

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

DEAL WITH OUTSOURCING!



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www.rmt.org.uk

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.

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EDITORIAL



A PLAN FOR INSOURCING

Our union has joined forces with Unison to call on the government to end the scourge of outsourcing within our public services.

Public sector outsourcing is a national scandal that has been privatising essential services throughout the country.

Taxpayers' money is being used to increase the profits of wealthy corporations while workers and communities pay the price through worse jobs and services.

We are calling on the government to urgently agree a new peoples' plan for insourcing to end the exploitation of workers and ensure public services put people before profit.

We agree that outsourcing, whereby services are farmed out to private providers at public great cost, results in a race to the bottom as these private agencies try to deliver services for less to increase their profits.

Outsourcing is a form of hidden privatisation in which low paid and vulnerable workers are exploited in the name of profit in what should be a public service. As a result, it is draining vast amounts of money from public services simply to generate huge profits skimmed off by greedy bosses of private firms.

This means that the money for insourcing is already there and it won't cost any more to bring services in-house, pay proper rates of pay and giving the public what it already pays for but better.

This government was elected on the manifesto promise to bring rail

back into public ownership and put an end to the 30-year failure of privatisation.

Outsourcing is part of privatisation as rail companies hived off whole workforces in cleaning, security, catering and infrastructure work to other private companies, who then drove down pay and conditions to create even bigger profits.

As a result, RMT has lobbied key rail decision-makers and the bodies developing Great British Railways (GBR) and has published research reports on outsourcing in the rail industry.

We have been building campaigns around key strategic contracts in rail at Transport for London, on Southeastern Trains, on the Tyne and Wear Metro and at Network Rail who can all take action to start bringing workers in-house, creating the wave of insourcing from the bottom up.

At a stroke insourcing would help low paid workers with the cost-of-living crisis and rebuild and reintegrate essential public services and give communities greater public control over those services.

Insourcing means better jobs for better services, it's as simple as that.

We need RMT members, regions and branches to be engaged on all fronts to ensure that the age of outsourcing follows the age of rail privatisation into the dustbin of history.

Eddie Dempsey

RMT SAFETY STRIKE AT EAST MIDLANDS RAILWAY

Union calls for withdrawal of faulty 810 fleet



RMT members working at East Midlands Railway (EMR) took 24-hour strike action with more planned over growing safety concerns that the company has failed to address.

The union has been in dispute with EMR for some time following the roll out of new Hitachi Class 810 'Aurora' fleet which has been operating with a significant

number of faults from non-working toilets to broken air con systems.

EMR is also facing major disruptions, cancellations, and a reduced timetable due to severe reliability and technical faults with its new fleet as well as maintenance backlogs on older trains.

As a result, it has been sending trains into service that are likely to fail and

require a full reset which leaves the train with no active safety systems including loss of communication between train drivers, dispatchers, and trackside which has occurred on multiple occasions.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that union reps and RMT officers had been extremely patient and tried to engage with management to no avail.

"The company has even put out safety notices with no involvement, consultation or negotiation with our reps who represent those most at risk.

"RMT is demanding that whilst these faults exist and until these trains are shown to be operating properly, they should be taken out of service," he said. ■



NO GATE LINE REDUCTIONS ON NORTHERN TRAINS!

Union says cuts contradict government policy

RMT has called on the government to instruct Northern Trains to cease trials that reduce gate line operations.

The union understands that Northern Trains has instructed

Carlisle Support Services (CSS) to hold trial that reduce the operation of gate lines on the Northern contract at many locations including St Helens Central, Blackburn, Harrogate, Skipton, Rochdale and Wigan

Wallgate.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that only recently government rail minister Peter Hendy had announced investment in physical gate lines across the country to prevent fare evasion which was losing the taxpayer millions in lost revenue.

"Open gates and no checks

will not only lead to more fare avoidance but increase anti-social behaviour as the gate lines often act as a physical barrier.

"We will be writing to the rail minister Lord Peter Hendy to point out that Northern Trains plans flatly contradict what the government is trying to do," he said. ■



NO TO EAST WEST DRIVER-ONLY OPERATION

Union calls for safety-critical staff on Chiltern trains

RMT has rejected plans to introduce Driver Only Operation (DOO) on the new East West Rail line after Chiltern Railways vowed to operate services on the new route without a second safety-critical member of staff.

The union is demanding clear guarantees that East West Rail services operated by Chiltern will not be DOO and that a second safety-critical member of staff will be a mandatory requirement for trains to run.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that a

guaranteed safety-critical second person onboard trains were essential for carrying out a wide range of duties and responding properly to dangerous and fast-moving situations.

"We need a clear commitment from Chiltern that East West Rail services will not be Driver Only Operation and that a second safety-critical member of staff will be guaranteed.

"Passengers value the reassurance of having staff onboard, and RMT remains totally opposed to DOO and

will use all of the political and industrial strength available to defend safety on the railway," he said.

"If Chiltern management

continue to be unreasonable, we cannot rule out Industrial action to defend this safety-critical role."



AVANTI STRIKE SUSPENDED

Further strike action suspended following talks

Further strike action by members working for Avanti West Coast at Manchester Piccadilly station over the unfair dismissal of a colleague has been suspended following an offer from management.

Members had been taking industrial action against the sacking which was based on anonymous allegations.

Avanti has now agreed to an independent external mediator to be brought in to investigate the issues raised during the dispute.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey congratulated the workforce for not accepting a toxic workplace culture which had encouraged anonymous and unsubstantiated complaints.■



MERSEYRAIL CLEANERS TAKE ACTION

Cleaners on Merseyrail employed by outsourcing firm Churchill Services took further 24-hour strike action against low pay.

The union believes that Churchill can improve the current low pay offer as the company reported a post-tax profit of £15.3 million for the 2025 financial year, and distributed dividends of approximately £13.5 million.

Moreover, the company's highest paid director, who is also a significant shareholder, received remuneration of £603,000.



RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that the company clearly had the capacity to fund the relatively small additional cost required to maintain the current pay

differential sought by members.

"Churchill must recognise that our members are some of the poorest paid in our industry and need a pay offer

that lifts them out of poverty," he said.

RMT remains open to talks, but if Churchill refuses to engage, the union will escalate its industrial campaign.■

RMT WARNS MARITIME APPRENTICESHIPS UNDER THREAT

RMT has raised the alarm at government consultations to remove several apprenticeship schemes for Ratings in the maritime industry.

The government's new skills body, Skills England has announced that it was 'retiring' apprenticeship standards including the Deck Rating Apprenticeship, the only scheme that employers have used to increase UK Ratings in the shipping industry.

The scheme was designed by the union in 2015 collaboration with government

and employers, including Stena Line and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary where there are existing Ratings training programmes and other maritime apprenticeship standards.

The union estimates that over 600 UK resident Deck Ratings have been trained since the apprenticeship was introduced with the full support of employers.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that plans to remove this training would be an appallingly short-sighted decision.

"It would reward the likes

of P&O Ferries, Irish Ferries and operators in the offshore wind supply chain who undercut progressive employers who employ and train locally.

"Employers support these apprentice schemes, and we should be improving standards and increasing the uptake not considering removing them altogether.

"We need to overhaul maritime apprentice strategies to benefit coastal communities that are crying out for employment opportunities which should be the bedrock of our island economy and

national security," he said.

RMT has written to the Skills Minister Jacqui Smith, Maritime Minister Keir Mather MP and the Defence Minister Calvin Bailey MP calling for the plans to be reversed.

The union is also working with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, maritime colleges and employers for an industry wide response expressing profound opposition and for swift action to be taken to deliver apprenticeship standards for deck, engine, catering and workboat Ratings.

■

PAY WIN AT STENA

RMT has secured another pay win for seafarers at Stena Line which represent uplifts of up to nearly 25 per cent in addition to the annual pay increase for 2026.

The uplift came following the union's engagement with the company regarding the company's crewing strategy which triggered comprehensive internal discussions within Stena Line.

RMT made fact-based presentations regarding maritime skills and future requirements of seafarers through elected representatives which encouraged further scrutiny of the company's plans within the seafaring labour market.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey applauded RMT maritime officials for engaging with Stena regarding retention of skills in the short term and its longer-term vision

for UK ratings, job security, and opportunities for career development.

"In contrast to rogue employers like P&O Ferries, Stena Line has publicly supported good quality employment of UK seafarers, whilst recognising that in order to attract the best people and retain the experience and loyalty of its people it has to compete with the pay scales of other employers which had fallen in decline," he said.

The Stena Line wage increases across grades working within the Deck and Technical department include uplifts for the following grades:

Bosun; 24 per cent

Assistant Bosun; 20 per cent

AB; 17 per cent

Hotel Repairman; 20 per cent

Engine watch ratings; between 8 and 17 per cent. ■

STENA EMBLA VISIT

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey, national secretary Darren Procter, Stena convenor Michael Hobson visit shipboard representative James

Haddock and several members of the crew employed onboard the Stena Embla, which operates between Birkenhead and Belfast. ■





RMT COURT VICTORY PROTECTS WORKERS' RIGHTS

Employer faces £6 million compensation bill for ignoring collective bargaining rights

An Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) has ruled in favour of more than 1,200 RMT members that their employer Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) had unlawfully bypassed their trade union in negotiations.

The judgment reinforces important protections for union members and builds on previous landmark cases that have established clear limits on employers seeking to bypass collective bargaining arrangements.

The tribunal upheld claims brought by Thompsons

Solicitors on behalf of approximately 1,235 RMT members, confirming that employers cannot go directly to workers to bypass a recognised trade union.

The case centred on pay negotiations in 2017 between Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) and three recognised trade unions - RMT, TSSA and Unite. While TSSA and Unite accepted the company's pay offer, RMT members rejected it in a ballot.

Instead of continuing negotiations with RMT, VTEC decided to press ahead with

the pay award and wrote directly to RMT members, giving them the option to "opt out" if they did not wish to receive it.

RMT had argued that these direct offers were an unlawful attempt to bypass collective bargaining and cut the union out of the negotiating process as those negotiations had not been exhausted under existing procedures.

Both the Employment Tribunal and now the EAT agreed with RMT.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that it

was a victory for RMT members who had been determined to defend their hard-won right to collective bargaining.

"This case shows that workers can win against the most determined employer that wants to impose deals and ignore basic workers' rights and the important concept of collective bargaining," he said.

The claims were originally brought against Virgin Trains East Coast. Following changes to the East Coast franchise, the affected employees

transferred to London North Eastern Railway and Hitachi Rail, which became respondents in the proceedings.

The judgment builds on the Supreme Court's landmark Kostal ruling, which established that employers cannot bypass recognised trade unions by making direct offers to workers when there is a realistic possibility that agreement could be reached through negotiation.

The ruling reinforces the principle when there is a chance of reaching agreement through collective bargaining mechanisms, employers cannot simply impose terms

on workers.

The tribunal upheld the original award, leaving the employers liable to pay an estimated £6 million in compensation and interest to more than 1,200 workers after the court found that they had acted unlawfully by bypassing collective bargaining.

The decision comes as Parliament strengthens workplace rights through the Employment Rights Act 2025, which from October 2026 will give independent trade unions new rights to access workplaces to meet, recruit, organise and represent workers.

While that legislation does

not interrelate to the legislative provisions considered in this case, both reflect the growing recognition of the vital role trade unions play in giving working people a collective voice and ensuring fair treatment at work.

Neil Todd, of Thompsons' Trade Union Law Group, said that it was an important victory for workers and for the fundamental right to be represented by a trade union in collective negotiations under the agreed processes in place.

"In this case the employer chose not to adhere to those processes and faces serious

consequences for not doing so.

"The protections afforded under this provision derive from important rights workers have under Article 11 Of the European convention that enable recognised trade unions the freedom to negotiate on behalf of those they represent.

"Strong trade unions are essential to securing fair pay improved terms and conditions and dignity at work.

"We are proud to have secured this outcome for more than 1,200 RMT members," he said.

■

RMT BRANDED MERCHANDISE

Show your support for the union. Go to the RMT webshop on the RMT web site for more details.

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





ON THE QUAY!

Organising within the docks, ports and waterways sector

RMT has been representing members within the docks, ports and waterways for decades.

However, there is a significant difference between representing members and effectively organising within the sector.

Following internal engagement the union decided to break down the membership sector within maritime industries, establishing sectoral organising committees for every sector including docks, ports and waterways.

The purpose of the committees was to create a dedicated focus on the key issues within the relevant sectors whilst establishing independent identity and campaign aims for each sector.

RMT national secretary Darren Procter said that a dedicated approach meant

analysing conditions between comparable employers and promote engagement of members within the sector.

"For instance, we identified shift patterns as a core concern within a survey that was sent to members within

these sectors.

"As a consequence we have seen shift patterns altered in Belfast and Fishguard whilst we are actively engaged in discussions with employers in Birkenhead and Heysham regarding changes to shift

patterns.

"Having a dedicated focus on each sector means that our aims are more specific and relevant for every sector," he said,

When visiting workplaces, the union asks what members



RECOGNITION: Darren Procter signing the agreement in London with David Tinkler of Stena extending trade union recognition of Stena Line Ports to cover Immingham, alongside Belfast, Birkenhead, Fishguard, Holyhead and Loch Ryan ports.

think our objectives should be for their sector, not just with their respective employer.

Whilst that seems a simple question, it is also thought provoking and creates discussion among representatives at recent sectoral organising committee meetings.

At a recent meeting there were representatives from various workplaces from Calmac, CLdN, City Cruises, Harwich International Port, Port of Dover, Stena Line, Targe Towing and Wightlink and each meeting grows with attendees from the sector.

Of course, members want better pay, improved conditions of employment, to work in a safe environment and go home to their families every night. But the question must be asked what improvements do we want to see within the sector?

For instance, there is an increasing introduction of technology, from smart gates at ports, to automated Tug master operations across several ports in Europe.

Digital innovation in ports can be a direct threat to jobs and services in ports and on the waterways and is something that should be discussed in the workplace.

Motions are encouraged from branches and union policy developed on matters such as this to future proof jobs and ensuring we are campaigning for the future jobs within the sector.

The union also needs to gather information such as member numbers and how many reps are trained or require training. As a result, workplace membership density and membership evaluation is carried out each quarter analysing membership growth or decline.

Reps provide a brief overview of union activity and key concerns within their respective workplace, which allows reps to understand that the issues they face may be industry concerns and

broadens the knowledge of union activity.

It is important that activists are familiar to concerns outside of their own workplace to identify what progress is being made elsewhere, how comparable terms and conditions and working practices vary between employers.

"The key objective of these meetings is to set out what our priorities are within the sector, what work needs to be undertaken over the coming months by officials and workplace reps.

"We will be organising a seminar for reps and activists within the sector for early next year to provide updates on key issues, invite guest speakers to provide educational support and greater awareness of union structures.

"Being connected across the ports not only allows greater awareness of conditions of employment it allows us to build networks across the sector where we actively encourage activists to engage with each other," said Darren.

The union has also recently achieved recognition at Stena Line in Immingham, shoreside in Northlink and is currently in negotiations for recognition at various employers within the sector including but not limited to Irish Ferries, Floorbrite, Bidvest Noonan and Stena Line which demonstrates significant growth within the sector.

Darren said that members within the sector should be encouraged by the work that is taking place, but there is much more work to be done.

"Helping to develop greater strength in your workplace is much more effective than complaining in the mess room or on social media and we can never have enough activists so please consider becoming active and making a change in your workplace and beyond," he said.

■



HARTLEPOOL: RMT is part of a joint organising campaign with Prospect for technicians employed at GE Verona working on the Dogger Bank seeking joint recognition. Darren Procter and Karlson Lingwood and Prospect officers met a considerable number of technicians during shift change.



BELFAST: Darren Procter with Stena Line Belfast VT4 Health and safety representative Evan Sayers during a port visit which engaged with three of the four shifts in the terminal.



BOOTLE: RMT assistant national secretary Karlson Lingwood and Liverpool shipping branch secretary Michael Hobson visit CLdN at Brocklebank dock in Bootle.

HARWICH: Harwich Stena Britannica ship board representatives along with Stena Convenor Michael Hobson visiting Unity House in London for a meeting with their employer.





TAKING MERSEYRAIL IN-HOUSE

Merseyrail public ownership leaves London as the last island of privatised rail

Liverpool's Combined Authority has unanimously backed Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram's proposals to bring Merseyrail into public ownership when the current contract ends in 2028.

This will leave Transport for London as the last island of privatised rail in Britain as every other devolved transport authority – Merseytravel, Transport for Wales, Transport Scotland, Nexus - will be operating rail services in the public sector alongside publicly owned Great British Railways.

In London, by contrast, even as the Labour government was beginning to bring franchises back into public ownership, Transport for London re-privatised both the Elizabeth Line and London Overground.

The Elizabeth Line is now operated on a seven-year

contract by a joint venture of Go-Ahead Group Plc and Japan's Sumitomo Corporation, both stock exchange listed and substantially owned by investment banks and asset management funds.

London Overground was handed over on an eight-year contract to FirstGroup, the British transport plc who brought you Avanti West Coast. FirstGroup's shareholders include many of the same funds and banks who own GTS. The two companies must have been licking their lips at the news since London's two concessions have paid out £116 million in dividends since 2018.

RMT launched a campaign last year for the nationalisation of Merseyrail services following press reports that councillors were considering an option to extend the

privatisation of the services when its contract expired.

In an answer to a question in parliament from Liverpool Labour MP Kim Johnson, the transport minister had previously confirmed that the mayor has the legal powers to take the service into public ownership.

RMT has pointed out that under the contract Merseyrail has made £212 million in dividends since 2003.

The union has said that at a time when the Labour government nationally is taking services into public ownership it would be a betrayal of passengers if Labour in Liverpool and the Combined Regional Authority area decided to re-privatise rail services it has control over.

RMT general secretary at the time Mick Lynch said that the union had received assurances in the past that

Mayor Steve Rotheram wanted to take Merseyrail into public ownership, and he had the power to do just that.

"Since the contract has started in 2003 an eye-watering £212 million in dividends has been fleeced off in profits, money that could have been spent cutting fares and improving services, as well as insourcing outsourced contracts, which the Labour Government has stated we will see the biggest wave of insourcing.

"However, Merseyrail has been so greedy they have even refused to directly employ hard working rail cleaners who were so important to keeping services safe during Covid and today. Merseyside's politicians now also need to demand that our cleaners are taken in-house," he said.

Following RMT's campaign

Mayor Rotheram recommended public ownership pointing out that one key benefit was “the removal of profit payments to private operators, enabling greater reinvestment into the network”.

The option of privatising it again, by contrast, not only meant more profit leakage but “did not provide the same level of long-term strategic control, integration or value retention as a publicly owned operating model”.



The Mayor’s proposals also recognise that public ownership would “align to the rail reform agenda being progressed at national level, where greater public control, clearer accountability and reduced contractual complexity are seen as the vital ingredients to improving the passenger experience”.

Finally, the paper states that public ownership could deliver more social value by enhancing control of procurement.

This approach recognises

the fact that you can do more good in the community if you directly control the purse strings. Londoners might justifiably wonder why what’s good enough for Liverpool and the whole of the rest of the country is not good enough for them?

GOOD ENOUGH FOR LONDON

Many of the arguments made by Mayor Rotheram were made by RMT to Transport for London back in 2024 but were ignored in favour of more privatisation.

The union has concluded that this occurred due to a measure of corporate capture inside TfL which is not the case in other transport authorities.

TfL spends around £4 billion on procurement of which half goes to a group of around 30 transport and construction companies. TfL executives are more comfortable selling and managing contracts than operating services directly and have established close relationships with the private sector over time. But why

should this cosy nexus of unelected executives dictate London’s transport policy?

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey has written to the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan pointing out that he has the power to change this situation.

In the letter he said: “I do not see why Londoners should have to support the profiteering of companies like FirstGroup and Govia, when this model has now been decisively abandoned across the rest of the country. Surely, it is time that London too was able to spend all its transport funding and revenue on frontline services for the capital’s people?”.

RMT believes that the Mayor can direct TfL to work up proposals for running its services in public ownership, learning from the growing fund of experience in the rest of the country and utilising break clauses in the contracts.

It’s not too late to stop the privateers taking London for a ride, but it’s a tragedy that the capital has so far been left behind. ■

LONDON OUT OF STEP



RMt condemned Transport for London’s decision to award privateers FirstGroup a lucrative eight-year £3 billion contract to run London Overground from May this year.

First Rail London Limited (FRL), a subsidiary of FirstGroup, took over the contract over from Arriva Rail

London even though TfL still owns most of the Overground rolling stock and sets the routes, timetables and fares.

At the time RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that despite London Labour mayor Sadiq Khan claiming to back public ownership of rail, London

Overground was re-privatised on a lucrative deal that put profit before passengers.

The union has argued that by taking the Elizabeth Line and London Overground into public hands, Londoners would see more of their fare revenue reinvested into the network, pointing out that private operators like MTR

and Arriva Rail London had paid out millions in dividends.

MTR paid out a dividend of £7.6 million, equivalent to a 2.4 per cent cut in Elizabeth Line fares while Arriva Rail London paid a dividend of £9.6 million, equivalent to a 4.4 per cent cut in Overground fares. ■



BP JOBS THREAT

Union raises alarm following reports of BP withdrawing from North Sea operations

RMT is deeply concerned by the reports surrounding BP's future in the North Sea and the potential impact on more than 1,000 skilled workers, their families and communities.

The government is in contact with offshore trade unions, including RMT about measures to protect the future of offshore workers' employment and pay.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that the immediate concern was the livelihoods of the workers who had built and sustained one of the world's most successful

offshore industries for decades.

"The North Sea Jobs Service must pull together existing, stand-alone policies such as the Energy Skills Passport and the Transition Training Fund.

"Workers have heard promises of a 'just transition' for many years, yet we are seeing job losses without equivalent, secure employment being created.

"A transition can only be described as 'just' if it protects jobs, retains skills and provides realistic opportunities for the

workforce and the communities that depend upon the industry.

"Offshore workers should not be left carrying the burden of political uncertainty or a lack of long-term industrial strategy.

"They deserve clarity, investment and a commitment to maintaining the highly skilled workforce that has powered the UK's energy sector for decades," he said.

RMT is calling on both the UK and Scottish governments, together with industry, to engage urgently with trade unions to develop a credible

plan that safeguards employment, supports investment and ensures that workers are not treated as disposable as the energy sector evolves.

"Our members have the skills, experience and professionalism that will be essential for the UK's future energy needs—whether in oil and gas, carbon capture, offshore wind, hydrogen or other emerging technologies.

"Protecting those skills must be at the heart of any energy policy," said Eddie Dempsey.





OUTSOURCED WORKERS STRIKE AT TRANSPENNINE

Rail Gourmet and Bidvest Noonan workers strike against low pay

Outsourced cleaners and catering workers at TransPennine Express (TPE) took 48-hour strike action against low pay with picket lines across the country.

Catering workers at Rail Gourmet and cleaners at Bidvest Noonan took the action after the company to even make a pay offer even though the anniversary date was back in April.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said that low pay was how outsourcing giants made money out of the rail network and called on the government to act.

"Companies like Rail Gourmet and Bidvest Noonan hide behind the fact that TPE won't take responsibility for low pay on their contracts.

"The government needs to act to end the scourge of low pay for outsourced workers and bring them in-house where they belong," he said.■





INSOURCE NOW!

Unions join forces to end outsourcing for better jobs and services

"We need a 'people's plan' for insourcing to end the exploitation of workers and ensure public services put people before profit," RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey told a huge rally held at Unison headquarters in London.

RMT and Unison launched a joint campaign, *Insource Now!*, calling for the outsourcing of public contracts to stop and for public services to be brought back in-house rather than given to private firms.

Joint Unison and RMT research has revealed that spending on private contractors for public services

including cleaning, catering and security has doubled since Labour came to power.

The value of outsourced contracts awarded or renewed for facilities reached £6.2 billion, up from £3.5 billion two years ago, according to recent figures, said the unions.

Research reveals that the outsourcing of public sector contracts remains widespread in areas such as health, local government and transport.

Unison general secretary Andrea Egan said that the wave of insourcing that everyone was promised was, in fact, just a trickle.

"Outsourcing is a scourge

that's draining vast amounts of cash from public services to generate huge profits skimmed off by greedy bosses of private firms.

"Every penny should be spent on providing higher quality services for everyone who needs them and making sure staff are paid fairly, instead of given rock-bottom rates.

"Insourcing makes perfect economic sense and makes sure that the public gets what they pay for," she said.

Eddie Dempsey agreed and said that public sector outsourcing was a national scandal that has been

privatising essential public services throughout the country.

"We have to call this model out for what it is, it leads to low pay, structural racism and embeds inequality.

"Taxpayers' money is being used to increase the profits of wealthy corporations while workers and communities pay the price through worse jobs and services.

"With Andy Burnham's welcome support for insourcing, there's now a real opportunity to turn the page.

"We're calling on the government to urgently agree a new 'people's plan' for



Eddie Dempsey



Union general secretary Andrea Egan

insourcing to end the exploitation of workers and ensure public services put people before profit.

"If the work is permanent the jobs should be permanent," he said.

TUC general secretary Paul Nowak said that outsourcing was a key issue for frontline workers.

"We don't want to wait, we need to see insourcing now!" he said to applause.

He called for decent pay, proper pensions and sick pay for all workers and an end to a two-tier workforce created by outsourcing in Britain's public services.

BETTER JOBS, BETTER SERVICES

RMT launched its *Better Jobs, Better Services* campaign last year following the election of a Labour government on the manifesto promise to bring rail back into public ownership and put an end to the 30-year failure of privatisation.

Outsourcing is part of privatisation as rail companies hived off whole workforces in cleaning, security, catering and infrastructure work to other private companies, who then drove down pay and conditions to create even bigger profits.

As the new government moved quickly to start to reverse privatisation, RMT demanded that the

government also put an end to outsourcing to rebuild a fully integrated public service in rail.

The Labour government was elected on a promise to 'oversee the biggest wave of insourcing for a generation'. RMT was determined to work with other unions including the TUC to make sure that it delivered on this pledge.

RMT has been lobbying key decision makers in rail, including the Mayor of London and the organisations that are developing Great British Railways (GBR) and has published a series of research

reports on outsourcing in the rail industry.

That means building campaigns around key strategic contracts in rail at TfL, on Southeastern Trains, on the Tyne and Wear Metro and at Network Rail who can all take action to end contracts and start bringing workers in-house, creating the wave of insourcing from the bottom up.

Eddie Dempsey said that *Insource Now!* would add weight to RMT's continuing and targeted campaign within the rail industry.

"We'll push train operators,

Network Rail, GBR and the devolved transport authorities like TfL and Nexus to insource their outsourced and sub-contracted services.

"Whether it's shifting the government's priorities or winning the case for insourcing from the bottom up, the difference will be made by members' engagement.

"We need RMT members and branches engaged on both fronts to ensure that the age of outsourcing follows the age of rail privatisation into the dustbin of history," he said.

■





CELEBRATION: Maria Xavier with RMT members at the unveiling

A PLAQUE FOR ASQUITH

English Heritage install plaque at former west London home of Asquith Xavier

A blue English Heritage plaque has been unveiled at the former Notting Hill home of Asquith Xavier, the rail worker from Dominica who became a leading figure in the fight for racial equality in Britain.

Asquith's daughter Maria Xavier unveiled the plaque in a ceremony outside the house at 149 Ledbury Road.

"I am proud of my father and his 'journey for justice' and the difference he made for this country," she said.

The National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) member became the first black guard at Euston Station in 1966 after successfully challenging an

unofficial colour bar at some railway stations.

RMT regional organiser Primrose Jeanton addressed the unveiling on behalf of the union outlining how her predecessor union the NUR stood with Asquith.

"It should not be forgotten that my union backed him in his time of need including his branch secretary Jimmy Prendergast, fellow guard Tony Donaghey right up to the general secretary Sid Greene.

"This was a perfect example of our motto; unity is strength and the fact that we can make wider changes in society through the actions of ordinary people.

"As a woman of Dominican descent and the union's first black female regional organiser I feel I am carrying on that legacy for future generations.

"My union stands for equality across society which still needs to be championed particularly for our member working in the outsourced sector," he said.

Black historian S I Martin also spoke of Asquith's single-minded fortitude on confronting the issue of discrimination.

"When Asquith came to this address it was in the middle of Notting Hill race riots that took place in these streets. So, it

took a lot of courage to stand up and fight for the right to work to look after his family.

"He has made a mark of our society which we are celebrating today," he said.

Asquith's granddaughter Camealia Xavier-Chihota also spoke passionately about how ordinary people like her grandfather can do extraordinary things.

"This is part of the story how Britain became a multi-racial society," she said.

As well as the blue plaque, Asquith's story has since been commemorated with plaques at Euston and Chatham stations, and a train has been named in his honour. ■



Asquith Xavier came to Britain from Dominica as part of the Windrush generation and immediately started work for British Railways as a porter, working his way up to rail guard at Marylebone station.

The infamous Beeching rail cuts led to the part closure of the Marylebone main line. As a result, guards were no longer required and were being transferred to stations like Euston.

However, Mr Xavier, an experienced guard, received a letter telling him that he had been rejected for a job at Euston.

He showed the letter to local NUR branch secretary Jimmy Prendergast. Jimmy was a life-long anti-fascist who had fought in Spain with the International Brigades and had served in the RAF against Hitler's Luftwaffe.

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

Jimmy led a local delegation to union headquarters at Unity House and then NUR general secretary Sid Greene contacted the British Rail Board about the racist policies

being practised in their name which had been a longstanding problem.

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

For the NUR 'any form of colour bar' was against union

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

My union badge shows two joined hands

With a lighted flame in common fight

But trouble's brewing in the sheds

For both these working hands are white

But working hands are white and black

And the work they do is all the same

But prejudice and fear come in To break the grip, and dim the flame...

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

The government was also forced to act with changes to the first Race Relations Act passed in 1965 which made it

illegal to "refuse anyone access, on racial grounds, to public places such as hotels, pubs, restaurants, cinemas, public transport or any place run by a public authority", but the legislation did not apply to the workplace.

As a result, the new 1968 Race Relations Act now made it illegal to refuse housing, employment or public services to people because of their ethnic background.

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

"Asquith was my mentor at Marylebone and he taught me a lot as a young man on the railway coming into the industry and he deserved to be treated with respect.

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

■



Eddie Dempsey and Tony Donaghey with members of Asquith's extended family in 2023 when a train was named after him



An RMT team took part in Rail Live, the annual trade expo for the railway sector, taking place at Long Marston, at the Porterbrook Rail Innovation Centre with 175 exhibitors in attendance.

RMT's team, made up of the union's recruitment, retention and organising department (RROD), ran a stall and visited other exhibitors including engineering firms, to expand the union's presence on the railway.

The mission was to inform employers that changes to trade union legislation meant that come October, employers must allow RMT access to sites and inductions.

It also meant that just 10 per cent of workers in membership the union can legally push for workplace recognition and, as the main union for the railways, it would be foolish to attempt to lock RMT out.

The team also sought to find out how many sites employers operate out of and how many staff at each work site, as well as who their HR

manager was - essential workplace mapping to prepare for more RMT recognition agreements.

This approach enabled the union to get a deeper sense of the work of numerous small engineering firms, and new technologies being employed for mapping and defect detection.

The tram was joined by former general secretary Mick Lynch, who drew many workers and supporters to the RMT stall and ensured that the union had an outsized presence in the expo.

Bill Paterson of the org department said that, as a result of these efforts, the union gained several crucial

relationships and opportunities to expand the union.

"The real value, as in all organising, came in the conversations we were able to have and there is no surrogate for organising conversations, and the RROD looks forward to putting the information we gleaned to work," he said.

■



Photos credit: Jack Boskett Media Ltd.

INTRODUCTIONS TO TRADE UNIONISM

RMT young members Marc Harris and Kelly Ritchie outline educational courses

RMT young members have been getting more involved with the Marx Memorial Library and Worker's School (MML) which holds fascinating archives concerning trade unionism, Marxism and the working-class movement and hosts lectures and workshops to share this history.

We are running joint courses aimed at young members in early October led by us and Sarah Cundy, chair of the young members' advisory committee.

We intend to run another reading group later in the autumn, looking at MML's archival collections as the basis for discussion.

These reading groups are designed to be accessible to non-graduates and graduates alike.

Marc Harris first found out about the library while attending the RMT young members' introduction to trade unionism course, taught by Sarah alongside the secretary of the library, Simon Renton.

The course introduced activists not only to trade union history and politics, but also to the important role the library plays in preserving the history of working-class struggle and socialist education.

Marc has now helped to develop the reading group using the library's extensive archives and was elected as a trustee of the library, reflecting the growing relationship



between RMT and the MML. This has created a space for discussion, political education and opportunities to bring together trade union activists.

Kelly Ritchie got involved through volunteering with other young members to carry out maintenance and repairs on the building, and later through the reading group.

"The library celebrates the history of trade unionism and shows that internationally and historically, we have fought many fights for the rights of the working class and will continue to do so.

"I love being able to

discuss and learn from others at the library, and the care that goes into preserving that history is quite inspiring," she said.

As railway workers and active trade unionists, they both felt that there was a real connection between the work of the library and the solidarity and collective organising within the union.

"We've helped organise building maintenance at the library with other volunteers and encouraged members who may not feel confident to get more involved and take ownership of the labour

movement's history and institutions.

"Working with the MML has been really rewarding and thought-provoking and has helped to share the importance of solidarity not just in times of struggle, but in everyday organising.

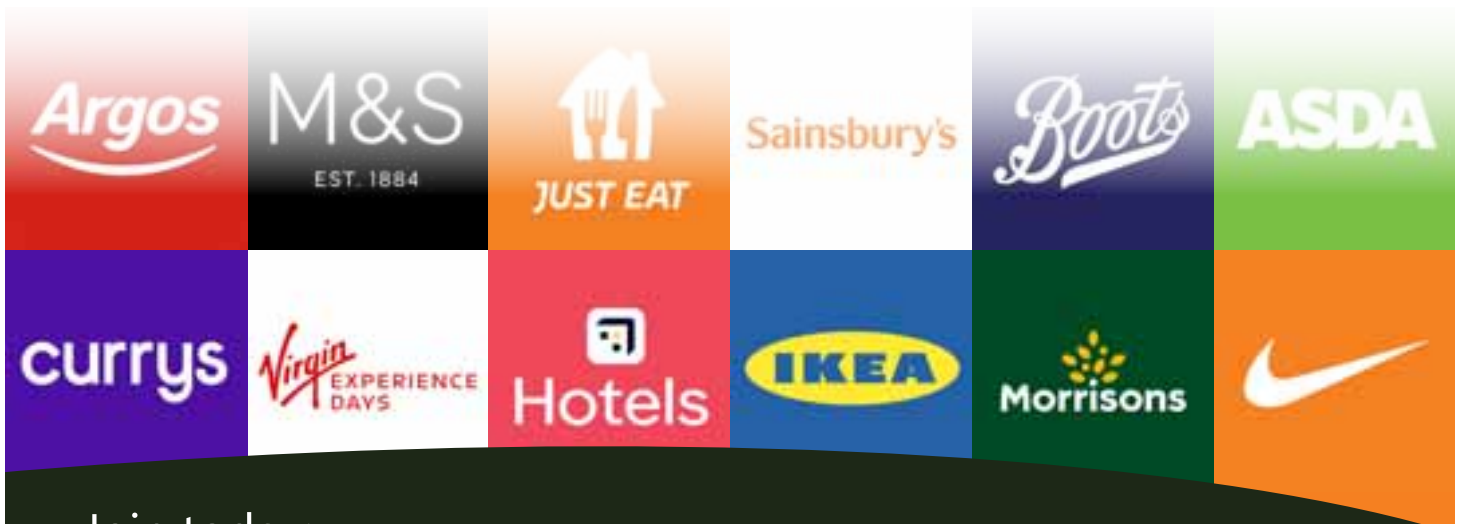
"We hope more RMT members will get involved, visit the library and see it as a place that belongs to the wider trade union movement," they agreed. ■

For more information on the work of RMT young members contact: YMchair@rmt.org.uk

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CANCER IS A TRADE UNION ISSUE

Having cancer can make it difficult for people to earn a living

Cancer at the point of diagnosis is covered by the protected characteristic of the Disability, Equality Act 2010.

Some people with a Cancer diagnosis choose to work if they can, stating that having the choice was vital during their treatment as they felt that many decisions in their life had been taken out of their hands and handed over to specialists.

However, the union has received reports that there are a growing number of members reporting to reps that they are being refused an

extension of the full pay part to the company sick pay scheme during cancer treatment. These members feel that they are being forced back into the workplace whilst still undergoing cancer treatment.

Choice is not afforded to these members once the company sick pay scheme is reduced to half pay.

With the current cost of living crisis whilst workers are already financially squeezed to the limit, our members must also manage the financial burden having

cancer brings, cost of hospital taxi journeys, cost of parking, cost of a change of products in the home, a change to personal products recommended to reduce risk or symptoms, reduction in household income if household member takes time off to attend appointments and give care, for example.

In the transport industry there are potential risks from exposures to asbestos in premises and rolling stock, respirable crystalline silica in ballast dust and from cutting

or grinding concrete, and diesel engine exhaust emissions. Transport workers are exposed to cancer causing carcinogens.

RMT will continue to negotiate workplace policies for workers to include full pay until at least the end of cancer treatment for those who do not feel that a return to the workplace during cancer treatment is beneficial to their wellbeing, and for sick pay schemes for transport workers who currently are only receiving statutory sick pay.



TRY THE RBF LOTTERY

Railway Benefit Fund trustee Mick Cash launches the 'Railway Lottery'



Railway Benefit Fund (RBF) has stood firmly behind rail workers and their families for over 165 years. Founded by railway workers themselves, the charity was built on a simple but powerful principle: that workmates should look after one another in times of need.

Last year, the charity paid out almost a quarter of a million pounds to railway families in need, helping with everything from council tax and rent to funeral costs, children's clothing and white goods.

There is also debt advice and practical support for those navigating difficult times, as well as the Check in and Chat service, which keeps retirees

connected.

As a trustee, I've seen this work first-hand and the staff and volunteers who give so much of themselves. The difference they make, quietly and consistently, is remarkable.

To keep making that difference, RBF has launched the Railway Lottery. It's a weekly lottery giving supporters the chance to win a £25,000 jackpot, while knowing that 50p from every £1 ticket goes directly to the charity. A small contribution that adds up to something much bigger for the people who need it.

Join me and support the Railway Lottery by using the QR code. ■



CHARTING A NEW COURSE AT RFA

RMT national secretary Darren Procter maps out a strategy at Royal Fleet Auxiliary

RMT members overwhelmingly accepted the RFA's two year pay deal for 2025-26 and 2026-27 this summer.

Despite the employer's failure to make the full payment in one go as envisaged, the fact remains that the union is now in a far stronger position regarding the RFA than it has been for several years.

This is all down to the commitment and unity shown by RFA members in winning two high profile pay disputes in the last two years.

The union is keeping up the momentum for change at the RFA. Establishing a stand-alone RFA branch, where members' views on all workplace, industrial and political views can be aired is central to this and puts us in a stronger position ahead of pay negotiations for 2027-28.

In the workplace, the union is regaining influence for RFA members after years of neglect, when the employer constantly used public sector austerity and outdated policies, procedures and processes to frustrate members' interests.

No longer will RMT stand for endless disciplinary processes and thousand-page

rule books which do not reflect the modern merchant shipping industry. The Ministry of Defence and the RFA now understand this and that bodes well for the reforms RMT is negotiating and which members need to see.

It is also very encouraging to see new faces with a constructive approach on the other side of the table. A return to constructive working will also help the RFA. Convenor support early resolution of members' issues which in turn will make the RFA a more attractive career prospect.

RMT officials, reps and members have been instrumental in creating this new approach in the RFA which is starting to pay off. This was evident in the MoD's Defence Investment Plan published earlier in the summer.

The Plan commits to tackling RFA seafarers' long standing pay concerns, including how the MoD classifies RFA personnel, and to increased investment in the existing RFA fleet, notably RFA Fort Victoria and RFA Proteus. It also increases the RFA budget for the next three years. This will see increases in



jobs and training for RFA Ratings, as well as the ultimate goal of one for one leave.

RMT had a good relationship with John Healey as Defence Secretary and his subsequent appointment as Chancellor in Andy Burnham's government is certainly no bad thing from an RFA perspective. The new Defence Minister covering the RFA, Calvin Bailey MP met members on RFA Tidespring and Mounts Bay at the end of July and we are seeking an introductory meeting with the new Minister to discuss the Fleet Solid Support contract with Navantia and the impact on RFA members from Capita's maladministration of the Civil Service Pension Scheme, amongst other issues.

The last two pay disputes, conflicts in the Middle East and security of subsea communications and energy

infrastructure in UK waters have put RFA members' work in the public eye.

RMT is using this to constantly highlight to politicians and the public the fundamental importance of RFA's skilled civilian seafarers to our national maritime security and humanitarian relief capacity.

The RFA are the only vessels in the 'grey fleet' that can enter commercial ports in other countries to re-supply, replenish and re-arm the Royal Navy on deployment anywhere in the world.

That job is now more important than ever and will only be successful with the engagement of the union to protect the collective interest of the Ratings and apprentices who are part of a solid maritime support service recovering from decades of neglect. ■

RMT CALLS FOR ACTION AGAINST P&O

RMT has called for civil legal action against P&O Ferries as the Insolvency Service completed its investigation into the rogue company over six months ago for offences following the illegal sacking of over 700 ratings in April 2022.

Following the unlawful sackings and their replacement with agency workers, the Insolvency Service launched

investigations into whether the company had committed any criminal or civil offences.

The criminal investigation was concluded in August 2022, with a finding that there was not sufficient prospect of winning a criminal case before conducting a public interest test of pursuing a civil case against P&O Ferries.

RMT general secretary

Eddie Dempsey said that he had been told that the civil investigation had been completed backed in January.

"The Insolvency Service takes, on average, about six months to complete a civil investigation and here we are well over four years into this case with no action which is over eight times longer than usual.

"There's a risk that the Insolvency Service has found that P&O has not committed any civil offences.

"The length of time they are taking, coupled with the failure to take criminal action or to use a public interest test in prosecuting open law breaking by P&O directors like Peter Hebblethwaite, should concern everybody," he said.■

President's Column

DO GBR PROPERLY

The creation of Great British Railways represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape our railway.

We have the chance to build something better: a railway that works for those who operate it, those who travel on it and the communities and economy that depend upon it.

But if we are going to create GBR, let's do it right.

The railway is a complex industry, made more complicated by decades of fragmentation. Privatisation divided an integrated railway between train operators, infrastructure companies, rolling-stock leasing companies, contractors and countless subcontractors. Workers have spent years dealing with the consequences.

We won the argument on bringing our railway back into public ownership. But we should not imagine that the argument is over. There will still be those who seek to preserve private profit within the new railway through outsourcing, leasing arrangements and complex contractual relationships.

GBR must represent genuine change, not simply a new name.

For GBR to be the best it can be, workers and their trade unions must be involved at every level. RMT has a multitude of knowledgeable people with decades of operational experience across our railway. That knowledge should be embraced from the very beginning.

Our members understand what works because they

operate the railway every day and drawing upon that experience will give GBR a much better start.

We must also recognise that these are unsettled times for railway workers. Organisational change inevitably creates uncertainty about jobs, grades, pensions and conditions of service.

Issues such as pensions and rail staff travel must therefore be addressed early.

Staff travel is always relevant and always important to railway workers, yet achieving consistent arrangements across GBR should be relatively straightforward. These issues matter because they demonstrate whether we are genuinely creating one railway and one consistent railway employer.

We should also use GBR to tackle the historic inequalities that fragmentation created.

There needs to be greater consistency in grades, pay and conditions. Over the years we have seen a multitude of job titles introduced, sometimes seemingly designed to allow similar work to be undertaken for lower pay and inferior conditions. GBR provides an opportunity to simplify structures and ensure people receive proper pay and enjoy good working conditions.

As train operators move into nationalisation, we will inevitably hear carefully managed narratives about the need for change. HR departments will talk extensively about employee engagement while attention is directed towards changing



frontline roles. That deserves scrutiny.

We will be highlighting where money is wasted on managerial roles that have no meaningful benefit, many of which were introduced to boost management numbers to undermine lawful industrial action.

Workers feel engaged when they have secure employment, decent pay, good pensions, safe workplaces and good working conditions. They feel valued when their knowledge and experience are respected.

Getting GBR right for workers will help get it right for passengers. It will need skilled, experienced and properly trained staff capable of responding to passengers' needs consistently across the network. Stations and trains should be clean, safe and secure, with services provided by directly employed staff rather than being outsourced simply to create another opportunity for profit.

Rail services across regional paths must be properly served and staffed. Investment cannot be concentrated solely on the busiest routes into our largest cities. Reliable regional connections support employment, education,

tourism and local economies and help reconnect communities that have too often been overlooked.

Our long-distance railway must equally provide a quality service. Passengers paying significant fares should expect comfortable, reliable trains, good Wi-Fi, clean facilities and proper catering provision. Technology should enhance customer service rather than become an excuse for removing the people who provide it.

A successful publicly owned railway can contribute enormously to economic growth, regeneration and the transition towards a greener transport system. Every pound invested in rail has the potential to support jobs, skills, manufacturing and communities throughout Britain.

We have spent many years campaigning for a publicly owned railway. We should now be ambitious about what that railway can become. Workers built it, workers operate it and workers understand it.

Bring their knowledge onboard from the beginning will help put passengers before profit which will help GBR will succeed.

George Welch

STEAMING ON TO ROBERTSBRIDGE!



The picturesque Kent and East Sussex Railway heritage line has big plans

The Kent and East Sussex Railway (KESR) heritage railway currently runs through the stunning Rother Valley from the historic town of Tenterden through to Bodiam station which is walking distance to the stunning Bodiam Castle nearby.

However, plans to re-instate services all the way to Robertsbridge are well under way and are expected to be completed by April 2028, extending runs to 14 miles one of the longest heritage lines in the country..

This extension would connect the KESR with the mainline once more allowing passengers to alight at Robertsbridge on the Hastings to London line and join the heritage line at Robertsbridge Junction.

This is a huge undertaking which will require five new bridges and two new level crossings, one at Northbridge which has already been completed and another to be constructed across the A21 Robertsbridge bypass.

This has only been possible by local fundraising, anonymous donations and political lobbying over many years including winning special Parliamentary dispensation to extend the line and install the new A21 level crossing.

Although new level crossings are contentious, it was successfully argued that a 10 mile an hour heritage train is not the same as a modern train travelling at over 100 miles an hour!

Network Rail has also helped install and develop the station at Robertsbridge Junction which allows passengers on the London-Hastings main line to alight and join the heritage line on the opposite platform.

In fact, some of the workforce from Network Rail, London Underground and some train operating companies have elected to help as part of their community engagement programmes to make the long-desired extension of the line a reality.



A new turntable has also been developed at Robertsbridge Junction and funds are being raised for a new engine shed to allow operations to begin at both ends of the KESR.

The KESR has also secured funding for the restoration of the historic Tovil Footbridge at Northiam Station, thanks to a combination of heritage grants, donations and the railway's own ring-fenced investment.

The project will not only preserve an important piece of railway heritage but will provide a practical passenger facility at Northiam, the only part of the line where trains pass each other.

The station is expected to play an increasingly important role in operations, following the planned extension to Robertsbridge, as an interchange between services to and from different stops on the line.

KESR chairman Derrick Bilsby said that the footbridge was an important example of historic railway engineering which deserves to be preserved and appreciated by future generations.

The K&ESR has also purchased two water treatment units - one to be located at Tenterden and the other at Northiam. The sole operational

Reverse Osmosis (RO) unit at present is at Rolvenden.

"Ready access to treated water will be essential to running steam services on the extended line.

"Having these RO units strategically located at both Tenterden and Northiam will ensure that engines need only to get treated water from Rolvenden at the start of the service day," he said.

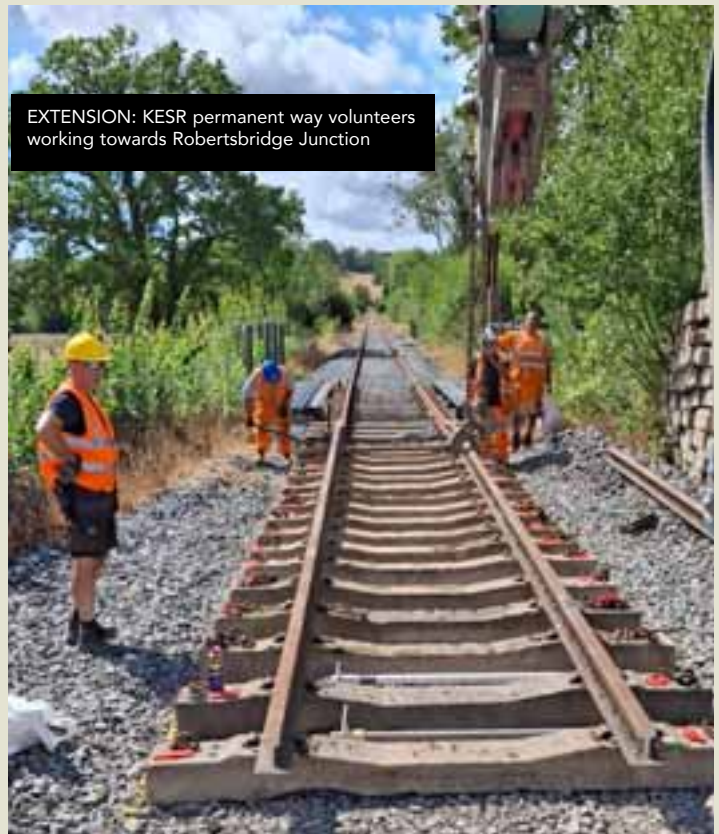
And there is a lot else to see including an interesting fleet of steam engines, dating from the 1870s to the 1950s, looked after at the busy locomotive works and carriage shed at Rolvenden.

This has also been a thriving centre for young people to get involved in the heritage industry with its innovative graduate programme.

The KESR has also led the sector by providing luxury Pullman style on-train catering since 1974. Themed weekends and events ranging from Days out with Thomas to transport rallies, the Hoppers' Weekend and the famous Santa Specials are also a major feature of operations.

All this activity means that visitors can enjoy the Kent and East Sussex Railway heritage line for many years to come.

For more information go to: kesr.org.uk



EXTENSION: KESR permanent way volunteers working towards Robertsbridge Junction



Photography by Paul Sage

LETTERS

DEFEND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Dear editor,

Collective bargaining has always been the foundation of progress for railway workers. Since the earliest days of trade unionism, it has secured better pay, shorter working hours, safer workplaces and improved annual leave.

The principle is simple: when transport workers stand together and negotiate collectively, we achieve more than we ever could alone.

As the government moves towards establishing Great British Railways (GBR), much of the public debate has centred on branding, fares and public ownership.

However, for RMT the more important question is how collective bargaining will be organised to deliver the best outcomes for members across the industry.

History provides valuable lessons. The formation of the

National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) in 1913 brought together workers from numerous private railway companies, replacing fragmented negotiations with a stronger, united voice. Nationalisation after the Second World War strengthened this approach, creating national agreements on pay and conditions while allowing local representatives to negotiate issues specific to their workplaces.

Privatisation reversed much of that progress. British Rail was broken into multiple companies, leaving the union to negotiate separate agreements with dozens of employers. The result has been inconsistent pay, varying terms and conditions, and a bargaining system that is often fragmented and unnecessarily complex.

Despite these challenges,

RMT has continued to deliver significant victories, protecting pensions, defending the role of the guard, preventing widespread ticket office closures and resisting attacks on members' terms and conditions. These successes demonstrate the strength of organised workers, even within a fragmented railway.

GBR offers an opportunity to improve bargaining arrangements. While it is unlikely that every rail worker will be covered by a single national agreement, stronger national frameworks could be established for pay structures, job security, pensions and core terms and conditions, with local representatives retaining responsibility for issues such as rostering, depot arrangements and workplace health and safety.

This is not about recreating the past. Today's railway is

more complex than British Rail ever was, and bargaining structures must reflect that reality. The objective should be a modern system that combines national consistency with effective local representation, giving members the benefits of both.

The railway has continually evolved, and so too has our union. Great British Railways represents the next chapter in that history. If it provides the opportunity to rebuild stronger national bargaining while preserving the vital role of local representatives, it is an opportunity we should embrace. Our greatest strength has always been our unity, and collective bargaining remains the best way to protect and improve the lives of railway workers.

Neil Sharples
Wigan branch



RMt national executive member Mark Keal presented Michael Clarke with a long service award in recognition of over 60 years on the railway and in the union.

Micheal started on the railway in November 1965 at Hull Central as a messenger then at Wilmington goods yard and on to Hull Paragon working in the parcel office and as a porter.

He then became a signalman at Goole and Beverley before becoming a Crossing keeper and booking office at Arram and then a Guard for 27 years. He went on to become a revenue officer

and is still going now at 76.

Michael said that he was very happy with his framed certificate and it will hang proudly on his wall with all his other railway memorabilia.

WIGAN AWARD

Wigan branch presented long-serving stalwarts Stuart Hancock and Mark Denny with well-deserved long service awards.

Stuart was a long serving conductor rep at Wigan Wallgate depot who steadfastly led members through the Northern Trains DOO and national pay dispute helping ensure picket lines were well organised.

RMT branch secretary Neil Sharples said that he was a well-respected and liked member, and the branch wished him well for the future in his retirement.

Mark Denny has been a Wigan branch stalwart for over four decades and helped to keep the branch running during those years,



AWARDS: Wigan branch chair Matt Hilton, RMT regional organiser Steve Shaw and branch secretary with Mark and Stuart separately.



both as an ex-chair and secretary his experience, advice and guidance for members have been critical

in building the branch into the effective organisation it has become today.

"The branch would like

to place on record it's immense gratitude and respect for both men," said Neil.

LEGAL SUPPORT FOR RMT MEMBERS AT EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

If you are experiencing difficulties in the workplace and need advice regarding a potential employment tribunal claim contact the union.

In the first instance, ensure that you contact your local RMT Representatives or Regional Organiser. Then complete an L2 – Request for Legal Assistance (available on-line) and send it to your Regional Office with all supporting documentation.

RMT's legal department deals with virtually all cases from assessment to the case's conclusion at a tribunal for members across England and Wales. The legal department has also submitted claims to Employment Appeal Tribunals.

The in-house legal department is now firmly established and employs four solicitors and continues to advise and support

members in their work-related criminal cases in the Magistrates Court.

This often involves defending members against false allegations made by the public of assault, false allegations of theft and alleged driving offences. Furthermore, it continues to offer tailored advice and support for bus and taxi drivers, in respect of their licensing issues, licensing appeals before the Magistrates Court, driving offences, and in respect of appearances before Traffic Commissioners.

The In-house legal department continues to strive to deliver a first-class service to all of members. They are committed to provide a strong service to assist the union through the ever-changing legal landscape and their successes have grown yearly.

Your Free legal service covers:

- **Employment Law – provided by the RMT Legal Department**
- **Access to Personal Injury Lawyers – where 100 per cent of compensation is kept by members.**
- **Access to a basic will service.**
- **Access to special terms for conveyancing, probate, powers of attorney.**
- **Access to special terms for family law related matters.**

The contact number for the legal department is 020 7084 7260 or go on-line to rmt.org.uk/about/legal-services/

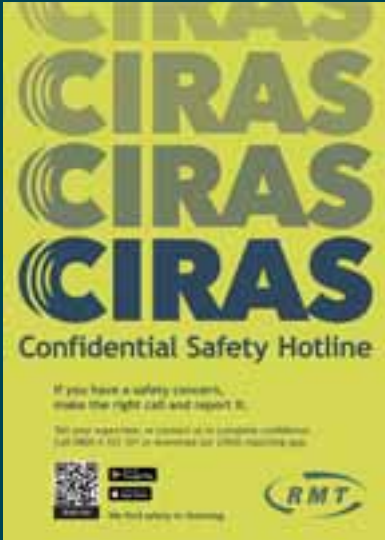
RAISE SAFETY CONCERNS SAFELY

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

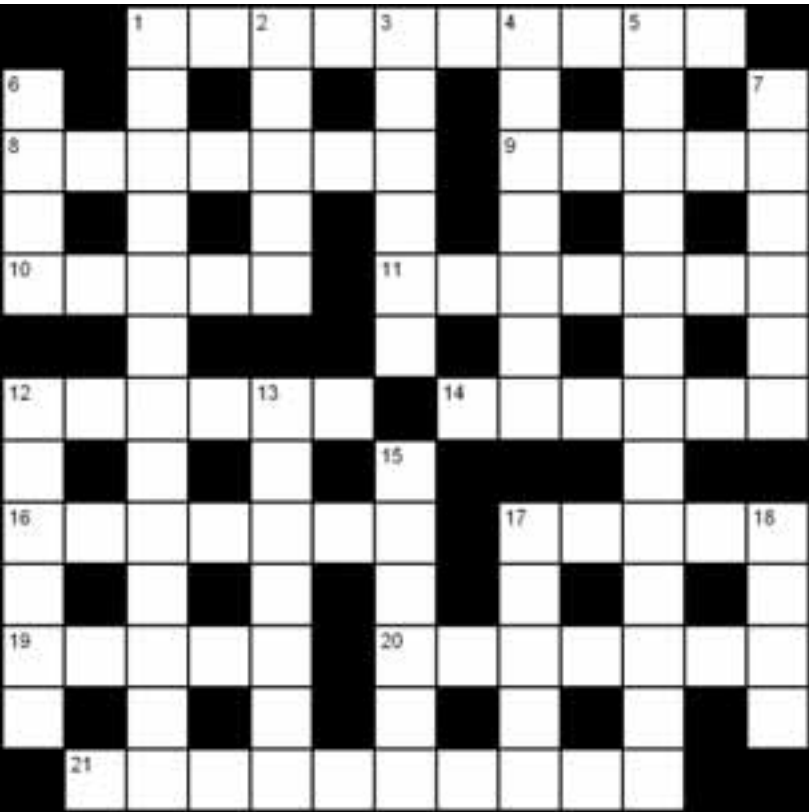
NEW POSTERS

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.

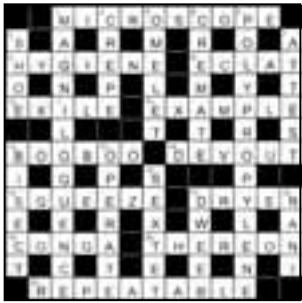
To order click on the RMT item, add it to your basket and select how many to order. In the basket, use the code CIRMT1 in the space for a CIRAS membership number. You'll then go to the checkout. The printed items will be posted to you completely free, no postage needed.



£100 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by November 2, 2026 with your name and address.

Last month's winner is J Pheny, Bracknell.

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

- ACROSS

 - 1 Absorbed (10)
 - 8 Introduction (7)
 - 9 List (5)
 - 10 Chemical group (5)
 - 11 Bring to light (7)
 - 12 Robust (6)
 - 14 Despot (6)
 - 16 Biscuit (7)
 - 17 Plant fibre (5)
 - 19 Shoe (5)
 - 20 Component (7)
 - 21 Indignation (10)
- DOWN

 - 1 Limitless (10)
 - 2 Conical fishnet (5)
 - 3 Regretful (6)
 - 4 Fullness (7)
 - 5 Awkwardness (13)
 - 6 Domed recess (4)
 - 7 Glowing heat (3,3)
 - 12 Partner (6)
 - 13 Conscript (7)
 - 15 Return to normal (6)
 - 17 Strain (5)
 - 18 Strip of wood (4)



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

.....

.....

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

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

Your signature

Date

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.



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