

RMT *news*

RESISTING RAIL PRIVATISATION IN EUROPE



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WORKING FOR YOU



Use the QR code to join to get help at work and save 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

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CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



WORKERS FIGHTING BACK

Due to anti-trade union laws in this country rail and tube workers are currently being re-balloted for industrial action in defence of jobs, working conditions and decent wages.

In both the national rail dispute and the fight on London Underground industrial action and the continuing threat of it has forced employers to rein in their plans for cutbacks and attacks on workers' pay and conditions. We must continue with that pressure if we are to win a better deal for you and we can do this if you vote yes in the re-ballots.

By threatening strike action on London Underground your union has pushed back attacks on pensions, won back station jobs and staved off draconian attendance policies.

Our campaigns against de-staffing, cuts and closures on the railway have won huge public support. This has been down to the fact that RMT members across the country have rolled up their sleeves and got involved in campaigns to secure a decent future for all transport workers.

Members working for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary are also being balloted for strike action after members rejected a paltry 4.5 per cent pay offer after years of austerity.

As you can see in this issue of RMT News, transport workers in Europe are also taking up the battle against the privatisation of transport networks demanded by unelected officials at the European Commission and the attacks on workers it brings. By looking over the channel to Britain they can see what a

disaster a privatised transport network looks like.

We stand in full solidarity with transport workers across Europe in their fight and we want to get rid of this rotten Tory government which privatised our transport services all those years ago. Privatisation has clearly failed and we need to move on.

At the end of this month the transport watchdogs will respond to the over 700,000 public objections to ticket office closures proposed by the train companies and the government. But even if the watchdogs do object the privateers can run to the Secretary of State, who wants to close all ticket offices in England, for a final decision. This ludicrous situation means that the battle is far from over and this union will continue to fight against the dehumanisation of the transport network.

Ultimately, the only way transport and energy workers can win at work is to organise and recruit at the workplace. RMT has recently set up an organising committee made up of the bus workers to carry out just this task as decided by the bus workers conference earlier this year.

In order to assist with this process, the union is producing calling cards containing the QR code to the membership form. Every branch and region will soon receive these cards so that every member can become a recruiter. We have to start to build a strong future for this union right now.

TORY 'MINIMUM SERVICE' LAWS WILL 'POISON' INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Union warns that new anti-union laws will prolong disputes and lead to more forms of action

RMT has warned that if new planned anti-union minimum service laws were used it would only worsen industrial relations, prolong disputes and lead to even more strikes as well as new novel forms of action.

The union was responding to a new Transport Committee report challenging the government's 'minimum service level regulations for railway strike action.

While the new draconian anti-union legislation became law earlier this year details of those regulations and how they could work in practice have yet to be unveiled by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Following its inquiry, the cross-party committee has demanded that if any such legislation was used it must ensure that safety for staff and the travelling public must be the primary consideration and that Industrial disputes must

not be neither been prolonged nor increased.

Transport Committee Chair Iain Stewart MP said: "We can't accept an increased risk of lives being put in danger due to a lack of key staff such as signallers, or of those with access needs being neglected if they experience difficulty".

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch told the committee that there would be novel forms of action, and there would be wildcat action, which is what already happens in France, Italy, Spain and elsewhere.

"In Sweden there were walk-outs all over the Stockholm tube network outside the minimum service legislation," he told the committee.

Even in its own impact assessment of the legislation, the Department of Transport noted that a consequence of the introduction of minimum service levels could be an "increase in staff taking action



short of striking which is not prohibited by this legislation".

The impact assessment also noted that such action was not only "difficult to mitigate" but can require "extensive planning, placing significant strain on the rail industry", which in turn could lead to a "change in relations" between unions and employers, alongside "more adverse impacts in the long term, such as an increased frequency of strikes for each dispute".

Mick Lynch said that it only revealed further that the profoundly flawed plans were

untested proposals dreamt up in Tory think tanks that would inevitably lead to more chaos on the railways and increase safety risks.

"Instead of attacking workers right to strike the government should spend its energy on resolving the national rail disputes.

"We have reached settlement in Scotland and Wales which demonstrates that the real reason for the current dispute is the union busting agenda of the UK government," he said.

■

RMT TELLS GOVERNMENT TO STOP INTERFERING

Tory government preventing any settlement to national rail dispute with veto on any agreement

RMT has called upon Transport Secretary Mark Harper to allow rail operators to negotiate an end to the national rail dispute.

The union issued a fresh

call for the Transport Secretary to step up to the plate as it was the government who contractually controlled the companies and sets the parameters of any deal.

Following a Freedom of Information request, the union recently unearthed documents showing that the government had stitched up the ticket office closure consultation

process and ministers were involved in drawing up the proposals.

Other concerns included longer-term staffing levels at stations and the reliability of

self-service ticket machines. They emerged in a letter from London Travelwatch to train operators' body the Rail Delivery Group at the end of March. Controversial proposals to close 974 ticket offices in England were unveiled at the start of July.

It led to over 700,000 responses from passengers. *The Mirror* newspaper is also campaigning to block the proposals. But the cache of documents, obtained by RMT reveals that ministers were involved in drawing up the proposals.

One email from June referenced discussions with ministers. London Travelwatch and Transport Focus will announce whether they object or approve to the proposals at the end of this month. It is understood that they raised an array of issues with train operators.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that it was clear that the Rail Delivery Group colluded to stitch up this consultation process before it even began.

He also said that the Transport Secretary needed

to stop hiding behind inadequate pay offers that have been rejected and unshackle the rail operators to put forward fresh proposals.

"We have done deals in every other part of the railway and with rail companies who are not controlled by DfT mandates.

"So, a negotiated settlement can be reached but only if Mr Harper allows the rail operators to act accordingly.

"Our findings from our FOI requests on ticket office

closures shows the whole process to be a stitch up between the train operators and ministers.

"The DfT claims that this process has been 'industry led' and a meaningful consultation have been proven to be farcical.

"It is clear from the level of anger and the unprecedented engagement on the consultation despite all its flaws, that the whole plan to close ticket offices should now be halted immediately," he said. ■

TUBE VICTORY

Tube workers re-balloted after winning some concessions

Strike action on London Underground was suspended last month following significant progress made by RMT negotiators.

However, tube staff are being asked to vote for further strike action to ensure that the union can keep up the pressure to defend pensions, jobs and agreements.

Planned strike action by over 3,000 station staff members was called off following talks at ACAS. As a result, RMT has managed to save key jobs, prevent detrimental changes to rosters and secure protection of earnings around grading changes.

This offer represents significant progress and the

elimination or reduction of several threats to members' job security and conditions. The union has won back 200 of the original 523 job cuts which were deleted using natural wastage of unfilled vacancies. The newly restored positions will now be recruited and filled and it is possible that further additions can be achieved through a further review of rosters under the machinery of negotiation.

LUL initially planned a revised area structure which would combine all rosters into a wider geographically-dispersed areas. This would have required members to work across large areas of the tube and this threat has now been significantly reduced.

Station change

displacements will also be very limited and RMT reps will be able to shape any arrangements that are necessary for a small number of members who may be at risk of displacement.

The proposal to regrade most Central London stations to be run by CSS2 instead of CSS1 is completely withdrawn. This protects CSS1 members and maintains promotional opportunities on stations. The proposal from LUL is dependent on RMT agreeing that the matters covered by the offer are resolved and no longer form part of the jobs, pensions and agreements dispute. In return, LUL has agreed that no further proposals for station changes will be brought

forward.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch congratulated all members who had been prepared to take strike action and the negotiations team for securing this victory in the long-running tube dispute.

"Without the unity and industrial power of our members, there is no way we would have been able to make the progress we have.

"We still remain in dispute over outstanding issues around pensions and working agreements and the union will continue to pursue a negotiated settlement.

"Therefore, we are asking tube members to vote Yes in the ongoing ballot in order to give us a mandate to keep fighting," he said. ■





PROTESTS: Disabled groups joined union protests outside Downing Street last month as part of the outpouring of opposition to government plans to dehumanise the rail network

HALT TICKET OFFICE CLOSURES

Union vows to take the fight to the Secretary of State after watchdogs release findings next month



The public consultations over plans to close nearly 1,000 ticket offices closed last month following unprecedented opposition with over 700,000 responses received by the watchdogs Transport Focus and London Travelwatch.

That so many people responded to the consultation was undoubtedly as a result of the efforts of RMT members getting the message out there to passengers.

The consultations were originally due to run for just 21 days but extended by another five weeks after a public outcry at the wholly insufficient time frame. While the union welcomed the extension, it did not believe that this addressed the fact that the process itself was highly flawed.

Disabled and other vulnerable people have been at the forefront of public opposition to the proposals. There has also been widespread concerns raised from across the political spectrum.

RMT remains completely

opposed to the the process, which is set out in the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement, because it was meant for changes to individual stations not as a means of closing nearly every ticket office in England.

CUTTING STAFF

The closure process was not about 'getting staff from behind the counter', as the government and train companies have claimed, but simply a massive de-staffing exercise. Around 2,300 station staff jobs are at risk as a result of these proposals which represents around a quarter of station staff.

Government claims that no staffed stations will become unstaffed as a result of these proposals are often contradictory. For instance, West Midlands Trains is proposing to close the majority of its ticket offices and is not proposing specific hours for staffing, merely that there will be visits from 'roving' teams. This gives passengers no guarantees about staff being present.

At other companies staffing cuts proposed will impact passengers as severely as if the station were to become unstaffed. Northern proposals, which centre around moving ticket office staff into mobile roles which they call 'journey makers', equate to a reduction in staffing hours of around 6,500 per week. Avanti is also proposing to reduce its ticketing assistance hours at its stations by around 350 hours a week.

Moreover, whatever the train companies are proposing can only be considered a temporary as arrangements governing ticket office hours are the only statutory regulation of station staffing. The train companies want to tear up these arrangements to allow them to cut services and slash staffing even more. They even admit this in their consultations. C2C says: 'Staffing hours do not form part of our Schedule 17 commitment and may change in future years'.

ACCESSIBILITY

The union believes that the ramifications of the proposals will be particularly severe in terms of accessibility for disabled and older people which means that train companies will not be able to meet their legal duties including 'turn up and go'.

The presence of staff is vital for making the railway accessible. Already around 45 per cent of stations are unstaffed and a similar proportion are only partially staffed.

A joint letter of objection coordinated by the disabled peoples' organisation Transport for All and signed by around 90 organisations warned that 'the changes will make the stations and their services inaccessible to disabled people'.

In a survey of RMT ticket office members, 98 per cent said that the proposals would worsen accessibility for disabled, Deaf and older passengers. Many RMT members report that passengers are telling them that they will not be able to travel at all if the closures go ahead.

Ticket office staff are often the first point of call for disabled passengers as many times they are the only member of staff at the station and have a key role in providing assistance services.

The roving model proposed by the train companies is simply not an adequate replacement for staffed ticket offices. It is not acceptable to expect disabled people to wander around a station trying to find a member of staff who may or may not be there. Guide dog users also report that their dogs are trained to learn the route to the ticket office.

The mobile model, which requires staff to conduct transactions out on the platform as well as fulfilling other functions, will limit their ability to give the same high level of tailored one-on-one advice and assistance that passengers value. It also puts passengers in a much more vulnerable position.

Recently representatives from disabled and older peoples' organisations told the House of Commons Transport Select Committee about their opposition to the proposals and what the impact would be for disabled and older people. It was highlighted that much of the rail network was already not accessible for disabled people and that these proposals would make it worse or impossible.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch was also at the Transport Committee and told the MPs that the whole process was a 'sham'.

It was clear that at every station that ticket office closures would represent a significantly worse service for passengers and must be objected to in its entirety by the passenger watchdogs.

The union also has concerns about the role of the Secretary of State as it was clear that the government had been directing the closures from the outset. The government tightly controls the contracts for the train companies and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 'modernising retail' in 2020 which gave the TOCs a mandate on station reform.

By the watchdogs' own admission, they can only object to proposals on 'specific, limited grounds'. As the Chief Executive of Transport Focus told the Transport Select Committee: "The majority of the board members and the chair are appointed by the Secretary of State". With Transport Focus funding and the appointment of its governing board dependent on the Secretary of State for Transport, there are questions raised about whether the DfT will seek to assert pressure on Transport Focus either directly or through the TOCs that it controls.

Even if the watchdogs do object and the train companies want to press ahead with their proposals, they can refer the decision to the Secretary of State. That is a clear conflict of interest and reinforces union concerns that the whole process was always a sham.

FOR OFFSHORE SAFETY

Union warns that workers could be trapped in a 'regulatory void' when vessels are disconnected from installations

RMT has welcomed The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) intervention in response to the serious issues raised by the union following a fatality on the Liberian flagged mobile offshore drilling unit Valaris 121, whilst it was being towed back to Dundee from a site over 100 miles from shore.

The tragic disappearance of a worker in the North Sea has highlighted concerns that UK authorities have insufficient powers to regulate the safety of vessels operating in the UK's offshore oil, gas and renewables industry.

While the drilling rig Valaris 121 was sitting on the seabed and attached to an oil and gas well, the 'installation' was regulated by the HSE's Energy Division and subject to the Offshore Installations (Offshore Safety Directive) Regulations 2015. However, once disconnected from the well and off the seabed under tow, the rig became a 'vessel/ship' and as such became subject to maritime law.

The union has called for government intervention and regulatory changes to ensure that offshore workers are not trapped in this 'regulatory void'.

A working group has been

formed by HSE, a government agency responsible for the enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare, with the union and employers to look at the specific lessons from this tragic case.

RMT national secretary Darren Procter said that the union was continuing to explore ways to strengthen legislative protections for workers in an offshore energy industry which was changing faster than many would care to admit.

"Obviously, the pace of that change and the billions of public and private investment it supports risks being compromised by the Prime Minister's reckless politicking over Net Zero but the fact that there are only four safety inspectors to cover the entire offshore renewables sector is clear evidence of the need to close regulatory loopholes in the safety and employment laws applicable in oil and gas and in offshore wind.

"This is of critical importance to the future of North Sea workers and to the safe delivery of new sources of energy, including the 24GW pipeline created by Crown Estate Scotland's (CES) leasing of rights for 17 offshore wind



DUNDEE: Valaris 121 oil rig in Dundee Harbour for refit and maintenance

projects in January last year.

"Most of these planned projects are beyond the 12 nautical mile limit and we have got to maximise safety, employment rights and domestic port activity in support of these projects.

This would increase offshore and supply chain jobs and maximise the value of the £700 million in leasing fees CES received for these critically important projects.

"We are reassured, to an extent, that the HSWA 1974 does apply in some form to the offshore workers, but we need more clarity over the status of project workers and seafarers on mobile units which work in different sectors, sometimes for relative short periods of time. This raises two further issues. Firstly, the practicalities of enforcing and monitoring compliance with

different safety regimes up to 200 miles from shore.

"Secondly, the need for aligned safety training standards for workers, so they can transfer their skills between sectors to avoid skills shortages and to increase the prospect of a just transition which for us means guarantees over income, employment rights and safety.

"Finally, the union is also clear that the menace, in safety terms, of flags of convenience is accentuated by the government's interpretation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

"As the number of offshore wind projects around the world increases, just when the UK's early growth is at risk of faltering, there will be a shortage of suitable vessels to carry out drilling, heavy lifting,

cable laying and other specialist work. That must not be allowed to compromise safety and in order to do that, we need to empower workers by providing them with clear, enforceable and responsive safety regimes," he said.

RMT believes that workers across the offshore energy sector and their families deserve better, and for this reason it will continue to campaign for change to ensure

that when offshore energy workers join their respective vessel or installation, they will know what safety standards are applicable and that they have protection in place – irrespective of the work that the vessel or installation is carrying out around the UK coast.

There must be a linkage between the licensing of contracts and the protection of workers within the offshore

energy sector for safety and employment standards. And the question must be asked as to why this government is failing to address this void and leave offshore energy workers and seafarers within the renewables sector without protection.

The UK government developed a tried and tested set of regulations and legislation for the oil and gas sector after the death of 167

workers on the Piper Alpha offshore oil platform in the North Sea in 1988.

"RMT believes much of the regulatory 'pack' developed in the aftermath of Piper Alpha could be extended or adapted to 'offshore energy project vessels and structures'.

"We believe this could be achieved relatively easily if the political will was there," said Darren Procter.

FIGHTING FOR ØRSTED WORKERS

Union exchanges solidarity with German and United States counterparts in struggle offshore wind developer Ørsted

RMT's industrial dispute with Danish offshore wind developer Ørsted is awaiting resolution at TUC level where the union is challenging the controversial national recognition agreement Ørsted has signed with managerial grade union Prospect.

RMT's fight for a decent pay rise, improved safety and other conditions for members at Ørsted's Burbo Bank wind farm has also caught the attention of officials from the IG Metall union of Germany, where Ørsted's refusal to reach a satisfactory collective agreement triggered an industrial dispute at the Norddeich site in north-west Germany.

IG Metall, Germany's largest trade union with over 2.2 million members, primarily organise steel and other onshore manufacturing jobs including those in the offshore wind industry. IG Metall officials attending the TUC conference in Liverpool requested a meeting to discuss RMT's industrial and political response to Ørsted's divisive tactics in the UK.

RMT national secretary Darren Procter met the IG Metall delegation, including Henrik Köller, vice-president of IG Metall Emden. Information

was exchanged this month which proved useful to IG Metall's industrial action in Germany against Ørsted, with a solidarity message from RMT to offshore wind workers in Germany who are fighting back against Ørsted's attempts to fragment their pay and conditions and to undermine their collective bargaining rights.

The union also participated in the ITF's campaign on behalf of the International Longshoremen of America (ILA), following Ørsted's calculated failure to honour an agreement to recognise the ILA in the Connecticut port of New London, which has been re-purposed from bulk cargo to offshore wind, using public money. Despite the jobs being dockers jobs, Ørsted has signed an agreement with a construction union in the USA, in a similar move to their actions in the UK.

RMT attended the ITF action at Ørsted's central London HQ and Mick Lynch issued a solidarity statement from RMT: "The UK has a relatively mature offshore wind market and it is clear that Ørsted has a strategy to divide offshore workers and their trade unions.

"It is frustrating to see



these actions being replicated in the USA, where Ørsted has already bagged contracts that will be central to hitting the US government's target of 30GW of offshore wind capacity by the end of the decade.

"We stand in solidarity with the members of the International Longshoremen's Association in Connecticut, where Ørsted is directly benefitting from the public investment which helped convert New London from bulk to an offshore wind port.

"Ørsted's undermining of its previous commitments to the ILA do not bode well for Jones Act compliance or for jobs for US mariners on the fleet of offshore wind vessels being built in America. Ørsted's engagement with trade unions in the USA, UK, Germany and elsewhere borders on dishonest.

"This culture of union busting has to end through a stable culture of sectoral collective bargaining rights, at Ørsted in Connecticut and across the global offshore wind industry.

"Offshore wind farms must be progressive from a worker as well as environmental perspective and RMT stand in support of the ILA and every other trade union member around the world in struggle at Ørsted," he said.

These are effective links to establish with fellow trade union members in struggle with a multinational offshore energy employer. The union will continue to share information with international trade unions and to campaign for sectoral collective bargaining rights for workers at Ørsted and across the offshore energy industry. ■

REMEMBER SOUTHALL



The Southall train crash 26 years ago killed six people and sparked the slow demise of Railtrack

The Southall train crash occurred on September 19, 1997 at 1.15pm near Southall station when an Intercity train ploughed into a freight train.

It is believed that the 10.32 to Paddington was travelling close to the maximum speed of 125 mph on the Southall approach as it hit the empty goods train being shunted across the main line.

There were two safety systems on the train which could have prevented the tragedy - the basic Automatic Warning System (AWS) and a trial version of the more advanced Automatic Train Protection (ATP).

However, the AWS was isolated and out of service and the ATP was switched off because the driver was not trained how to use it. The

ensuing enquiry identified these issues and raised questions about the negative impact of the recent Tory privatisation of the railway network.

The findings of both Southall rail enquiry chair Professor John Uff and health and safety commission chair Bill Callaghan brought new pressures to bear on the New Labour government to reverse the rail privatisation as it had promised before the general election which had brought it to power.

Prof Uff highlighted the industry's post-privatisation fragmentation in his report and strongly criticised Railtrack for replacing one set of rules "with a hotchpotch of different rules".

He said that the accident

occurred in "circumstances which were exacerbated by privatisation", but the findings were largely ignored by politicians.

Just two years later the Paddington rail crash occurred on October 5, 1999 at Ladbroke Grove, when two passenger trains collided almost head-on after one of them had passed a signal at danger. With 31 people killed and 417 injured, it was one of the worst rail accidents in British history and the second major accident on the Great Western Main Line in just over two years.

Both crashes could have been prevented by an operational ATP system, wider fitting of which had been rejected on cost grounds. The crashes severely damaged

public confidence in the management and regulation of safety of Britain's privatised railway system.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that Southall was a significant anniversary.

"Our thoughts lie with the families of those killed twenty-six years ago and with the survivors, some of whom still carry physical and mental scars to this day.

"Unfortunately, we also still see accidents and near misses directly relating to lack of training and fatigue amongst the workforce.

"All workers should have the right to go home safe and healthy every day and every employer has the responsibility to provide a safe working environment – and this includes all the passengers

transported by our members," he said.

CULLEN

A public inquiry into the Paddington crash led by Lord Cullen was held in 2000. Since both the Paddington and Southall crashes had reopened the debate on ATP, a separate joint inquiry considering the issue in the light of both crashes was also held in 2000. This inquiry confirmed the rejection of ATP and the mandatory adoption of a cheaper and less effective system, but it did admit a mismatch between public opinion and cost-benefit analysis.

The Cullen inquiry was given additional urgency as while it was sitting a further train crash occurred at Hatfield on October 17, 2000 killing four people and injuring many more

as well as sparking a further major decline in trust in the private management and regulation of safety by Railtrack.

This also called into question the privatisation and fragmentation of the railway network which had directly impacted on both safety and maintenance regimes.

According to journalist Christian Wolmar, Railtrack's board panicked after Hatfield because Railtrack's first chief executive John Edmonds had pursued a deliberate strategy of outsourcing engineering work wherever possible to cut costs and increase the Railtrack share price.

The immediate major repairs undertaken across the whole railway network were estimated to have cost in the order of £580 million and Railtrack had no idea how

many more 'Hatfields' were waiting to happen because it had lost considerable in-house engineering skills following the sale or closure of many of the engineering and maintenance functions of British Rail and handed them to private companies like Balfour Beatty which had been responsible for the faulty track at Hatfield.

In February 2001, Railtrack chairman Steve Marshall warned that it was running out of money and begged the New Labour government for a bail out which it received and controversially used it to pay a £137 million dividends to its shareholders in May 2001.

With considerable brassneck, Railtrack sought yet another bailout from the taxpayer but with the government's patience exhausted Railtrack plc was placed into administration in

October 2001 under the Railways Act 1993 following an application to the High Court by Transport Secretary Stephen Byers and was it replaced by Network Rail.

A record £10 million fine was later imposed on Balfour Beatty after the company was found guilty of negligence over the faulty track at Hatfield. However, this was cut to £7.5 million by the appeal court to the dismay of crash victims and the general public.

Railtrack was also found guilty of breaching health and safety laws and fined for both its performance for infrastructure improvement and for its safety record. Ultimately Southall and all the disasters that followed combined to expose the major folly of rail privatisation and the intense cost-cutting and profiteering which underpinned it. ■



PROTESTS: Survivors and relatives of victims of the Paddington and Southall rail crashes march in central London in November 1999 to demand that safety mechanisms are installed to prevent another rail disaster. Less than a year later the Hatfield train disaster occurred profoundly undermining public confidence in rail privatisation.



NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY HANDBOOK LAUNCHED

Union updates health and safety resources for reps and updates the website

Over the last 18 months the union's resources for health and safety reps have been completely re-written and updated including advice on serious and imminent danger, the health and safety handbook and also the safety reps charter.

Re-writing these publications has also enabled a refresh of the health and safety section of RMT web site. All information can be found here:
<https://www.rmt.org.uk/about/health-and-safety/> on RMT web site.

Given the completion of this work, it seemed a good time to meet with RMT safety reps (albeit remotely) to discuss the content of these resources and to speak about how safety reps can best use them in the representation of members. As a result this

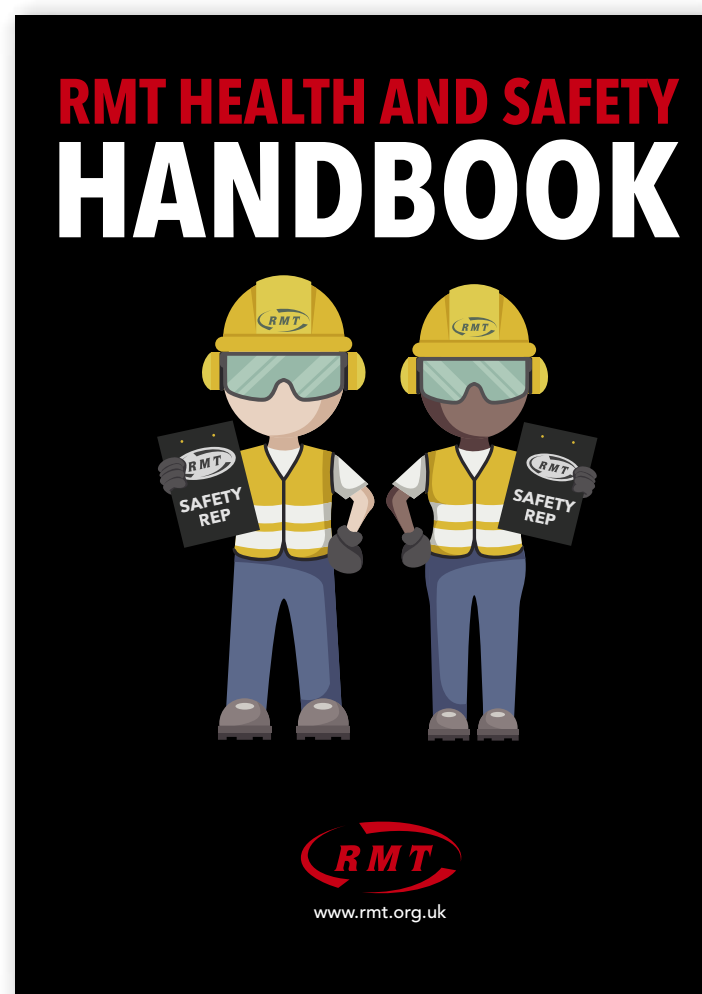
month around 60 RMT safety reps from all over the country from different grades from Network Rail, London Transport and the train operating companies took part in the meeting to learn about these resources from RMT health and safety officers.

Additionally, reps learnt about a resolution passed at this year's RMT AGM - Rule 10A
<https://www.rmt.org.uk/about/rmt-rule-book/rule-10a/> which for the first time puts all RMT lay elected reps into the rule book and makes formal the relationship between the rep and the union.

The new materials are as follows:

SAFETY REPS CHARTER

The charter explains the role and functions of safety reps as set out in safety legislation,



how to find out about members' workplace health and safety concerns, contains information on training and

support for safety reps and how to progress health and safety issues within the union.



'SERIOUS AND IMMINENT DANGER' GUIDANCE BOOKLET

The guidance advises that employees are protected by law if they decide that their work situation represents a threat of 'serious or imminent danger' and as a result 'they may remove themselves to a place of safety. The guide was re-written to reflect an Employment Appeal Tribunal decision that it was not automatically unfair to dismiss an employee who refused to return to work during the first lockdown because of concerns about the risks posed by Covid -19.

HEALTH AND SAFETY HANDBOOK

The handbook contains many

of the more common legal requirements concerning health and safety in the workplace, information on some of the most frequent health and safety problems faced by RMT members and the general health and safety legislation which applies to these issues. Since the previous edition of the handbook there have been a number of changes, such as leaving the EU and additions, amendments, and unfortunately some watering down of legislation - and the new handbook reflects these changes.

In addition to the chapters on health and safety legislation there are also chapters on health and safety problems faced by RMT members:

Fatigue, this section contains information on ORR guide "Managing Rail Staff Fatigue" and there is also a section on fatigue for road vehicle transport, bus and taxis.

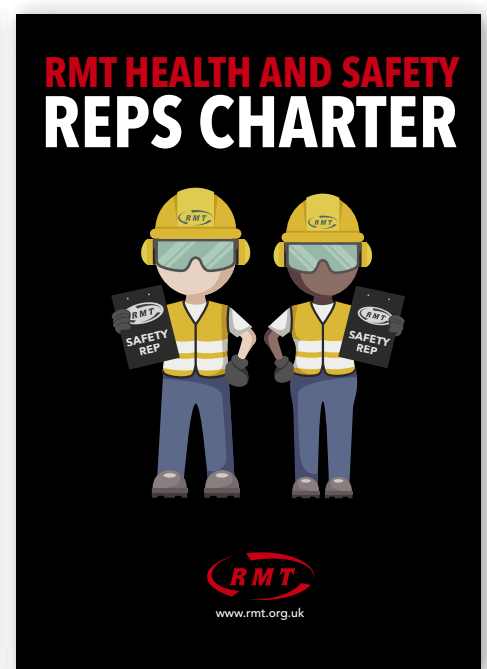
Stress, this section titled, "Dealing with stress at work" replaced RMT's Mental Health booklet. Instead, the section on stress at work has been strengthened and is now included in the handbook for the first time. The information from the booklet on mental health is on the web site.

Working in extreme weather, this section of the handbook provoked much discussion which is not surprising as the meeting took place following temperatures of over 30 degrees. Questions came from trackworkers – one

a rep who said that there was little thought for those working nights in extreme hot weather and another who works on London Underground who spoke about extreme heat in tunnels, which can top 100 degrees.

If we experience any cold weather this winter, the section on working in cold weather will be useful for reps to get a look at.

The safety reps were advised that legislation is useful in persuading employers to set minimum standards. But that our safety legal standards are weak - as are our health and safety enforcement agencies. As a result of that safety reps can only succeed if they have member's support. ■



RMT HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE

The union's annual conference takes place in York next year on February 20/21

RMT's annual health and safety conference will take place on Tuesday 20 and Wednesday 21 February 2024 at the Radisson Hotel, York with training workshops on the first day and the main conference next day.

The theme of conference will be the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 fifty years on. There will also be a wide range of workshops available and keynote speakers from the union, trade union and labour

movement and the industry at the conference itself. Delegates are also welcome from the maritime and bus sectors.

In order to apply to be a delegate, you must be an RMT

Health and Safety representative and be nominated by your branch. Contact your branch secretary for further details. There are no limits on the amount of delegates a branch may send.

A NATIONAL CLEANERS' CHARTER

Union launches a cleaners' charter to demand a fair deal for these largely outsourced workers

Cleaners have been exploited by rail companies and employers across the economy as cleaning has been outsourced to private companies because it was thought they were not essential workers.

But the Covid pandemic revealed that cleaners were essential keyworkers and more and more people came to recognise the way cleaners are treated was a national scandal.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that was why the union had launched a national charter for cleaning workers and cleaners were now using their collective strength through our union to demand better.

"Cleaners all over the railway are angry and they're right to be and it is time for a change.

"The millionaires and billionaires who get rich off our railways and your work, want to turn the clock back and put you back in your box because they are frightened of you and your power.

"The RMT National Cleaners' Charter sets out our vision and lays out our demands for cleaning grades.

"We will use it to win

political support for its demands and we will work to get its principles embedded in agreements with our employers.

But we also need members to use it to recruit. The more cleaners we represent, the greater will be our bargaining power as our employers will know that when we speak, we speak for you," he said.

THE CLEANERS' CHARTER

A PAY RISE TO £15 AN HOUR NOW

The scandal of low pay among cleaners must be ended. 63 per cent of cleaners reported they were struggling to make ends meet before the pandemic. Now rising prices are wiping thousands of pounds off the value of cleaners' pay. Basic pay should be lifted to £15 an hour now.

DIRECT EMPLOYMENT AND AN END TO OUTSOURCING

80 per cent of cleaners on the railways are outsourced to private companies who hold down pay and conditions to extract profits on their contracts. Outsourcing is a



scourge that must be driven out of the railways and all cleaners should be employed directly on the same terms and conditions as other rail workers.

A PROPER SICK PAY SCHEME THAT KICKS IN FROM DAY ONE

The pandemic highlighted that one of the ways outsourcing companies make their money is by not paying sick pay.

ANNUAL PAY INCREASES AND PROPER COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ARRANGEMENTS

Because they are outsourced, cleaners' pay is negotiated separately in arrangements that vary from company to company in a patchwork of contracts. Collective bargaining should be

conducted through a national bargaining structure that is integrated with that of other rail workers.

A DECENT PENSION

Again, because they are outsourced, cleaners are denied a decent pension in retirement while outsourcing companies profiteer by winning contracts by reducing the cost of employing cleaners. This is a disgrace that should be ended and all cleaners should have a proper pension.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

Cleaners should receive free travel to and from work. No transport workers should have to pay for train travel to and from work or in their leisure time anywhere on the network.

The cost to train operating companies and other transport authorities would be negligible.

A CAREER PATH

Cleaning work used to be an integral part of work on the railways and progression into other roles was possible for those who wanted it. Now outsourcing has meant that cleaners are treated like a lower tier of worker. Cleaners should have access to career progression and training as well as being integrated into the wider transport workforce.

A REDUCTION IN WORKING HOURS WITHOUT LOSS OF PAY

Working hours should be reduced to 35 hours without loss of earnings.

ANNUAL LEAVE PROVISION EQUIVALENT TO OTHER RAIL WORKERS

RMT policy is that no cleaning member should have inferior holiday entitlement to any other rail worker.

ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS FOR LATE NIGHT OR WEEKEND WORK

The health risks of working unsocial hours are well known yet cleaners regularly have to do this without adequate payment. Unsocial hours payments should be offered as compensation for weekend, bank holiday or night working.

CLEAN AND HYGIENIC MESS ROOMS

Employers have a legal duty to provide adequate facilities for employees. This means that eating facilities should be kept clean and staff should be able to prepare or buy a hot drink.

Where hot food cannot be obtained, employers should provide the means for workers to heat up their own food. Mess rooms must be kept clean and hygienic for workers.

REGULAR PROVISION OF UNIFORM AND PPE

Cleaning companies try to hold down costs by failing to provide uniforms or proper PPE. During the pandemic, more than a third of cleaners said they were not confident they were getting the right PPE for the job.

RMT - A FIGHTING INDUSTRIAL UNION FOR CLEANERS

RMT is an industrial union which organises all grades in the rail network and on metro systems. It is organising cleaners and they are fighting for justice alongside their sisters and brothers in the rest of the rail network.

JOIN RMT

The more of us there are the more power you have. If you're colleagues are not already RMT members now is the time to join. If your workmates are not in the union, let them know about RMT's campaign for justice for cleaners. ■

JOIN HERE:



Cleaners on the Railway deserve:

A pay rise to £15 an hour now

Direct employment and an end to outsourcing

A proper sick pay scheme that kicks in from day one

Annual pay increases and proper collective bargaining arrangements

A decent pension

Travel facilities equivalent to those of other rail workers

A career path that rewards experience

Annual leave provision equivalent to other rail workers

A reduction in working hours without loss of pay

Additional payments for late night or weekend work

Clean and hygienic mess rooms

Regular provision of uniform and full PPE



RESISTING RAIL PRIVATISATION IN EUROPE

PROTESTS: European rail unions held an international protest in the French city of Lyons earlier this year against the EU drive to privatise their railways



» DECENT JOBS
» DECENT PAY
» DECENT CONDITIONS
BARGAINING, NOT BEGGING!

European Commission pushes for public transport privatisation without a democratic mandate

Transport workers and unions across Europe have been protesting against European Commission attempts to enforce the 'liberalisation' of public transport without involving the Council and the European Parliament.

The European Commission wants to make competitive tendering compulsory in a desperate bid for more privatisation of public transport services.

The unelected body is trying to complete the implementation of the 4th EU Railway Package, a set of six legislative texts adopted in 2016 to establish a single market for rail services – the Single European Railway Area.

The implementation of the package effectively gives the EU's railway agency powers over rail services in member states and 'competition' in

passenger traffic will be compulsory. As a result, any democratic evaluations will become meaningless because elected governments will lose decision-making powers over them.

The package also removes national jurisdiction over railway safety regulations, which could also jeopardise the safety of passengers and other rail services.

Currently, under EU regulation on Public Service Obligation (PSO) local authorities can choose to award rail and road public service directly to their own operators.

The European Commission is trying to change this by adopting guidelines to the regulation which requires no Council or European Parliament involvement. In other words, the European

Commission is trying to reinvent the rules without any democratic process whatsoever.

The European Transport Workers Federation (ETF) said in a statement that more privatisation in rail and road transport by the EU was creating poorer working conditions, less staff, and more expensive tickets whilst defeating the purpose of public transport to serve the public interest and make transport accessible to all.

ETF President Frank Moreels said that such neo-liberal policies had seriously hit railway workers and their trade unions and delivered a worse service for passengers.

He said that these policies had reduced the number of rail networks and created a shift towards casual and precarious work resulting in:

- a decline in safety
- job losses due to driver-only operations and line closures
- an increase in sub-contracting within the railway sector

ETF general secretary Livia Spera also stressed that transport workers were fed up with the current state of the transport industry, which was already too liberalised.

"The sector suffers from a shortage of workers, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find people willing to work in transport. Yet, the European Commission continues to disregard the voices of the workers who power the industry," she said.

Livia Spera warned protesters at a demonstration in Lille earlier this year that workers may not even show up at EU elections in 2024 to vote



as they continue to lose faith in the EU and its leaders.

Last June transport workers from France, Switzerland, Croatia, Spain, Italy, Germany and Belgium also took to the streets of the French city of Lyon to demand *Fair Transport*.

Livia Spera told protesters at the rally: "Liberalisation has failed workers, the environment and society: Across Europe, transport workers are fighting against lack of decent jobs and the politicians who don't want to face reality!

"Throughout Europe, workers are fighting the same fight and taking industrial action against low salaries, loss of jobs and shortage of decent work.

"Decades of EU liberalisation, privatisation, and a focus on competition and cheap transport have created the inevitable: a shortage of decent work – transport workers no longer want to work in an industry that cannot be bothered to provide them with decent jobs," she said.

FRENCH PROTESTS

French rail workers also held protests outside the EU's railway agency authority in Lille in June against the privatisation of freight and passenger rail taking place in France and in support of a regional protest against a decision by the Hauts-de-France Region regional assembly to open up regional rail line to competition.

An emergency motion from the French rail union CGT was

also overwhelmingly endorsed by the European TUC after the European Commission launched an investigation recently into the French publicly owned rail freight company, SNCF Fret. The investigation targeted state aid granted to the company between 2007 and 2019 which is illegal under EU law and the treaties.

While the investigation is not yet closed, the French government has already announced a "discontinuity" scenario which would mean the break-up of SNCF Fret.

The CGT said that such a call was unfair as SNCF Fret was returning to financial equilibrium thanks to the hard work of its rail staff and warned that the "discontinuity" meant the dismantling of the company.

"All the work of the staff is being cancelled out and reduced to nothing to benefit a strictly competition-focused vision.

"This decision also reflects political paradoxes. Energy transition is on everyone's lips but has not prevented SNCF Fret from being destroyed. For the European Commission, energy transition can only be solved within the dogma of competition," the CGT motion said.

The union warned that it meant hundreds of job losses, the abandonment of 30 per cent of traffic and the impossibility of bidding for it for 10 years and the transfer of locomotives to hostile

operators taking over SNCF Fret traffic.

Just a few years ago the ETF and the European TUC were calling for the need for 'social partnership' between trade unions and the employers and promoted the

drive for European centralisation. However, these organisations are becoming increasingly disillusioned with EU institutions which are clearly driven solely by neo-liberal obligations as laid out in the EU treaties.

This increasing trade union militancy reflects the fact that the voices of workers are very low down on the priorities of EU institutions and governments in the member states which are more wedded to EU integration and the treaties rather than the interests of voters. This disconnect is creating the conditions for further industrial, social and political conflict within the EU.

EU RAIL PRIVATISATION TIMELINE

1991 European Commission introduces rail directive 91/440/EEC on July 29 demanding the separation of infrastructure and operations, open access for international undertakings and the introduction of track access charges.

1992 The Railways Regulations 1992 introduced in Britain under Section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 in order to comply with directive 91/440/EEC.

1993 Tory government privatises British Rail under The Railways Act 1993.

2001 EU's First Railway Package demands 'liberalisation' of rail freight which was fully implemented in Britain in November 2005.

2004 Second Railway Package demands open access for all types of rail freight services by 2006 and establishes a European Railway Agency to oversee implementation of EU directives.

2007 Third Railway Package demands 'liberalisation' of passenger rail services requiring open access in all EU member states by 2010.

2009 The Lisbon Treaty removes the national veto on transport, transferring decisions to Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) allowing member states to be outvoted.

2010 The European Commission takes 13 member states to court for failing to fully enact EU legislation on railway 'liberalisation'.

2012 First Railway Package 'recast' to establish a single European railway area and outlaws member states from using the "holding model" to manage infrastructure and operations within the same parent company.

2013 European Commission publishes a 4th Railway Package which requires the compulsory competitive tendering of all rail services by December 2019.

2016 The 4th Railway Package is formally adopted as a set of six legislative texts designed to remove powers of member states and transferring them to EU bodies to complete the single market for Rail services (Single European Railway Area).

2023 On February 28 transport unions from 10 countries protest outside the European Parliament against European Commission attempts to enforce public transport 'liberalisation' without recourse to the Council and the European Parliament.

CELEBRATING ASQUITH XAVIER



HONOUR: RMT assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey with Asquith's daughter Maria, former RMT president Tony Donaghey and other family members

Train named after National Union of Railwaymen member Asquith Xavier whose struggle against racism changed the law

Rail worker Asquith Xavier, the guard who broke the colour bar at Euston station with the help of his union nearly 60 years ago, has been celebrated with the naming of an Avanti West Coast train in his honour.

The colour bar at Euston station was finally defeated on August 15, 1966 when the West Indian guard was finally allowed to start work after initially being refused a job. This relatively small victory actually led to changes in the law such as the inclusion of a ban on discrimination in the workplace in the new Race Relations Act.

Asquith's daughter Maria

Magdalena-Xavier unveiled the plaque in front of family, friends and fellow rail workers including Asquith's friend retired former RMT president Tony Donaghey.

"My father would have been proud that we are all here today to honour him not just for himself but for all those who suffer discrimination.

"This represents his own journey to justice," said Maria before an emotionally charged unveiling.

Speaking at the unveiling RMT assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that the union was proud that its predecessor the National Union of Railwaymen backed

Asquith in his fight.

"We have come a long way since then and my union stands for equality across society which still needs to be championed by everyone," he said.

Designers at Avanti West Coast consulted with Asquith's family on the train nameplate which captures him at work as a train guard. Asquith is also honoured with a plaque at Euston and another at Chatham station, the town where he and his family came to reside after leaving London.

Asquith Xavier came to Britain from Dominica as part of the Windrush generation. He had started work for British

Railways in 1956 as a porter, working his way up to rail guard at Marylebone station. However, following the closure of the Marylebone main line as part of the Beeching rail cuts, guards were no longer required and were being transferred to stations like Euston.

However, Mr Xavier, an experienced guard, received a letter telling him that he had been rejected for a job at Euston. Mr Xavier showed the letter to local NUR branch secretary Jimmy Prendergast. Jimmy was a life-long anti-fascist who had fought in Spain with the International Brigades and had served in

the RAF against Hitler's Luftwaffe.

Jimmy knew that fellow NUR member Tony Donaghey – who was to become RMT president many years later – had been offered a guard position at Euston. When Tony was informed by Jimmy about this blatant racism and the treatment of his friend Asquith, he withdrew his application in protest and took up a guard's position at St Pancras.

Jimmy led a local delegation to union headquarters at Unity House and then NUR general secretary Sid Greene contacted the British Rail Board about the racist policies being practised in their name which had been a longstanding problem.

In 1952, National Union of Railwaymen general secretary Jim Figgins and John Shearer, the union's area representative, intervened against an unofficial strike at King's Cross goods depot following the promotion of West Indian rail worker Stephen Salmon.

For the NUR 'any form of colour bar' was against union policy and Figgins words and actions in ending the King's Cross strike even inspired a young railway worker Charlie Mayo to write the song 'The Colour Bar Strike' which was later recorded by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger:

*My union badge shows two
joined hands
With a lighted flame in
common fight
But trouble's brewing in the
sheds
For both these working hands
are white
But working hands are white
and black
And the work they do is all the
same
But prejudice and fear come in
To break the grip, and dim the
flame...*

Yet on June 20, 1961 the newspaper *The Daily Worker* also reported that the South

Paddington Labour Party had requested that BR investigate a ban on the employment of black workers at Paddington Station.

In the fight to defeat the blatant racism against Asquith at Euston, Jimmy Prendergast leaked the story to a sympathetic journalist on Fleet Street, resulting in a national scandal which forced British Railways to announce that after negotiations with local NUR officials that no grade would in future be closed on racial grounds.

After Asquith took up his duties in 1966 an inquiry into discrimination found that colour bars were in place in several London stations and BR promised to lift these as well.

The government was also forced to act with changes to the first Race Relations Act passed in 1965 which made it illegal to "refuse anyone access, on racial grounds, to public places such as hotels, pubs, restaurants, cinemas, public transport or any place run by a public authority", but the legislation did not apply to the workplace. As a result, the new 1968 Race Relations Act now made it illegal to refuse housing, employment or public services to people



VICTORY: Asquith starts work at Euston in 1966

because of their ethnic background.

Tony Donaghey also said that the union can be proud of the role it had played in exposing and defeating discrimination.

"Asquith was my mentor at Marylebone and he taught me a lot as a young man on the railway coming into the

industry and he deserved to be treated with respect.

"I would also like to pay tribute to Asquith's NUR rep Jimmy Prendergast - when he saw an injustice, he would not take no for an answer particularly when defending his members regardless of their colour or creed," he said.

Photography: Jas Lehal Photos ■



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OVER 50 YEARS' SERVICE

After 51 years of working on the railways and a member of the union Stewart Livingstone is retiring after started his railway career in November 1972 at the parcel terminal at Peterborough.

He progressed to the position of shunter at a time when the yard had two 350 shunters and would normally deal with up to 70 trains a day.

In 1987 Stewart moved to Peterborough station where he remained for three years until becoming a Rest Day relief crossing keeper in 1989

covering Marholm, Woodcroft, Helpston, Whittlesey and Bainton staying in this role for six years. He became a messenger where he earned his nickname of Postman Pat which stuck. He transferred to Kings Cross but returned in 2002 to working Woodcroft Crossing which is the only remaining hand-operated level crossing on the network.

In 2005 he attended signalling school and moved to Peterborough PSB until its closure in August and Stewart decided to take severance



PETERBOROUGH: (Left to Right) Stewart Livingstone, Jake Moore, SSM Dave Lilley, Dave Toynon, Phil Nolan and local rep Martin Mason

marking the end of an era as his father-in-law was on duty for the first train signalled by Peterborough PSB and Stewart was on duty to signal the last, the two combined have 103

years' service.

"It really has been a great part of my life and certainly the most enjoyable years, I will miss the railway family," he said. ■

President's Column

WE NEED A HIGH SPEED 2 SOCIALISM

This month I joined RMT members with thousands of trade unionists at the People's Assembly protest in Manchester against the Tory Party Conference taking place in the city.

Manchester does not elect a single Tory MP, or Councillor. It is not a Tory city. The cradle of the labour movement, where in 1819, armed cavalry massacred workers demonstrating in St Peter's Fields ('Peterloo'), Manchester is the city where the Trades Union Congress was founded in 1868.

Rishi Sunak chose to announce he was scrapping the HS2 high-speed rail network to Manchester at Manchester Central Convention Centre (formerly Manchester Central station). Genius.

Instead, he pledged to extend Metrolink tram to Manchester Airport – a link that opened in 2014.

For fifteen years banks and big businesses have had their noses in the HS2 trough, snorting billions in fees for consultants, lawyers, contractors, and inflated property prices. Now, the Tories have killed the

'Northern Powerhouse' they promised voters in 2014.

But HS2 was nobbled long before Sunak's announcement.

Originally linking Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester and London within 90 minutes, in 2010 the DfT High Speed Rail – Command Paper called for a "new British high speed rail network connected to the wider European high speed rail network via High Speed One and the Channel Tunnel."

In 2012, HS2 Ltd estimated direct trains from Leeds and Manchester to Paris would take 3 hours, 38 minutes. Birmingham to Paris, a mere 3 hours, 7 minutes.

Then in 2014, the government cut the HS2-HS1 link from the High-Speed Rail Bill. Lord Adonis later told parliament "... it seems absurd there is not a connection between [HS2-HS1] but I very much doubt it would be taken up in any big way. While we have cheap airlines that offer very frequent services to Manchester and Birmingham it is unlikely such a line would be viable."

High-speed rail linking city centres in under five hours is highly competitive against environmentally damaging

short-haul flights. When airlines funded by lavish EU regional airport subsidies, lobbied to cut the link between HS2 and the Channel Tunnel, Tory ministers agreed.

The vultures today picking over HS2's carcass, are a perfect symbol for such short-term opportunism.

Sunak has announced a private development company to manage and finance the Euston-Old Oak Common link, meaning HS2 will never reach central London.

Instead, Euston will become a gold rush for property speculators building 'luxury flats' as trophy investments for global billionaires.

Under the Tories, property speculation always trumps public interest. A government representing rentier capitalists isn't interested in, or capable of developing strategic national infrastructure such as high-speed rail, renewable energy, or public housing.

In the decade it took the Tories to turn HS2 into luxury homes opportunities for their mates, China developed a 40,000 km publicly owned, high-speed rail network, the largest in the world.

Using breakthrough



technologies, such as super-thin, large hollow aluminium to build aerodynamic nose cones, China's latest Fuxing bullet train reaches speeds of 350 km/hour to slash travel times on the 1,318 km (818.9 miles) Beijing-Shanghai route from 37 to four hours.

Britain isn't the only country going backwards. From December 2023, France's TER regional rail services go out to tender under EU Rail Liberalisation rules. The new TER Loire-Atlantique operator has already slashed 17 trains from its September timetable.

Railways are a public good that will be developed by long-term public investment and public ownership. Developing a successful high-speed rail network requires socialism.

Alex Gordon

RMT AT NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL



The union had a presence in the Notting Hill Carnival once more this year, writes Nathan Wallace. RMT again showcased the long-standing campaign for reparations for African enslavement and colonialism. Participants at the Notting Hill Carnival were given the opportunity to gather further understanding of the Reparation Movement by the use of QR codes

displayed on the RMT banner at the Notting Hill Carnival.

RMT activists arrived early to leaflet the event on both days. The London Transport Regional Council produced a leaflet titled, 'Stop the decline of the Tube'. This leaflet highlighted station closures, maintenance and investment budget cuts, fewer train drivers and more risk to the travelling public in London.

The accompanying QR code included links to a petition relating to the issues highlighted. The RMT presence at Notting Hill Carnival was well received and appreciated. The RMT logo was visible on the Colours Masquerade, (Mas) band T-shirt and the accompanying PA system repeatedly mentioned the union and referenced our causes over the two days.

A wide cross section of the membership once again represented the union and a strong and varied political message was conveyed. Once again, the RMT banner paid homage to the late communist and intersectional feminist Claudia Jones who is credited as being the one of the founders of the Notting Hill Carnival.



SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

The union's national black and ethnic members advisory committee held a very successful event in conjunction with the Redbridge Trades Union Council at Clapton Community Football Club in Forest Gate, Newham as part of the South Asia Heritage month in August.

RMT president Alex Gordon brought greetings at the start of the meeting, then listened to the various contributions and made some points on the relation between race and class. He also discussed the inception of the black and ethnic advisory committee and the struggles of the Paddington guards from his branch who were a catalyst in raising awareness of the need to form the advisory committee.

A panel of speakers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds from the sub-continent and elsewhere explored the stories of several generations of families arriving and settling in east London. The meeting was chaired by Ujitha de Zoysa who is of Sri Lankan heritage and the current vice president of trades council.

Retired teacher Bhasker Bhadresha was born in Kenya and grew up in Stratford and Forest Gate and he talked about his experiences of racism on the streets of east London and later as a secondary teacher in the area.

Sukhdev Johal, university teacher and committed UCU union activist used the opportunity to explain to his own grown-up children in the audience how his experience of encountering power-relations as a youngster shaped his political outlook and activity.

Canning Town Councillor Shaban Mohammed talked about countering racist violence in the area at a time when the National Front had widespread influence on young people. He pointed out that South Asians of all backgrounds had developed mutual solidarity and said this experience was at the root of his determination to help people to improve their circumstances.

Nirmala Rajasingham a Sri Lankan refugee and political activist provided a contextual perspective on colonial and contemporary Indian



subcontinental politics and its impact on the South Asian diaspora in Britain.

Much of the discussion focussed on the implications of Britain's part in the history of the region up to the present day. There were a variety of testimonies that explored the topics of race in the working class communities along with ideas leading to a way

forward.

The discussion was heartfelt and wide-ranging and many of the 40-plus attendees were keen to have a future opportunity to continue the debate. Newham Mayor Roxana Fiaz also attended the event and responded during the discussion to the issues raised.

BLACK PRIDE

The union once again had a stall at Black Pride held at the Stratford Olympic Park in August. It was the 18th year that this event has taken place and has become the world's largest LGBTQI+ celebration of people of African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern and Latin American event.

This inclusive event is a safe space that celebrates intersectional diversity and includes the opportunity to explore the culture through education, advocacy, art including spoken word and live entertainment. To quote

the poet Audre Lorde: "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives, our struggles are particular, but we are not alone".

This year saw an increase in socialist and trade union participants and RMT activists used diverse tools including QR codes to promote industrial campaigns such as Save our Ticket Offices. Members of the public were encouraged to sign the Save Our Ticket Offices petition and to write to their members of Parliament. ■



DELEGATES: LT Region NEC member Carlos Barros, RMT young members Committee chair Sarah Cundy, RMT young member London & Anglia Region Eli Edwards, LT Regional Council president Noreen Hayes.

LEFT BLOC POLITICAL SCHOOL

Members of the union attended a political school on Inis Oírr, one of the smallest of the Aran Islands in Galway Bay in Ireland, writes Noreen Hayes. Run by **Left Bloc** and Trademark Belfast, it brought together academics, trade unionists, climate and political activists, economists, socialist think tanks and more.

Delegates came from Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Argentina, and Chile

amongst other countries.

The political school styled itself on the hedge schools of old Ireland where illegal education, mainly of Catholics, was taught. They would teach Irish, Poetry, Latin, Greek and even economics to young people. They were a place of critical thought, away from ruling class influence, where Irish people could ensure their children could learn and be educated about their own

culture and often reached a very high standard under this hidden system.

The hedge school then makes for a perfect model for sessions in radical thought. They set the tone with subjects such as 'eco-communism - an anti-imperialist response to the land question', which looked at the absence of left wing thought as directed at our agricultural communities. The

fact that the far right has a hold on various farmers protest groups, shows the vacuum the left must now enter.

Clare Daly MEP spoke on militarisation and the drive to war. About how the EU is funding and supporting more and more wars, not just the Ukrainian war. She was clear to make the distinction that that doesn't mean you would support any state like Russia but that war equals money for the rich.

Victor Figueroa Clark gave us 'Allende - Revolutionary Democrat Victor himself being the son of Chilean refugees from the Pinochet era. He gave us an insight into how someone so faithful to socialism made errors that we must all learn from.

Delegates were addressed by Costas Lapavistas, author of *The State of Capitalism*, who took us through key areas of the collaborative book which he co-authored with a collective of 11 writers. It was an economic lesson for the everyman including simplified dissections of how and where the 'market' keeps winning



and why the workers keep losing out.

Community activist Bernadette McAliskey (né Devlin) spoke about how the far right were sourcing funds and getting organised. She discussed how impoverished and disenfranchised workers were often taken in by sectarian and fascist arguments.

She summed up by saying it was up to trade unionists to educate ourselves at events

like these. "We must reach out within our communities and make sure they are educated in turn," she said.

Even when socialising on the Island of Inis Oírr we saw the joy of our class communing. A young Irish Language poet and rapper took time to sit around the campfire with a group of travellers to share some songs with each other. A swathe of young, socialist musicians were brought in every lunchtime

and evening. They jiggled and reeled our cares and woes into fun and laughter. The atmosphere created on that remote little island, gave us great heart for the future and we made connections that will stay with us all in our respective struggles.

But the takeaway from the weekend was summed up by an Islander who lent her production skills to Left Bloc. She helped facilitate sound and video of each talk. It's a

mantra I will hold, and all reps, officers and activists should remember: "Be useful, be kind and tomorrow - we go again".

Left Bloc and Trademark Belfast have set the bar for vibrant, dynamic and relevant left-wing education and space for comradely and positive debate. We should support them at every turn and create our own spaces to find joy in resistance.

Sláinte agus RMT abú!

BURSTON STRIKE SCHOOL

RMT brass band marches to celebrate 110 years since the school strike

The annual trade union celebration in the Norfolk village of Burston marks the strike by school children which became known as 'the longest strike in history'.

During the spring of April 1914, the young pupils at the Burston village Council School walked out of their school building in protest at the sacking of their beloved teachers Tom and Kitty Higdon, who were being punished by the local gentry and church authorities for Tom's trade union and socialist views. The strike and boycott lasted for some 25 years.

Every year trade unionists march the route that the children took around the village carrying large placards aloft, with the slogans "We Want Our Teachers Back" and "Justice We Want". At the head of the procession was a large banner, inscribed with the one word "Justice".

By 1916, a national fundraising campaign had been launched that went on to raise enough funds for the building of a brand new school and many National Union of Railwaymen branches donated funds towards it. Today the



Burston Strike School still stands as a monument to working class education and the struggle against tyranny.

Since 1984, the Burston

Strike School Rally has been an annual event, with the day now being fixed to the first Sunday in September. The event is completely funded by trade

unions which allows it to be free of any ticketing. Local RMT branches brought their banners and marched behind the award-winning RMT band. ■

LEGAL

WINNING AT WORK



RMT offers full legal support for members and their families, don't leave home without it

A signal worker member employed by Network Rail was injured during the course of his work. At the end of his shift and as he was walking away from the signal box, he tripped over debris which had been left on an unlit authorised walkway. The member fell and landed heavily on his left side, sustaining grazing to the left knee and pain to his left hand.

He initially thought that he had just sustained bruising and that the hand was a bit sore and swollen and continued to work for a further three shifts before his work supervisor showed a picture of his hand to his line manager. His line manager thereafter arranged for the member to be taken to the Emergency Department of the hospital

where x-rays were performed and showed a fracture of the little finger. Our member was treated with a splint and was off work for approximately 49 days.

Thompsons Solicitors was instructed to pursue a claim for compensation for the member's injuries and losses. The employer admitted a breach of duty and agreed to pay the member compensation as a result of their negligence.

Thompsons Solicitors arranged for an independent medical expert to examine our member and prepare a report dealing with the injuries and losses that he had sustained as a result of the accident. The medical expert confirmed that our member sustained a fracture to his little finger and

was off work for seven weeks as a result of the pain, swelling and weakness. Following this seven-week period, the expert found that the member had made a full recovery.

As our member had to take time off of work as a result of the accident, he suffered a reduction in his take-home pay during this period. Thompsons Solicitors therefore investigated the loss of earnings that our member had suffered and sought to recover this, together with travel expenses, as part of our member's claim for compensation.

After some negotiation, Thompsons solicitors were able to obtain a settlement of £3,500 in respect of our member's injuries and losses, which were carefully valued by Thompsons in order to ensure that our member received the appropriate amount of compensation.

ROAD ACCIDENT

A railway worker member has secured compensation after suffering an injury following a road traffic accident. The member was hit by a vehicle while walking home, which caused him to sustain significant injuries to his right foot and ankle. He had to spend more than six weeks in

hospital and he required a considerable amount of rehabilitation.

The member instructed specialist injury lawyers at Thompsons Solicitors through the RMT legal assistance scheme. After a thorough investigation, the defendant's representatives admitted liability for the accident and medical evidence was then obtained to prove the member's claim.

Thompsons Solicitors was also able to arrange funding for a rehabilitation package, which helped the member to return to work.

The national law firm then instructed a consultant orthopaedic surgeon and an expert in care and rehabilitation to prepare reports. These reports set out the nature and extent of the injuries, the treatment required and the cost of future care and rehabilitation.

A detailed schedule of financial loss was prepared and court proceedings were issued. Following correspondence and negotiations with the insurers it was possible to negotiate a satisfactory settlement without the case proceeding to trial. A total sum of £257,000 was agreed and subsequently paid to the member. ■

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
www.thompsonstradeunion.law

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SOLICITORS
STANDING UP FOR YOU

100
YEARS
1921-2021

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS

Set out below is the report of the independent auditors to the members as contained in the accounts of the Union for the year ended 31 December 2022:

OPINION

We have audited the financial statements of the National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers ["The Union"] for the year ended 31 December 2022 which comprise the Income and Expenditure account, Combined Funds, Income and Expenditure Account - General Funds, Income and Expenditure account - Orphan Fund, Income and Expenditure Account - Political Fund, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Changes in Equity, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including Statement, Statement of Movement in funds significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the Union's affairs as at 31 December 2022 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

BASIS FOR OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Union in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO GOING CONCERN

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the National Executive Committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Union's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the National Executive Committee with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

OTHER INFORMATION

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditors report thereon. The National Executive Committee is responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If

we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT BY EXCEPTION

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (Amended) requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- A satisfactory system of control over transactions has not been maintained; or
- The Union has not kept proper accounting records; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the books of account; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we need for our audit.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the National Executive Committee, the National Executive Committee is responsible for the preparation of financial statements and being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the National Executive Committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the National Executive Committee are responsible for assessing the Union's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the National Executive Committee either intend to liquidate the Union or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

As part of our planning process:

- We enquired of management the systems and controls the union has in place, the areas of the financial statements that are most susceptible to the risk of irregularities and fraud, and whether there was any known, suspected or alleged fraud. The union did not inform us of any known, suspected or alleged fraud.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to

SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION EXTRACTED FROM THE FULL ACCOUNTS

Summary income and expenditure accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022:

General Fund and Orphan Fund

	2022	2021
	£'000	As restated £'000
Subscription income	18,638	18,437
Operating expenditure	(21,522)	(19,333)
Operating result	(2,884)	(806)
Other income/(expenditure)	(1,120)	7067
Result for the year	(4,004)	6171
Other comprehensive income	752	12,706
Comprehensive result for the year	(3,252)	18,877

Political Fund

	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
Subscription income	229	235
Operating expenditure	(143)	(174)
Operating result	86	61
Other income	0	0
Result and comprehensive result for the year	86	61

SUMMARY OF SALARIES AND BENEFITS PROVIDED

Name	Position	Details	Amount
M Lynch	GS & Assistant General Secretary	Salary Pension contributions Other benefits	£89,961 £27,900 £0
S Hedley	Senior Assistant General Secretary	Salary Pension contributions Other benefits	£61,756 £7,071 £1,602
E Dempsey	Senior Assistant General Secretary	Salary Pension contributions Other benefits	£78,282 £24,258 £1,157
J Leach	Assistant General Secretary	Salary Pension contributions Other benefits	£42,499 £18,023 £10,435
Alex Gordon	President	Attendance, lodging allowance and reimbursed expenses	£57,229

The members of the National Executive Committee do not receive any benefits but do receive attendance and lodging allowances, which are set out below. The General Secretary, the Assistant General Secretaries, the President and the members of the National Executive Committee are reimbursed for any expenditure incurred by them in the performance of their duties on behalf of the Union.

Summary of attendance and lodging allowances and reimbursed expenses paid to the National Executive Committee

Name	Amount	Name	Amount
Oluwarotimi Ajayi	£58,330	David King	£61,090
I Allen	£33,284	J Kirby	£40,740
Millie Apedo-Amah	£61,928	Peter March	£13
Andy Budds	£64,676	P McDonnell	£58,733
David Goard	£60,333	S. Miskimmon	£62,161
A Gordon	£65,286	W Moore	£58,161
Alex Gordon	£57,229	K L Morrison	£60,316
MJ Herbison	£66,534	S Shaw	£60,861
K Jewell*	£79	J Wood	£40,337
Dale Kember	£51,189	Michael Ramsey	£20,901
		Robert Wynes	£21,241

*In addition, the Union provides accommodation while on Union business

the union. We determined that the following were most relevant: FRS 102 and the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (Amended).

- We considered the incentives and opportunities that exist in the union, including the extent of management bias, which present a potential for irregularities and fraud to be perpetuated, and tailored our risk assessment accordingly.
- Using our knowledge of the union, together with the discussions held with the union at the planning stage, we formed a conclusion on the risk of misstatement due to irregularities including fraud and tailored our procedures according to this risk assessment.

The key procedures we undertook to detect irregularities including fraud during the course of the audit included:

- Identifying and testing journal entries and the overall accounting records, in particular those that were significant and unusual.
- Reviewing the financial statement disclosures and determining whether accounting policies have been appropriately applied.
- Reviewing and challenging the assumptions and judgements used by management in their significant

accounting estimates, in particular in relation to valuations of both property assets and pension obligations.

- Assessing the extent of compliance, or lack of, with the relevant laws and regulations.
- Testing key revenue lines, in particular cut-off, for evidence of management bias.
- Performing a physical verification of key assets
- Obtaining third-party confirmation of material investment, bank and loan balances.
- Documenting and verifying all significant related party balances and transactions.
- Reviewing documentation such as minutes of the meeting of the National Executive Committee and confirmation from solicitors for discussions of irregularities including fraud.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities and fraud rests with those charged with governance of the Union.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

USE OF OUR REPORT

This report is made solely to the Union's members, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Union's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Union and the Union's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

HW FISHER LLP
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor

Acre House
11 - 15 William Road
London NW1 3ER
United Kingdom

Date: 02 August 2023

We are required by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (amended) to include the following declaration in this statement to all members. The wording is as prescribed by the Act.

"A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or have occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concerns with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider obtaining independent legal advice."

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE POLITICAL FUND

In accordance with section 84A of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 we are obliged to inform, on an annual basis, any member who joined the Union on or after 1 March 2018 that they are entitled to choose to withdraw

their contributions to the Union's Political Fund if they submit a withdrawal notice. For the avoidance of doubt, the Union does not recommend that you do this as the money it receives from the Political Fund is vital to much of the campaigning work it undertakes.

However, notwithstanding the Union's position, if you wish to

withdraw your contribution to the Political Fund you need to submit a withdrawal notice making clear you no longer wish to contribute to the Union's Political Fund. In this notice you should set out who you are, what your address is and what branch you are in. You can submit the withdrawal notice either by delivering it by hand to the

Union's head office or your branch office or by emailing info@rmt.org.uk. The Union will then action your request. You can also ask us to provide you with an electronic version of a withdrawal notice for you to complete to facilitate your withdrawal and we will do this immediately if you email info@rmt.org.uk.

OFFICIAL RMT BRANDED MERCHANDISE

Show your support for the union



Go to the RMT webshop on the RMT web site for more details.

Promote your branch, region and the union - call Pellacraft on 01623 636 602 if you have any queries.



KEEP IT SIMPLE

The key to the RMT Credit Union is 'keeping it simple'

You just save a minimum of £5 per month and then after a short time, you can borrow from us. As you pay down your loan amount each month, you only pay interest on the outstanding balance.

There are no hidden costs to saving and borrowing with the RMT Credit Union. If you pay up early you simply pay the balance and any interest due at the time. NO Handling or Administration charges and NO penalty charges.

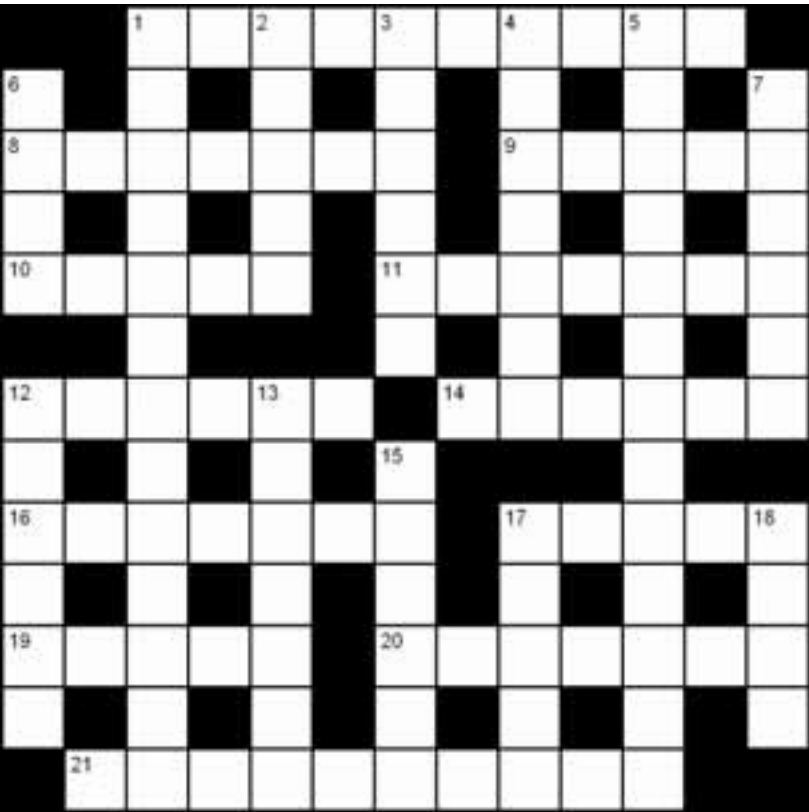
We have accounts to help you put money aside for your holidays, Christmas or even encourage your children to save. For more information, check the RMT Credit Union Website or fill out the application form on inside back page.

Run by RMT members for RMT members and their families.



Find out more
c.union@rmtcreditunion.co.uk
Tel: 020 3535 5820
<https://rmtcreditunion.co.uk/>

£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by November 14, 2023 with your name and address.

Last month's winner is John Payne, Southend.

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

ACROSS

- 1 Contemptuous (10)
- 8 Unleavened biscuit (7)
- 9 Declare invalid (5)
- 10 Fish (5)
- 11 Random disorder (7)
- 12 Authority (6)
- 14 Fabric dealer (6)
- 16 Two-wheeled vehicle for one (7)
- 17 Garment (5)
- 19 One who moves over snow (5)
- 20 Learner (7)
- 21 Infer broad principles (10)

DOWN

- 1 Self-analysing (13)
- 2 Respond (5)
- 3 Observer (6)
- 4 Estate agent (7)
- 5 Disobedience (13)
- 6 Foot inflammation (4)
- 7 Musician (6)
- 12 Exit (6)
- 13 Book (7)
- 15 Religious text (6)
- 17 Hindi teacher (5)
- 18 At that time (4)

JOIN RMT



BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION

Visit www.rmt.org.uk to join
online or call the helpline on
freephone **0800 376 3706**

Problems at work? Call the helpline



Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

In the light of draconian anti-trade union laws that have been used against the union, members should keep their personal data up to date. It is also important to note that in order to keep members informed your union requires your mobile telephone number and email address.

Members can do this via the RMT website, telephone the RMT helpline above, or writing to the membership department at RMT head office, Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

