for pay justice earlier this month.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that Trans Pennine Express conductor members were standing rock solid again in their fight for a pay deal that recognises the growing cost of living crisis confronting working people.

"RMT has made it absolutely clear that those at the sharp end of our public services, who have worked

throughout to keep Britain moving during COVID, should not now be taking a hit to their standards of living," he said.

RMT has revealed that TPE's owners have taken out dividends worth £30 million from their rail empire and are awaiting the Secretary of State's permission to pay out a further £33 million.

TransPennine Express and Avanti West Coast are on National Rail Contracts which enable them to make dividend payments up to the value of

100 per cent of their profits, subject to having their performance assessed by the Secretary of State.

FirstGroup's latest trading update notes that the DfT has confirmed that so far, they are in line to meet their targets, raising the prospect of a whopping dividend payment for TPE in the near future.

"If you want to see an example of gross injustice, compare the treatment of essential keyworkers on the railways with the frankly revolting profiteering from the

owners of Transpennine Express.

"Managers intone piously about disruption to passengers, but their companies are leeching millions out of our railways with the connivance of a callous government.

"Transpennine Express could show that they are something more than parasites by spending less time trying to line up their dividend payments and starting to fund pay justice for hard working staff," said Mick Lynch. ■



WIGAN SOLIDARITY



RMT NEC member Steve Shaw reveals a shocking attack on a gate-line member and the solidarity given

Wigan RMT member Colin Spicer was viciously assaulted on the gate-line last month in the course of his duties in an unprovoked violent attack for simply asking the customer to purchase a ticket for his journey.

Colin suffered multiple fractures to his eye socket, jaw, and skull in what can only be described as one of the worst assaults ever suffered by one of our members at work, yet he receives no sick pay.

He is employed by union-busting employer Carlisle Support Services who refuse to recognise the union on this revenue contract despite the RMT having 90 per cent membership density.

A campaign is currently running to secure RMT recognition that will ultimately result in a ballot for industrial action of members should the employer decline RMT demands. Due to Carlisle Support Services lack of sick pay and the only income Colin will now receive for many months will be statutory sick pay which falls way short of his weekly earnings.

As a paying member of Wigan Wallgate RMT Solidarity Fund, Colin immediately received financial support as the committee agreed to donate towards Colins loss of earnings. It also launched a GoFundMe page to recoup Colins loss of wages as he had been advised by his surgeon that he could be absent from his place of work for a number of months.

Within 48 hours RMT members from all over the country had also sent messages of solidarity to Colin and donated over £4,500 towards Colins loss of earnings whilst he recovers from the assault.

Once again, the solidarity displayed demonstrates the power and value of trade union membership which cannot be underestimated. There is nothing stronger than a group of working-class people uniting during a time of need in support of one of their own. It just doesn't happen anywhere else in society.

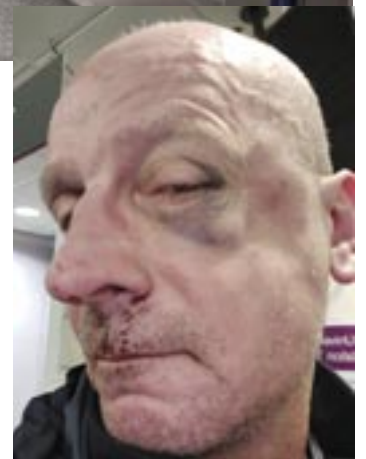
As a result, we have managed to secure a big



chunk of the loss of earnings our brother Colin Spicer of Wigan RMT branch will suffer over the coming months simply for asking a punter to produce a valid ticket at the station gate-line.

Colin has now undergone surgery for a fractured eye socket, a broken jaw and multiple head injuries and must endure months off work without any sick pay.

This once more highlights the need to abolish the outsourcing of core railway work to rogue contractors employing workers on poverty wages, zero-hour contracts and poor conditions. Carlisle Support Services are leaving their staff destitute and financially abandoned as has happened in Colin's circumstances. This company clearly should have a duty of



care towards staff when attacked in the course of their duty. Following a conversation with Colin, he thanks everyone who has donated and is completely overwhelmed at the level of support he is receiving from the union and other trade unions across the country. A big up to everyone who has supported him in his time of need.



OPERATION OCEAN WITNESS

Greenpeace UK: Why is the government letting destructive 'supertrawlers' fish in Marine Protected Areas?

RMT member Martin Yorwarth explains why coastal communities are joining forces to protect the ocean

Many RMT members in the off-shore energy, renewables, wind farms and ferry sectors and other maritime industries will have worked in the once-thriving fishing industry before being forced to find employment elsewhere.

They have seen coastal communities devastated first by the disastrous Common Fisheries Policy imposed from the EU and now this Tory government's Brexit betrayal of the fishing industry which is

further killing off what should be a vital sector for any island nation.

Many in the fishing industry have united under the banner *Operation Ocean Witness*, an alliance with Greenpeace UK and others to demand that the government takes immediate and urgent action to protect coastal livelihoods and the health of our oceans.

This country's oceans and coastal communities are in crisis. Just one third of our fish

populations are in a healthy state. Industrial fishing vessels like supertrawlers and fly-shooters have immense catching capacity and are pushing marine ecosystems and fish populations to the brink of collapse, leaving local fishermen with nothing left to catch.

Greenpeace has been working with local fishermen to document the destruction of the UK's seas by industrial fishing. When you're on the

water, it's very clear: our fishing communities – especially in the English Channel and Southern North Sea – are at breaking point.

Without urgent action, our oceans will be damaged beyond repair and our fishing communities won't survive. In the plus side the government has used new post-Brexit powers to ban electric pulse trawling, a perfect example of what is possible when there is political will. Australia banned

supertrawlers like the Margiris from their waters over five years ago, but the UK has continued to let them fish here.

The government has not properly assessed the environmental impacts of fly shooting, yet such vessels are licenced to fish in UK waters and Defra has removed all catch limits for fly shooters targeting non-quota species for 2021.

This fundamentally conflicts with the precautionary objective in the Fisheries Act 2020: The "precautionary objective" is that— (a) the precautionary approach to fisheries management is applied, and (b) exploitation of marine stocks restores and maintains populations of harvested species above biomass levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield. in the Fisheries Act.

That's why the government must act to protect our oceans and fishing communities – beginning with the following measures:

For the 10 offshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that

have been designated in the English Channel more than 12 nautical miles from the coast, supertrawlers over 100 metres, bottom trawlers and fly shooters should be banned immediately and permanently (see map below).

Pelagic trawlers over 55 metres and fly shooters should be banned immediately from the entire English Channel and the Southern North Sea on the grounds of the precautionary objective in the Fisheries Act and based on the immense threat these fishing methods pose to the livelihoods of fishermen along the south coast.

Additional steps must also be explored to support fishermen operating within the six – 12 nautical mile zone in both the English Channel and Southern North Sea, in light of the threat posed by large scallopers and large beamers.

We must seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to save our oceans and our fishing communities.■

@Martin Yorwarth appears in the Greenpeace documentary *High & Dry: How UK Fishermen Were Sold Out by Brexit* available on-line.



ACTION: A map of proposed protection measures around the UK's south coast. A solid shaded area running from the tip of Cornwall to just below the Humber Estuary shows the area where fly-shooters and pelagic trawlers over 55 metres long should be excluded. 10 irregularly-shaped yellow blocks show offshore MPAs, with a notable cluster around the Isle of Wight. These should be permanently closed to supertrawlers, bottom trawlers and fly-shooters.

MARITIME SKILLS CRISIS

RMT has responded with concern to the latest government statistics on UK Seafarers which found UK ratings numbers continued their pattern of stagnation and decline, with very few in training to fill this gap.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the figures revealed that UK shipping was in a crisis of its own making.

"UK-based Ratings now only hold 11.5 per cent of over 82,000 jobs and the number of Deck Ratings has plummeted 40% with very few apprentices in the pipeline.

"Maritime apprenticeships should be backfilling seafarer jobs after the pandemic but employers are simply ignoring them in favour of cheaper crew from countries with

appalling human rights records.

"Flagship training policies like the Tonnage Tax are hopelessly unbalanced, with 13,000 Cadets and only 75 Ratings trained in the last 20 years and the Government must use its current reforms to the £2.48 billion Tonnage Tax to mandate Ratings training.

"We have been warning for years that the government must provide greater protection from under cutting and invest in Ratings training to back fill jobs and it is time they listened.

"RMT calls on all sectors of the shipping industry to increase the number of apprentice Ratings in the UK to avert a full blown maritime skills crisis," he said. ■

PAY DEAL ON CITY CRUISES

Members on City Cruises voted to accept a three-year pay offer of 12 per cent and an overtime Rate of 1.25 per cent.

City Cruises is a cruise vessel operator in England with operations in London, Poole and York. It is a subsidiary of Hornblower Cruises.

The pay uplift will begin with a six per cent increase

backdated to January and three per cent each year of the deal.

Workers will also get an extra one-day holiday to add to their annual holiday allowance a 3/2 shift pattern will be introduced.

The company also agreed to work with the crew to find a better allowance on hours calculated for annual leave. ■



PAYING MORE FOR LESS!

National protests against fare increases earlier this month warned of threats to railway safety and services caused by the loss of

thousands of rail jobs.

Rail workers gathered at stations in London, Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds to warn passengers that

despite another huge increase in fares of 3.8 per cent rail companies and the government are intent on cutting thousands of frontline staff making the railways less safe, secure and accessible. Passengers will be paying "more for less".

Rail workers are also furious that despite being praised as key worker heroes during the pandemic the cuts are being made while the rail companies make hundreds of millions in profits.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that despite rail fares going up again the

government and rail companies are planning to slash rail services and thousands of frontline jobs at stations, on-trains and on safety critical infrastructure.

"That means our railways will be less secure, less safe and less accessible with more expensive rail fares; passengers will literally be paying more for less."

"Rail workers are also furious that despite being praised as key worker heroes during the pandemic the cuts are being made while the rail companies make hundreds of millions in profits."

"It's time to put passengers before profit and today we calling on the government and rail companies to announce that there will be no cuts to rail services and staffing," he said. ■



President's column

'OUR DEMANDS MOST MODERATE ARE'



In 'Songs of Freedom' (1907), the Irish patriot and revolutionary socialist, James Connolly wrote:

*Some men, faint-hearted, ever seek
Our programme to retouch,
And will insist, when'er they speak
That we demand too much.
'Tis passing strange, yet I declare
Such statements give me mirth,
For our demands most moderate are,
We only want the earth.*

Connolly was born in 1868 to Irish Catholic immigrant parents in Cowgate, Edinburgh. He followed his two brothers into the British Army, which sent him to serve in Ireland where he met his wife Lillie Reynolds, a Protestant domestic servant from Wicklow who married him in 1890.

After army discharge Connolly found work as a carter - the catch-all term for a freight logistics worker - and threw himself into the new trade unionism of the 1890s. He became a socialist and despite lack of formal education as a child, read widely on marxism, history, socialism and economics.

In the 1900s Connolly worked and travelled in Scotland, Ireland and the USA preaching revolutionary trade unionism. Back in Dublin in 1910, Connolly became a trade union organiser for the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union, established by James

Larkin during the 1909 Belfast Dockers' strike.

In 1913 following defeat for the ITGWU in the Dublin Lockout, Larkin left for the USA and Connolly became General Secretary of the union in Ireland. During the Easter Uprising in April 1916, Connolly commanded the Republican forces in Dublin from the General Post Office where he was injured and taken prisoner.

He was court martialled, strapped to a chair and executed by British Army firing squad in Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin on 12 May 1916. When the news of his execution reached MPs in the House of Commons, they applauded and Labour MPs joined in.

James Connolly's life story and writings are relevant today. He was a child of immigrant parents who married across religious lines. He was a highly principled and modern thinker, who rejected sectarianism in religion, politics and life in general and who worked for maximum unity of working class people to win the full fruits of their labour.

He recognised that modern capitalism had created a new system of imperialism where British landlords, banks and industrialists could extract super-profits from workers not only in Britain, but around the world. He understood that in order to challenge this new super-exploitation it was necessary for

the workers to mobilise and take control of their industries, societies and nations.

He was one of the first socialists from Britain to grasp that the right of national independence for people who are dominated by colonialism and imperialism is a pre-requisite to build socialism. When he was executed in 1916 Britain was in the midst of World War 1, a slaughter that lasted another two and half years and cost the lives of around 40 million soldiers and civilians.

In the following 50 years, the Empire Britain had amassed in James Connolly's lifetime began to disintegrate with successful struggles for independence of the peoples of India from 1947, Ghana in 1957 the first country in west Africa to win freedom from the British Empire, followed by Nigeria in 1960 and Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Guyana from 1962.

Today, as the war fever is ramped up by media and politicians, we should take inspiration from Connolly's words:

We need not kneel, our cause is high

*Of true men there's no dearth
And our victorious rallying cry
Shall be we want the earth!*

Alex Gordon,
RMT National President

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



ISLAND LINE UPGRADE

The final Class 484 train arrives on the Isle of Wight as last Class 483 departs

The new Island Line fleet to serve the Isle of Wight reached its full complement last month as the fifth Class 484 train arrived from the mainland and the final Class 483 trains arrived at their new home with the London Traction Transport Group.

The change is part of the biggest transformation of the Island Line since it was

electrified in 1967.

The fifth and final Class 484 train was delivered to Sandown and will be now subject to a number of tests before serving train passengers.

The five new trains form an integral part of the £26 million Island Line upgrade, which took place last year. The new trains included upgrades ranging from better interiors to



plug sockets, free WiFi and wheelchair spaces.

The railway's track has been significantly enhanced, helping to improve passenger comfort

while a new passing loop at Brading will usher in a new, regular 30-minute train service, aligned to the ferry timetable.

ACTIVISTS: A helping hand with recruitment



RMT is committed to protecting and promoting members' interests – so as well as representing our members in the workplace, we've also negotiated some great member benefits.

One such benefit is the £5,000 Free Accidental Death Cover that we have negotiated with RMTProtect on your behalf.

The RMTProtect team can provide leaflets, email templates, web/social/newsletter banners or they can come out to your branch to present to your members.

Call **John Eccles** on 07833450067 or email jeccles@uibuk.com for more information about this and other benefits to help support recruitment and retention!

Visit www.RMTProtect.com/JE to register

About the Cover:

- The policy pays out £5,000 if the policyholder dies as the result of an accident.
- The cover is available to RMT members and their families
- Cover is for UK residents aged 18-69.
- Cover last for 12 months, then it needs to be renewed each year, but it's always FREE. For full details, please visit www.RMTProtect.com/FreeCoverInfo
- It takes less than 2 mins to register.
- Following registration an RMTProtect representative will telephone to set up the free cover and explain the other benefits available.

RMT is an Introducing Appointed Representative of RMTProtect, a trading name of Union Income Benefit Holdings Ltd (UIBH) who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority to distribute non-investment insurance products, register number 307575. This can be checked on the FCA website www.fca.org.uk. Free Accidental Death Cover is underwritten by Stonebridge International Insurance Ltd.

WELCOME ABOARD THE EPPING ONGAR RAILWAY



Robert Good of Epping Ongar Railway Volunteer Society makes a call for others to join in the fun

Step back in time with us and experience the romance of travel in bygone times as you pass through picturesque countryside, beautiful forest and historic towns. We are both the longest heritage railway in Essex and the closest to London, easily accessible via the underground network. We're also the only heritage line that runs on a former part of the underground network!

Like all heritage railways, the Epping Ongar Railway could not operate without our friendly team of volunteers. Our volunteers undertake all the jobs that are essential for the safe and smooth operation of the Railway, including:

Being part of our on-train teams - a guard, train driver,



fireman, second man or ticket inspector

Safely signalling trains, keeping our stations and coaches clean and tidy, selling tickets

Caring for and restoring our heritage rolling stock, keeping the track in good order

Managing the vegetation and environmental ecosystems

along the line

Maintaining drains, bridges and structures

Working on keeping the steam and diesel locomotives running etc.

We have teams that meet on both weekdays and at weekends, and there is always a friendly welcome for new

faces. It's an excellent way to meet new people, find a new life-goal or passing on your knowledge and experience.

We operate both steam and diesel locomotives and even have a former 1959 London Underground Driving Motor Coach, No. 1031, which we are planning to turn into a museum! ■

We have an exciting 2022 programme and the latest information can be found on our website at: www.eorailway.co.uk

If you are ready to join, then visit: www.eorailway.co.uk/membership/ and download a membership application form. If you would like more information please contact: volunteering@eorailway.co.uk

We look forward to seeing you. Photos: Katie Pickersgill and Robert Good

ALDERLEY EDGE ART

Joy Division bass player Peter Hook unveils new artwork celebrating Cheshire village's heritage

Vibrant new artworks at one of Northern's Cheshire stations have been unveiled by a local musical legend.

Murals at Alderley Edge station were revealed last month by Peter Hook of Joy Division and New Order fame, who is a resident of the village.

Created by Stockport-based artist Eamonn Murphy, the images show a historic first-class 1840's rail carriage on the Manchester bound platform and a set of four

images in alcoves on the main station building depicting the view from The Edge, one of Cheshire's best-loved landmarks

The artworks were commissioned by the Community Rail Partnership and Alderley Edge Station Volunteer Group and funded by Northern and Waitrose & Partners.

Artist Eamonn Murphy's work can be seen at many stations in the area including Heaton Chapel, Rose Hill and



NEW JOY: Image from L to R - Kelvin Briggs from Alderley Edge Station Volunteer Group, Peter Hook, Artist Eamonn Murphy, Ros Lee from Waitrose, Sarah Morgan from Crewe to Manchester Community Rail Partnership, and Rebecca Styles from Northern. Front - John Kenny, Crewe to Manchester Community Rail Partnership.

Disley stations.

He has created more than 70 artworks featuring landmarks and places of interest accessible from stations on the Crewe to

Manchester, and South East Manchester lines. The collection can be viewed online at stationconnections.co.uk.

DISABLED MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

FIGHTING AN UNSEEN BATTLE

My name is Jennifer Aggrey-Fynn, and I work as a Customer Services Team Member at Eurostar International in London.

I have prediabetes, and was diagnosed with endometriosis after surgery fifteen years ago. I have also had two mini-strokes (transient ischaemic attacks: TIA) which have left me with mobility challenges.

I used to work a roster where duties started from 04.15am and hours were long. Management showed a lack of understanding, and resisted implementing reasonable adjustments, even after many visits to Occupational Health.

Since the closure of our ticket offices, we have no seated positions, which has eroded any support I had to carry out my job. I often use annual leave to cope with the new regime when my medical condition flares up, instead of actually being away on a well-deserved holiday! Working mainly in the ticket office permitted me and others

some respite to deal with our medical situations and work full-time.

The nature of my conditions and the inadequate way that management have addressed them affect my mental, emotional and physical wellbeing,

It has been a real struggle to be heard and to finally be removed from 4am shifts, and now I am under constant review! Living with a chronic condition is not the same as breaking a leg which heals after a few weeks or so and you're walking without crutches. Some managers are more understanding than others, so you take the rough with the smooth.

Through being involved in the union, I have been able to learn about my rights to reasonable adjustments at work. My union rep and branch chair has been instrumental in fighting and negotiating alongside me.

My own empowerment in successfully dealing with

disability cases from a personal standpoint has equipped me to advise, support and represent other members. I would recommend members as well as reps attend the equality courses the union provides as they form an excellent basis of understanding equality matters in the union, in the workplace and in society.

I am a passionate advocate for disability rights. I am an RMT lay tutor, member of the union's National Advisory Committees of Women and of Black and Ethnic Minority Members, and Education Officer for London and Anglia Region.

Our workplaces would be a lot better if there were more commitment to equality matters, including educating the workforce about neurodivergent conditions such as autism, ADHD or dyslexia to name but a few. If there were more understanding about invisible impairments such as



gynaecological conditions, it would not be such an uphill battle.

Remember: You are an invaluable part of the workforce, so do not allow anyone to discriminate against you or push you out. Never give up fighting for your rights and those of others.

Unity is strength – you have the force of the whole union behind your case not just your local team!

Never Suffer in Silence. ■

SIGNALLING AWARDS

RMT assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey congratulated Tony Ace for over 50 year's service to the union and the industry while at signallers conference in Leeds.

After receiving his 50-year badge Tony said that he joined the industry in 1970 and became a signal box boy at just 16 years old and ended his career at the

Three Bridges ASC.

"It is a great privilege to be congratulated by my peers at this conference," he said.

Eddie also made presentations to Ian Pointer and his wife Kelly on his retirement from the industry.

Conference executive committee member Chris Bown also received his 25-year union service badge. ■



AWARDS: (left to right) Eddie Dempsey, Tony Ace, Chris Bown, Ian and Kelly Pointer and conference president Chris Knibb.

A SIGNALLING FAREWELL



Jim Burns joined British Rail and the union in 1978 as a TR boy covering three boxes in the Glasgow area, before going on to be passed out on a total of 24 boxes right across central Scotland.

Jim retired from the Cowlairs and Cumbernauld Workstations at Edinburgh IECC in February after 44 years of service in order to spend more time with his Bob Dylan collection and his motorbike. ■

SIGNALLING RETIREMENT

RMT assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey wished signaller Andy Jones a happy retirement at rth3 annual signalling grades conference.

Andy used the opportunity to thank RMT rep Wayne Dixon for taking on his case of unfair dismissal which he won for him and all the trumped-up charges against him were dropped.

"I believe I speak for many members who have benefitted from Wayne's representation skills which

have had led to positive outcomes which are too many to mention here.

"We are indeed lucky to have people like Wayne who is ready to assist at no benefit to himself but to see justice done, thanks again Wayne," he said. ■



40 YEARS AWARD

RMT stalwart Phil McGarry received his 40-year badge at Scotland Regional Council from RMT president Alex Gordon and general secretary Mick Lynch. Phil joined the

railway as a guard in Glasgow over 40 years ago and has occupied many roles within the union since then including regional organiser for Scotland. ■



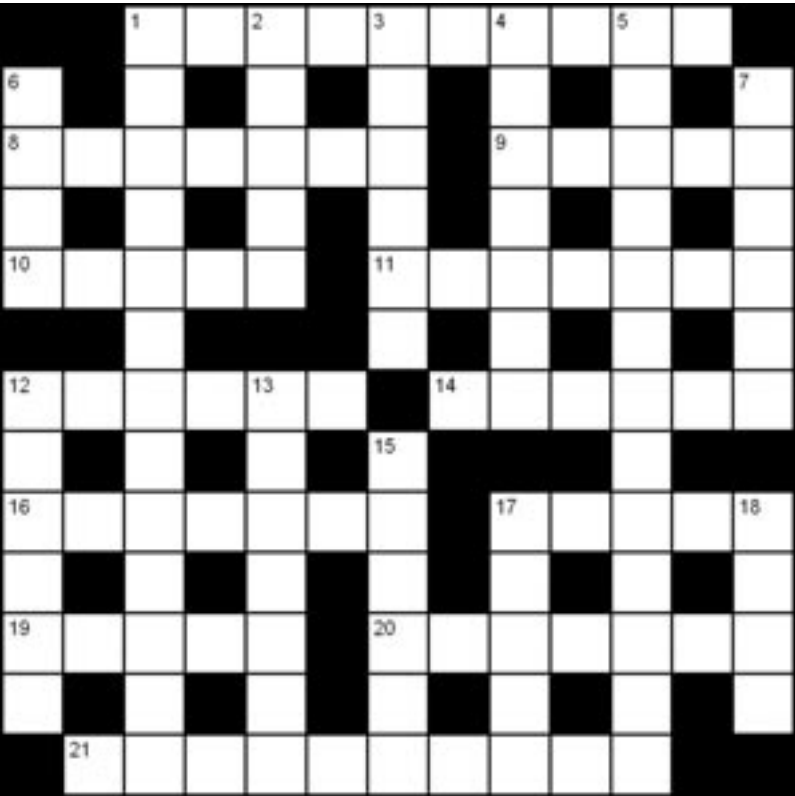
CROYDE BAY CALLING

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

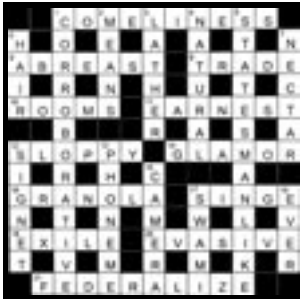
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For five per cent discount quote 'RMT' plus your membership number



£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by April 10 with your name and address.
Last month's winner is Mr Thomson, Denbighshire



insurance for trade union members

Crossword sponsored by UIA

- ACROSS

 - 1 Acute contagious infection (10)
 - 8 Harass (7)
 - 9 Repeat (5)
 - 10 Exhilarate (5)
 - 11 Bacterial infection (11)
 - 12 Graceful (6)
 - 14 Taking part (6)
 - 16 Intestinal infection (7)
 - 17 Thin pancake (5)
 - 19 Headress (5)
 - 20 Enclosed territory (7)
 - 21 Infer broad principles (10)
- DOWN

 - 1 Unemotional (13)
 - 2 Annoy (5)
 - 3 Written agreement (6)
 - 4 Unpredictable (7)
 - 5 Insensitive (13)
 - 6 Competent (4)
 - 7 Fish (6)
 - 12 Discover (6)
 - 13 Daunt (7)
 - 15 Blue-grey mineral (6)
 - 17 Bacteria (5)
 - 18 Level (4)



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