

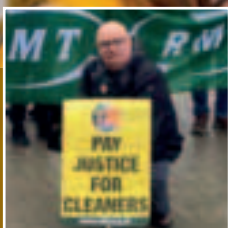
RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

RIGHT TO STRIKE



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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

HEALTH CASH PLAN

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

Join RMT by visiting
www.rmt.org.uk

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CROSSWORD



EDITORIAL

RIGHT TO STRIKE

As we go to press trade unionists and workers up and down the country are involved in protests against this Tory government's draconian new anti-strike Bill which adds up to industrial conscription to provide minimum services during strike action.

Workers are sending a clear message that the labour and trade union movement will relentlessly fight this fundamental attack on our democratic and human rights to withdraw our labour.

These profoundly anti-democratic proposals hand Secretary of State for Business Grant Shapps the personal power to decide statutory minimum service levels for a string of public services and to sack those who do not comply.

The trade union movement will fight these proposals all the way in order to exercise its hard-won rights to improve the lives of workers and not be exploited on the whim of employers.

It is clear that, having lost the argument against decent pay rises for working class people, this government is attempting to ban effective strike action by demanding that trade unions break their own strikes.

Even Rail minister Huw Merriman told the Transport Select Committee that the government had lost more money due to the impact of rail strikes than it would have cost to settle the disputes months ago.

RMT has now received revised proposals from the Rail Delivery Group, who act

on behalf of the train operating companies, in our present dispute over jobs, conditions and pay.

The proposal covers a range of issues that affect all of our grade groups at these companies and will now be considered by the National Executive Committee.

The proposals on pay and job security are directly conditional on cost savings and alterations to contractual terms, entitlements and working practices.

In the meantime, this union will continue to fight for all members regardless of the grade of worker they are. RMT is launching a campaign for a fair deal for outsourced workers as transport companies increasingly attempt to replace directly employed workers with agency workers.

Outsourced cleaners are already taking strike action for a better deal and other workers are joining the campaign for dignity and equality in the workplace.

Ultimately these outsourcing companies along with other employers in the transport and energy sectors already rake in millions while attempting to cut workers' wages in the pursuit of profit. Like other workers providing services in this country, they need a pay rise in recognition of the work they do on our behalf of all of us.

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

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



Tories launch serious attack on trade union rights with proposals to enforce minimum service levels

Trades unionists from across the labour movement have launched protests against the Minimum Service Levels bill currently being proposed by the Tory government.

Under the bill Secretary of State for Business Grant Shapps would have the power to decide statutory minimum service levels for a string of public services and to sack those who did not comply.

It would allow an employer to give a 'work notice' to trade unions that levels of service under minimum service regulations are to apply in relation to strike action.

This work notice would identify persons, regardless of union membership, required

to work during the strike in order to secure minimum service levels and specify the work required to be carried out by them during any strike action.

There is apparently no limit on the factors that Shapps would be permitted to take into account in doing so. The only requirement is to consult 'such persons as they consider appropriate' before making the regulations which can even include a consultation before the Act comes into force.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch told a demonstration outside Downing Street last month that the government had decided to bring in this anti-worker law because it

wanted to make effective strike action illegal in Britain.

He said that the bill was "an attack on human rights and civil liberties which we will oppose in the courts, parliament and the workplace."

"Trades unionists and democrats from across the political spectrum must come together in the interests of civil liberties and human rights to oppose these measures."

"This violation of democratic norms and values will be strongly opposed by the RMT and the entire labour movement, in Parliament, the courts and the workplace, if it is put on the statute books," he said.

Labour MP Bell Ribeiro-

Addy MP, who came straight from Parliament, said that the Bill's introduction in the Commons had been "absolutely disgraceful".

"All we heard from the minister was lies, deceit and utter contempt for our public service workers," she told protesters.

Labour shadow business secretary Angela Rayner responded in the House of Commons by asking how Grant Shapps could seriously think that sacking thousands of key workers wouldn't plunge public services further into crisis?

"The transport secretary admits it won't work, the education secretary doesn't

want it, and his own government impact assessment finds it will lead to more strikes and staff shortages... If he's scraping the barrel with comparisons of France and Spain, those countries with those laws... lose vastly more strike days than Britain.

"He quotes the ILO – I'm surprised that he knows what it even is – he'll know that the ILO requires compensatory measures and an independent arbitrator. Are those in his bill?

"The ILO also says minimum service levels can only happen in services when the safety of individuals or their health is at stake. This doesn't include transport, the Border Force and teachers as he proposes," she said.

TUC general secretary Paul Nowak told the protests that if passed, the bill would prolong disputes and poison industrial relations leading to more frequent strikes.

"That's why MPs must do the right thing and reject this cynical 'sack key workers bill'. It's time for the government to show they are on the side of nurses, firefighters and all our key workers who got this country through the pandemic – not actively working against them," he said.

Unlike the Transport Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill published in November, which provided for the involvement of the Central Arbitration Committee in the determination of minimum service levels and minimum service agreements, the new Bill has no such provision and makes no pretence at protection of public safety, the economy or the environment. Its purpose is simply 'to restrict the protection provides to trade unions and employees in respect of strikes'.

Labour movement legal experts have warned that the government had chosen to ignore international labour standards which leaves it vulnerable to legal challenges.

■



Mick Lynch



NEW COVENTRY BANNER

RMT Coventry branch unveiled their new banner at the Downing Street demo designed by branch member Jamie Collins featuring Lady Godiva who opposed the raising of taxes on the citizens of Coventry by her husband, the Earl of Mercia. Holding the banner at Downing Street gates are assistant branch secretary John Logan, Katie Gough, newly elected branch secretary Amanda Birch, branch chair Shakeel Goulthorpe and Steve Haskins.

GOVERNMENT TURNED DOWN STRIKE TALKS



The Tory government turned down an offer for meaningful talks in the national rail dispute before further strike action around Christmas.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that he had asked rail minister Huw Merriman to facilitate intensive negotiations to seek to resolve the dispute.

"It was clear that the rail minister had no authority to bring a resolution to the rail dispute and that Downing Street is pulling all the strings.

"We have been able to reach agreements on rail involving the Scottish and Welsh governments but the fact that we have not been able to make any progress with the UK government confirms that there is an agenda to take on the unions regardless of the cost to businesses, passengers and workers," he said. ■





JUSTICE FOR OUTSOURCED RAIL WORKERS



Union launches national campaign for outsourced workers to end exploitation and get a fair deal

RMT members who are outsourced gateline and revenue workers employed by Carlisle Support Services on Northern Trains are among those campaigning for workplace justice around the issues of pay, conditions, pensions and equality.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch addressed a meeting of RMT's Wigan branch to discuss the campaign at Northern Trains.

"The scourge of outsourcing has already fuelled in-work poverty and eroded terms and conditions for hundreds of thousands of workers.

"Many industries have used this model to get workers on the cheap and rail companies are now no exception and want to extend the use of agency workers over full time employed staff.

"Where the subcontracting of cleaners and catering staff has been used it has driven down pay.

"That is why cleaners are fighting back as a part of a national campaign already and we need to send a message to train operating companies that this model designed to create a cheap workforce is unacceptable to all of us," he said.

THE CAMPAIGN KEY DEMANDS ARE:

- A £15 per hour minimum wage which in addition protects existing differentials.
- Reform of the application of the 'Time gate' system that sees an end to members losing their hard-earned annual leave.
- All contracts of employment to reflect the normal rostered hours, no more 336 hr per year contracts for non-casual employees.
- All CSS staff on the NTL contract to receive equal leisure travel facilities on NTL as directly employed

NTL staff.

- All CSS staff on the NTL contract to receive a minimum of six weeks' full sick pay, then six weeks' half sick pay.
- CSS to increase their employer contributions to the staff's pension fund.■

If you are an outsourced worker employed by Carlisle Support Services, make sure you join RMT to become part of the campaign for justice and equality. www.rmt.org.uk/join



JUSTICE: RMT general secretary Mick Lynch addresses Wigan branch about the campaign for outsourced CSS workers on Northern Trains

EUROSTAR SECURITY STAFF WIN IMPROVED OFFER

Union cancels strike action following improved offer

Strike action by RMT members working on the Eurostar security contract for Mitie was called off just before Christmas after the company made an improved pay offer of over 10 per cent and an uplift for the lowest paid of nearly 30 per cent.

The new deal includes an uplift of 10.3 per cent including back pay and a 28.89 per cent increase for the lowest paid staff.

The union has also secured guaranteed hours on permanent shift patterns and employees who work flexibly will be offered choices which

suit their individual requirements.

The company has also agreed to looking at the discretionary sick pay policy clause to ensure employees have a review before any decision is made on whether it is payable.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch congratulated members for being steadfast in pursuit of a decent pay increase and improved conditions.

"These workers have fought hard for an improvement in the offer and succeeded," he said.



FURTHER STRIKE ACTION ON THE ELIZABETH LINE

RMT members employed by Rail for London Infrastructure (RfLI) who are safety critical to running services across London's new flagship west-east line took further strike action last month in a battle over pay.

Rail for London (Infrastructure) (RfLI), a wholly-

owned TfL subsidiary, manages the infrastructure for the Crossrail Central Operating Section of the Elizabeth Line.

Affected workers are currently being paid significantly less than similar positions across the network.

RfLI has offered four per

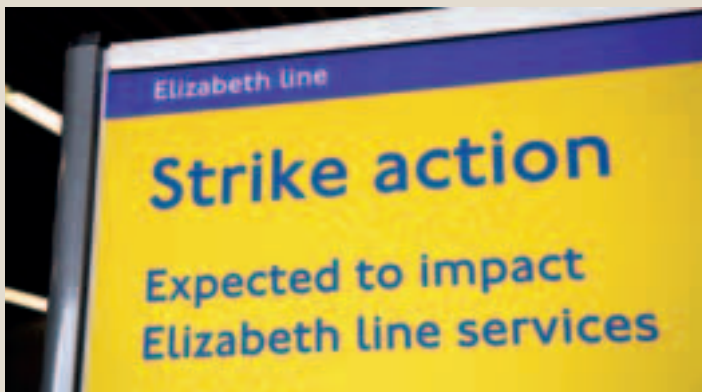


cent but workers at MTR – the outsourced part of the Elizabeth Line – received an 8.2 per cent increase this year and Docklands Light Railway (DLR) staff received nearly 10 per cent.

RMT general secretary Michael Lynch said that workers should be rewarded

for contributing to the outstanding success of The Elizabeth Line.

"Not only are these workers the poor relations of the rail network they are fundamental to Elizabeth Line operations and the employers need to recognise this fact," he said.



TUBE SAFETY AT RISK

RMT demands a moratorium on staffing reductions and an investigation into use of waivers to avoid safety regulations

RMT hit out at unsafe staffing levels on London Underground last month following a series of reports suggesting waivers to safety regulations were being inappropriately used.

In a letter to London Mayor Sadiq Khan, RMT general secretary Mick Lynch highlighted incidents where stations had less than the required staff and, in some cases, no staff at all and demanded a moratorium on staffing reductions and an immediate investigation into the use of waivers to avoid minimum number regulations.

The letter said that these problems had been caused by de-staffing, in particular the decision to axe 600 station jobs, something the RMT has taken strike action over.

"I'm writing to express my deep concern at reports I am receiving concerning station safety at London Underground.

"I have received multiple reports of Senior Operating Officers (SOO) issuing waivers that override Minimum Staffing levels that were established to ensure the safe operation of London Underground stations.

"In the wake of the Kings Cross fire of 1987, Minimum Staffing Levels were enshrined in statute by the Fire Precautions (Sub-surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1401) and then



STRIKE: Tube workers took strike action recently against job losses and cuts

reinforced by London Underground regulations that set safe staffing levels for stations based on their size and traffic.

"Yet an increasing number of stations are being opened with a staffing level below that considered to be consistent with passenger safety.

"Recently, for example, Barbican, a busy Zone 1 station, was left completely unstaffed all day, while Farringdon was left open without the required level of staff.

"I am disturbed by what appears to be an emerging culture of using these waivers to cover up the under-staffing of London Underground stations.

"As you know, these waivers are designed to be

used if the risks to safety can be shown to outweigh the risks of leaving the stations open while under-staffed. Yet in the cases I've seen the reason being given is 'customer inconvenience', which it is claimed might lead to angry passengers targeting staff.

"Yet the risks associated with under-staffed or even un-staffed stations are far greater for staff and passengers alike.

"In addition, it is hypocritical in the extreme for London Underground to use the potential threat to our staff as a reason to override minimum staffing levels on our Tube stations.

"The truth is that these actions are the direct consequence of the de-staffing of the Tube in recent years

and, most critically, of LU management's decision to delete 600 station staff posts.

"RMT members have taken five days of strike action across all grades in defence of jobs, pensions and agreements, RMT station members took an additional day to highlight the threat of 600 job reductions. My members on the three groups, where job reductions have been imposed so far, took further strike action on 25th November 2022.

"It is now clear that London Underground cannot keep stations open on a reliable basis and in compliance with safety regulations now, let alone after over 10 per cent of all station staff posts are removed," the letter said.



CLEANERS TAKE NATIONAL STRIKE ACTION



Over 1,000 contracted cleaners across the rail network took strike action on the last day of 2022 in the first national strike of its kind.

Cleaners working for the likes of Atalian Servest, Churchill and Mitie are demanding £15 an hour, company sick pay, decent holidays and good pensions from contractors who are raking in profits worth millions of pounds.

ISS cleaners on Docklands Light Railway (DLR) also took two days of action over pay, imposed rosters and attacks on working conditions.

Rail companies who use contracted out cleaning providers such as Avanti West Coast, GWR, LNER and TransPennine Express will be affected by the action.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that it was the first time that cleaners had been

taken out on strike across the rail network.

"It is a testament to our members fearlessness and determination to see justice done on pay and working conditions.

"These multimillion pound companies who super exploit workers who were rightly hailed as heroes during the pandemic, should be removed from operating in Britain, if they do not come to a

negotiated settlement on our members' modest demands.

"It is a national disgrace that many languish on the minimum wage, with no company sick or holiday pay while doing such an important job of keeping our stations and trains clean.

"These cleaners' strikes are just the beginning of our industrial campaign for the most exploited workers on our railways," he said. ■



PICKET LINE PAINTER

Watercolour artist Inga Bystram has become well known to RMT members on picket lines at Seven Sisters depot in Tottenham this year, as well as at Euston, Kings Cross, and further afield. Her colour-coordinated outfits fit right in alongside striking RMT members' colourful hi-vis, flags and banners.

Inga sketches and paints striking rail workers (RMT, ASLEF and TSSA) as well as CWU postal workers, UCU university lecturers, and even striking barristers outside the Old Bailey.

Inga lives on Tottenham's Broadwater Farm Estate and describes herself as 'a relative newcomer', having moved there in 2005 when she married her late husband, Terry Burton, the long-serving Secretary of Haringey Trades Union Council from 1986 to 2008.

Inga has been drawing since her schooldays. She first learnt to draw at her sixth Form at Broxbourne School in Hertfordshire and she then

went on to study art at London's Royal Academy. This summer she decided to paint striking RMT members, attracted by the colour and vibrancy of the picket lines as well as the friendliness of the pickets.

Of her first picket line painting she says: "I went down to Euston Station and got introduced to lovely Uncle Paul who took me under his wing. My sister Yolanda who was active on picket lines in the 1970s and 80s said to me "Don't be nervous, Inga. It might be their first picket line too!"

Inga has become something of a picket line celebrity and will be exhibiting her watercolour sketches at trade union offices in 2023, as well as a possible exhibition at Somerstown's prestigious Cock Tavern Art Gallery in Chalton Street.

On exhibiting her work to readers of *RMT News*, Inga says: "It means more to me than a show at the Tate".



CUT CARBON EMISSIONS, NOT TRANSPORT JOBS

Train crew and shunting grades organising conference committee calls for delegates to come to Newcastle in April

Climate change will be high up on the agenda at the annual train crew and shunting grades organising conference meeting in Newcastle on April 20/21 around the concept of placing public transport at the heart of the green agenda.

The Climate Change crisis is a very real threat to humanity as we know it, not just globally but nationally, regionally and locally to all of us.

The focus of the meeting will be the union's report 2021 titled '*Cut Carbon Emissions. Not Transport Jobs*' which is available on the RMT website. The document highlights six major issues:

- Recognising climate change is a local and global threat to lives and livelihoods
- Time to tackle harmful transport emissions from road vehicles as it is the UK's largest emitter of greenhouse gases.
- Cut harmful emissions by expanding public transport to encourage people out of cars and onto public transport.
- Demand a new deal for public transport through a green transport revolution that makes services more affordable, available, accessible, and attractive to use.
- Transforming public transport is ambitious but affordable, because the economic benefits of public transport expansion exceed the costs of paying for it.
- The climate challenge is a

trade union and class challenge and reducing harmful emissions can be achieved through urgent political action to defend public transport jobs and services

Ultimately the climate change agenda must not be dictated by corporations.

That is why a crucial step in challenging climate change is for decisions to be made in the interests of workers through strong trade unions and through campaigning for a more socialistic world where decisions to protect our planet, its species and our livelihoods are made by the many and not the few.

Delegates will use the report as a basis for the content of this year's conference, making the argument that addressing climate change is a political, industrial and social issue that the union can and must be involved in.

The governments of the world are tinkering at the edges with the very existence of the human race and it is incumbent upon trade unions and all of us as individuals to play our part in this struggle and to challenge our leaders and decision makers to listen to and hear the science.

The rail industry has a very key role in delivering a green agenda as one of the most sustainable and potentially low carbon means of transport which can make a real difference for the future of our children and grandchildren.

The committee would like

as many branches as possible to get involved and send delegates to conference, also we would appreciate if branches and regional councils could assist by encouraging germane resolutions to conference which consider the unions approach to green jobs and sustainable railways.

As part of the invitation, conference packs when sent out, will include a copy of the union's pamphlet. Conference

will also be inviting on climate change crisis generally and one on the rail and transport sectors part in the plan for a greener future. Please get your branch members in the respective grades to get involved and attend conference at what is a crucial time for our industry, union and our grades. Contact your branch secretary for more details.



BANKROLLING THE DISPUTE

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Industrial Action will affect South Western Railway services between 18 December 2022 and 8 January 2023

0500 to 2200 only

This industrial action applies to the following dates:

December
19, 20, 21, 22, 23,
28, 29, 30, 31
January
1, 2

Rail minister admits prolonging rail strikes to keep down public sector pay

RMT has written to business leaders accusing the government of using them as 'collateral damage' following Rail Minister Huw Merriman's admission that the government was deliberately prolonging the dispute with taxpayers' money.

The rail minister was asked by Ben Bradshaw MP of the Transport Select Committee if it had cost more to the government and the economy to bankroll the dispute than it would have done to settle it earlier.

Mr Merriam replied: "If you look at it in that particular lens then absolutely it's actually ended up costing more than would have been the case if it had just been settled in that

part but, again, we have to look at the overall impact on the public sector pay deals that are going across, and we also have to look on the ability for the reforms that don't often get talked about, but they're absolutely vital as part of the package".

In the letter to business leaders, whose companies have been impacted by the rail strikes, RMT general secretary Mick Lynch wrote that the government had admitted that prolonging the rail dispute was part of a deliberate strategy that was dictated by the government's drive to keep down the pay of rail workers, nurses, ambulance workers and teachers.

"The wider economy and the business interests who relied on pre-Christmas trade were just collateral damage in that policy.

"For months, this government insisted it had no role in the dispute while it paid the costs of the train operating companies and then intervened just before Christmas to torpedo the talks and ensure there was no settlement.

"RMT has settled dozens of disputes on parts of the national railway where the DfT has no involvement, including with devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland and many areas where the transport is the responsibility of the metro mayors.

"But in this dispute, the interests of businesses, rail workers and passengers have been sacrificed to a wider public sector pay agenda," the letter said.

PROFITS

At the same time the government spent an estimated £300 million of taxpayers' money to indemnify the train operating companies so that they didn't lose a penny as a result of strike action.

RMT research has also revealed that profits for the same train operating companies reached up to £400 million since the government put them on new contracts when the Covid-19

pandemic hit,

While rail workers have had their pay frozen in the same period, Department of Transport data has revealed that the private train operators made £310 million in taxpayer-funded profits between March 2020 and September 2022. By September last year, that figure was in excess of £400 million, all of which could be turned into shareholder dividends.

The report also showed that had it been reinvested back into the rail industry, £310 million would have been enough to fund a 10.6 per cent pay rise for the train operating companies' staff.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that while the Secretary of State and the Rail Delivery Group spin about the need for reform to fund pay rises, the truth was that the money was always there but it was being salted away by a gang of profiteers and their mates in the government.

"It's outrageous that the

interests of workers, passengers and the taxpaying public are all sacrificed to the greed of a handful of private transport companies who are being guaranteed profits when they can't run a railway even when we're not on strike.

"While executives and the rich make millions, our members are being asked to accept substandard pay offers and a ripping up of their hard fought for terms and conditions, during an escalating cost of living crisis.

"It's time the interests of workers and passengers were put first. We need a negotiated settlement with both the rail operators and Network Rail and the government needs to stop blocking these deals," he said.

The latest revelations from Huw Merriman would explain the lack of urgency in dealing with the national rail dispute in the run-up to Christmas.

This government inaction meant that the train operating companies had no incentive to

settle the dispute.

On the basis of answers given in Parliament by the government, the union has calculated that by the end of the last round of strikes the government will have bailed out the train companies to the tune of £318 million to cover the cost of the strikes.

As a result of this indemnification the rail companies will continue to make profits while rail workers and the economy lose money.

"As it is the government which is clearly prolonging this dispute with their taxpayer funded bailout for the private train companies you would clearly be justified in asking what similar steps it will be taking to compensate your

businesses," the union told business leaders.

Mick Lynch pointed out that RMT had come to negotiated settlements with the Scottish and Welsh devolved governments on pay and conditions on the railways but not Westminster.

"In Scotland and Wales, RMT has settled similar disputes with the support of the governments there but where companies are controlled by the DfT, time is running out.

"The strikes that were scheduled for the run up to Christmas were a direct consequence of actions being taken by the Secretary of State," he said.



FIRSTGROUP DIVIDENDS BONANZA

FirstGroup recently filed their accounts for all their rail companies. They paid dividends out in three of their four on Department of Transport contracts last year, totalling £59.4 million.

Over the last two years, while they were on emergency contracts from the pandemic, they paid out £90 million in dividends. In short while rail workers got nothing, FirstGroup did very nicely out of their contracts with the DfT and the government signed off all of these dividends.

TOC Dividends	2021	2022	TOTAL
First Greater Western	£19,000,000	£33,000,000	£52,000,000
First Hull Trains Ltd	£0	£0	£0
First South Western	£0	£12,900,000	£12,900,000
First Transpennine Express	£0	£0	£0
First Trenitalia Avanti			
West Coast	£11,500,000	£13,500,000	£25,000,000
TOTAL	£30,500,000	£59,400,000	£89,900,000



BANKROLL: Minister of State for Rail and HS2 Huw Merriman has admitted prolonging rail dispute in order to defeat public sector workers seeking a decent pay rise.



CHAOS: Passengers at Euston station following train cancellations last year as London mayor Sadiq Khan and Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham slammed Avanti West Coast for drastically reducing its timetables as "completely unacceptable".

RMT calls for Avanti West Coast to be taken into public ownership at end of contract in April

Avanti West Coast is the train operating company owned by FirstGroup (70 per cent) and Trenitalia (30 per cent) that operates the West Coast Partnership (WCP) franchise.

At the end of 2019 it took over operations from Virgin Trains which had run the franchise since 1997 and the franchise was scheduled to run until March 2030. However, the Department of Transport introduced an Emergency Recovery Measures Agreement (ERMA) in September 2020 to deal with the pandemic set to expire in October 2022.

The DfT extended the ERMA arrangements until the end of March 2023 under broadly the same terms and conditions.

Problems began almost immediately after Avanti took over the franchise as they lost staff and failed or refused to replace them, presumably to manage down staff costs. Instead, they attempted to force existing staff to work longer shifts and cover more work.

Then last year Avanti West Coast began reducing its timetable and blaming its staff in the media with unsubstantiated claims of unofficial strike action. Trains were running at one service per hour most routes, as opposed to the three which would typically run on the London Euston to Manchester Piccadilly route. Media stories also emerged of numerous train cancellations, overcrowded services, delays and expensive fares.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham expressed his frustration by calling on the government to strip Avanti West Coast of its franchise and the CEO of Avanti West Coast resigned amid the controversy.

In October last year when the government extended Avanti's contract until the end of next month it stated that "drastic improvements" were necessary. However, according to figures released by the Office of Rail and Road in November, Avanti West Coast

had the worst record of train cancellations in the year prior to this date.

Before Christmas Rail Minister Huw Merriman told the House of Commons that Avanti's incoming timetable would mark a new departure because its services would be no longer reliant on staff – drivers and Train Managers – volunteering to work overtime or on their Rest Days.

"This timetable change

represents an opportunity to put in place a long-term timetable base and to return to the extended booking horizons that passengers rightly expect," he said.

At the time of this debate, RMT surveyed Avanti staff who told the union that they had no confidence that Avanti would be able to deliver its new timetable as the company was simply too short-staffed. Avanti's internal



ANGER: Ian Bryne Labour MP for Liverpool West Derby is just one of many MPs across the political spectrum calling for Avanti to be stripped of its West Coast franchise.

communications from the point when it began to operate its new timetable confirmed this view.

This information revealed that on non-strike days, Avanti was cancelling on average 15 per cent of their trains, either fully or in part, and over 70 per cent of these cancellations were due to the non-availability of drivers and Train managers due to staff being unwilling to work their rest days of work overtime.

SURVEY

RMT surveyed its members working for Avanti West Coast in December and more than 1,000 members of staff at Avanti responded (see tables of questions and responses).

- 95 per cent of respondents said they did not agree with Avanti bosses who told Parliament that they had no problems before July. Avanti staff said that problems started from the day Avanti took over the franchise.
- More than 90 per cent agreed that working life had

got harder in the past three years, that there are not enough staff and that the company had mismanaged their workforce while more than 80 per cent strongly agreed with all three statements

- A recurrent view was that the real problems date from when FirstGroup and Trenitalia took over leading to chronic understaffing, an attack on established Rest Day working pay rates and agreements, incompetent rostering and a hostile attitude toward staff.
- 95 per cent of ticket office staff reported that they were aware ticket offices closing or failing to open during their advertised hours as a consequence of understaffing. 70 per cent reported that this had happened more than 10 times in the last six months.
- 96 per cent of staff said that their working life had been negatively affected by Avanti's actions in reducing their timetable and in short

term cancellations

- Asked to rate their levels of trust and confidence in management on a scale of 1-100 where 100 was no confidence at all, respondents' average response was 90/100.

Avanti remains short-staffed and reliant on a good-will which has sparked strike action over rosters by RMT members. Staff now view Avanti's management as being toxic.

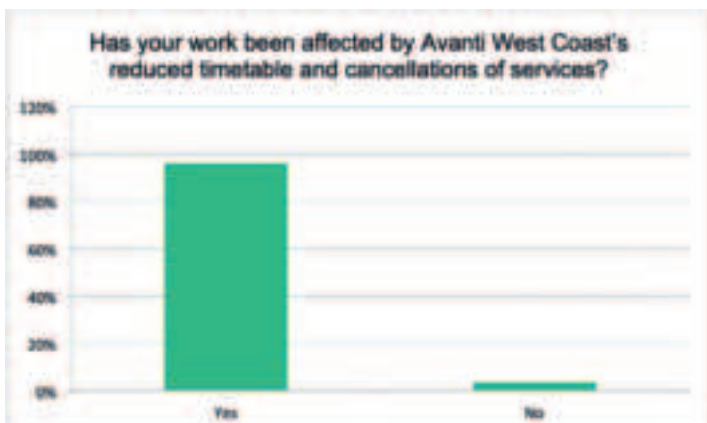
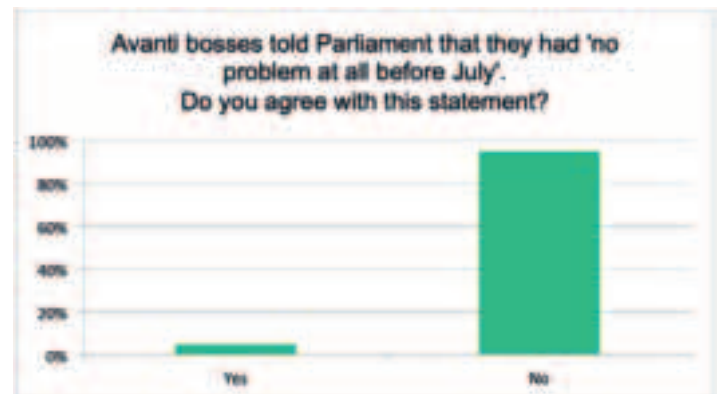
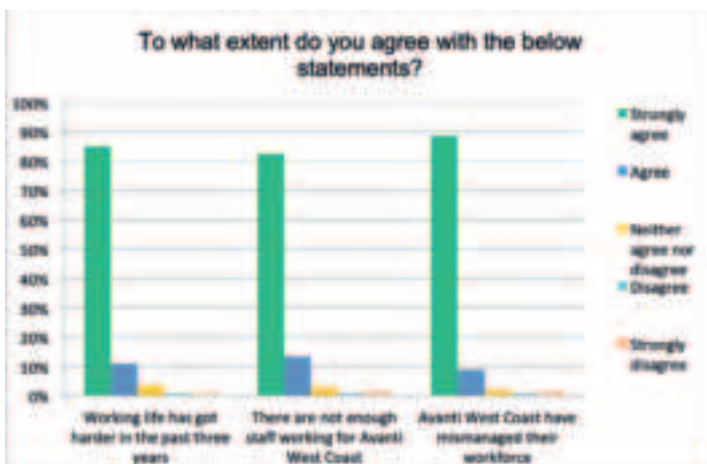
The company has misled Parliament about the problems in an attempt to extract taxpayers' money to which by rights they should not be entitled through a shady contractual manoeuvre aimed at getting their cancellations

designated as a force majeure event.

The signs are that the government may be complicit in this duplicity as it persistently repeats the line that Avanti's problems are due to unprecedented, sudden actions by its staff. If this happens it will be little more than a grubby scam on the taxpayer.

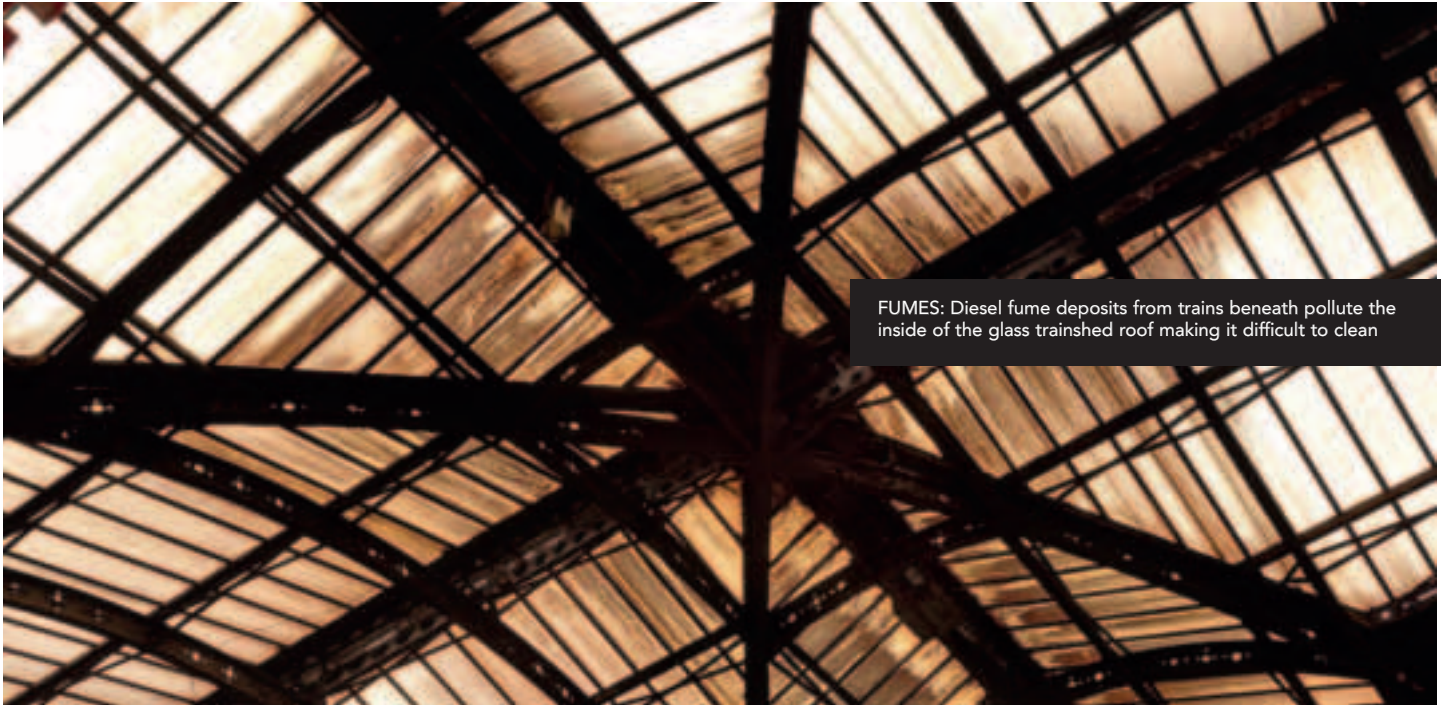
RMT has argued that the company should be stripped of its franchise. The West Coast mainline should join the East Coast mainline in public ownership, under the operator of last Resort. This is a vital precondition to rebuilding staff goodwill and trust and confidence in management.

■



CLEAN AIR AT WORK

RMT surveys finds that in all grades including rail, maritime, buses and taxis are exposed to diesel fumes



FUMES: Diesel fume deposits from trains beneath pollute the inside of the glass trainshed roof making it difficult to clean

Following last year's health and safety advisory conference dealing with clean air at work over 9,000 members working in rail, maritime, buses and taxis responded to a short survey about exposure to diesel engine exhaust emissions in the workplace.

Over 80 per cent of respondents said that they had been exposed to diesel fumes while at work and 79 per cent said that this exposure is ongoing.

MARITIME

Car decks were shown to be the main area in which maritime members are exposed to diesel pollution, which is particularly problematic as they are enclosed areas - and in some instances fans not cleaned. One respondent wrote "all cars and lorries are ticking over at least 15 minutes before we enter the bottom deck is full of fumes and only

one door open it doesn't leave the deck" and alarmingly several respondents wrote in connection to Irish Ferries and P&O that these companies "Didn't care, we asked for face masks, but were told it would frighten passengers".

BUSES

One respondent wrote, "I'm a bus driver, I'm regularly exposed to diesel fumes either at the depot or most commonly in the cab of the bus. The vents suck it through from the whole vehicle in front and it is often very unpleasant and smells strongly of burnt diesel fumes in the bus cab. Most of our diesel buses you can smell fumes while driving them".

Another respondent explained that their canteen /restroom window opens straight into the bus depot.

TAXIS

The survey found that

Transport for London are the qualification body for taxi drivers under section 53 & 54 of the Equality Act 2010 but neglect their duty to taxi drivers who they licence.

RAILWAYS

Tunnels were identified by respondents as a high-risk area where diesel fumes are particularly bad, especially when placing T3 protection and when working by engineering trains and using machinery.

When working track side, diesel exhaust emission pollution was identified by respondents as a problem when using tamping machines, stone blowers, other diesel plant, also using road rail machines and MEWPs (Mobile Elevated Working Platform).

The continued use of diesel trains because of the governments continued failure to electrify lines is reflected in response findings and its

impact on board trains and in stations:

Respondents said that they were exposed to diesel engine exhaust emission inside train sheds, during testing after engine change, when working in DMU maintenance depot and constantly running vehicles in shed as the overhead lines/shore supply were not being used.

One respondent wrote: "Every day we have poor to none ventilation the extractors we have don't walkway work or turn on our plant and buildings department fob us off every time we complain about the problem. My company doesn't want to spend the money to improve the outdated system."

A respondent wrote of impact of diesel pollution on board train: "As a guard this can be on train coming into the back cab or when performing station duties. Often finding black on the

tissued when I blow my nose".

Birmingham New Street station was identified by several of the respondents as a problem, one respondent wrote of the station "where Cross Country and Avanti Voyagers regularly serve pumping fumes into the enclosed area and a series of fans blow the fumes all-round the station. I reported this to CIRAS a few years ago but it is still as bad as ever".

Another wrote: "I work next to trains and am constantly exposed to diesel fumes as the fumes spread with enclosed station".

"As a station shunter, I worked on a daily basis, working in between trains on a ground level with DMU's and diesel-powered engines".

"Complaints have been made to Eurostar about East Midlands but we have been told they cannot turn engines off as trains may not restart. We have not had any briefing

or any concern shown".

"We've been fighting a losing battle for years especially with terminating trains not switching off engines".

Over half of respondents said that diesel exposure had caused them headaches, nearly 40 per cent experience eye irritation and over 30 per cent light headedness. These are all symptoms which impact on the ability of RMT members to do their work safely - and is particularly concerning given that many of them carry out safety critical work in the transport industry. Respiratory problems including wheezing were also a significant problem.

Over 83 per cent said that they were not given any information or training on the health risks of diesel exhaust emissions. Of the RMT safety reps who responded to the survey over 80 per cent said that they hadn't seen the

employers risk assessment of diesel pollution. 65 per cent said that the issue of diesel pollution was not discussed at safety committee.

One safety rep wrote: "Sometimes reps may bring to the health and safety meetings the occasions of working in tunnels, when breathing engine fumes, but the company suggest respiratory masks or invoking the work safe procedure instead of dealing with the problem".

These results reveal that RMT members are working in a toxic soup of chemicals and employers must be forced to exercise their legal duties and minimum standards on ventilation.

It also revealed that we don't all breathe the same air and the lower paid you are more likely to live and work in polluted areas. As one respondent explained, "cleaners don't have a

choice".

RMT is demanding that employers comply with HSE guidance on diesel engine exhaust emissions. The government must also step up funding to achieve Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation strategy which is that over 8,000 miles of railway line needs to be electrified by 2050. The union must work with the TUC and other unions to demand that workplaces be included in clean air zones and employers must enforce their idling policies. Maritime employers must allow use of face masks on desks, not allow engines on in advance and ensure that fans are sufficient.

Ultimately employers must be held responsible for measuring air quality and reps should know exactly what levels their members are being exposed to in their workplaces.



Hunting for better home insurance? Let us help you out...

If home is where the heart is, then protecting it makes sense. While RMT's former home insurance provider, UIA Mutual, has stopped offering cover, the union has teamed up with Union Insurance Services for a comparison service to help members find alternative providers.

Don't worry, existing policy holders will still be serviced by UIA Mutual until renewal, but new customers will now be directed towards the best savings with Union Insurance Services' platform.

Using Union Insurance Services' comparison platform to choose your home insurance can help save you money and time. It searches deals to flag the policies that offer the best value - they do the hard work for you.

You only need to provide your information once for the platform to pick out the policies most relevant to you. You'll get a quick and impartial overview of what's available - and for how much - in a matter of minutes.

*Non-standard home insurance, as it's called in the industry, applies to houses that don't quite fit building norms. Union Insurance

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Why Non-Standard Matters

Over 9 million of the 25 million homes in the UK are now categorised as non-standard.

Non-standard home insurance risks include:

- Personal circumstances such as bad credit history.
- Property type, e.g. listed.
- Property location - flood risk, subsidence risk.
- Property condition such as flat roof.
- Property usage.

Many insurers will either not provide a quote or will provide an inappropriate quote for non-standard homes.

UNION INSURANCE services

To get your quote visit:
RMTProtect.com/home
or call us on 01608 544639

*For Prize Draw Rules please visit RMTProtect.com/win2000 *Customers will receive 10% cashback on their annual home insurance premium if this is their second UIB / Union Insurance Services / RMTProtect paid policy and where UIB has access to their bank account details. Payment is made within two months of the policy start date. To ensure that you receive your 10% cashback, please email customercare@uibuk.com with your new home insurance policy details and current UIB policy details. RMT is an Introducing Appointed Representative of Union Insurance Services, 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. This site is operated by Ceta Insurance Limited, registered in England & Wales company number 02827690.

WOMEN ON SCOTTISH RAILWAYS

RMT members in Scotland took part in a project studying the history of women on the railways

RMT Learning Scotland Lowlands and Uplands project teamed up with The Open University (OU) in Scotland for the Women and Scottish Railway project in January 2021 supported a group of women RMT members from various branches across Scotland to research and address the relative absence of the history of women in Scottish railway history.

The project had a strong focus on the role of women in trade unions especially struggles faced by women working in Scotland's railway.

The course programme focused on the creation and completion of a history project to celebrate the achievements of women members of NUR and RMT working within the rail industry in Scotland. The programme encompassed and developed educational resources which now sit on the Open Learn website <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/scotland-women-railways>

The programme introduced contemporary issues and approaches to understanding history and developing a

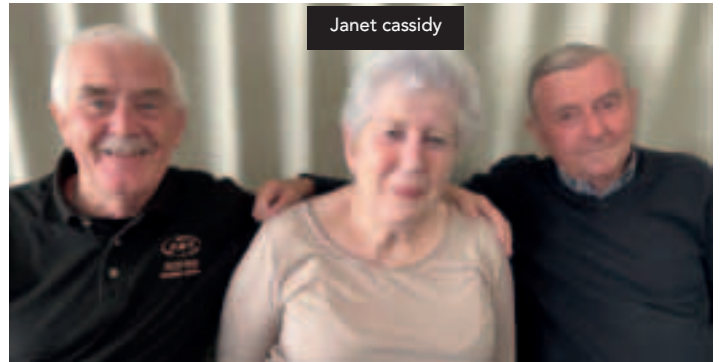
historical educational resource that are now available online.

With support from OU tutors the women developed study skills, research skills, interviewing skills, interdisciplinary approaches, ethics, preparing online and text-based materials. The goal was to produce a collection of materials that are now hosted on The Open University's OpenLearn website that is now freely accessible for women in the rail industry and women planning a career in the railway.

Some of the research included how did the employment of women during the First World War affect the railway industry to how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on employees working on the railways.

The project includes interviews with Janet Cassidy one of the first women train divers in Scotland and Nan Zaimaitas who started work on the railway in 1977 and how she became an active union representative.

Through learning the struggles faced by women rail



workers in the past and present by reading and listening to the project outcomes it is hoping to encourage other women in the various branches in Scotland to engage with the next upcoming course.

The Women and Scottish Railway History Project secured funding through the RMT Lowlands and Uplands learning project supported by Scottish Union Learning. RMT Learning Organiser for Lowlands and Uplands Scotland Dennis Fallen said that the original inspiration for the course grew out of a Webinar on the Glasgow 1915 women's rent strikes which is part of the Open Learn Red Clyde Side collection and

delivered during the pandemic by Jennifer McCarey of Glasgow Trades Council. The course logo was inspired by the 100-year anniversary badge commemorating women in both NUR and RMT, wording for this course badge was created by RMT member Mary Jane Herbison.

The RMT Lowlands and Uplands project is currently planning a further course for women in Scotland working in the railway and offshore to begin this year. For more information contact your branch secretary, RMT Union Learning Representative or Dennis Fallen RMT Learning Organiser via email: D.Fallen@rmt.org.uk



PROS AND CONS of electric cars



Sales of electric cars continue to increase and, as fuel prices make trips to the pump ever more eye-watering, their popularity shows no sign of waning.

At the end of last year roughly one in five new cars was fully electric, and 2022 is shaping up to be just as buoyant. Indeed, sales of electric vehicles are forecast to outstrip diesel models for the first time this year. If you're looking to make the leap, here's what you need to know:

ECO CREDENTIALS:

Concerned about your carbon footprint? Switching to electric makes sense. Zero tailpipe emissions mean these vehicles are better for air quality and, ultimately, for your health. Even if this isn't a big motivating factor now, it soon will be. In 2020, the government announced plans to phase-out petrol and diesel cars by 2030. From 2035, all new cars and vans must be fully zero-emission.

DRIVING EXPERIENCE:

Here's where, historically, electric cars have received the most flak. Many potential buyers have been put off by 'range anxiety' i.e. the mileage you can cover before having to recharge. This has improved tremendously in recent years (even cheaper models can now squeeze around 300 miles out of their batteries), as has charging infrastructure.

Of course, you're still going to hear the odd horror stories of public chargers being out of order, or the cable not connecting properly when you've left it plugged in overnight. And, of course, charging an EV still isn't as quick as refuelling a petrol or diesel car. However, finding car parks with charging points is now relatively straightforward, even if managing the range of accounts needed for the different providers can be a bit of a headache.

Once underway, electric vehicle owners generally rave about the drive itself which, with instant acceleration and near silence, offers tremendous benefits over standard vehicles. Continuing improvements in battery range and better on-board equipment will only make the experience more comfortable in future.

Thinking about changing or renewing your car insurance? Get a **FREE** quote by visiting www.RMTCar.co.uk today! Compare quotes from up to 60 insurance brands to find the best deal for you. **PLUS** if you find a cheaper car insurance quote online they guarantee to beat it - just call 0330 022 6657 to find out more!*

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EXPOSING FASCISM

How the National Union of Railwaymen humbled the leader of the Blackshirts Sir Oswald Mosley

Ninety years ago, during some of the most turbulent years of the last century, John Marchbank was elected National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) general secretary at around the same time as the Nazis came to power in Germany.

As a result, Marchbank is probably best remembered for his long-running legal battle with the fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley which went a long way to exposing his infamous Blackshirts as the thugs and racists they were.

Born in Lambfoot in Dumfriesshire in 1883, John Marchbank worked as a shepherd before he joined the Caledonian Railway Company at the age of eighteen.

In 1906, he joined the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants before it became part of the new NUR in 1913.

He joined the NUR executive committee in his twenties, became president at just 39 years old before going on to become general secretary in 1933 following the death of his predecessor Charlie Cramp.

As the fascist threat was still not widely understood the union's annual general meeting in Morecambe in July of that year resolved that the best method to combat fascism was the creation of 'a highly disciplined and organised working class schooled in militant socialist principles'.

Delegate Jim Campbell – who would later become NUR general secretary in 1953 – also argued that the best way to defeat fascism was to create a united front of working-class organisations and 'do away with divisions'. However, this was defeated by delegates after Cramp, who died within the month, warned against

communist influence in the union. As a result, only anti-fascist literature from the TUC and the Labour Party was circulated to branches.

Mosley received a massive media boost when *Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror* newspaper owner Lord Viscount Rothermere wrote articles under his own by-line in January 1934 in both newspapers with headlines such as 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts' and 'Give the Blackshirts a helping hand'.

Mosley had initially enjoyed a wide and even glamorous appeal. Endowed with huge personal wealth, he began his political career as the Conservative MP for Harrow

before switching to Labour and winning a by-election in 1926 as Labour MP for Smethwick.

By 1931 he had resigned as a minister from the government and launched the New Party (NP), which led to his expulsion from Labour along with a handful of other Labour MPs. Interestingly, its first electoral contest was at the Ashton-under-Lyne by-election in April 1931 following the death of the sitting NUR MP, Albert Bellamy. Much to the chagrin of the NUR, the NP split the vote which led to the NUR-backed Labour candidate J W Gordon losing out to the Conservatives.

Hurrah for the Blackshirts

By
VISCOUNT ROTHERMERE

BECAUSE Fascism comes from Italy, short-sighted people in this country think they show a sturdy national spirit by deriding it. If their ancestors had been equally stupid, Britain would have had no banking system, no Roman law, nor even any football, since all of these are of Italian invention.

and disgusted by the incompetence of their leaders in dealing with the depression that has followed on it. The other is made up of men too young to remember the war but ready to put all their ardour and energy at the service of a cause which offers them a vigorous constructive policy in place of the drift and indecision of the old political

views" were an effective substitute in human affairs for action, the National Government would be the best that Britain has ever had. But the experience of the past two years has proved that these futile and time-wasting devices are no more than a screen for inertia and indecision.

THE huge majority obtained by the present Government at the general election of 1931 was the last vote of confidence that the nation will ever give to Old Gang politicians. Two years from now another general election will be almost due. The whole future of Britain will depend upon it.

Crazy New Reef
Presented by
D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS
OLD soldiers will note, with fiction, one of the most "The Soldier's Return," a group, at the British Art Exhibition. The handsome, even foppish, soldier, wearing an expensive shirt and a navy velvet necktie.



John Marchbank, NUR general secretary 1933 to 1943

The New Party became increasingly fascist and violent as Mosley set up a party militia, known as the 'Biff Boys' led by the England rugby captain Peter Howard. By 1932, heavily influenced by the Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini, Mosley had formed the British Union of Fascists (BUF).

Emulating Mussolini's thugs, Mosley created a corps of black-uniformed stewards, the Fascist Defence Force, nicknamed 'Blackshirts', who were frequently involved in violent confrontations with communist and Jewish groups.

An internal Labour Research Department report from 1934 sent to the NUR marked 'completely confidential' revealed how seriously the BUF threat was. It noted: 'Fascist propaganda is far more effective and is making more headway than is commonly realised'.

The scale of the threat was brought into sharp focus at a notorious mass BUF meeting at Olympia on June 7, 1934 which drew over 15,000 many just curious to hear about fascism. Eye witnesses reported the use of excessive political violence against protestors rarely seen by fringe groups in Britain before.

At around this time, as part of the NUR's 'Campaign Against Fascism', the union sent further anti-fascist Labour Party literature to branches.

Marchbank addressed a trade union meeting in Newcastle on July 14 outlining

evidence of 'secret instructions issued by Sir Oswald Mosley', that fascists were active among the armed forces, that certain weapons were recommended for use including clubs, knuckledusters, knives etc. Marchbank was reported to have said 'we strongly object to any particular party assembling in the guise of a military machine with the object of overthrowing by force the constitutional government of the country'.

After a report of the speech appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, Mosley's solicitors informed Marchbank that he was being sued for slander. Mosley had already successfully sued many publications for libel and now turned his attentions to the NUR.

However, based on the meticulous collection of evidence, Marchbank decided to fight the allegations based on three points: that he did not say the words alleged in relation to Mosley personally, that the meeting was a privileged occasion and that the words he did say were true.

Finally, in February 1936, after much legal wrangling and over the course of five days in court, the former shepherd used his defence to publicly give detailed examples of Blackshirt brutality. The evidence collected for the case, contained within the archives of the NUR at Warwick University, included statements by former BUF members on the organisation's use of violence and anti-semitism.

Famously, Mosley won the case but was awarded just one farthing in damages - one quarter of one pence. Despite this symbolic victory, Marchbank's costs totalled some £5,518, an enormous sum at the time, and NUR rules prevented any use of the union's funds to assist him.

A testimonial fund committee was hastily set up

which included many Labour heavyweights such as Walter Citrine, Clement Attlee, Hugh Dalton, George Lansbury, Ernest Bevin and Herbert Morrison, a measure of the esteem in which Marchbank was held. As a result, all costs were met and the remainder was used to fight other cases including the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) successfully suing another fascist and former Labour MP, John Beckett, for libel after he smeared the union in his pamphlet '*Fascism and Trade Unionism*'.

Following these legal victories, the AEU and NUR general secretaries wrote a joint introduction to an LRD pamphlet aimed at trade unionists called '*Fascism - fight it now*'.

Mosley's legal defeats were followed by the physical defeat of the Blackshirts at the notorious Battle of Cable Street on October 4, 1936 when they were prevented

from marching through the East End of London. Jewish groups, communists, anti-fascists and trade unionists united to block the fascists from passing and saw off repeated baton charges from mounted police.

The backlash from these humiliations and the electoral losses to come convinced many to turn their backs on Mosley. This led to Mussolini withdrawing much-needed funding for Mosley's BUF.

Marchbank went on to serve as vice-president of the International Transport Workers' Federation from 1935 and retired from his posts at the NUR and the TUC General Council in 1943.

Following the outbreak of the war Mosley and many of his fascist cronies were interned. Ultimately, the anti-fascist activities of the NUR leader and others prevented the poison of fascism from taking a greater grip in Britain.



FASCISTS: One of the leaflets distributed by the NUR to branches and regions.

EQUALITY MATTERS



RMT tutor Jennifer Aggrey-Fynn delivers two equality courses at the RMT Bob Crow education centre in Doncaster

Delegates gathered from across the country from various grades to study equality and disability at work. Education is a fundamental part of being an RMT union member and courses look at the structure of the union, tackling racism and sexism in the workplace, understanding gender transition and disability models.

Courses also look at the law and its limits, unlawful discrimination, campaigning for equality in the workplace and removing barriers and reasonable adjustments for disabled workers and sickness absence.

The courses provide a safe space to open up a myriad of frank debates as we consider the reality of the impact of negative treatment on others and the notion of whether equality actually exists in society in the workplaces and the trade union movement.

The union has taken collective action in recent months and many of these workers in the affected grades are from black and ethnic minority backgrounds on zero-hour contracts or are women working part-time as well as the effect of ticket office closures on our disabled members and passengers

alike.

Below are some reflections from students on the courses provided:

Alistair Stone, Birmingham Rail: "When I attended my first course disability in the workplace I really didn't know what to expect! I was told it would be a good experience at the education centre and I wasn't disappointed. What a great place to learn!

Having everything in one place was such a great help. The learning environment was second to none, the staff friendly, helpful and with such a knowledgeable and friendly tutor in Jennifer, it was a

pleasure to be part of the week. If you are given the opportunity to spend some time in Doncaster at the learning centre, grab it with both hands. I can't wait to go again. But beware, those food portions are out of this world".

Mick Flynn, Network Rail: "Our tutor Jen became a friend. She was warm and welcoming with us, both as a group and individually. As the week progressed, she made many of us friends for life.

The course itself is extremely educational and a part of modern life. Some of us disagreed with some of the notions but our tutor held

great debates and had a fantastic ability to reason. Do not hesitate to attend this course. It's so informative. You won't regret it".

David Garratt, Peterborough branch: "I found the course extremely helpful and very enlightening with the content it contains and hopefully more reps will enrol. Jennifer is an excellent tutor and really knows her stuff, but what I found most enjoyable was the mixture of students and their backgrounds within the railway.

For anyone who hasn't attended Doncaster then what are you waiting for? The entire complex is great, the staff absolutely amazing as is the food. But getting back to the course,

very informative and I've already used what knowledge I learnt in cases at work and I won

because of the knowledge I attained. Get on it as you won't be disappointed".

Ashley Abrams, Euston No.1: "The RMT Equality at work course was very interesting when we learnt about different sectors equally and how to deal with racism in the workplace. We watched a documentary called Jane Elliott 'Blue eyes, brown eyes' depicting an experiment on

Antiracism.

It shows the difference and segregation of discrimination because of the colour of eyes of the school

Children, definitely worth a watch to understand how others are treated less favourably because of how they look. It was my first time at the education centre and I look forward to coming back for the Autism in the workplace course. It has been a very positive experience".

Joseph Sammut, Heathrow Express: "As a Health & Safety rep, I highly recommend the disability in the workplace course. Some of the topics we covered include the views, facts and figures on disability. The course also explains the difference between the medical and social models of disability and Disability law and policies.

"Other topics we learnt about are sickness absence policies, the TUC and RMT's own Disabled Members Advisory Committee (DMAC). After doing the course, I feel much more confident in dealing with the challenges that colleagues and customers face as I am much more knowledgeable".

Tony Peacock, Hastings: "I found the course an interesting and thought provoking one. There are



elements to the course that are very interesting and educational. This course had me thinking hard and helped me to understand the complexity of the rights that people with disabilities have and should expect from their employers. I would recommend every rep should attend this course

to broaden their knowledge & understanding".

Both courses concluded with the launch of RMT's Disabled Transport Workers

Charter produced by disabled members themselves.

The 10-point plan charter details what the union should be campaigning for in the workplace. All members, reps and officials should familiarise themselves with our demands to protect the rights of our disabled members. As Frederick Douglass famously said. "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will".

As we enter 2023, we have historical statistics on our own equality representation at senior levels of this union. We have our first elected female regional organiser Kathy Mazur in London and Anglia region and three women on our NEC Mary Jane Herbison (Scotland), Millie Apedo-Amah (South East) and Jas Breyal, newly elected from our Midlands region for a three year term and Oluwarotimi Ajayi (South Wales & West of England), David King (North East Region) and Carlos Barros (London Transport Regional Council).

Applications for all courses should be arranged through the branch via the RMT website:
www.rmt.org.uk/education



LEGAL

TRIPS, SLIPS AND FALLS



RMT members regularly win compensation cases handled by the union for falls in the workplace

An RMT member has secured compensation after suffering an injury while working as a train dispatcher for First MTR South Western Trains Limited.

Having been in a conversation with the train's driver on a platform at London Waterloo Station the member turned to walk towards the middle of the train. As he did so, he tripped on a raised portion of tarmac on the platform, twisting his left ankle and also injuring his right knee.

The member reported the accident to the station manager on the same day, and the raised portion of tarmac was repaired the day after. As a result of the fall, the member suffered pain and discomfort from a sprain to his left ankle and a minor soft tissue injury to his right knee, resulting in an area of numbness over the joint.

The member instructed specialist lawyers at Thompsons through the RMT legal assistance scheme to pursue a claim against his employer for compensation for the injuries and losses he suffered as a result of this accident.

Thompsons provided the member with detailed advice about the case, and submitted a claim to the employer, arguing that the employer had failed to ensure that the



surface of the platform was kept completely flat, without any raised portions of tarmac and that by failing to do so they had created a trip hazard. After investigating the claim, the employer admitted liability for the accident.

Thompsons instructed an Accident and Emergency Consultant to prepare a medical report detailing the nature and extent of the injuries suffered by the member, and drafted a schedule listing his losses. Following correspondence and detailed negotiations with the employer's insurer, a settlement was agreed and the member was awarded damages of £1,000.00 without the need for court proceedings.

The fact that Thompsons

recovered damages for the member's relatively minor injuries shows that the value of the RMT's legal assistance scheme and that the union is there to support all its injured members, including in cases which claims companies and no-win no-fee solicitors would refuse to take on given its relatively low value.

SLIPPING ON ICE

Through the RMT legal scheme, Thompsons Solicitors helped a member secure compensation after he slipped and fell at work.

The member was injured when walking to his train at Cardiff Central Station. He was using the safe walking route when he slipped on ice. He suffered a chipped bone in his right wrist as well as pain,

bruising and tenderness to the right side of his ribs, and restricted mobility.

Thompsons argued that his employer had failed to monitor the conditions and grit the pavement as it should have done, creating an avoidable risk of injury.

The employer's insurers admitted liability for the accident and medical evidence was obtained and the defendants settled out of court.

The settlement sum recognised three weeks of hand pain, three months of pain from the rib injury discomfort in the wrist in the winter following the accident and the additional family support he needed following the accident.



FREE LEGAL SUPPORT FOR RMT MEMBERS



For legal advice that helps you read between the lines, contact Thompsons Solicitors

As a member of RMT, you and your family have access to specialist legal advice and representation from the UK's leading law firm for trade union members.

Thompsons Solicitors has been securing life-changing compensation for injured trade union members since 1921. Our trusted lawyers are committed to making sure you have the protection you need if you or a member of your family is injured.

Last year, we secured over £4.5 million in compensation for more than 250 members and their families.

To learn more about how we can help, call **0800 587 7516** or start a claim online at **www.thompsonstradeunion.law**.

Your free legal service covers:

- Personal injury – at or away from work, on holiday or on the roads
- Serious injury – including brain injuries and spinal cord injuries
- Industrial disease or illness, such as asbestos-related diseases
- Special funding terms for medical negligence claims
- Online basic wills services
- Special terms for conveyancing, probate and powers of attorney
- Employment law (accessed via your RMT representative).

Family members are also covered for:

- Personal injury – away from work, on holiday or on the roads
- Special funding terms for medical negligence claims
- Special terms for wills, conveyancing, probate and powers of attorney.

Keep 100% of your compensation

If you make your legal claim through RMT, you're guaranteed access to experts who, on principle, will only act for those who have been injured, and never for those who cause injury.

You are also guaranteed to keep 100% of your compensation (with special terms available for medical negligence claims) because, unlike with other law firms, you won't pay a penny in legal fees.

0800 587 7516
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YEARS
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OBITUARY

JIMMY MCAULEY

Stuart Hyslop of Glasgow Shipping branch looks at the life of an NUS/RMT stalwart

Time and tide wait for no-one, and with the recent passing of Jimmy McAuley, RMT and the international trade union movement have lost a committed fighter for justice and employment rights throughout the world.

Jimmy came from a Glasgow seafaring family and after joining the NUS in the late 1950s, he sailed to many parts of the globe including several visits to Cuban ports before the US imposed its illegal trade embargo in 1962.

By the mid-60s Jimmy was living in Vancouver, shipping out of the west-coast Canadian port, and soon involved in union struggles. In 1949 Canadian shipowners launched a brutal attack on the Canadian Seamen's Union by importing gangsters from the corrupt 'Seafarers International Union' in New York to break the CSU. A decade after this notorious episode Jimmy joined the CSU veterans of 1949 fighting for union representation for Canadian seafarers on coastal vessels through the Marine section of the ILWU Local 400 in Vancouver.

By the 1980s Jimmy was back in Glasgow working on Cal-Mac Ferries and taking part in May Day rallies, anti-racist marches. Jimmy could be seen on every progressive march or demonstration in Glasgow and attending Scottish Morning Star conferences.

Jimmy became a regular at NUS Glasgow Shipping Branch and joined the Branch committee following the

NUS/NUR merger to form RMT. Jimmy was nominated to attend Shipping Biennial General Meetings and RMT Annual General Meetings on several occasions.

Jimmy's support for the International Brigades Memorial Trust meant he often travelled to International Brigades Commemoration ceremonies in central Scotland. He loved the memorial to Dolores Ibárruri ('La Pasionaria') on Clyde St, near the Broomielaw in Glasgow. He was very proud of the unveiling of the Seafarers' Blockade Runners Memorial in 2019, which was the result of fifteen years of hard work by Glasgow RMT Shipping Branch.

Jimmy McAuley campaigned in support of the Liverpool Dockers during the 1995 lock-out by Mersey Docks & Harbour Board, becoming a patron of the Dockers' Community Advice Service Association, 'The Casa' in Hope Street, Liverpool.

In 1998 Bro McAuley joined "MV Global Mariner" for the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) 18-month worldwide campaign voyage against Flags of Convenience.

During the ship's visit to Bangkok, Jimmy became personally involved with the Seafarers' Union of Burma, in exile in Thailand. He supported the SUB with the assistance of the late Bob Crow for many years. In Bangkok Jimmy met his wife who worked for a Thai trade union and assisted with



organising the SUB when Jimmy travelled to Thailand on leave. Jimmy appears several times in the ITF film 'Burmese Cowboy', available on YouTube.

"MV Global Mariner" also called at Vancouver on the campaign and Jimmy met many of his 'old' shipmates and stalwarts of the 1949 Canadian Seamen's Union strike.

In 2000, Jimmy McAuley returned to live in Glasgow, working for Northlink Ferries out of Aberdeen and resumed his RMT Glasgow Shipping Branch activities. As a delegate to the RMT AGM in Southport in 2001 he was nominated to attend the 2002 ITF World Congress in Vancouver. Once again, Bro. McAuley was welcomed by staunch CSU veterans of 1949, as a well liked and respected

shipmate and comrade.

On retirement Jimmy McAuley continued his RMT activities and found time to visit older shipmates in hospital or at home. Jimmy considered trade union welfare a vital commitment to members who had supported the Union throughout their working life.

On Bro. McAuley's passing, his great friend and shipmate from "MV Global Mariner", Shwe Tun Aung summed up the person Jimmy was with these words: "Such a kind, honourable man and a true Trade Unionist".

Go well, "wee mac" and "Peace and Love" to his family in Bangkok and Glasgow and his many friends and comrades in RMT and around the world.

Jimmy McAuley: July 5, 1942 - 31 October 31, 2022

President's column

OUR RIGHT TO STRIKE

Last month RMT members from London, Newcastle, Manchester, Coventry, Bristol and beyond joined hundreds of trade unionists outside 10 Downing Street to protest the Tory government's so-called Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill 2022-23.

Never mind collapse of our NHS caused by 12 years of Tory cuts to pay and staffing levels and 25 years of the Private Finance Initiative bleeding our health service dry for private profit. This government has a plan for the NHS. They plan to sack and jail nurses and ambulance staff for taking strike action.

Ignore the cuts to our fire and rescue services, which have closed fire stations and withdrawn fire appliances across the country in the last decade. In November 2022 the Fire Brigades' Union identified cuts to fire services in East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service as a risk to public safety.

According to FBU Hastings branch chair, Leo Cacciatore: "In recent years we have seen devastating cuts to our service losing one in every five firefighters nationally and an on-call duty system that has fallen well behind ... we see huge gaps in fire cover with fire appliances regularly unavailable. This is becoming a daily event and we are hugely concerned about public safety".

But the government has a plan for the emergency services. They are going to

conscript firefighters to work during strike action.

The latest Tory legislation - the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill - is a sure sign that the government by seeking to ban democracy at work has lost control.

Having been found guilty in the court of public opinion of inflicting a crisis of falling wages and rising prices on working people, the government has decided to make strikes illegal for workers in six key sectors: health, fire and rescue, education, transport, nuclear and border security.

The fundamental human right to withdraw your labour has been trampled on by successive British governments for forty years. In 1997, Labour leader Tony Blair boasted that British laws were "the most restrictive on trade unions in the Western world".

Since that time, despite the extension of individual rights, such as those enshrined in the Equality Act 2010 and other legislation, our collective rights as workers to organise, bargain and when necessary to withdraw our labour by taking strike action, have been further attacked and weakened.

The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill was drafted at the initiative of Tory Business Secretary Grant Shapps, a man who goes by many names, but who in over three years in his former post as Transport Secretary refused to meet a single trade union general



secretary.

Shapps is a coward who hides in his Whitehall office and won't face workers who staff the services he was responsible for. Now he wants to turn us into a low-paid, conscript army.

We need to see the back of Shapps, his boss Sunak and their government, which truly has the stench of death about it.

In 1819, the poet Percy Shelley wrote 'The Mask of Anarchy', his satirical broadside against Lord Liverpool's Tory government after the massacre of striking workers in Manchester - the so-called "Peterloo massacre".

We should treat our current government with the same implacable disdain which Shelley voiced two hundred years ago and proclaim with him:

'Rise like Lions after slumber

In unvanquishable number,

Shake your chains to earth like dew,

Which in sleep had fallen on you -

Ye are many - they are few'.

Alex Gordon

40 FOR BARRY

Proud Cornishman and RMT regional organiser for the South West Barry West received his 40-year badge and medal from the general secretary and the president last month.

Barry joined the railway on April 16, 1982 working for British Rail and became a member of the NUR on the same day.

He worked in St Austell on the Permanent way as a trackman.

"The work was very seasonal and the majority of it was preventative maintenance or renewals.

"Unlike today there seems to be more of a reactive approach to trackside operations undertaken by those who work

on and around the lineside," he said.

Through attending branch meetings and encouragement to get involved he became a safety and LDC rep and travelled extensively to be a part of negotiations, consultations and high-level working parties on many different aspects that focused on safety improvements.

"I have been privileged enough to serve under four general secretaries and I am proud to have served members and RMT, alongside many others that have shown determination and demonstrated the true spirit of seeking fairness, equality and respect for all," he said.

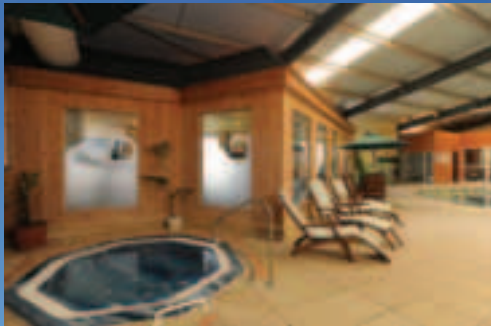


RMT president Alex Gordon, Barry West and RMT general secretary Mick Lynch present award at Unity House.

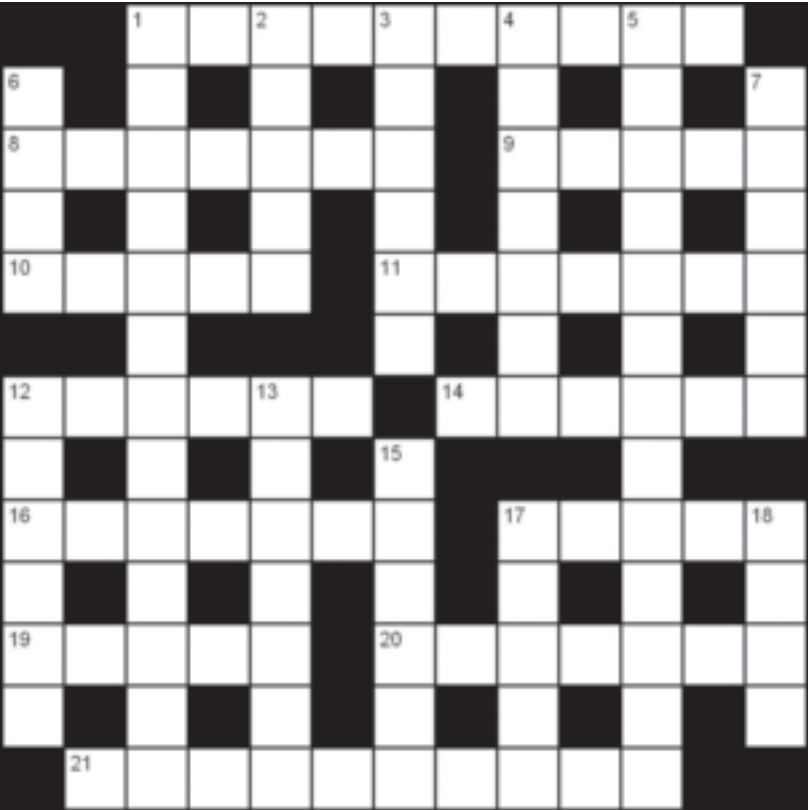
CROYDE BAY CALLING

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

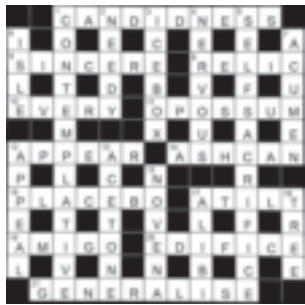
UNISON Croyde Bay Holiday Resort and conference centre
01271 890 890 and
www.croydeunison.co.uk
For five per cent discount quote 'RMT' plus your membership number



£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 JJD by February 28, 2023 with your name and address.

Last month's winner is Ms P J Hobbs, Bideford.

Please supply bank account details and sort code to receive your prize quickly.

ACROSS

- 1 Enterprise (10)
- 8 Locate (7)
- 9 Tedium (5)
- 10 Hymn of mourning (5)
- 11 Delivery by parachute (7)
- 12 Small hand tool (6)
- 14 Trinket (6)
- 16 Mother of your parent (7)
- 17 Annoyance (5)
- 19 Striver (5)
- 20 Christian recluse (7)
- 21 Generous (10)

DOWN

- 1 Inquisitorial (13)
- 2 Representation (5)
- 3 Emetic drug (6)
- 4 Proposition (7)
- 5 Voice projector (13)
- 6 Employed (4)
- 7 Mollusc (6)
- 12 Hosiery (6)
- 13 Sign (7)
- 15 Improvise (4,2)
- 17 Section (5)
- 18 Thin sword (4)



Britain's Largest Specialist Transport Union

IT'S TIME FOR **JUSTICE for CLEANERS** JOIN THE FIGHT for **£15 an hour**



The dirty truth about rail cleaning...

- 63% of cleaners were struggling to make ends meet BEFORE the cost of living crisis
- Rising prices mean that a cleaner on the National Minimum Wage would need a £2,000 pay rise to have the same spending power as last year
- Cleaners get no company sick pay
- 69% of cleaners say they have gone into work sick because they can't afford not to work
- Cleaners get no travel facilities
- The number of cleaners has been cut leaving people overworked and underpaid.

WE DEMAND...

- A pay rise to £15 an hour
- A proper sick pay scheme
- Travel provision
- Proper pension provision
- An end to outsourcing and profiteering on cleaning.

More cleaners than ever before are balloting for industrial action and taking strike action. If you're NOT a member JOIN NOW!

**Protecting our members' interests is our priority
Join us today**

rmt.org.uk FREEPHONE 0800 376 3706   **RMTunion**



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