

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

ORGANISE: LESSONS OF THE 1926 GENERAL STRIKE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...



**BRING SOUTHEASTERN
CLEANERS IN-HOUSE**
PAGE 4



**TUBE DRIVERS TAKE
STRIKE ACTION**
PAGE 6



**FIGHTING FOR FAIR PAY
AT RFA**
PAGE 7



**ACTING AGAINST
ASSAULTS**
PAGE 18



www.rmt.org.uk



RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

P.O. Box 252, Wisbech, PE14 4FX
c.union@rmtcreditunion.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

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

Please use **BLOCK** Capitals and **BLACK INK**.

1 PERSONAL DETAILS.

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

2 Marital Status married ☐ partner ☐ single ☐ divorced ☐

Drivers Licence No.

3 Your Employment.

Employer		RMT Branch	
Job Description			

4 Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐

5 Membership Status

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

6 How much do you wish to save £ ☐ weekly ☐ Monthly on 2nd, 15th or 28th ☐ if 4 weekly add date you get paid

7 Next of Kin

Address

.....

.....

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

Your signature

Date

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

I agree to my identity being checked electronically ☐

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

Telephone: 0203 535 5820

Authorised and Regulated by FCA & PRA, FRN No.228612 Company Registration No.705C



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in the whole form including official use box using a ball point pen and Send to: RMT Credit Union Ltd., P.O. Box 252, Wisbech, PE14 4FX

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
	Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Originator's Identification Number

Reference Number

FOR RMT CREDIT UNION LTD OFFICIAL USE ONLY
This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

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

Signature(s)

Date

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

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

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



Contents

Page 4	BRING SOUTHEASTERN CLEANERS IN-HOUSE
Page 5	LEEDS PROTEST AGAINST OUTSOURCING
Page 6	TUBE DRIVERS TAKE STRIKE ACTION
Page 7	FIGHTING FOR FAIR PAY AT RFA
Page 8	GENERAL STRIKE 100
Page 10	BACKING THE BUS WORKERS' CHARTER
Page 12	ORGANISING FOR CHANGE
Page 13	WHERE'S THE WAVE?
Page 14	SUPERVISORY GRADES MEET
Page 15	CATERING FOR GBR SERVICES
Page 16	FIGHTING ASSAULTS
Page 18	ACTING AGAINST ASSAULTS
Page 20	FIGHTING RACISM
Page 21	RMT AT WOMEN'S TUC
Page 22	ENGINEERING CHANGE
Page 24	RMT TELLS COVID INQUIRY EXPERIENCES OF TRANSPORT WORKERS
Page 25	WILMCOTE MEMORIAL UNVEILED
Page 26	DISABLED MEMBERS' MEET
Page 27	PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
Page 28	AWARDS/OBITUARY
Page 29	TRAVEL FOR RETIRED WORKERS
Page 30	CROSSWORD

EDITORIAL



ORGANISING FOR THE FUTURE TODAY

On the centenary of the 1926 General Strike, we must draw the right lessons from history. It showed us that workers could be united on an unprecedented scale and fight for each other.

It also showed that industrial unionism which organises workers of all grades industry by industry can become a force in society. That is the tradition this union stands in today which is focused on organising and empowering workers who make this society run.

As you can see from RMT News, members from all grades are currently meeting to discuss and debate strategies for building that unity amongst working people.

Our End Outsourcing campaign is gathering support across the trade union movement to demand an end to two-tier workforces where people working alongside each other are on lower rates of pay and terms and conditions.

This is because, while it is good news that the government is creating an integrated, publicly owned rail network, many essential rail services - such as cleaning, station staffing, catering, security, rail infrastructure and engineering - will remain outsourced to private contractors.

That's bad news for passengers and taxpayers as these companies rake in £400 million annually in profits and

bad news for rail workers as it is an employment model that drives workers on precarious contracts.

We should all be very proud of RMT members who took part in events across the country recent as part of our national Action Against Assaults campaign.

This campaign is one of the most important the union has undertaken because significant action is required to improve the day to day lives of members and those who use these transport services who fear being assaulted every day.

RMT wants to see an end to lone working and staffing levels as well as for increased funding and presence of the British Transport Police and to put pressure on politicians to act.

Millions of workers and users believe that public transport must be a space where people feel welcome and our members feel safe.

That needs enforcement both legally and through proper resourcing of authorities like the BTP with safe staffing levels on the transport network.

All the best to all those presently engaged in struggles at work for justice and real improvements, that fight is what this union is all about. Solidarity and unity are our watchwords that have stood us in good stead and will continue to in the future.

Eddie Dempsey



BRING SOUTHEASTERN CLEANERS IN-HOUSE

A rally in Ashford, Kent called for an end to outsourcing on Southeastern services, demanding that cleaners employed by private contractor Churchill be brought back in-house under public ownership.

Southeastern has been taken into public control and will be integrated into Great British Railways, but cleaning staff remain outsourced, on inferior pay and conditions and little to no job security.

RMT has highlighted that Churchill had paid out more than £50 million to shareholders in the last two

years, arguing that profits were being prioritised over the interests of frontline staff and the travelling public.

The union has pointed out that the Labour government had promised the biggest wave of insourcing in a generation but that it had so far not followed through on that commitment.

Activists leafleted Ashford International station prior to pay talks with the company led by RMT regional organiser John Parsons.

He told the company that there was no justification for keeping cleaners outsourced

to a private contractor when Southeastern was in public hands.

"Churchill has paid out tens of millions to shareholders at the same time as suppressing cleaners pay, denying them sick pay and leaving them without a proper pension," he said.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that cutting corners on staffing and conditions inevitably impacted on cleanliness and standards across the railway which negatively impacted on passengers.

"We are calling on the

government to end outsourcing on rail and bring these essential workers into Great British Railways where they belong," he said.



Scan this QR code to join the campaign

TUBE CLEANERS WIN SICK PAY

After a long battle, London Underground cleaners working for outsourced contractor Mitie have won the right to the sick pay scheme after the company took over the contract from April 1.

As a result of the long-running RMT campaign, cleaners will now be entitled

to four weeks' full sick pay which would not have been achieved without union pressure.

RMT has lobbied City Hall the Transport for London Board for several years with three key demands of travel passes for cleaners, sick pay and improved pensions.

Before this victory the lack of a sick pay scheme meant that cleaners literally could not afford to be ill, facing a choice between using annual leave, struggling by on Statutory Sick Pay, or coming to work whilst unwell.

This would worsen health conditions and put

workmates and passengers at risk if the illness was contagious.

During the pandemic, TfL recognised how dangerous this situation was, and subsidised a sick pay scheme but it was subsequently withdrawn.

RMT general secretary



LEEDS PROTEST AGAINST OUTSOURCING

Union demands Northern Trains bring station staff, cleaners and security guards in-house

RMT members protested in Leeds outside the meeting of Transport for the North's Board to demand a 'wave of in-sourcing' at Northern Trains.

Even though Northern Trains will soon become part of a publicly owned Great British Railways, many rail workers are being left out of Great British Railways because they are outsourced to private companies.

Northern Trains currently outsources station staff, cleaners and security guards to companies like Carlisle and ISS. Carlisle, which is owned by the Tory peer Lord Ashcroft, is typical of the worst

of outsourcing firms in its treatment of staff.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that outsourcing companies cut costs to boost profits, resulting in inferior pay and conditions for staff and a worse service for passengers.

"RMT members at Carlisle on Northern Trains are currently in a bitter dispute with their employer over their employer's refusal to negotiate pay.

"Instead, Carlisle chooses to impose the minimum possible pay rates it can get away with and blame Northern Trains instead.

"Our members have been forced to take industrial action in the form of strikes and refusing to scan tickets to try to get a negotiated pay rise," he said.

Since the dispute began, Carlisle managers have tried to bully and intimidate workers into submission by keeping them on zero hours contracts and threatening to cut shifts or holiday entitlement just for taking legal strike action.

Carlisle and Northern keep passing the buck between them, each blaming the other for the dispute, while hoping members will be starved into giving up.

RMT has launched a petition to Northern Trains (see QR code below).

Early Day Motion 2929 has also been tabled in Parliament by Rebecca Long-Bailey MP calling on Northern Trains to resolve the dispute and in-source workers.



Eddie Dempsey congratulated the cleaners for holding out for improved conditions around the transfer of the contract from ABM to Mitie, when the employers have finally budged.

"The sick pay scheme will be funded by TfL itself,

further eroding the logic of outsourcing.

"TfL will now be providing staff travel passes for outsourced workers and paying cleaners' sick pay. Why not simply employ them directly?" he asked.

Despite the victory sick pay entitlement for cleaners

remains well below that of their directly employed workmates.

Pension arrangements are still inadequate, and TfL and outsourced contractors continue to treat the London Living Wage as a ceiling, rather than a floor.

"RMT will continue

fighting on all these issues and, ultimately, for direct, in-house employment.

"The significant step forward on sick pay shows what's possible when we stand together and refuse to give up the fight," he said.



TUBE DRIVERS TAKE STRIKE ACTION

RMt has slammed Transport for London for reneging on promises to negotiate in good faith on a 'fake' four-day week, which left tube drivers no choice but to take two days of strike action.

During negotiations over the imposition, TfL had offered to negotiate on all elements of the proposals.

However, TfL imposed proposals to condense the working week into four days against the expressed wishes of most drivers in two separate referendums across LU.

RMT driver members' objection to the imposed "fake four-day week" is that it amounts to five days' work compressed into four.

This included reduced flexibility over shift patterns, with the potential for only 24 hour notice of what shift duties, serious concerns about shift length and fatigue impacting safety in a safety-critical role like tube driving, and the fact that Transport for London has made no new offer despite months of

negotiation.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that the union had approached negotiations with TfL in good faith throughout the entire process.

"Despite our best efforts, TfL seem unwilling to make any concessions in a bid to avert strike action.

"RMT had sought assurances from TfL in writing that members could stay on their current shift patterns and agreed terms and conditions.

"Yet failed to respond adequately which meant that it was not a voluntary scheme

and TfL were seeking to impose it on our members.

"This is extremely disappointing and has baffled RMT negotiators.

"The approach of TfL is not one which leads to industrial peace and will infuriate our members who want to see a negotiated settlement to this avoidable dispute."

RMT London Transport regional organiser Jared Wood also told the media that there were no assurances that these arrangements would genuinely be voluntary.

"We have asked TfL a number of direct questions

such as does this mean that drivers can continue working under their current arrangements? Can new drivers in the future can opt for those same arrangements? Does it allow a simple choice between four or five days?

"The answer to each of those questions has been, "we can't tell you" and London Underground stated that the only way to find out is to help them implement the changes first, and only then will they clarify what they mean by 'voluntary' which is not acceptable," he said.





FIGHTING FOR FAIR PAY AT RFA

Royal Fleet Auxiliary seafarers take strike action

RMT members in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) have taken four days of successful strike action after overwhelmingly rejecting the latest pay offer.

Despite the union's sustained efforts to reach a negotiated settlement, RFA management have continued to table proposals that fall short of members' expectations.

During strike action, members will continue to ensure the safety of vessels is maintained at all times, including the management of moorings and gangways.

Seafarers can routinely work up to 12 hours a day but there remains no clear or transparent formula setting out how pay is calculated against those hours.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that members in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary were taking a principled stand.

"They have made their position clear. They will not accept substandard pay offers and are prepared to take further strike action if necessary to get the pay rise they deserve.

"Our members play a vital role in supporting the Navy, often in some of the most

demanding and dangerous working conditions.

"But they have faced years of below par pay and unresolved concerns about conditions.

"The Ministry of Defence and the employer now need to come forward with a serious, long-term commitment to improving pay and conditions, including ensuring they comply with National Minimum Wage legislation, if they are serious about retaining staff," he said. ■



GENERAL STRIKE 100

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey celebrates 100 years of struggle since the 1926 General Strike



STRIKE: Workers taking part in the 1926 General Strike

As RMT members, you are part of one of the longest and proudest traditions of trade unionism this country has produced. And make no mistake, it wasn't handed down to us. It was fought for and won by generations of members.

By the start of the 20th century, our forebears had turned the railways into a fortress of the workers' movement with hundreds of thousands of members across Britain.

They fought and won national strikes in 1911 and 1919, forcing the bosses to recognise them, hammering out bargaining agreements and building a decent floor of terms and conditions for rail workers.

They understood that workers are stronger when

they stand together, so they brought about a new era of unity. In 1913, they amalgamated the rail unions into the National Union of Railwaymen and, a year later, they stood shoulder to shoulder with our comrades in mining and transport to form the Triple Alliance.

The Triple Alliance was forged from a clear understanding that it was workers – not big business, City speculators or private industrialists – who made the economy run. If the coal dug by the miners was the lifeblood of the economy, the rail and road were the arteries and veins. Stop them and the whole thing stops.

This period of history reached its symbolic height in 1926 with the general strike, when nearly two million

workers across Britain came out in unity. And just like in the 1980s, it started with an attack on the miners.

After the First World War, the government handed the mines back to the private owners. And, as with every privatisation before or since, the result was the same: an attack on workers' pay and conditions. The mine owners tore up the national agreements that set a floor for the industry and demanded wage cuts of up to fifty per cent.

And just as we would today, the miners told them where to go. "Not a penny off the pay, not a minute on the day" was their slogan. As a result, they were locked out and the wider trade union movement went on strike in sympathetic action.

This was only possible

because of the growing awareness among working people that no matter where you worked – whether it be on a train, boat or bus, down a mine or up a ladder – you shared a common interest.

Every worker wants the same things: a decent wage, job security, dignified terms and conditions, an affordable place to live, public services that work, a future for our young people.

But those years hammered home another lesson too: there were people who did very well out of denying workers those things. A small but powerful elite owned the economy, and they pushed their profits up by forcing our living standards down. That's the nature of class and the society we live in, whether they admit it or not.

1926 was a battle between the working class and the owning class – and we're still in that battle one hundred years later. The fight for better jobs, pay and conditions comes down to this: are we better organised, or are they?

Unfortunately, in 1926, the employers and the British state were well organised.

If our side had learned lessons about power and the importance of unity, so had the vested interests who ran Britain.

A year earlier, the employers had made a tactical retreat. They used the intervening time to stockpile coal, bring together big business with the state and prepare for a confrontation.

They even built a propaganda network to get across the bosses' message during the strike. The British Gazette, funded and run by the state, was edited by Winston Churchill throughout the general strike and pumped out anti-worker lines on a daily basis.

By contrast, the workers'

movement had been forced into a defensive strike that it wasn't prepared for. Not for the first time, leadership – including our own in the NUR – was found wanting. The strike was abandoned in failure after just nine days.

Despite being rock solid on their picket lines, our members paid a heavy cost for the general strike. The employers refused to allow them back on the same terms and many thousands were victimised or even denied a return to work on the rail altogether.

But we must draw the right lessons from that history. The 1926 general strike showed that workers could be united on an unprecedented scale. It showed that working people would fight for each other: more than a million walked out in support of the miners, despite never having set foot down the pit.

It showed that industrial unionism, a fighting trade unionism that organises workers of all grades industry by industry, had built our



CHANGE: Eddie Dempsey calls for a new kind of politics based on representing working class interests at the Banners Held High rally in Wakefield

movement into a force in society. And our opponents knew it. The wealthiest and most powerful people in the country were driven into a desperate rearguard action to protect their positions.

That is the tradition RMT stands in today. We remain an industrial union. We are focused on organising and empowering workers, not servicing them from an office or running around after politicians.

We believe in industrial

unity. We want to see the wider trade union movement pulling together strategically to rebuild our position in society. But just like a century ago, a new era demands a new approach. After decades of decline, we must find new alliances, new structures and new tactics.

Ultimately we must return to this essential fact: it is workers who make this society run. That is an immense power – if we've got the organisation and the nerve to wield it. ■

RMT AT 'BANNERS HELD HIGH'

RMT's marching band led the annual Banners Held High march through Wakefield followed by around 20 RMT

branch and regional banners followed by many more from other trade unions.

RMT general secretary

Eddie Dempsey spoke at the rally at the Wakefield Exchange calling on the trade union movement to develop

its own strategies and policies based on the needs of the working class. ■





BACKING THE BUS WORKERS' CHARTER

Bus workers launch charter at the grades conference in Chesterfield

Bus workers launched a charter for increases in pay, reduction in working hours and improved safety at work at their grades conference in Chesterfield.

Members who work as drivers, engineers, cleaners and other grades in the bus industry, are being encouraged to take the charter into negotiations in order to get a better deal at work.

Launching the charter, RMT assistant general secretary and the lead officer for buses, Daren Ireland, said that it was a serious document.

"It sets out key demands and a key national strategy for our representatives here to take in negotiations.

"And what my ask is, is that

we need to have a consistent approach as to how we improve on pay, terms and conditions," he said.

Detailing the industrial landscape and the varying rates of pay for bus workers, he said: "The privatisation and fragmentation that have been driven by deregulation over the last forty plus years has led us to a position where we no longer organising within nationalised companies.

"Employers are taking control, where the employer will push for lower pay and cut services which will badly impact on local communities".

He went on to highlight just how useful and practical a document like the bus workers charter could be in negotiations with employers,

adding: "This document is about trying to tackle your employers with a consistent strategy, such that we can improve and get to, a position where we have one common set of pay and conditions for all bus workers that are decent".

He also savaged private bus companies: "The likes of First Bus, the likes of Stagecoach, and the likes of Go-Ahead. All their CEOs have benefited out of public money given to those companies.

"And if you look at the salaries of those CEOs, they're all on a million pound-plus - an absolute staggering amount of money. That is about fifty times what you earn.

"They're only interested in

running services if it's for a profit or it's funded through taxation".

Julie Tobin, South Devon Bus who played a key role in the development of the Charter, told RMT News: "I am really pleased that we've managed to put this Bus Charter together.

"It will equip our representatives with the principles that we expect for our members.

"It gives them a very clear guideline about what it is that the union that they're a part of is actually fighting for and it shows that RMT is fighting for them in the workplace.

"That means fighting to improve living standards and their safety standards in which they work. So I'm very proud



RMT BUS WORKERS' CHARTER

These demands should be tabled with employers during pay and conditions negotiations.

PAY AND CONDITIONS

- Significant increases to rates of pay
- Enhanced overtime, unsocial hours and weekend payments
- Increased annual leave
- Improved pension schemes
- Job security guarantees
- 100% company sick pay from day one

HOURS AND BREAKS

- Reduction in the working week with no loss of pay
- Sufficient paid rest breaks in the working day
- Reduction in daily working and driving hours with no loss of pay
- No enforced split shifts

SAFETY AT WORK

- Safe and well-maintained vehicles
- Access to welfare facilities
- Safety reporting systems
- Action against assaults
- Specific and regular safety training

to have been associated with the development of this".

Ms Tobin who is also active in the regional council in the South West, highlighted the importance of the bus workers conference as an opportunity to organise more effectively and to gain tangible results for RMT members.

"This charter is the result of democracy in action. It originated from resolutions that were brought forward from bus workers conference and the organising committee.

"This is the end product that says, we are a member led union, and we listened to our members. Well this is one of the products of listening to members, and I look forward to implementing this as we go forward," she said.

Conference also dealt with several resolutions including a commitment to campaign for the bus fare cap to remain in place.

Lee Odams, Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Bus said that the national bus fare cap had played a significant role in supporting passengers during the cost-of-living crisis.

"By reducing the cost of travel, the fare cap has helped



maintain ridership, supported access to employment and education, and ensured that bus services remain affordable to those who rely on them most.

"Fare affordability is not simply a pricing issue but a matter of social inclusion, access to opportunity and equality.

"Withdrawal or reduction of fare support risks reversing recent gains in ridership and undermining the financial sustainability of bus services," he said.

RMT regional organiser for Yorkshire and Humberside Gaz Jackson called on bus workers to support the Action Against Assaults campaign.

He said that it was vital that people understood that it was unacceptable to assault workers across all the sectors RMT represents. ■



ORGANISING FOR CHANGE

Winning trade union recognition is a crucial part of organising in the workplace.

RMT is taking advantage of major changes in employment rights legislation to fight for dozens of new recognition agreements up and down the country.

The benefits of having a recognition agreement at work between your employer and your union couldn't be clearer – these agreements allow your union to negotiate better pay, better hours and better conditions for members, usually on an annual basis.

They also allow reps to access much needed facility time and training which means that reps can stand up for workers against management across a range of issues, from bullying and harassment to health and safety issues.

That's why your union is implementing a sustained campaign to secure recognition agreements in dozens of non-union companies.

RMT has taken advantage of the new Employment Rights Act 2025 which makes legally enforceable recognition much simpler.

Before April, unions had to show both that they had ten

percent of workers in any proposed bargaining unit and that most workers 'would be likely to favour recognition of the union'.

If a union had submitted a request to an employer and that employer had ignored or refused the request, the union could apply to the Central Arbitration Committee, a state-run body which has the power to order ballots for recognition and decide bargaining units.

The requirement to show majority support in a bargaining unit was a substantial hurdle, made worse by the openness of the system for abuse by unscrupulous employers.

In 2023, Amazon notoriously added more than a thousand workers to one bargaining unit in its Coventry warehouses to block a trade union from gaining recognition.

Until recently, turnout thresholds in recognition ballots also meant that those not voting in a recognition ballot, for whatever reason, had their vote counted against having a union onsite.

Whilst RMT has been

consistent in opposing the government's watering down of its Employment Rights Act, the changes around recognition represent a major opportunity for RMT reps and activists.

The union no longer needs to show that a majority are likely to support recognition when it applies to the CAC and the requirement that 40 per cent of all workers support recognition has likewise been dropped.

While RMT still needs to prove that 10 per cent of those workers in a bargaining unit are members of the union, the government plans to introduce new restrictions on unfair practices as soon as the request for recognition is made.

So, what has your union being doing to turn this opportunity into something that secures real benefits for RMT members?

The union's Recruitment, Retention and Organising Department (RROD), in close collaboration with your national and regional officers, national executive committee and regional councils, have

spoken to hundreds of reps and members to identify hundreds of bargaining units, calculate density and prepare recognition requests over the past few months.

By the time that you have read this article, dozens of companies will have received formal requests to begin negotiating with the union and some will already have signed agreements. In other companies, it will be necessary to pursue the legal road to recognition. If you work for any of the companies involved, you will already have received communication from the union, outlining how you can support the campaign to win recognition.

Having a recognised trade union is the bare minimum every worker should be entitled to expect, and your union will not rest until as many members as possible are covered by these arrangements.

If you are in a non-union workplace in the rail, maritime, offshore and transport sectors and want to get organised, please let us know by emailing org.unit@rmt.org.uk ■

WHERE'S THE WAVE?

Union demands the government acts against outsourcing

"There is a reason nothing in this country works anymore," RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey told a rally in Westminster recently, "and that reason is outsourcing".

The rally, organised by the Trade Union Coordinating Group, criticised the Labour government's failure to live up to its commitment to "the biggest wave of insourcing in a generation".

That pledge was first made by now-Chancellor Rachel Reeves in 2021 and then included in the Labour Party's 'Make Work Pay' policy document prior to the 2024 General Election. Yet, two years on, there has been little progress.

Eddie Dempsey also highlighted the Mayor of London's failure to follow through on his commitment to insource over 3,000 Transport for London cleaners, instead handing the contract over to

outsourcing giant, Mitie.

"Outsourcing is a scam designed to undermine public services and drive down terms and conditions," he said, "but like all scams in Britain today, there are plenty of people benefitting from it.

"Mitie is one of the biggest privatisers of public services in the country and have seen their revenues more than double from £2.27 billion to over £5 billion in the last decade alone".

He also highlighted the role played by another outsourcer, Carillion, in the Carmont disaster in 2020, which resulted in the deaths of three people, including two RMT members.

A recent Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) investigation revealed that Carillion, which collapsed into liquidation in 2018, had failed to construct a drainage system as agreed and left Network

Rail in the dark about how it should be maintained.

Among the other speakers was PCS general secretary Fran Heathcoate who highlighted how outsourcing giant Capita had mismanaged the civil service pension scheme and left thousands with late pension payments.

Paul Fleming of actors' union, Equity explained how outsourcing at the BBC had led to 80 per cent of British television production being reliant on US companies, while Mark Fairhurst of the Prison Officers Association said that the outsourcing of prison maintenance had resulted in a £2 billion backlog and "squalid" conditions.

"Outsourced workers are more likely to be on zero-hour contracts and at the bottom of the pay scale," Eddie Dempsey told the meeting.

"They are far more likely to have no sick pay and no



chance of a decent pension in retirement. Meanwhile, it delivers nothing for the public but chaos and unaccountability.

"RMT wants to see a government that ends the outsourcing scam once-and-for-all, we won't accept anything less," he said. ■

NEGOTIATING AT MITIE

Union wins recognition for Mitie workers at TfL

RMT Mitie reps and RMT regional organiser Glen Hart attended inaugural pay talks with Transport for London recently after gaining recognition across all Mitie security TfL contracts.

Trade union recognition was achieved following excellent work by LU Fleet and Piccadilly and District West branches, activists and the regional council.

Piccadilly and District West began the hard work of organising these outsourced contracts some years ago and made steady progress.

Members and reps are keen to continue organising to fight low pay and excessively long hours.■



NEGOTIATION: From left to right: Zaffar Iqbal, Giovany Bonuccelli, Carlos Barros (branch secretary who attended staff-side) regional organiser Glen Hart, Lina Senkute, Olushola Mustapha, Ubaid Ullah, Iva Naydenov

SUPERVISORY GRADES MEET

RMT delegates discuss pay, organising and mental health



Delegates at the union's organising conference of supervisory, clerical and salaried grades meeting in Nottingham backed a call to confront what they described as a growing mental health crisis among members in the grade.

Conference president Sean Hoyle, Portsmouth highlighted the mounting pressures faced by clerical, administrative and supervisory staff, from excessive workloads and chronic understaffing to the isolation of remote working and the strain of enforcing management decisions.

He pointed out that changes in working patterns were compounding the problem.

The expansion of agile and remote working had often led to increased professional isolation and a blurring of boundaries between work and home life, creating what delegates described as a "living at work" culture.

"The biggest thing you take on in these busy supervisory roles in the digital era we are in, you are never off duty.

"You all work on your phones or on your iPads, you never clock out. You're always available, always reading emails and you're not paid for any of that. The stress that

causes you needs to be managed properly," he said.

A Edinburgh No.1 and Portobello delegate said: "I've come across quite a lot of situations where there's a lot of clerical staff who tend to get forgotten.

"If the managers are busier then so are the clerks and they are not properly resourced," he said.

Conference agreed to develop a charter for salaried grades that includes the 'right to disconnect' and guarantees that no member would face Capability Procedures for mental health-related absences.

Delegates also backed a major push to defend clerical and administrative grades across the transport industry warning that the erosion of such roles posed a direct threat to pay, conditions and the union's strength.

Andy Westwater, Cardiff Rail warned that employers were increasingly abolishing traditional clerical roles and rebranding them as 'management' positions, stripping staff of collectively bargained protections and weakening union density in the process.

He pointed out that clerical and administrative workers are not peripheral, but central to

the safe and effective running of the transport network.

"We need a robust campaign around this, better organisation and recruitment," he said.

A number of guest speakers also addressed conference including RMT assistant general secretary Daren Ireland.

He emphasised that grades conferences must continue to grow so more voices are heard, and that they become bigger, stronger and more organised.

"It's an opportunity for reps across the country in a fragmented industry to come together and talk about their key issues. That way we can be on a common path to challenge the employers," he said.

Turning his attention to the national picture, Mr Ireland said that the coming period would bring about problems again with austerity.

"We know as a union that austerity has been around since the Coalition government in 2010, so we're in the 16th year of cuts, 16 years of attacks on the working class," he said.

He praised the achievement of the union in securing an RPI pay deal with no strings on Network Rail, adding that RMT

was in dispute with several train operating companies with the purpose of these disputes to secure similar deals.

"We have to be strong, and united as a collective union to ensure that the terms, conditions that you have today are maintained and that struggle is getting harder," he said.

Looking ahead to the roll out of Great British Railways, he said that the union would be playing its role in trying to make it a success.

"We should use it as an opportunity to try and get any terms and conditions that we've lost, back.

"We should use it as an opportunity to try and strengthen staff travel agreements and use it as an opportunity to say as ever, we are an all-grades industrial trade union where all grades come together in solidarity to win," he said.

Mr Ireland encouraged delegates to take part in the action against assaults, adding that the situation was "far worse now" from when he was a guard over 15 years ago, demanding the government bring in new laws to make it a specific offence to assault a transport worker.

■



CATERING FOR GBR SERVICES

Catering grades call for expansion of catering services on a renationalised railway

Expand rail catering on Great British Railways (GBR) was the message from the union's organising conference for catering and ancillary grades meeting in Tenby.

Mandy Evans, Swansea No 1 said that while there will be huge savings bringing rail back into the public sector under GBR, catering workers were raising concerns in mess rooms, surgeries and branches about job security.

"We hear about a fully integrated railway but, as front line workers, caterers are rarely discussed.

"Yet we are more at risk of assault while on duty and we deal with almost every situation on a daily basis with lone working and staff assaults.

"We would expect catering to be part of any workforce reforms as caterers do not want to be left behind as we will only have once chance to get it right," he said.

RMT assistant general secretary Daren Ireland said that the creation of GBR should also be an opportunity to bring catering workers back in-house.

"We have also seen private companies stripping out catering facilities completely to save money.

"We must be raising these issues directly to GBR to rebuild catering services across the country in line with this grades campaign to 'bring back the buffet'," he said.

He also outlined Ireland outlined the need to maintain demands for pay deals based on the Retail Price Index (RPI) and not the lower Consumer Price Index (CPI).

"We know that employers and the government would like to use CPI which does not include housing costs.

"If the government wants to manage our pay they should come to the negotiations and face us across the table," he said.

Delegates also raised questions about the legality of catering workers operating without hot water.

Stuart Evans, Swansea No1 raised concerns over the lack of duty of care by employers when there was no access to hot running water at work.

"Employers are legally required to provide hot and

cold running water and washing facilities to ensure adequate hygiene when handling food and for cleaning under Regulation 21 of The Workplace (Health & Safety & welfare Regulations 1992).

"Yet as transport caterers we seem to be exempt from welfare facilities such as washing, toilet, rest and changing facilities.

"As caterers we are being forced to provide catering services when we have no running water, putting us at risk of infection and we are in breach of the legislation," he warned.

Sara Howell, Swansea no1 called on the union to investigate the abuse of Managing For Attendance (MFA) procedures against catering workers.

She warned that catering grades were being forced back to work to handle food before any symptom free period under the law.

"Caterers are protected by the Food Safety Act 1990, but some employers are putting members on MFA procedures which are breaches in legislation," she said.

Delegates agreed that the union must investigate when legislation was not being adhered to and put pressure on employers to abide by the law.

Benjamin Little, Shrewsbury called on the union to demand that non-safety critical staff such as caterers were provided with transportation during any rail disruption and adverse weather conditions.

"During disruption there is often no duty of care regarding transport provision to our base depots.

"We are sometimes being allocated turns of duty in the knowledge that we can't leave our trolleys and without transport," he said.

Mandy Evans said that while other grades were being provided with taxis, caterers were often left behind.

"We are simply asking to be treated with dignity and respect like other grades," she said.

Conference called on the union to take up the issue of transport provision for catering workers with employers.

Next year's conference will take place in Preston.■



MEETING: Train crew gather in Plymouth

FIGHTING ASSAULTS

Train crew conference calls for action against growing number of assaults on the network

Abuse against rail workers remains at “unacceptable levels”, with football-related disorder identified as a major driver of serious incidents agreed train crew members gathered at the union’s national organising conference in Plymouth.

Martin McCleary, Berwick Rail backed the union’s ongoing Action Against Assaults campaign and highlighted the risks faced daily by staff.

He argued that a significant proportion of serious incidents occur around football fixtures, particularly where large groups of supporters are travelling.

Moving a successful motion, he said that train managers, guards, conductors and onboard crew are routinely left to deal with overcrowding, alcohol-fuelled disorder, open drug use and passengers refusing to follow safety instructions.

“We had an assault last

week at Darlington station. We offered a guy a glass of water, and the reward for that is to get punched repeatedly in the face and end up in hospital.

“This is in some ways unpredictable. But this resolution is different because... football fixtures are predictable.

“Members are filled with dread and fear,” adding that football clubs are failing to take responsibility for supporter behaviour while

travelling, despite benefiting financially from away fixtures.

He pointed out that there was an expectation tickets would not be checked on certain trains because of possible violent response from some football fans.

“We’re rewarding bad behaviour then?”

“We’ve got to change that culture of acceptance. Just because you claim to be a football fan, and you get coked up to your eyeballs, it

doesn't give you the right to call me a c**t and smash my face in" he said.

He called for a sharper focus on football-related travel within the union's Action Against Assaults campaign, with specific calls designed to address the risks associated with large groups of supporters moving across the network.

Seconding the motion, Jessica Robinson, Darlington spoke from her own personal experience as a newly qualified train manager, highlighting some of the appalling incidents she has had to contend with in recent months.

"I worked a relatively quiet football train within a week of being a train manager, and I got cornered in a vestibule by a man in his sixties who tried to push me into a bike cupboard door," she recalled.

"I'm well able to handle myself, but that was still pretty intimidating. He was bigger than me and part of a bigger group. Why should I come to work and expect that on a football day?"

Worryingly Ms Robinson

said that this sort of behaviour was quite regular on days when football fans were expected to travel.

"Every train I've had that's been a football train since that November, it has had fights, grown men vomiting everywhere, sexual abuse, verbal abuse. I've had the lot, and that is only since November," she said.

She told delegates that there were positive steps that had been taken including when a Premier League football team paid for security to be on the train which meant the train manager on duty felt supported.

She added that the motion didn't take away from the wider Action Against Assaults campaign, it supported it.

"It means that our employers need to focus on these predictable events. We can't predict things like the attack that we had earlier in Huntingdon.

"We can't predict things like hen parties and stag parties, which can be just as abusive as football fans, but these sporting events are things we can predict," she

said.

Backing the motion, Neil Henry, Nottingham pointed out that it was not just higher division teams that had thuggish football fans, adding that BTP officers had been much more "unavailable" than previously.

"We're not seeing as much BTP support, coming out to trains, even when we signal for them.

"We all want to come to work in safety and not be intimidated by hooligans," he said.

Maureen Mulligan, Bristol said: "I've been a guard for 36 years and I've never seen the anti-social behaviour we have to deal with today.

"We need to get behind this campaign.

"We should not be left alone to deal with it. Our job is safety critical so to be treated this way is not acceptable," she said.

Conference went on to debate other issues such as fatigue, implementation of new technology and the physical toll of the job.

Delegates made clear that they recognised safety risks

caused by roster design, early and late turns, inadequate rest and staffing pressures were a problem that needs dealing with.

Moves by some companies to introduce in-cab monitoring technology were criticised for shifting responsibility onto drivers, with the union insisting the solution lies in better rostering, proper rest and stronger fatigue risk management.

Concerns were also raised about the rollout of ERTMS signalling, particularly the loss of visual confirmation for guards during train dispatch. Drawing on experience from the Cambrian lines, conference backed a call for a union strategy to protect the role of the second safety-critical person onboard as the system expands across the UK.

RMT assistant general secretary and lead officer for the conference, John Leach warned delegates about the threat of Reform and the need for the union to oppose their anti-worker policies alongside the "bigotry and intolerance" that the party encouraged.

■





ACTING AGAINST ASSAULTS

Transport workers across all sectors hold National Day of Action

RMT activists leafleted train stations, bus depots and ports across Britain highlighting the union's campaign demands to curb the rise in assaults and abuse and to make public transport a safer place.

The demands include safe

staffing levels, an end to lone working, proper funding for British Transport Police and an increased presence of officers, legislation to make it a specific offence to assault a transport worker and an end to outsourcing of security and

enforcement staff.

In Scotland, the union has secured manifesto commitments from the SNP, Labour and Scottish Greens, to legislate to protect public transport workers.

This stands in stark contrast

to the continued failure of the Westminster government to introduce a standalone offence for assaults on transport workers, despite repeated calls from RMT and the wider industry.

RMT general secretary





Eddie Dempsey who joined activists in Glasgow (above) said that a major part of the campaign was to put pressure on employers and politicians to take concrete steps to deliver for transport workers on the issue.

"Public transport must be a space where passengers feel welcome and our members feel safe.

"That needs enforcement both legally and through proper resourcing of authorities like the British Transport Police with safe staffing levels on the transport network.

"Our members are, in some cases, being seriously assaulted, all for just doing their jobs professionally and being of significant help to passengers during extremely busy travel environments.

"Our members are calling on the public to support them in this campaign as there is a shared interest to see assaults, abuse and harassment curbed, so we can have a safer environment for travel on public transport.

"This action will be a launchpad for further political and industrial campaigning until we secure improvements for our members," he said.■





FIGHTING RACISM

Black and ethnic minority advisory conference (BEMMAC) meets in Peterborough

Black and ethnic minority RMT members vowed to take on Reform at the ballot box and in the workplace, during the annual BEMMAC conference.

The rise of Reform in the polls and the presence of trade unionists at far-right agitator Tommy Robinson's recent demonstration has prompted widespread concern about what these developments meant for workers from diverse backgrounds and how unions can effectively resist these trends.

Midlands delegate and former national executive committee member Lee Williams said that the best way to combat the far right was effective organisation in the workplace.

"We need to maximise unity and strength among our members and reject the way the right uses differences in skin tone, faith, presentation and disability to divide us.

"Our workplaces, which reflect our society, are where we must challenge that

narrative of division, standing together with our white brothers and sisters.

"We must take on the Reform narrative, reset the argument around class, and remind our members exactly what they want to take from us and impose on us," he said.

Primrose Jeanton, the union's first black woman to be elected regional organiser, said that racism and intolerance takes hold when people were desperate, felt insecure and were handed scapegoats to blame such as migrants or people who do not look like them.

"Fighting racism and fascism effectively is not just a moral question but one of organisation.

"There are hardened ideological fascists who need to be fought and shunned by society.

"But there are working class people who have sympathies with Reform who can and must be won round by the trade union movement.

"We are the engine room

of change in our workplaces and communities. And the brothers, sisters and comrades at this conference have a crucial role to play," she said.

Ebony Kingston-West, Neasden gave an engaging talk promoting the union's anti fascist organising course noted how effectively the far right uses social media to transmit their views.

This includes "algorithmic manipulation bot farms and misinformation" to promote hate and division, she said.

On the theme of confronting racism and corporate dominance of public space, Annila Saghir, Kings Cross noted the union's TUC awards for social media campaigning but said that there needed to be more resources put into using TikTok and platforms that would reach younger audiences.

"The union communicates by email and we have noticeboards at work. But no young person uses these mediums anymore and we

must adapt to the changing demographics of our union.

"We need to look at TikTok and short video formats to communicate our anti racist messages," she said.

Several industrial issues were debated, including the impact of outsourcing on black and ethnic minority members and mega corporations engaging in "digital colonialism".

RMT regional organiser Kathy Mazur warned that outsourcing in the rail industry was driving inequality and "institutionalising racism" across the workforce.

She highlighted how black and ethnic minority workers were disproportionately concentrated in low-paid, outsourced roles such as cleaning, catering and security, often with worse pay, conditions and job security than directly employed staff.

Drawing on recent site visits, she described "shocking" conditions for outsourced cleaners, including unsafe and inadequate break

facilities, lack of basic welfare provisions, and stark disparities compared with directly employed colleagues.

Ms Mazur added that this created a two-tier workforce where minority workers were treated as "second-class citizens" and called the situation totally unacceptable.

Mel Mullings, Bakerloo Line warned that the expansion of US tech firm Palantir Technologies into UK public services represented a form of "digital colonialism" that risked exploiting workers and public data for private profit.

She argued that the growing use of AI and data surveillance tools could

deepen inequality, with concerns that such technologies are often tested on black and migrant communities and may embed racial bias in workplaces.

The motion called for strict safeguards, including full union oversight and transparency over any new technology introduced in the transport sector, to prevent surveillance, discrimination and the erosion of workers' rights.

She added that the union should demand that employers carry out "equity impact assessments" to ensure that new systems do not disproportionately target black workers. ■



CONFERENCE: Newly-elected regional organiser Primrose Jeanton addresses delegates

RMT AT WOMEN'S TUC



Conference discusses assaults, online abuse, workplace safety, pensions and women's health

RMT's largest ever delegation to TUC called for action against assaults on women.

A key theme throughout conference was the increasing impact of violence and abuse, particularly for women in frontline roles.

RMT played a leading role by highlighting the growing prevalence and severity of violence across public transport.

RMT delegate Annila Saghir, Kings Cross moved a motion drawing attention to the heightened risks faced by women workers and passengers and provided data illustrating

the rise in violent offences against women and girls alongside significant reductions in British Transport Police numbers.

It also reflected findings from RMT women transport workers, showing that 70 per cent had experienced workplace violence in the past year, with many working alone at the time.

Conference backed the call for urgent action, supporting RMT's campaign to tackle assaults through properly staffed transport networks, an end to lone working and stronger legal protections.

Annila also moved a motion

in support of the WASPI campaign, drawing attention to the gender pension gap and the inequalities many women face in retirement.

RMT delegate Jessica Robinson spoke in support of Women's Occupational Health and Safety, emphasising the need to better recognise women's health issues in the workplace.

Roxanne Lesieur, Leeds supported flexible learning in the trade union movement, highlighting the importance of access to education and training.

Emma Purcell, a stewardess

for Stena Line, seconded a motion on supporting seafarers through menopause at sea, raising awareness of the challenges faced by women in the maritime sector.

Annila was also elected to the TUC Women's Committee, ensuring that RMT women will continue to have a strong voice in shaping the wider trade union movement's agenda.

"Conference once again demonstrated the importance of women being at the heart of our union, leading the fight for safer workplaces, fairer conditions and equality for all," she said. ■



Engineering grades call for unified action on new technology

The organising conference for engineering grades meeting in Ashford discussed the rapid introduction of new technologies across the rail network and London Underground.

Sam Ashley, LU Engineering said that the deployment of new signalling systems, use of drones and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in automation posed an industry-wide challenge to members.

"The bosses are closely coordinating to advance their own interests, and our response must be equally unified.

"Therefore, we must establish regular contact amongst all engineering workers to share information, monitor technological rollouts and plan industrial strategies to deal with it," he said.

Conference unanimously backed the call to organise a national meeting to develop

policies on the impact of AI on reactive maintenance, new signalling systems, drones and other emerging technologies.

Rhys Harmer, LU Engineering said that between London Underground and Network Rail, engineering and ops members made up over half the union membership.

"We need to establish a robust network to ensure we are collectively planning and responding to these threats to jobs, safety, and working conditions.

"In unity, there is strength and we must ensure we are as coordinated as the employers we face," he said.

RMT assistant general secretary Daren Ireland said that the union was fighting attempts by employers to use pay negotiations to undermine and terms and conditions of employment.

"We broke that employer's model with this year's pay deal

with a no-strings pay deal based on Retail Price Index (RPI) not the lower CPI inflation index.

"But Network Rail has made clear that it wants to move away from pay awards being aligned to RPI and are looking make other attacks on the workforce," he said.

He outlined how the government was still interfering in negotiations with public and private rail employers despite not attending one meeting with the union.

"This is a direct assault on our right to free collective bargaining with the employers.

"We know there has also been an erosion of wages so if we are going to fight for something better, we need to fight for it.

"We need to get the message into the workplace that only by organising ourselves to build the union's

strength everywhere," he said.

Use of Temporary Variations

Delegates demanded that all Temporary Variations (TVs) ie short-term changes to operating procedures and safety standards implemented by Network Rail must be logged, risk-assessed and shared with the union.

Yet TVs can bypass established safety validation routes and weaken nationally agreed protections, effectively undermining the integrity of the Life Saving Rules and safety standards.

Steve Allen, South East London Engineering said that Network Rail was increasingly relying upon the use of TVs to under the justification of improving efficiency or reducing disruptions.

"Such variations have been introduced without consultation with trade union safety reps or adequate assessment of their potential



ACTION: delegate Sam Ashley calls for action on automation and AI

impact on workforce and public safety.

"This lack of oversight and systematic tracking poses a serious risk to railway safety culture and accountability within Network Rail.

"Any use of TVs must be exceptional, transparent and subject to prior consultation with RMT safety reps.

"We need to remind the employer that efficiency must

never come at the expense of safety and that any deviation from standard controls must be carried out in partnership with the union," he said.

Conference president Charles Fisher also clarified that TVs were being implemented outside the remit of the Office of Road and Rail (ORR).

Delegates backed the call to establish a joint monitoring

mechanism with Network Rail to scrutinise all TVs including safety justifications, review periods and outcomes.

TELECOMS GRADING

Pat McCarthy, Birmingham Engineering said that there were growing concerns regarding the ongoing failure by Network Rail to respect the grading boundaries established under the 1992 Thales Terms and Conditions.

He said that the distinction between Technician (Grade 3) and Senior Technician (Grade 4) has been progressively eroded.

"Grade 3 Technicians are regularly expected to undertake high-level diagnostic, supervisory and technical duties that properly fall within the Grade 4 remit, without appropriate recognition or remuneration.

"A formal competency matrix is essential to clearly define and protect the technical and supervisory distinctions between Grade 3 and Grade 4 roles," he said.

Delegates agreed that any member who demonstrates the competencies and undertakes the duties of a Grade 4 Senior Technician

should be contractually entitled to that grade.

Conference also agreed that the union should register a dispute with Network Rail if the company failed to reach agreement or implement such measures.

ACCESSING FACILITIES

Alan Jary, Norwich said that members working for Network Rail had received a fleet of messing vans with no ability to provide hot water for drinking and washing.

"This means that teams had to clear screens or de-ice vehicles and were unable to warm-up quickly after prolonged cold exposure.

"The sink facilities on the new vans leak and do not have any method to drain soiled water into unlike the previous handy wash basin," he said.

John Lamb, Chiltern said that workers should remember to challenge employers if vehicles were not up to standard.

Delegates called for the union to have oversight into the procurement of vehicles to ensure that there was access to adequate hygiene and welfare facilities.

SOLIDARITY IN ACTION

Bill Martin honorary member of both the NUM and RMT addressed conference about the need for solidarity.

He worked at Kent's Betteshanger mine before its closure in 1989. He went to work on the railway and joined RMT, serving as a member of the union's general grades committee and regional council until his retirement.

"The best support we got during the miner's strike was from the rail workers and we are still grateful for that," he said.

Liz French of Women Against Pit Closures was

involved with supporting mine workers in the 1972/73 strike and the Great Miners' Strike.

"In all that time solidarity in action was the key to building unity among workers," she said.

Tim Hughes, former Betteshanger miner and now a worker at the local mining museum, explained that the Kent coalfields were militant because they were mainly blacklisted workers from other coalfields.

"I was a flying picket and wherever we went we got support from working people from every walk of life.

"Now we go to the

Durham miners rally every year with our banner and always thank rail workers for the role they played during the '84 strike.

"The trade union movement is all we have left

so keep going as the rest of society needs your support to build a better and fairer world," he said.





INQUIRY: RMT assistant general secretary John Leach makes a point at the Covid hearings

RMT TELLS COVID INQUIRY EXPERIENCES OF TRANSPORT WORKERS

Union outlines how privatisation, outsourcing and austerity impacted on dealing with the pandemic

RMT assistant general secretary John Leach was called on the final day of the Public Inquiry into the Covid-19 pandemic.

Baroness Hallett's Inquiry was commissioned in March 2022 to 'examine, consider and report on preparations and the response to the pandemic in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Part of the Inquiry's agreed terms of reference was also to examine the impact of the pandemic on society and on key workers.

RMT's priority was to outline key messages which had come out of discussions with reps and members throughout the crisis.

One key issue was the way that fragmented and privatised transport services hampered a coherent response by government and industry, while austerity cuts left transport systems with little

resilience.

The Covid pandemic also had deep economic effects including falling living standards, generating a rise in assaults on transport workers, alongside other public-facing service workers.

"Our survey evidence has left the union in no doubt that members were feeling a huge spike in workplace violence and that the pandemic and the government's response were making this far worse," Mr Leach told the inquiry.

The union also stressed the impact of outsourcing and sub-contracting in determining workers' experience of the pandemic.

Throughout the four years of the inquiry, the union hammered home the message that tens of thousands of outsourced and sub-contracted workers had been hailed as heroes while having to work through the pandemic with no

sick pay, poverty wages and no pensions. T

"This scandal was magnified when outsourced workers were promptly forgotten when the economy opened up again and expected to carry on as if nothing had happened," he told the inquiry.

RMT submitted a formal evidence paper based on survey evidence and testimony from our members, as well as providing evidence for the TUC's own Witness Statement.

The TUC also projected the voice of workers into the inquiry and to work to secure recommendations that would ensure lasting benefit for working people. It made the case for investment in public services and for enhanced health and safety in the workplace.

Evidence disclosed as a result of union questioning also exposed the Tory government's anti-union

agenda and its fear of making any concessions during the pandemic in case they couldn't be taken back afterwards. The TUC was also able to submit questions directly to government ministers, the Prime Minister and senior science advisers.

Summing up the lessons to be learned for the future, Mr Leach stressed that the industry had not reflected sufficiently on what needed to be put in place before any future crisis and he urged action on the two-tier workforce, saying that it was 'unjust and unsafe'. The evidence session is available on the Inquiry's Youtube channel.

The TUC thanked RMT for its work in supporting the task of pushing workers' voices into the inquiry and ensuring that the experiences of union members would never be forgotten. ■

WILMCOTE MEMORIAL UNVEILED

Permanent memorials erected to track workers killed at Wilmcote in 1922

Four years ago, *RMT News* marked the 100th anniversary of an accident at Wilmcote, which killed four trackworkers.

The men involved – George Booker, William Bonehill, Lewis Washburn and Edward Sherwood – were all members of the National Union of Railwaymen, one of RMT's predecessor unions.

They now have permanent memorials at Wilmcote station, in Warwickshire, thanks to the hard work of the local station adopters.

On March 24, 1922, the men were maintaining the lines between Stratford-upon-Avon and Wilmcote.

They stepped clear of a passing train, but an approaching light engine was obscured and hit them. Each man was married; between them they left 13 children, including one born shortly after the accident.

As the men were all local to Wilmcote, the village and the area were also deeply affected by the deaths.

By 2022 the accident was all but forgotten, but research by the Railway Work, Life & Death project uncovered the

incident and brought the men back to public attention.

This is part of the project's work to find out more about railway worker accidents before 1939, and to ensure people know about the staff involved in railway accidents.

On the centenary of the accident, a small gathering was held at Wilmcote station to remember the men, including descendants and other family members of the men.

Led by John Philps, the Wilmcote community were so taken with incident that they wanted a permanent memorial to the men and in 2026 it was made a reality, with help from the current industry.

On March 24, 2026, people gathered again at Wilmcote, for the dedication of the memorials. Family members offered their thoughts and the memorials were dedicated by Andrew Hall, Railway Mission Chaplain for the West Midlands.

The memorials took the form of replica Great Western Railway benches, each bearing a plaque to one of the men. A poster with details of the

accident has also been put up, so that people can find out more.

Also present at the dedication were representatives from the industry – including RMT regional organiser John Watson who said that it was important to remember the loss of the individuals who tragically died in the course of their work.

"This memorial shows that they are not forgotten to their families and serves as a stark reminder to the railway employees of today that the dangers of the railways are still the same as they were over 100 years ago," he said.

Dr Mike Esbester of the Railway Work, Life & Death project said that tragically, John's comments were shown to be only too true in the weeks before the Wilmcote memorials were installed.

"On March 7 a track worker was involved in a near-miss incident at Radlett in Hertfordshire. Then, on March 15, a worker was struck and killed by a train travelling at speed in the same area.

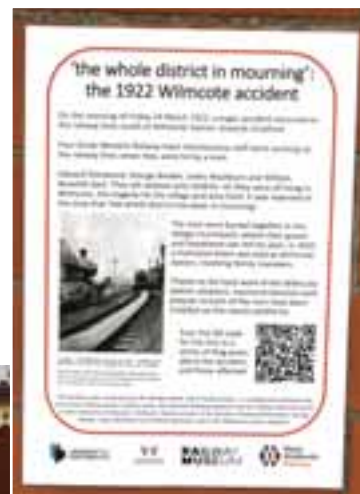
"As those incidents are still

being investigated, we don't know yet the underlying causes, but no worker should be hurt doing their job.

"The way in which the local community at Wilmcote was affected, at the time and then 100 years later, demonstrates the close connections between people and their railway – including to the people who keep the railway running.

"The project would like to see more memorials of this kind across the rail network to remember those who have been killed and injured at work in the past is important, but it can also help the industry now.

"The slogan of International Workers' Memorial Day, marked on 28 April each year, is apt: Remember the dead, fight for the living," he said. ■



DISABLED MEMBERS' MEET

RMT disabled members call for accessibility and workplace support

A packed disabled members advisory conference meeting in Exeter laid out the main issues for the next year of campaigning.

Conference chair Faye Wright, Exeter Rail welcomed delegates to an ever-growing annual meeting for members.

RMT assistant general secretary John Leach also underscored the importance of the conference in fostering a knowledgeable organisation.

He said that the collective expertise of the advisory committee and the conference had provided the union with invaluable strategic insights.

"You are the experts based on your experiences and it is important that those who are most marginalised are heard," he said.

Joseph Clough, Stockport and District called for the union to campaign to remove all time restrictions from the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS).

"Disabled people in the UK face a postcode lottery, with some able to travel for free on buses during peak hours, while many in England cannot," he said.

He said that the union needed to step up campaigning to ensure public transport was fully accessible, both physically and financially, for disabled people.

Faye Wright called for mandatory neurodiversity training for RMT officers and reps as the union needed to be on top of the issue.

"By doing this we can make sure we are supporting neurodivergent members effectively and leading by example, not just asking others to do it," she said.

Angharad Cooter, Sheffield and District argued for the union to launch a campaign



calling on employers to implement mandatory accessibility assessments for all new starters.

The assessments would cover mobility, sensory, and any other individual needs required to ensure full and fair participation in the workplace.

"Following completion of an assessment, the employer must provide equipment, adjustments, or support as specified by the qualified assessor, and such equipment must not be substituted unless an alternative is explicitly authorised by the assessing expert," she said.

Colin Stewart, Plymouth No 1 called for the union to write to train operating companies highlighting the importance of timely action where an

employee has engaged the Access to Work scheme and their input is needed.

"Access to Work not only helps the employee but also the company, especially where financial grants are requested," he said.

Phil Scott, Cambrian told delegates that there was a need for operational and safety critical information to be available as hard copy and not solely in digital format as was the case on Transport for Wales currently.

"Operational Information can be difficult to obtain and access, especially if needed at short notice in a location with poor mobile or broadband reception," he said.

Roxsanne Lesieur, Leeds City and Aiden Morgan,

Neasden ran workshops on the role of the union's Disability Advisory Committee (DMAC).

They explained the work that it was carrying out and their personal experiences of navigating work with a disability.

They outlined how DMAC offers case guidance, training, access to resources and direct contact for union members who need assistance or support.

Ms Lesieur explained that DMAC used the social model of understanding disability over the medical model so that adjustments are made to support people with disabilities rather than requiring disabled people to adjust.

Mr Morgan outlined his personal experiences with TfL and LUL and how he tested their processes by applying for hundreds of jobs where he both disclosed and didn't disclose that he had a disability.

Overwhelmingly the jobs were available to him when he didn't disclose a disability, yet only three when he applied as a disabled person.

Stef Lić, Hull Rail spoke about the Neurodivergence Project at Network Rail and

provided delegates with access to a document that explained the various neurodivergent conditions.

Mark Stock of The Deaf Academy gave a well-received talk about the situation that deaf people face when travelling on public transport, particularly trains.

He opened by describing "one of the worst days of my life" when a storm cancelled and diverted trains while he was travelling and explained some of the less obvious

issues that a deaf person faced in those circumstances.

While delegates gave accounts of some of the stations where positive steps had been taken to assist deaf travellers, including using screens that display British Sign Language, Stock pointed out that staff often lack basic training.

Lucy Fawkes-Grey, GWR Welfare Officer gave an account of the work that company was doing and the structures that are in place to

support staff.

She talked about the TRiM system, peer-based trauma risk management originally designed for the UK military in the late 1990s. The system helps prevent people who have experienced trauma from needing further psychological help.

Conference concluded with a clear determination to ensure that these member-led priorities remained at the forefront of the union's national agenda.■

President's Column

ORGANISE AND RECRUIT

The Employment Rights Act present a real, practical opportunity for our union to grow, organise, and strengthen our collective voice.

These are not abstract legal tweaks—they are tools that open doors that were previously closed and every member can use them.

For years, unions have faced barriers when trying to reach workers directly in their workplaces. That is now changing.

The new provisions give unions greater access rights, meaning we can enter workplaces for the purposes of recruitment, organising and retention. In simple terms, we can now have conversations with workers where it matters most—on the job, face to face and in real time.

This creates opportunities to grow membership across all grades—rail, road and maritime. We are an all-grades transport union and these changes reinforce that message. Where there are workers, there should be a union and now it will be easier to make that a reality.

RMT's organising department has already identified new areas to tap into. Workers who were previously difficult to

reach—whether due to outsourcing, fragmented workplaces, or employer resistance—can now be engaged more directly. That matters because many of those workers face the greatest insecurity, the lowest pay, and the least protection.

Not every employer will welcome this and some may resist union access or attempt to delay engagement. But the difference now is that the law is on our side.

Where access is unreasonably denied, unions can apply to the Central Arbitration Committee — an independent body that can step in and decide whether access should be granted. If the case is upheld, the employer must comply. That gives us a clear, lawful route to challenge obstruction and ensure workers are not cut off from union support.

Growing membership is not just about numbers; it is about strengthening workplace security, dignity and respect. Every new member adds weight to our collective voice. That voice is what secures better pay, safer conditions, and fair treatment. It is also what underpins collective bargaining agreements.

Put simply, collective

bargaining is when workers negotiate together, through their union, rather than individually. This leads to stronger outcomes—better wages, clearer protections, and enforceable rights.

The new legislation makes it easier for unions to reach the critical mass needed to establish and expand these agreements. More members mean more recognition, and more recognition means more power to negotiate.

We have already seen what that strength can achieve through our campaigns—whether it is fighting against workplace assaults or standing firm in the campaign to end outsourcing. These are not isolated issues; they are part of a broader struggle for fairness and respect at work. A stronger, larger union is better placed to win those fights.

But legislation alone does not build a union—people do. The real opportunity lies with all of us: representatives, activists, and members. The task is simple but powerful—have the conversation. Speak to colleagues. Challenge myths about who can join. Too many workers still believe unions are "not for them." These changes give us the chance to prove otherwise.



This builds directly on the outstanding work already being carried out across our regional councils and branches. Our reps and activists are the backbone of the union. With these new rights, their efforts can go even further and reach more workers, in more workplaces, more effectively.

We have fought hard to secure these improvements, now we must make them count. By using these rights, by organising in previously untapped areas and by strengthening collective bargaining, we can extend protection to more workers.

Unity is strength. That strength provides protection from unfair treatment, unsafe conditions and from being left to face employers alone. When we stand together, we are not just defending what we have—we are building something stronger for the future.

The opportunity is here and it's up to all of us to take it.

George Welch



SOUTHEASTERN MEETING

Southeastern RMT Station Grades representatives and the four Company Council reps organised a meeting to empower members in the workplace and provide tools and guidance for their roles.

Some attendees were newly elected while others have held their positions for several years. There were 34 people in attendance, and it proved to be a fantastic and productive day. ■



50-YEAR AWARD FOR LARRY

RMT Scotland regional secretary Jim Gray presented Laurance Ferris with his fifty-year medallion for services to the union.

Larry joined the merchant navy as a member of the

National Union of Seamen when he left school and joined British Rail as a guard in 1978. He has served as a health and safety rep and defended members throughout that time.

"I have seen many changes over the years in the industry.

"I would like to thank the union which has supported me over all those years and wish you all the best for the future," he said. ■



CARLISLE AWARDS

Carlisle branch recently held a joint event for George Notman with 41 years' service and Brian Anderson with 44 years' service.

Brian was a local rep for around 40 years and branch

secretary of Dumfries and Lockerbie branch for around 36 years.

Both members had served the union for many years and the branch celebrated in suitable style. ■



HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARD WINNER

RMT member Andy Bower was presented with the 2026 Willie Strang Health and Safety Representative of the Year award at the union's health and safety conference recently.

Andy holds key union positions including local and route health and safety and industrial relations rep. He is also on the East Coast Route health and safety council and Darlington branch secretary.

As a longtime health and

safety rep he has consistently demonstrated professionalism, clarity of thought and a relentless focus on securing the safest possible outcomes for members at all levels.

RMT assistant general secretary John Leach said that Andy took an active role in major investigations, producing comprehensive and well-evidenced reports.

"These have been invaluable in protecting members, particularly when

cases progress towards potential disciplinary action.

"Andy leads by example and actively mentors new reps, providing guidance, documentation and day-to-day support to help them grow into their roles.

"Within his own S&T discipline, he is regarded as the expert.

"His technical knowledge and practical experience are vital to health and safety reps across his region," he said. ■



WIGAN STALWART

Wigan branch is sad to report that David Tomlinson has passed away after a short illness.

David started his railway career in 1981 at Horwich loco as an apprentice when Horwich closed he moved to

Eastleigh in Southampton. From there he moved up to Warrington p-way in 1985 before moving to in Golborne on the p-way as a trackman.

He moved back to Warrington p-way and in 2001 became a team leader in

charge of new starters. He came back to Wigan in 2006 and in 2023 he became a supervisor.

RMT regional organiser Steve Shaw said that he was "a proper railway stalwart who will be missed by many". ■

TRAVEL FOR RETIRED WORKERS

RMT retired members call for action on pensions, care and travel



RMT retired members conference meeting in Manchester welcomed the creation of Great British Railways and called for improved travel facilities for current and future retired members.

Ray Knight, London and Anglia retired activist branch said that the template should be the current facilities enjoyed by safeguarded staff prior to the privatisation of the railways.

Delegates also called on the government to deliver the lifesaving investment required for the National Health Service to end 'corridor care'.

Billy Laing, Northwest and North Wales said that older people were dying in hospitals or forced to wait for treatment in corridors, waiting rooms, ambulances or even in cupboards.

"We call for government action to rebuild GP services, restore hospital capacity and end years of underinvestment which has left emergency services unable to deliver life-saving care," he said.

Tony Donaghey, London and Anglia that the union needed to 'get political' to expose this funding scandal that was

endangering lives every day.

Olly New, London Transport warned that the government was threatening to dismantle the Triple Lock, despite the state pension being one of the meanest in Europe.

"We must oppose politicians who advocate military spending and war rather than decent pensions, a properly funded NHS and other vital public services," he said.

Arthur Richardson, Manchester and Northwest called for justice for the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign.

"The Labour government has refused to compensate women adversely affected by the change to women's state pension age and we need to reiterate our support for a just resolution," he said.

Delegates agreed to send a letter of solidarity to the WASPI women.

Delegates backed a call for the abolition of the personal tax allowance freeze at £12,750 since April 2021 and its extension for a further three years to 2028.

Jimmy Allen, Northwest and North Wales warned that the full new state pension was set

to rise above the income tax allowance from next April.

"That means pensioner whose only income is the full new state pension will be paying tax on their state pension.

"And pensioners with savings and small occupational pension will be paying tax for the first time.

"It is a scandal that the extension to the freeze will wipe out most benefits of the triple lock increase.

"We have been cash cows for years and it needs to be exposed," he said.

Arthur Richardson called for a vigorous campaign through the union's parliamentary group of MPs for a policy of increasing tax thresholds as part of a transformative programme of wealth redistribution.

Olly New called on retired members to promote trade union history including the 1926 General Strike.

"Retired members can play an important role to highlight histories of working people including the Luddites, early trade unions, chartists, suffragettes, anti-colonial and anti-slavery struggles and many more in communities

everywhere.

"A knowledge of these struggles will help encourage the battles of today," he said.

RMT young members committee chair Sarah Cundy welcomed the chance to address conference to thank retired members for the contribution they had made to the trade union movement.

"Trade unions like RMT have given young people protections at work which they would not otherwise enjoy.

"It is important that we organise and work together to ensure that these protections not only continue but are improved," she said to applause.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey reiterated the message that unity was required not only in the transport sector but across the labour and trade union movement.

"We must argue for the rebuilding of the industrial base this country and the creation of Great British Railways can be the start of that process.

"We must replace division with a different vision for the future of this country," he said.

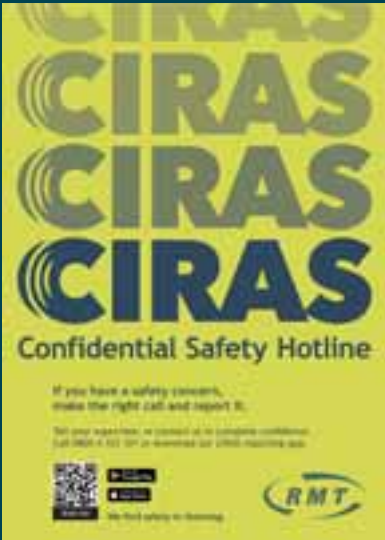
RAISE SAFETY CONCERNS SAFELY

Use the joint RMT and CIRAS posters to share how to raise concerns confidentially

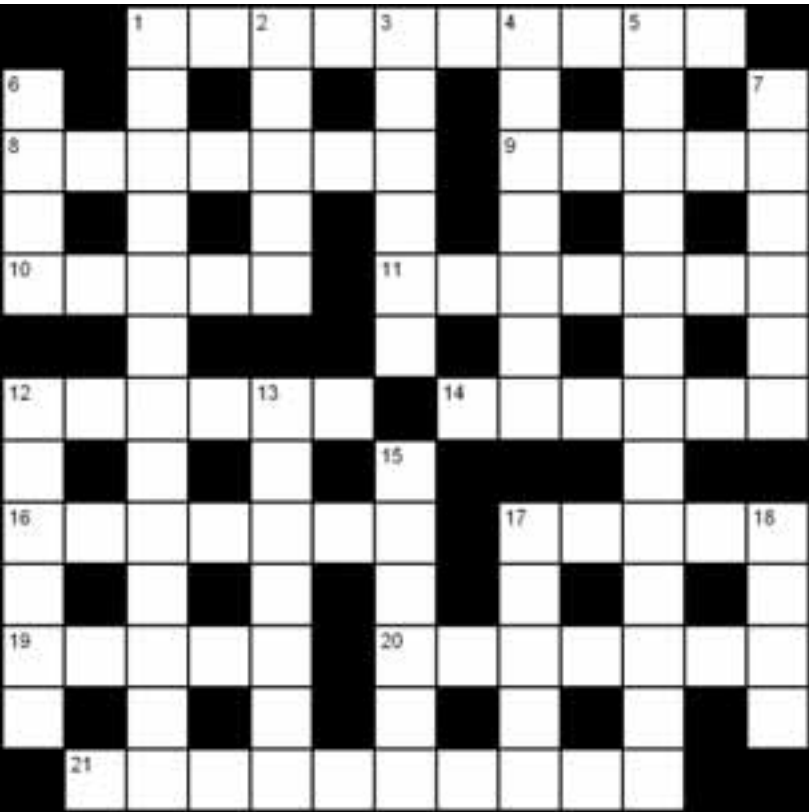
NEW POSTERS

Now available: order printed CIRAS posters and flyers with the RMT logo for free from the CIRAS online shop (above). Search online for CIRAS shop or go to www.willsonshop.com/collections/ciras. You'll find the RMT poster and flyer at the end of the page.

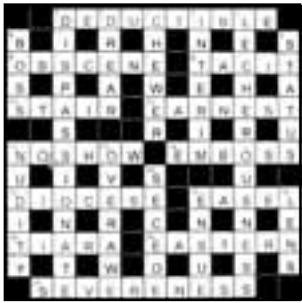
To order click on the RMT item, add it to your basket and select how many to order. In the basket, use the code CIRMT1 in the space for a CIRAS membership number. You'll then go to the checkout. The printed items will be posted to you completely free, no postage needed.



£100 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by June 29, 2026 with your name and address.

Last month's winner is Ms Prince, London.

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

- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Interception (10) | 1 Predominance (10) |
| 8 Statistical norm (7) | 2 Exhilarate (5) |
| 9 Single cell organism (5) | 3 Levelly (6) |
| 10 Run away secretly (5) | 4 Farm vehicle (7) |
| 11 Frothy (7) | 5 Exaggerate (13) |
| 12 Firstborn (6) | 6 Low visibility (4) |
| 14 Fabric dealer (6) | 7 Brief (slang) (6) |
| 16 Procession (7) | 12 Tax (6) |
| 17 Scoundrel (5) | 13 Oozing (7) |
| 19 Cassia tree (5) | 15 Old Spanish money (6) |
| 20 Avoiding (7) | 17 Military colour (5) |
| 21 Composed of plants (10) | 18 Divisible by two (4) |

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. This policy is underwritten by Stonebridge International Insurance Ltd. 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

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL

Assistance for members with their potential employment tribunal claim offered through the RMT's In-house Legal Department.

JOIN RMT

BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION

Visit rmt.org.uk to join online or
call the helpline on

freephone **0800 376 3706**



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, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.



rmt.org.uk