

# RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

# ANOTHER NEAR MISS

Due to “ineffective” and unofficial working practices

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[www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk)



# WORKING FOR YOU

RMT membership helps you at work and saves you money

*RMT has developed a number of benefits to save members money. This includes negotiating access to savings and special offers from our approved partners.*

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The union has a dedicated team of elected officers and local reps to serve your interests negotiating with employers on issues from pay, hours of work, pensions and working conditions. They are supported by a team of researchers to formulate pay claims to obtain the best negotiated terms for you.

## CAMPAIGNING

The union has a political fund to run campaigns and provide a political voice to benefit members' interests in the workplace. RMT has a very active parliamentary group which raises issues of concern for members at Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

## PERSONAL INJURIES

Personal injury claims cover if you suffer an accident in work or outside work. RMT underwrites settlements that would not be provided by no-win, no-fee companies. Call 08457 125 495.

## INDUSTRIAL DISEASES

Members who have suffered an industrial disease will receive free legal support to make a claim. Such claims are underwritten by the union and members will not have any deduction from their settlement unlike claims run by no-win, no-fee companies. Call 08457 125 495

## EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

Should a member find themselves unfairly dismissed, discriminated against or have any claim which has reasonable prospects of success at an Employment Tribunal, RMT will provide legal representation and pay

the fee. Even if the union is advised that the claim is unlikely to succeed, members who make a claim are eligible to receive free legal advice.

## ACCIDENT BENEFIT

Payable if you have an accident at work or on the way to or from work. Accident benefit is only payable if you have been off for three days or more.

Accident must be reported to branch secretary within 26 weeks in order to qualify for accident benefit.

## RETIREMENT BENEFIT

Payable to any member who retires over the age of 60 or aged 55 if retired through redundancy or resettlement. Ill health retirement is also payable; proof of this must be sent with application for retirement benefit.

## TAX AND WILL PREPARATION

The union can provide a personal taxation service and will preparation service.

## DEMOTION COMPENSATION

Payable to any member who is experiencing loss of wages through being permanently demoted or downgraded as a result of illness or injury.

Payment of £300 provided that member reports this to branch secretary within 12 weeks.

## ORPHAN FUND

The beneficiaries of this fund would be any child of a member or spouse if the member dies in service or if a members' spouse dies and the member has responsibility of the children.

Benefit is paid while a child is

in full-time education up until the age of 22. Payment is made quarterly and the rate is £12.00 per week for children up to the age of 16, then £12.75 per week from 16 to 22.

## RMT CREDIT UNION

Accessible savings and affordable loans from RMT's Credit union.  
[www.rmt.org.uk/about/credit-union](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.rmtprepaid.com)

## FREE £5,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH COVER

As a benefit of your RMT membership you can register for £5,000 Free Accidental Death Cover. Cover is for UK residents aged 18-69.

12 months free cover. Annually renewable and always FREE. The Cover is underwritten by Advent Insurance PCC Ltd – UIB Cell.

[www.rmtprotect.com](http://www.rmtprotect.com)

## INSURANCE

UIA Mutual offers great value, low cost Home, Travel and Pet Insurance to RMT members and their families.

- Interest free direct debits (spread over 10 months)
- No fees to amend your policy
- Accidental damage to TVs, laptops and game consoles covered
- Cover for damage caused by subsidence
- Alternative accommodation for family and pets if needed

Call on 0800 030 4606 to talk to UK-based call centre agents from 8.30am to 8pm Monday to Friday.

## HEALTH CASH PLAN

For a small monthly premium you can claim cash-back on dental, optical and therapy treatments. Visit [www.bhsf.co.uk](http://www.bhsf.co.uk)

**Join RMT by visiting [www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk)**

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## EDITORIAL



# ANOTHER NEAR MISS

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch has found that another near miss due to “ineffective” safety arrangements and a number of unofficial working practices contributed to a group of contractors and agency workers narrowly avoiding being hit by a train.

Shortly before the 30th anniversary of the Clapham disaster in December the RAIB warned that a collision at London Waterloo contained “parallels with the 1988 Clapham Junction accident which show that some of the lessons learnt from this accident are fading from the railway industry’s collective memory”.

These are yet more shocking examples of the risks being run by rail workers out there day and night on Britain’s dangerous railways where cuts are rife and the safety culture is being undermined by budget constraints, fragmentation and reliance on agency labour.

The railway industry now has an array of sub-contractors and outsourced organisations and agencies proliferating in a toxic and chaotic fashion.

What is needed as a matter of urgency for the safety of rail workers and passengers is a publicly-owned railway where safety is the top priority and all workers are subject to a set of common-sense safety rules and instructions, rather than the profit-induced mess that has developed in the wake of privatisation, outsourcing and the growth of agency labour.

This is also what is at the heart of our campaign to keep the guard on the train as train operators seek to remove staff and introduce driver-only operation in the insatiable drive for profits.

Yet under the terms of the latest wave of Tory anti-union laws RMT has been forced to re-ballot yet again to secure a vote to continue with action in the rail safety dispute on South Western Railway.

Despite this Northern Rail members remained absolutely rock solid on its 45th day of action last month as the

company snubs all efforts to get talks going and Arriva was put up for sale by Deutsche Bahn in order to unload the basket-case operator.

There is some good news in the maritime sector following the transfer of the Argyll Ferries contract to the publicly owned CalMac. This is a victory for union members and the on-going campaign to end profiteering and uncertainty on Scottish ferry services.

However, following the uncertainty over Brexit, RMT has taken demands for a fair deal for British workers on government Brexit ferry contracts directly to Department for Transport.

The union has set out three core demands on the government contracts: all ferries to be fully crewed up with UK ratings, recognition of UK trade unions and UK employment laws to be fully complied with.

The protests came after a slew of publicity around the Seaborne Freight contract awarded at public expense by Chris Grayling and the on-going dredging of Ramsgate Harbour.

The union is also demanding an end to social dumping on Condor ferries running services between the UK and Channel Islands.

RMT is calling on trade unionists, politicians and the public to support the protests for: a living wage, RMT recognition, the register of all UK-Channel Island ferries in the Red Ensign Group and binding targets for seafarer apprentices over the life of the next contract.

Finally in this magazine you will see that the union has conducted a survey of bus workers and received over 200 written responses in just one day. They reveal an industry in crisis and hanging by a thread because they are run for private profit not the public interest.

Best wishes





Liverpool

# STRIKE ACTION ON SOUTH WESTERN AND NORTHERN

## RMT forced to ballot for fourth time under anti-union laws as SWR blocks agreement

RMT has been forced to re-ballot yet again to continue with action in the rail safety dispute on South Western Railway after being forced to renew the mandate under the terms of the latest wave of Tory anti-union laws.

Northern Rail members remained absolutely rock solid on its 45th day last month as the company snubs all efforts to get talks going and ploughs on regardless with its plans to throw guards off their trains and rip up the safety rule book.

The strike took place as Arriva was put up for sale by

Deutsche Bahn as they looked to unload the basket-case operator.

The union has accused German-owned Arriva of deliberately seeking continued confrontation, while they milk taxpayer-funded bailout payments to fatten up the asset for sale to whatever bunch of chancers fancy a run at ripping off passengers across the Northern routes.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash called on the company to stop spinning and start talking.

“It is the sheer determination and unity of our members over 45 days of action that has kept

the fight for safe and accessible rail travel for all across the Northern franchise in the spotlight while the company refuse to get out of their bunker and enter serious talks around the core issue of the guard guarantee.

“If Northern are prepared to

stand in front of a TV camera rattling on about the second person on their trains then why aren't they prepared to put some fresh proposals on the guard guarantee in writing to the union?

“While this basket-case, German-owned company is



Carlisle



fattened up for sale off the back of British-taxpayer subsidies and bail-outs it has only been the resilience of RMT members, and our supporters from the travelling public, whose solidarity has been instrumental in keeping the focus of the dispute on the campaign for a guaranteed second person on the train with the full suite of safety competencies.

“We thank the public for their continuing support and understanding in a dispute which is about putting rail safety before private profit,” he said.

Members at SWR will be voting to continue with the current action in defence of safety, security and access despite the legal hurdles erected by the Tories.

The union has accused SWR, owned by a combination of Scottish based company First Group and the Chinese state, of working hand in glove with the Tory government to block attempts to reach a settlement in a politically motivated effort to open the door to widespread Driver Only Operation.

Mick Cash said that the union had been forced under the latest wave of Tory anti-union laws to re-ballot for a fourth time in the rail safety dispute on South Western Railway under the six month rule.

“I am confident that once again our members will return an overwhelming mandate to carry on the fight to put public safety before private profit.

“It is a disgrace that South Western Railway, with the connivance of this rotten Tory government, has opted to play for time over yet another six months rather than acting responsibly and getting round the table with the union to work out a solution to this dispute that puts safety and the guard guarantee centre stage. That is the package we have successfully negotiated elsewhere.

“It defies belief that we are being denied the same positive outcome on the South Western Railway routes,” he said. ■



Burrow in Furness



Waterloo



Newhaven



Newcastle



Middlesbrough



Doncaster



Blackpool

# LONDON UNDERGROUND CLEANING JOBS UNDER THREAT

London Underground has again outsourced Tube cleaning at the end of last year, this time on a five year contract to Global Corporation ABM.

When ABM initially took over the contract Transport for London's own press release said that there would be at least 2,800 staff and the company informed RMT that the new combined cleaning workforce consisted of some 2,800 to 3,200 people.

ABM has now informed the union that the target figure for the entire workforce is 2,000, meaning a one third cut in the Tube cleaning workforce.

RMT general secretary Mick

Cash has written to the London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who is ultimately responsible for London Underground, to raise concerns about a massive cut in Tube cleaning staffing levels on the London Underground.

Tube cleaners worked in dirty and hazardous conditions, frequently through the night time and other unsocial hours to keep the Capital's Underground network clear of obstructions and in a hygienic condition.

"RMT, and indeed a number of MPs, has already expressed the view that this outsourced cleaning work be returned in-house as soon as practicable and we have also expressed

concern that Tube cleaners are being treated less favourably compared to other workers who work on the Underground including inferior sick pay, holidays, pensions and travel facilities."

"Now on top of this RMT have been told by ABM that there is to be a one third reduction in cleaning workforce and this raises serious concerns about the quality and frequency that will be undertaken in the future but also means that the same amount of cleaning work for the whole of the Tube is expected to be done by about a third less staff which will hugely add to the numerous

pressures already endured by our cleaners.

"I hope you would agree that such a high profile, world famous public service as the London Underground should be leading the way in providing decent working conditions for all staff instead of allowing the most vulnerable workers to be exploited in this way.

"I would therefore be grateful if you could urgently investigate this matter and confirm that tube cleaning staffing levels will be in the 3000 region as originally stipulated and not 2000 as ABM are now stating," he wrote.

# ISS STAFF TO STRIKE IN EDINBURGH

RMT has confirmed ISS contract workers based at Edinburgh Waverly will be taking strike action after the company reneged on promises to improve staff accommodation facilities and install air conditioning.

RMT has described the working facilities inflicted on

this core group of rail support staff as a disgrace to the railway in Scotland and an appalling indictment of the way that private contractors think they can get away with treating their workforce.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the fact that low paid ISS contractors are being

forced to strike over broken promises to improve workplace conditions is a scandal and the company should be hanging their heads in shame.

"The working facilities inflicted on this core group of rail support staff are a disgrace to the railway in Scotland and an appalling indictment of the

way that private contractors think they can get away with treating their workforce.

"It is clear that the only way we can get ISS to keep their word on making substantial improvements to their staff accommodation and facilities is by taking strike action," he said.

## RMT INDUSTRIAL ORGANISING CONFERENCES AND EQUALITY ADVISORIES FOR 2019

Signalling and operations Grades	Crewe	February 23 – 24
Young members' conference	London	February 24 – 25
Health and safety conference	Doncaster	February 27
Women's conference	Dover	March 1 – 2
Education conference	Birmingham	March 12
Supervisory and associated grades conference	Portsmouth	March 16–17
Black and ethnic minority conference	Edinburgh	March 27– 28
Catering grades conference	Birmingham	April 5–6
Train crew and shunting grades conference	Chatham	April 11– 12
Station staff and associated Grades	Dunfermline	April 12– 13
Road freight and logistics conference	Leeds	April 13
Retired members' conference	Manchester	April 17
Bus workers conference	Salisbury	April 25 – 26
Engineering grades conference	Rugby	April 25 – 26
Disabled workers conference	Plymouth	April 27 – 28
Transport cleaning workers conference	Southend	May 11
LGBT+ members' conference	Torquay	May 17–18
Branch regional council secretaries	Bowness Bay	June 2
Annual General Meeting	Manchester	June 23– 28

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR BRANCH SECRETARY



REINSTATED:  
Tube worker  
and RMT  
member Elia  
Mahoney and  
his local RMT  
rep Laszlo  
Rollinger  
celebrate his  
return to work



# BACK AT WORK!

## LUL probationer re-instated following the threat of strike action

London Underground worker Elia Mahoney has been re-instated following a successful ballot for strike action.

Elia had been sacked under the LUL probationary procedure after more than ten months in employment. However probation on LUL is clearly stated as a maximum of nine months and his local rep Laszlo Rollinger became involved in the case.

Despite the fact that his letter

of dismissal referred to events that occurred after his nine months in service his appeal was rejected.

RMT regional organiser requested a director's review and the union moved to a ballot of the local Metropolitan group.

However LUL relented and Elia Mahoney is now back at work and all lost earnings have been reimbursed.



# RAIL GOURMET MEMBERS TO STRIKE IN EDINBURGH

Rail Gourmet members based at the Edinburgh Depot will be taking further strike action next month in a fight for workplace justice following a comprehensive breakdown in industrial relations. The staff work on the inter-city LNER contract.

The dispute centres around the bullying and harassment of staff, abuse of the disciplinary procedures and non-payment of

additional duties.

It will be the fourth day of strike action in the on-going dispute.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the fact that low paid rail workers were being forced to strike for basic dignity and respect in the workplace is a scandal and Rail Gourmet should be hanging their heads in shame.

"This is a fight for workplace

justice involving a crucial group of staff servicing the catering functions on LNER trains and they deserve to be treated fairly just like any other group of transport workers.

"RMT will not stand back while bullying, abuse of procedures and non-payment for additional duties is rife. Our members have voted overwhelmingly for action in an earlier ballot and have shown

rock solid support for this fight and it is now down to Rail Gourmet to take this dispute seriously and start talking about a settlement that puts fair treatment in the workplace at the top of the agenda.

"It is clear that the only way we can get management to address these issues immediately is by taking further strike action," he said.







# MORE RAIL FARE RISES

## Union reveals rail fares rose almost 50 per cent faster than inflation since privatisation

As average UK rail fares rose by 3.1 per cent last month, new RMT research has revealed that rail fares has risen almost 50 per cent faster than inflation since privatisation with nearly half of passenger revenue going to foreign owned rail companies.

As passengers returned to work to yet another fare hike the research has found that rail fares have risen almost 50 per cent faster than inflation since privatisation.

The report also showed that of open access operators and franchises total passenger revenue of £7.9 billion last year £3.8 billion went to foreign rail firms, who in turn made profits of at least £115 million in one year alone out of the British railway system.

The research was produced as rail workers and their supporters held protests at stations around the UK.

Campaigners have also

criticised the use of RPI – an index that is not widely used in government and is normally higher than CPI. Tory transport secretary Chris Grayling sparked anger in the summer by suggesting that rail workers should have pay rises tied to the lower rate if they wished to keep fares lower.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that a quarter of a century of rail privatisation had seen rail fares rise significantly faster than inflation, which instead of improving British rail has been used to boost the coffers of foreign rail. ■



Hastings







“It is beyond comprehension that after a year of rail meltdown and passenger misery Chris Grayling has once again not lifted a finger to take action to curb fare rises and provide some relief to passengers. When a general election eventually does happen ministers will pay the price for this neglect at the ballot box.

“The government may not care about passengers, but rail workers do, and we will be out around the country today stepping up the campaign for public ownership.

“Our passengers have been left paying the highest fares in Europe to travel on rammed out and unreliable services and that is a national disgrace.

“The only solution is to sweep this whole racket away and return our railways to public ownership,” he said. ■

## HOW MUCH ARE ANNUAL SEASON TICKETS GOING UP IN JANUARY?

*All fares standard class and by any permitted route*

Annual season tickets journeys	Train operator	Current price £	2019 price £	Increase £	Increase %
Swindon - Paddington	Great Western Railway	8,740	9,016	276	3.2
Peterborough - Kings Cross	London North Eastern Railway	7,752	8,000	248	3.2
Bournemouth - Waterloo	South Western Railway	6,732	6,944	212	3.1
Northampton - Euston	West Midlands Trains	5,604	5,780	176	3.1
Luton - Sutton (via City Thameslink)	Thameslink	4,368	4,504	136	3.1
Brighton - Victoria	Southern Rail	4,332	4,468	136	3.1
Halifax - Manchester	TransPennine	2,672	2,756	84	3.1
Harpenden - St Pancras International	Thameslink	3,820	3,940	120	3.1
High Wycombe - Marylebone	Chiltern Railways	3,556	3,668	112	3.1
Basildon - Fenchurch Street	c2c	2,852	2,940	88	3.1
Manchester - Preston	Northern	2,836	2,924	88	3.1
Burton-on-Trent - Derby	Cross Country	1,428	1,472	44	3.1
Canterbury - London Bridge (Not high speed)	Southeastern	5,412	5,584	172	3.2
Huddersfield - Leeds	Northern	1,368	1,408	40	2.9
Colchester - London Liverpool Street	Greater Anglia	5,104	5,264	160	3.1

# SCOTTISH PUBLIC OWNERSHIP DELAY WILL COST PASSENGERS

As Scotrail passengers face another New Year’s fare hike, new RMT research found that the decision by the Scottish government to delay returning the Scotrail Franchise to public ownership by three years will cost £37million, the equivalent of an 11 per cent fare cut.

In November, the Scottish government opposed a parliamentary motion that would have allowed the troubled ScotRail franchise to be placed

in public ownership by 2022. Ministers instead argued that the franchise should stay in private ownership for an additional three years until 2025.

That means three more years than necessary in which profits will leak out of Scotrail instead of being invested in public ownership to reduce fares.

The news came as RMT renewed its call for public ownership and held a protest at

Edinburgh Waverly Station.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was appalling that despite enduring a terrible service in 2018 passengers are beginning 2019 with yet another fare hike.

“What’s worse is that the decision of the Scottish government to delay any prospect of bringing Scotrail into public ownership until 2025 means passenger will continue to be fleeced to the

tune of tens of millions of pounds that will swell Scotrail’s profits.

“That’s money that could instead be used to fund a much needed fare cut.

“We are renewing our call for public ownership of the railways and would urge the Scottish government to think again and allow our railways in Scotland to be nationalised as soon as possible,” he said. ■



# ANOTHER NEAR MISS



Near miss of agency track workers reveals growing problems from budget cuts, outsourcing and fragmentation



The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) has released a report regarding another near miss which found that “ineffective” safety arrangements and a number of unofficial working practices contributed to a group of contractors and agency workers narrowly avoiding being hit by a train.

A train service travelling towards London Euston on March 11 2018 narrowly missed the group of workers whilst they were placing trolleys on the track alongside South Hampstead station.

Nearby colleagues shouted a warning to the group and the workers managed to remove the trolleys and get clear just two seconds before the train passed after the driver had applied the brakes.

The RAIB report, released in December, said that one member of the group received a minor injury and many were very distressed.

It found that the work group did not have anyone designated as the ‘person in charge’ (PIC) who had the sufficient knowledge and competence to manage all the risks associated with the work, including the danger of moving trains.

The supervisor of the work group was employed by contractor MJ Quinn as the manager of its London Underground and Docklands Light Railway projects. On the night of the incident, he was coordinating the work activities on site. He did not hold a COSS or SWL6 competence.

Premier People Recruitment (PPR) was the agency which supplied MJ Quinn with the three staff qualified to act as Controllers of Site Safety (COSSs) and fourteen other staff in the work group.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was yet another shocking example of the risks being run by track workers day and night on Britain’s dangerous railways where cuts were rife and the safety culture is being undermined by budget constraints, fragmentation and reliance on agency labour.

“The railway industry now has an array of sub-contractors and outsourced organisations and agencies proliferating in a toxic and chaotic fashion as was the case with this potentially-lethal incident.

“What is needed as a matter of urgency for the safety of rail workers and our passengers is a publicly-owned railway where safety is the top priority and all workers are subject to

a set of common-sense safety rules and instructions, rather than the profit-induced mess that has developed in the wake of privatisation, outsourcing and the growth of agency labour,” he said.

### TOO MANY NEAR MISSES

Chief inspector of rail accidents Simon French said that there had been too many near misses, such as this one at South Hampstead, in which people had to jump for their lives at the last moment.

“In the case of the near miss at Egmonton in October 2017, a multi-fatality accident was only avoided with two seconds to spare.

“The recent tragic death of a track worker on the Brighton Main Line at Stoats Nest Junction is a stark reminder of the risk of working on the railway tracks. Prior to this accident, it had been nearly five years since a track worker was struck and killed by a train.

“The number and type of near misses in recent years is hugely disappointing given the efforts made to address track worker safety during that time. Every near-miss, however caused, should be viewed as a failure of the system to deliver safety.

“Over the same period, Network Rail has introduced a number of changes to procedures, and several new initiatives, to try to reduce the risk. One of these re-introduced the concept that there should be a ‘person in charge’. This was intended to make an identifiable and capable person responsible for all aspects of the planning and delivery of safe work, for each job. It is disappointing that our investigation found that the way in which this concept had been implemented lacked clarity, and the result of this was confusion on site.

“As well as this organisational issue, we found that staff were disorientated, and did not know which line was which.

“This could have been readily solved if they had had proper diagrams, and if clear signs had been provided at the point where they entered the railway. RAIB has raised this issue before – it’s time that the industry thought long and hard about the way it provides critical safety information to its staff and contractors.

“I am concerned that, despite much effort and many initiatives, we are not seeing the hoped-for improvements in safety for track workers. Despite all the



efforts that the industry has made, this kind of alarming incident is still happening,” he said.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of its investigation the RAIB made six recommendations to Network Rail relating to:

- clarifying to staff the exact responsibilities of a ‘Person in Charge’;
- making sure that managers are aware of their responsibilities;
- improving location information that staff are provided with when working on or near the track;
- signage at the access point at South Hampstead;
- undertaking an audit of how Network Rail standard NR/L2/OHS/019 Issue 9 has been implemented across the network in order to determine how the standard has been interpreted and understood, and areas of good and bad practice
- reviewing how the changes from issue 8 to issue 9 of NR/L2/OHS/019 were managed, in order to identify any areas for improvement in the management of change.

The RAIB also identified that those in charge of safety should be careful to check safety critical information when challenged by others in their team. ■



# GET RICH QUICK? NOT LIKELY!

## Railways Pension Scheme (RPS) administrator RPMI warns that conmen are out to steal your pension

Every year, pension scam victims lose an average of £91,000 from their pensions. And when it's gone, it's really gone. You won't get it back.

Pension fraud is doubling every year, but the true number of victims is probably much higher because many are too ashamed to report it.

And that's where the problem lies. We think we're too smart to get conned ... and the pound signs start flashing. A tempting offer lands and it's all too easy to get reeled in.

But ask yourself – why should you be singled out for a deal that sounds too good to be true?

There's plenty of warnings in the media about cold calls, free pension reviews, overseas investments offering mega returns.

But with up to 10 million people getting an unsolicited pension offer every year, and fraudsters thought to be behind one in 10 requests to transfer benefits out of a pension scheme, the risks are still high.

Don't let one of the victims be YOU! Pension scams come in many forms but tend to fall into two main categories:

- The first encourages people to take cash lump sums from their pensions for 'investments'.
- The other involves tricking the victim into transferring their pension to a new provider.

So here at RPMI, which looks after the railways pension



schemes, we'd like to share some of the classic early warning signs:

1. Cold calling. The government is bringing in a ban on pension cold-calling this year, but if you get an unexpected call or email – don't hang around, hang up.
2. 'Loads' money. You're promised a tax-free lump sum worth more than 25 per cent of your pension's total value. In reality, you could end up with nothing at all.
3. Promises of cash before the age of 55. You can only do this in exceptional cases like ill health. If the claim is fraudulent, the taxman will be after you 'pronto'.
4. Tight deadlines. If you're pressured into making a very quick decision (with a discount or bonus thrown in), it's likely to be a conman pulling the strings.
5. Get-rich-quick investments. The investments are normally overseas (where you have no consumer protection) and typically 'guarantee' a high rate of return. Your money is likely to vanish pretty quickly and the taxman will still want his share.
6. The company's contact details are only a mobile phone number or a PO box address and you can't ring them back.

### THE PENALTIES

Take money out of your pension early and you could be liable for a tax charge of more than half your pension's value. This

is on top of high commission or arrangement fees of typically 20 per cent to 30 per cent for agreeing to a dodgy deal in the first place.

Your remaining pension savings are also likely to be placed into high-risk investments. Get rich quick? Not likely!

All of the above issues are why the Pensions Regulator asks administrators like RPMI to carry out certain checks before agreeing to a pension transfer.

We're really not being awkward in taking time to carry out checks – all we are doing is helping protect members' pensions.

RPMI deals with around 20 pension transfer quotes every month, and we check them carefully for signs of fraud by asking the member to fill in a pension liberation questionnaire. We may also ask HMRC for advice if necessary.

In the past, many fake 'independent financial advisers' have been stationed in scam hotspots like Malta, Hong Kong or Australia. Fortunately, overseas transfer requests have dropped since tax charges were hiked for non-UK registered schemes. But suspect offers can come from anywhere – including the UK.

### IF IN DOUBT ...

Check for registered, fully authorised independent financial advisers at [fca.org.uk](http://fca.org.uk).

Words to watch out for: be cautious if you read an advert or offer which uses any of these

phrases:

Loan, savings advance, cash incentive, bonus, loophole, preference shares, one-off investment opportunity, free pension review, government endorsement.

**STAY SCAM-SAFE**

Fraudsters may pretend to be from Pension Wise or the Money Advice Service. These services – and any other government backed service or authorised pension scheme – would never contact you offering a pension review.

If you have already lost money to a scam, be on your guard against companies which promise to get some or all of your money back. Sadly you could get scammed again.

**NEED ADVICE?**

Speak to the Single Financial Guidance Body (SFGB). This brand-new service is backed by the government and offers free, impartial financial advice. It replaces the Money Advice Service, Pensions Advisory Service and Pension Wise.

**At a glance**

At the end of 2017, the Railways Pension Scheme had:

- total assets of **£27.5bn**
- 109** sections
- ...and paid out **£1,035m** in benefits

These benefits cover pensions, lump sums, death benefits and taxation.

**THINK YOU'RE A TARGET?**

If you've signed up for a transfer that you're not sure about, contact your pension scheme provider immediately. They might be able to stop a transfer if it hasn't gone through.

If you're worried about a scam, tel: Action Fraud on 0300

123 2040 or report online at [actionfraud.police.uk](http://actionfraud.police.uk).

Report an unauthorised firm or scam to the FCA tel: 0800 111 6768 or online at [fca.org.uk](http://fca.org.uk).

Report nuisance calls and messages to the Information Commissioner's Office online at [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk) or on 0303 123 1113.

**SO REMEMBER ...**

You've saved into your pension scheme, possibly for many years. Be wary of promises that sound too good to be true and don't be rushed or pressured into making a decision.

Stay scam-wise and don't let the fraudsters steal your future.

**WIN A PAIR OF CINEMA TICKETS\***

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Union Rewards is giving 25 lucky winners a chance to win a pair of cinema tickets when they download the free Union Rewards Cashback App and redeem the offer by 31st March 2019\*.

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# FAIR DEAL FOR BREXIT FERRY CONTRACTS

RMT took demands for a fair deal for British workers on government Brexit ferry contracts direct to the Department for Transport and the port of Ramsgate earlier this month.

The union has set out three core demands on the government contracts:

- All ferries to be fully crewed up with UK ratings .
- Recognition of UK trade unions.
- UK employment laws to be fully complied with.

The RMT protests come after a slew of publicity around the Seaborne Freight contract awarded at public expense by Chris Grayling and the on-going dredging of Ramsgate Harbour.

Chris Grayling has defended

his decision to award a £13.8 million contract to charter extra ferries to a “start-up” company that has no ships, as part of no-deal Brexit preparations.

The contract is one of three agreements worth a total of £107.7 million signed by the government to help ease congestion at Dover by securing extra lorry capacity.

Seaborne hopes to operate freight ferries from Ramsgate from late March, beginning with two ships and increasing to four by the end of the summer.

However Shipping Minister Nusrat Ghani has refused to agree that UK employment legislation such as the national minimum wage or Equality Act which prevents pay discrimination, will apply in relation to the UK government’s

Brexit Ferry Contracts, in an astonishing statement to MPs.

The Minister also refused to say whether even a single UK seafarer will be employed as a result of the contracts.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the government would be quite within their rights to insist that these contracts are protected by UK employment law and crewed with UK seafarers.

“Yet in answer to a simple yes or no question in Parliament the Shipping Minister ducked the issue and was unable even to say if UK employment legislation such as the national minimum wage or Equality Act which prevents pay discrimination will apply or if a single UK job will be created.

“That is an absolute scandal and it is clear that the

government is only interested in a bosses’ Brexit. Companies will trouser millions of pounds of taxpayers’ cash while they crew their ships with exploited seafarers from other countries.

“We will not allow the scandal of the Ships of Shame in British waters, where poverty pay below the minimum wage and shocking working conditions are endemic, to roll over to these contracts.

“Under RMT’s SOS2020 campaign banner we have been fighting for a fair deal and increased employment opportunities across the UK maritime sector.

“We will be taking that message direct to Chris Grayling and we expect him, and the companies he has contracted, to meet our demands in full as a matter of urgency,” he said. ■

## P&O ‘FLAGS OUT’ DOVER-CALAIS FLEET TO CYPRUS

RMT poured scorn over P&O’s claim that Brexit was behind their decision to switch the entire Dover-Calais fleet from the UK to the Cypriot flag as the company finally confirmed publicly what RMT has been warning of for weeks.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was pure opportunism from P&O, whose long term aim has always been to switch the UK fleet to a tax haven register, as they have already done with most of the Irish Sea and North Sea fleet.

“We demand immediate assurance from P&O that the pay and terms and conditions of over 730 RMT members in Dover are not under threat from this move. We would also expect the Shipping Minister to see this move for what it is – rank

opportunism from a company owned in Dubai.

“If P&O think they can use Brexit as a smokescreen for introducing the low cost crewing model on the vital Dover-Calais route then they have got another think coming,” he said. ■

# CONDOR PROTESTS DEMAND FAIR EMPLOYMENT

## Union demands an end to social dumping on Condor ferries running services between the UK and Channel Islands

RMT held protests this month calling for an end to Condor Ferries paying poverty wages on its ships.

Condor is contracted by the Jersey and Guernsey governments to operate lifeline ferry services between Portsmouth and Poole and the Channel Islands and its contract is up for renewal this year.

RMT is calling on trade unionists, politicians and the public in Jersey, Guernsey and the UK to support the protest in pursuit of the union's demands for:

- A Living Wage employer (£9.75 per hour), as a minimum on lifeline Channel Island ferry services.
- Recognition for RMT to collectively bargain for seafarer ratings.
- Register all UK-Channel Island ferries in the Red Ensign Group.
- Binding targets for Seafarer apprentices over the life of the next contract.

The protests were part of RMT's SOS 2020 campaign which is calling out companies' profiting from the exploitation of seafarers, including Condor Ferries' owners, the Australian bank Macquarie who extract a management fee under the

current contract with the governments of Jersey and Guernsey.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that that UK and Channel Island seafarers cannot and should not have to compete with poverty pay rates on these ships of shame.

"Scandalously low pay in the shipping industry has driven a fall in UK ratings of over 60 per cent since the 1980s.

"Yet there are 87,000 ratings jobs in the UK shipping industry, with demand forecast to grow in the coming years. RMT is fighting to enable domestic seafarers to compete for these jobs by enforcing Minimum Wage legislation and ending nationality based pay discrimination.

"In addition to disgracefully low wages, 81 per cent of Channel Islanders in 2016 were dissatisfied with Condor Ferries, the result of rising fares, safety incidents, service cancellations, delayed freight supplies and exploitative employment practices.

"This is no way to run a lifeline ferry service for the public, government and businesses of the Channel Islands, and we look forward to debating these matters with them," he said.

■





# WHAT BUS WORKERS SAY

RMT has conducted a survey of bus workers and received over 200 written responses in just one day. The common thread of all the responses is that buses are in decline because they are run for private profit and not public service. Here is just a small selection.

## GOVERNMENT POLICY

Over 80 per cent of bus workers said that they were unaware of any government policies that support and protect bus services. Only two per cent thought that the government had good policies for the bus industry. 84 per cent of bus workers believed bus services should be publicly owned.

“ Bus usage is in serious decline because it's no longer a public service. 99% of owners/operators are only interested in profits.

“ Only run at profitable time local council funding almost non-existent. I worked industry when it was nationalised buses ran 24/7 7 days a week.”

“ Having been in the bus industry in London and then working outside in smaller towns and cities the vast differences in services are abysmal. Since deregulation in 1976 the bus sector was due to be operated for competitiveness only for the bigger conglomerates to take over smaller firms. This has been farcical and deregulation has done nothing for the travelling public. Transport should be re-nationalised.

“ The government don't really care about the bus industry so therefore leave it to incompetent fat cats in the private sector to slash services.

## PROFITS BEFORE SERVICES

Over half of bus workers believe that the availability and reliability of services is the most important factor affecting bus decline. 72 per cent of bus workers believe the bus company they work for is more interested in making a profit than providing a service.

“ My company has cut all country routes that do not make a profit instead of using some of the profits from the many commercially viable routes.

“ Companies only interested in the profitable routes. Prepared to flood profitable routes with buses at cheap fare rates. Put fares up ridiculously high on country routes to make sure they don't get used then kill them off.

“ They need to stop thinking about profit as first and foremost. Cut backs within the company makes it harder to keep buses on the road. When a repair needs doing then it should get done and not thinking about the budget. We have a fleet of buses that are less than 12 months old yet they are breaking down.

“ The private companies cherry pick what they think will make profit and ditch the rest regardless of community needs and the

## FARES

Over one in four bus workers though that the cost of bus fares was the most important reason for the decline in bus use.

“ Various price differences across the city for the same distance travelled.

“ Fare increases and poor reliability make travel on buses unattractive in comparison with car use. Slashing fares and more buses could change this. It requires public ownership.

“ Bus use is declining because of exorbitant fares charged by companies. The general public don't get the services they want, just the routes that generate the most income, which will become shorter and shorter as fares increase beyond what the average person can afford.

“ Various price differences across the city for the same distance travelled.

## FUNDING CUTS

Only eight per cent of bus workers believe there is sufficient funding for bus services, with 76 per cent saying there is not enough funding.

“ Lack of funding especially on Sunday and evening services. Rural services are just abandoned as no profit.

“ Buses are no longer reliable due to funding cuts which means not as many new buses, frequency is cut, putting more passengers on other services making services late and unreliable.

“ I believe bus services are in decline due to the lack of funding. The companies are only interested in making money so not happy to run routes that won't make the most money. In our area there is talk of a few routes been cut to save money and the company will not fund them even though they are used by elderly people daily.”

“ Lack of funding. Dropping service runs due to not being economically viable.

## POOR WORKING CONDITIONS

“ There are not enough drivers and drivers are encouraged to do more hours, thus putting passengers' lives at risk.

“ Long hours low morale 80 different grades in the industry, even when your off sick, you have to claim money from job centre no support it's rubbish.

“ Drivers got too much responsibility and don't get enough pay this effect the customer services and the safety of the passengers. Bus companies have a huge number of turn over drivers to get rid of the experience drivers by new drivers just to save money don't care about the safety of the passenger,

To many cooks & not enough drivers! Not enough running time.  
“ Have to work six days for a decent wage.



# Disabled members speak out

## CAUTION: CANCER AT WORK!

Retired signaller Dave Gott writes about his experience with cancer and work.

After taking a blood test on a cancer awareness day at Towcester races (yes, really), I found out that I had cancer.

Until it happens to you, you don't know how you are going to feel. Cancer doesn't just mess with your body, it messes with your mind. It was the start of a crazy time in my life; or, as I thought at the time, what was left of my life. Things that would bug me before now seemed irrelevant. Real things and real life are what matters.

The oncologist said that the treatment and the illness affect different people in different ways. The biggest thing for me was the tiredness.

In the end there was only

one choice of treatment: surgery. It was not that bad: only three days in hospital. But the recovery period was three weeks sitting in a chair with a pipe attached at one end and a bag of wee strapped to my ankle at the other end – not pleasant. And having a shower was difficult.

I was off for six months on full basic pay. It is because we are strongly unionised on Network Rail that we get company sick pay – disgracefully, it is not something that every worker gets.

While I was off my old manager left which was just as well! The new manager was much better. I went back to



ALL CLEAR: Dave Gott with general secretary Mick Cash and assistant general secretary Mick Lynch

work and did trade union and pension fund duties, weekday office hours. Again, strong union organisation meant that I could keep on working even when I could no longer manage my old job.

Cancer is considered a disability under the law, so if you have cancer, you have certain rights, including the right not to be discriminated against or harassed, and the

right to adjustments to your work. But to assert your rights, you need to be in the union!

The hardest thing – and talking to fellow prostate cancer sufferers, all say the same – is coming to terms with the after effects. All I can say is don't try to go back to the person you once were, you will never be that. Make the most of the person you now are! Namely ALIVE! ■

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# JOHN WINS ULR AWARD



AWARD: (L-R) Kate Hudson TUC Midlands chair, award winner John Holmes, RMT general secretary Mick Cash and TUC Midlands regional secretary Lee Barron

RMT Union Learning organiser John Holmes was named winner of the Andy Becker Union Learning rep award at the 2018 TUC Midlands Reps awards night held in last December at Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

Working at Network Rail as a ULR, John had enrolled more than 120 colleagues on apprenticeships before he was seconded as a learning organiser a year ago. Network Rail has recently agreed to fund his

secondment for a second year.

The RMT NR team, which also includes ULRs Chris Brown, Phil Heaton, Sam McLeod and John Richards, has been central to the success of the apprenticeship programme.

“This award is for the union and the team and not personal as without the other learning organisers the union learning reps along with our union leadership none of this could be possible,” said John. ■

## WORKERS' MUSIC ASSOCIATION 73RD ANNUAL SUMMER SCHOOL OF MUSIC AUGUST 17 TO 24 2019

There has been a Workers' Music Association Summer School of Music every year since 1946, held in the belief that music can be a force for good in the world. There is no minimum standard requirement: students bring with them a love of music and the aspiration to enjoy sharing this with others. The School is unique in providing courses in a wide range of musical genres, so you can indulge your favourite style and challenge yourself to try something new.

**Details on the courses, tutors and course materials can be found on our website:**  
[www.wmasummerschoolofmusic.co.uk](http://www.wmasummerschoolofmusic.co.uk)

This includes an application form which can be copied and pasted into Microsoft Word.







# COMBATTING VIOLENCE

## Union runs a pilot education course on violence and harassment against women

A two day pilot course on Violence and Harassment Against Women was held at the Bob Crow National Educational Centre November 28-29 2018. It was tutored by a team consisting of Kathleen Gaughan, Mary Jane Herbison, Claire Walters and Amanda Williams.

The aim of the course was to develop plans and strategies to combat the violence and harassment women face in many workplaces. The idea had started as a project from the European Transport Workers' Federation women's committee and was taken up by RMT's

national women's advisory committee.

Kathleen Gaughan said that the pilot course was filled by RMT women and thanked them for their wonderful input.

"Their engagement was invaluable as it will enable us to structure this course which will

eventually be taken to all our members, male and female, throughout the regions.

"This will provide the tools and training aids to help our reps combat this issue," she said. Plans are underway to offer the course for all regions of the union. ■

## PUBLIC OWNERSHIP VICTORY AT ARGYLL

### Scottish government scraps tender process and directly awards the Gourock-Dunoon contract to CalMac

RMT has welcomed the transfer of the Argyll Ferries contract to the publicly owned CalMac and heralded it as a victory for union members and the on-going campaign to end profiteering and uncertainty on Scottish Ferry services.

Minister for energy, connectivity and the Islands, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, announced last year that he would be scrapping the halted tender process and directly awarding the Gourock-Dunoon contract to CalMac. The union has held consultative meetings with members and the company

and the TUPE transfer of staff to CalMac Ferries Ltd took place last month.

The union also welcomes the Scottish government's direct award of this contract which contrasts with the tender process affecting RMT members on the Northern Isles contract. The Gourock-Dunoon contract awarded to CalMac is for a foot passenger service only, due to the Scottish government's misplaced concerns over EU state aid restrictions.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that transferring Argyll Ferries staff on to



CalMac terms and conditions provided long term stability and certainty for members on the MV Ali Cat and MV Argyll Flyer.

"We welcome this and the re-integration of the Gourock-Dunoon route into the Clyde and Hebrides ferries network operated by CalMac.

"Direct awards of public ferry contracts to David MacBrayne, Scotland's publicly owned ferry

company are to be encouraged and we hope that ministers follow this logic on the Northern Isles contract recently put out to tender.

"We urge the Scottish government to take this opportunity to provide a more ambitious service for passengers and staff between Gourock and Dunoon and across Scotland's publicly funded ferry network," he said. ■



MARITIME: Delegates to the dock and shippers grades bi-annual conference last year

# MARITIME EDUCATION AND TRAINING SEMINAR

## RMT general secretary Mick Cash outlines a major seminar in Eastbourne next month for developing education and training

Educating our elected officials and activists in the maritime grades is a critical element of ensuring the union provides the best possible representation, support and leadership for all RMT members in the maritime grades.

The union is already uniquely placed with its work with the UK Seafarers Charity to offer support to seafarers past and present with financial support for a variety of training opportunities. Therefore it is important to discuss and develop bespoke strategies and practical plans to strengthen the educational

The seminar will take place at The View Hotel, Grand Parade, Eastbourne, East Sussex,

BN21 4DN, opening at 17.00hrs on Sunday March 17 to 17.00hrs on Tuesday March 19 2019.

The seminar is open to all the unions maritime members wherever you work within the industries, and whatever your level of involvement in RMT, from the very experienced to the very new to union activity all voices and ideas will be listened to.

All members in the maritime industries will know the challenges and struggles they face as well as many outrageous inequalities of treatment in the workplace when compared to their colleagues in land based industries. To meet these challenges, win these struggles

and end inequality one key task is to provide all activists and union representatives with the tools, knowledge and confidence to organise the fight back and win for RMT maritime workers.

The seminar, using innovative exercises and discussion groups, will identify and prioritise the issues, provide specific actions and activities in terms of trade union education and training that equips the union to deliver real progressive change in the maritime industries. This may mean changing or amending what is in place now, it may mean delivering what is required differently, that will be the big ask of those attending but there is no better group to begin that

work than the maritime members in the industry themselves.

I would urge maritime members to make every effort to attend this hugely important seminar. You will be reimbursed all your reasonable travel to and from the event and accommodation and meals will be provided free. If you, with assistance from your regional organiser or national secretary, are unable to obtain paid release your loss of earnings will be reimbursed. The application and any further information required can be obtained from the RMT national education officer at [a.gilchrist@rmt.org.uk](mailto:a.gilchrist@rmt.org.uk) or on 07584172705.



# WHAT DID THE UNION DO FOR ITS MEMBERS IN 1901?

Mike Esbester is asking for your help to unlock the details of what happened to over 2,000 railway trade unionists between 1901 and 1905

We all know what RMT does for its members today – often the same things it has been doing since it was originally formed in the 1860s. Looking after worker rights and trying to secure a safer workplace is at the heart of this – and now you’ve got a chance to help show this to a wider audience who might not be so aware of it.

This is part of the ‘Railway Work, Life & Death’ project, which is looking at accidents to railway staff in the later 19th century up to the Second World War. We’re trying to find out more about working conditions and attitudes towards safety – and about the individuals who had accidents.

Many of those men, and later women, were union members – and what happened to around 2,000 of them is recorded in a

book compiled between 1901 and 1905 (see picture). The snag? Until now, if you wanted to find out more, you’d have to go to see it in person, in the Midlands.

The handwritten book is part of RMT’s rich archive, preserved for posterity at the Modern Records Centre (MRC) at the University of Warwick. However, the MRC has digitised the volume, and now we’re trying to make it possible for everyone to find out more – and we want your help!

On February 5 the project is looking for your help to transcribe details found in the book, which includes details of union representation at accident enquiries and legal cases affecting railway workers.

It’s all part of the ‘Transcription Tuesday’ event, hosted by ‘Who Do You Think You Are?’ magazine. Over the course of the day, and with your assistance, we’re hoping we can get all 2,150 or so cases detailed in an online database.

In ‘Transcription Tuesday’,



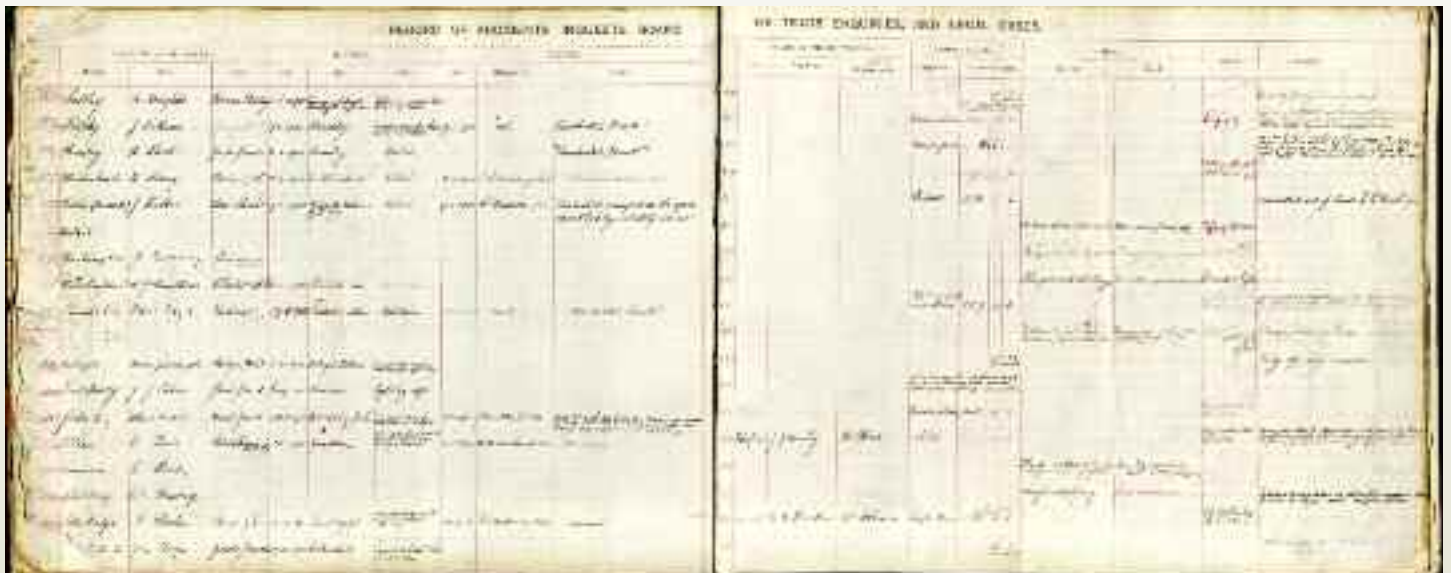
1. Asking for Trouble.

*DANGEROUS: 1914 advice about the dangers of riding on brake sticks.*

anyone (not necessarily historians) and everyone is encouraged to help out on a single day with projects involving some element of transcription – so, converting the handwriting from images of original documents into typed text in a database. It means that

anyone, anywhere in the world could find out what RMT’s predecessor did to help its members and to improve the railways.

That includes, for example, the case of J Hallams, a PW ganger who was hit by a train and killed on January 7 1901 at



Thackley in Yorkshire, leaving a widow and four children. Union representation ensured that they were granted £234,112 in compensation (around £24,100 today), of which £98,112 was to be paid to the widow and the rest in quarterly instalments until the youngest child was 14. A later note recorded that the mother had died and payments were transferred to an aunt.

Of course, the union wasn't just interested in fatal accidents. Life-changing injuries appear all too frequently in the pages of the volume, and again we can see the Union defending its members and ensuring compensation was paid. All of this helped to push the railway companies towards paying the costs of a dangerous workplace, something they'd avoided doing for most of the 19th century.

The volume is full of all sorts of detail about life on the railways at the start of the 20th century and will make for fascinating work. As well as being a great help to family historians, railway historians and many more, it'll mean that everyone – RMT members and beyond – has a much better appreciation of the dangers of railway work in the past and of what the Union has done to look after its members.

Full details of how to get involved, including helpful instructions, are available from: <http://www.railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk/transcription-tuesday/>

After checking for accuracy, we'll be making the data available to all, for free, via our website. It will join the data that the existing 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project volunteers have transcribed, covering around 4,500 accidents to British and Irish railway workers between 1911 and 1923.

We think all of this is a great resource, and that 'Transcription Tuesday' and this volume will show the power of trade unionism – as well as how far the industry has come over the last 120 years. ■

- *Mike Esbester is based at the University of Portsmouth and co-leads the 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project.*

## President's column



# IN SOLIDARITY

Well, 2019 started with greedy train operating companies putting fares up and yet again fare-paying passengers are suffering the most. Some would not have received a pay rise to match the increase meaning they get closer to the poverty line this government seems intent on inflicting on all workers.

I was proud to be part of the many demonstrations across the country highlighting the rip-off fares passengers pay to such private companies and their shareholders, who make nothing only empty promises to improve. While getting maximum profits from the passengers, train operators refuse to have dialogue to resolve real concerns over removing a second person safety-critically trained guard as the government hand over millions to ensure their private venture' are protected. The misery continues for everyone.

I also had the pleasure of finally spending time with our great comrades in the CGT, who are facing the same struggle in France as we are in stopping the private sector taking over the railways. I heard in their branch meeting the success of action they have taken with more to come to put their members at the front of the dispute and not surrendering to the

government or bosses.

Their meeting was lively and full of passion to fight and protect the industry they work in collectively leaving no one behind but showing solidarity with low paid workers. Throughout the excellent example of democracy I'm sure you will join me in a message of solidarity to all workers in the class struggle they face.

I also want to thank everyone who turned up at Manchester Victoria to show support to our member who was disgracefully abused by racists. The message seen by the far right was one of solidarity from across every aspect of the left coming together to say an injury to one is an injury to all.

I am out and about where possible, with visits to Wessex Regional Council, London Taxi Branch and Dorset rail branch with one theme fighting to make improvements for our members on every level, proud also of the action guards at ARN and SWR have taken at great personal cost to themselves to keep the railways safe. Hopefully I will be meeting many more members in the coming months.

In Solidarity

**Michelle Rodgers**





**YOUR UNION. YOUR RIGHTS.  
YOUR LEGAL SERVICE.**



# Injured? we'll fight for you.

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**But don't just take our word for it.**

“The RMT Legal Service has been fantastic. It shows  
that RMT membership is worth every penny.”

**RMT member, work accident claimant**

\*Within the union scheme. Terms and conditions apply. Claims must be brought within three years of the date of an accident or diagnosis. Exceptions do apply, please contact us for advice on whether or not you have a claim. \*\*Where claims can be pursued in UK courts.

LEGAL

# BUS FUMES CAUSE SERIOUS BREATHING PROBLEMS



## Bus driver wins compensation after falling ill because of fumes from a faulty engine

A bus driver has secured £5,500 in compensation after noxious engine fumes made him ill and off work for months.

The RMT member had to stop the engine of a bus he was about to drive after noticing a burning smell.

He asked not to drive it again because he suffers from asthma, which was exacerbated by the smell.

However, several months later, he was asked to drive the same bus again. His employer rather than fix the problem had tried to mask the smell by attaching a fresh board – used in urinals – to the front of the vehicle. He had to stop the bus early, was sick and needed three months off work.

He was unaware that there had previously been a fire on the bus and the engine had not been repaired properly.

“I struggle to count the number of times my employer ignored my concerns about my reaction to fumes over the years,” he said. “With this bus they tried to cover up the issue, instead of ensuring the

bus was properly maintained. I spoke with colleagues as I started to wonder if it was just me, but it turned out that a number of them had also complained about the smell.

“They’ve finally stopped using the bus and, since then, my condition has improved significantly. I just don’t understand why it took so long for the change.”

He turned to RMT and industrial disease experts, Thompsons Solicitors, who helped him secure £5,500 in compensation.

“I don’t know what I would have done without the backing of my union and Thompsons. “Having a solicitor who actually listened to and acted on my concerns was refreshing and meant my employer was held to account for what it did,” he added.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was crucial that any transport operator ensured that its vehicles are regularly checked and any faults are corrected as soon as possible as failure to do can put staff and, in some cases, passengers at risk.

“Roland suffered for far too long because of his employer’s negligence and thankfully, his union membership meant he could get legal guidance and 100 per cent of his compensation, free of charge,” he said.

Shivani Vadukul, the solicitor from Thompsons who supported the member with his claim, added that from the onset of the claim, his employer denied it was responsible for the member’s ill health.

“We investigated the issue and quickly found that his wasn’t true; there had been almost 100 complaints from a number of bus drivers about the smell.

“The fact his employer continued using the bus after the fire demonstrated a lack of care for health and safety. Their continued reluctance to address the problem following complaints was particularly concerning.

“In the end, the employer’s poor attitude to health and safety led to them losing a costly, but avoidable, legal battle,” he said. ■



# A RED FLAG ON TYNWALD HILL

## John Callow tells the story of the successful 1918 Manx general strike

On July 4 1918 a red flag flew from Tynwald Hill. All transport stopped on the Isle of Man, the lights went out, the shops shut and the docks closed.

The crew of a Steam Packet boat on its daily run from Liverpool negotiated with pickets in order to land 500 bemused holiday makers at Douglas, before agreeing not to take any return passengers and voting to join the strike themselves.

At the yard of the Manx Electric Railway, a member of the office staff attempted to take-out a car but was set upon

by a crowd and fled headlong across the rocks. Elsewhere, not an engine or a tram moved from its shed, and there was no-one to shovel the coal, mine the tin or stoke the gas retorts. As the day wore on, the crowds on the streets of the island's capital grew in numbers and confidence, while farm labourers joined the strike in the north of the island and women stocking knitters came out in support in the south.

The strike committee ensured that essential food supplies were delivered to the poor, the old and the hungry – negotiating



the landing, prices and distribution of the catches from fishermen - while the Manx police force openly fraternised with the strikers. Often portrayed as quiescent or reactionary, the Manx people showed themselves to be anything but, during the 48-hour general strike of July 1918. Indeed, this was to become the only successful general strike

waged – to date – in the British and Irish archipelagos.

How had this happened? The Isle had not had a tradition of organised labour before the outbreak of the Great War and attempts to unionise the gas workers, railway employees, farm and builder's labourers had been smashed through intimidation, the sack and the blacklist.

If you don't like it, the old Tory Captain Moughtin was fond of snarling, 'a single ticket to England costs only six shillings'. However, the Great War had served to stratify Manx society as never before.

It widened the gulf that separated the rich from the poor. Profiteers – landowners, shareholders in public companies and shopkeepers – who had secured the lucrative contracts to provision and equip the internment and prison camps on the Isle, flourished and fortunes were made.

However, unskilled labourers, farm and shop workers, and many who had worked in the tourist industry – including the



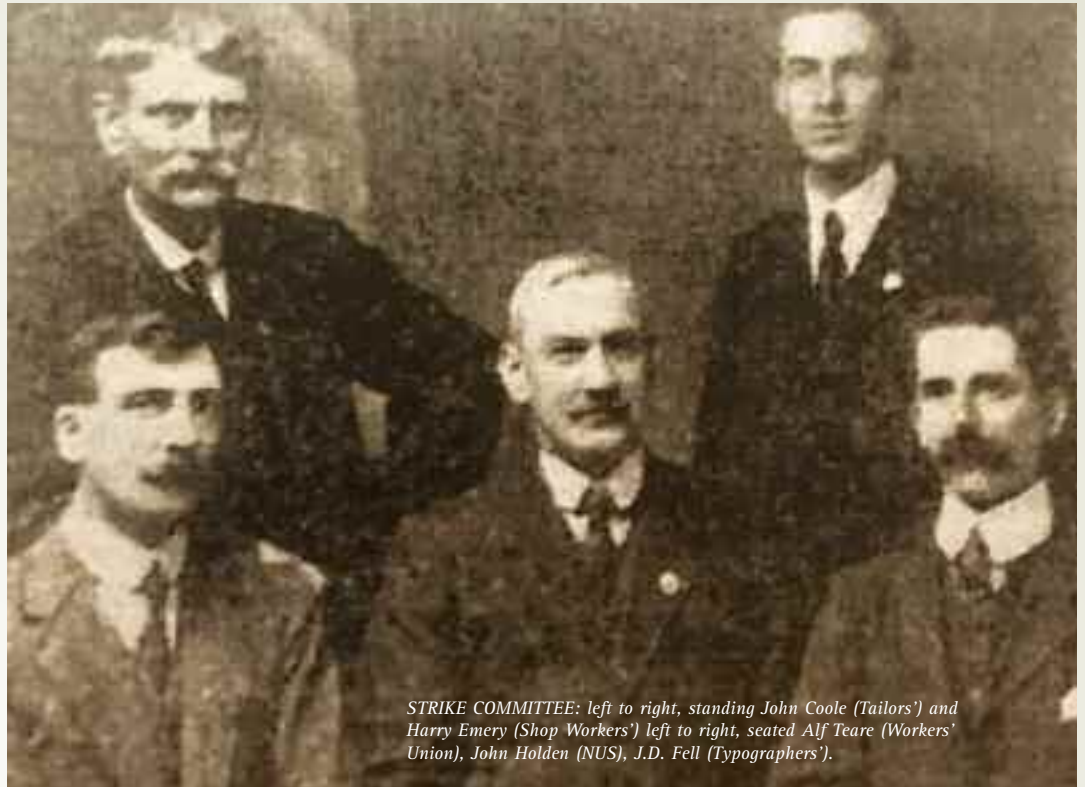
owners of small hotels and boarding houses – faced ruin, as wages were frozen. The holiday trade came to a stop, and food prices rose by more than 60 per cent on pre-1914 levels. More than 300 aged and infirm women and men were in receipt of poor relief in Douglas, the island's capital, alone. In rural communities hunger and food shortages were facts of life, and starvation threatened.

Indeed, many islanders cast envious eyes at the internees and German prisoners of war on the Isle, whose rations were far more generous and whose diets were far more varied than the great majority of the Manx who lived outside the wire.

Yet, it did not have to be that way. The free market ideology, rigidly and brutally espoused by the island's governor, Lord Raglan, had exacerbated wartime hardships and highlighted the lack of democratic accountability in a territory directly controlled by the Crown.

As British law did not apply, there were no old age pensions and there was no direct taxation upon income. As a result, revenues had to be collected indirectly through tariffs on food stuffs, which affected the poor, the working and even the middle classes disproportionately.

At the same time, a policy of exporting food to the rest of Britain, coupled with Raglan's refusal to control prices, put staple foodstuffs (such as



STRIKE COMMITTEE: left to right, standing John Coole (Tailors') and Harry Emery (Shop Workers') left to right, seated Alf Teare (Workers' Union), John Holden (NUS), J.D. Fell (Typographers').

potatoes and bread) beyond the reach of the pockets of a growing number of islanders. Consequently, it was Raglan's decision to withdraw the subsidy on bread that ignited the general strike, in July 1918, with the bakeries beginning to close declaring that they could no longer afford to produce loaves to feed the people.

Almost unseen, the Labour Movement had been growing. Initially, new socialist ideas had taken root among the radical printers led by Alf Teare at the Isle of Man Times but they were quickly propagated by his younger comrades, Walter Cannell and Harry Emery.

However, the problem remained about how to organise the railway workers, as workers were scattered across the Isle. A new approach was found when five stationmasters met at 'a little tea party at Ballasalla on a Sunday afternoon'. Each undertook to recruit all of the men in their sectors and within weeks the clerks, plate layers and loco-men were solidly unionised. Dick Nelson, a guard on the South Line, was called in by management and asked 'what did he know about the union?' 'We are all in – 100 per cent!' he retorted. The result was tangible as the wages of the railwaymen doubled over the course of 1918.

When the General strike was announced the railway workers answered the call, while the National Union of Seamen was represented on the co-ordinating Strike Committee by John Holden, who sat alongside Harry Emery of the Shop Workers' Union, J.D. Fell of the Typographical Society, Alf Teare of the Workers' Union, and John Coole of the Tailors' Union. The reach and the swiftness of the strike took the authorities completely by surprise. Indeed, as the police refused to be used politically by the governor,

control of the island began to fall to the Strike Committee.

Having lost the support of the British government and with the strike widening on the Isle, Raglan's administration crumbled and conceded to the Strike Committee's demands on the afternoon of July 5 1918.

All-too-often Labour History is written from the perspective of betrayals, or 'what ifs': but the story of the Manx General Strike is one of principles informing practice in order to achieve great and lasting results for working people.

The victory won by the burgeoning Manx trade unions, fuelled by socialist ideals, prevented starvation on the Isle, democratised taxation, swept away the high-handed administration of Lord Raglan and enabled the payment of Old Age Pensions.

If the Manx general strike has gone largely unrecorded in histories of both trade unionism and the Manx nation, then – a century later – it stands as a cause for true pride, not just for those who live and work on the Isle but for all of those who believe in economic and political democracy, and who would seek to fight for them in our own uncertain times. ■



PENSIONS: Presenting the first Manx old age pension, 1918



## CARDIFF AWARDS

Cardiff Rail and Cardiff 7 branches held a joint long membership awards evening at the Sandringham Hotel.

RMT assistant general secretary Steve Hedley presented ten year awards to Trevor Keane, branch Vice chair Susan Wales, Bryan Wilkinson, Elaine Smith, Alun Wakefield, Malcolm Wills, health and safety rep Robert Rees, Denise Coleman and Marc Tudor.

25 year awards were presented to Colin Day, Clive Thomas and Mark Hassell. And 40 year awards were handed to Richard Price and Graham Davies. ■



From left to right: Jac Ngadi, Mick Cash, Dave Harvey with a 40 year badge, Carol McNamara (10 years), Jamie Bell (10 years), Karen Gallagher (10 years), Daniel Quigley (10 years) and James Rolles (10 years).

## NEASDEN BRANCH HONOURS LONG SERVICE MEMBERS



From left to right John Talbot (25 years), Kishore Sudha (40 years), AGS Mick Lynch, Vinod Patel (40 years), Arvin Patel (40 years) and Maria Evans (10 years).

## LETTERS

### SHAMELESS OPPORTUNISM

Dear editor,

In our branch submission to the debate within the union on Labour Party affiliation we argued for the position of standing by our current rules. We stated "This important freedom within our rules allows our representatives (National Executive Committee, National Officers, Regional Organisers and others) acting on the members' behalf not to be constrained when dealing with the government, devolved administrations, regional and local authorities. In effect the members' interests are paramount and not compromised or subservient to any political party allegiance."

I have reflected on this as events unfolded in the equal pay dispute in Glasgow City Council. I wish the workers every success in obtaining their rightful entitlement.

What is of concern is the role the unions representing the workers played in this long, sorry denial of the legitimate rights of their members. It is clear to me that the unions concerned failed their members throughout the process because they are far too close to the Labour Party. Labour was in power in Glasgow City Council throughout the majority of the 12 years of this

protracted dispute. The workers themselves recognised this failure as the vast majority of the claimants are not represented by the unions but by a private lawyer. Also numbers of workers have taken out legal claims against their unions for failing to represent them properly. Yet these unions are supporters of the Labour Party which in power in Glasgow is reported to have spent £2.5 Million in legal fees in actions to suppress the workers legitimate demands. This self same Labour Party has the temerity to send messages of solidarity to the workers. Their representatives attempted to blame the SNP city government in Glasgow (in office since 2017) and the SNP Government in Holyrood. Shameless political opportunism and a hypocritical attempt to create a political situation which they think will win them support. They have fooled no-one

As a believer in trade unionism and its core principles I do not make these comments with any satisfaction. However when something is done that reflects badly on trade unionism and what it should represent it must be called out for what it is.

John Milligan (Retired Member)

### POEM FOR THE GUARD

Dear editor,

As an ex-rail worker I can see the absolute folly of removing guards and other grades from our stations and trains. Therefore please find enclosed a poem in support of your fight. I hope the action you are taking will make management see sense.

All the best,

John Grimmett, Bridlington

#### No guard to call

Many years ago in this country so fine,  
Towns and villages had a railway line,  
Stations were staffed from morning to night,  
Proud railman used to clean the brass bright,  
A ticket collector stood by the gate,  
Informing passengers if their train was late,  
Porters helped them to alight or board the train,  
The likes of which we will never see again,  
Now if your town has a station at all,  
There is no staff there to hear your call,  
The private firms that now run our trains,  
Are only doing it for private gain,  
As I said at the beginning of this little rhyme,  
These private firms have cut staff for a long time,  
Now they want to get rid of the train guards,  
For health and safety reasons it will be hard,  
Remember of there is no guard to call if you're in distress,  
If you can remember Morse Code just send and SOS

# RAILWAY MAN GETS ROYAL HONOUR

It was a special day in the life of Tejinder Sharma who was honoured in Buckingham Palace with "The Member of the Order of the British Empire" award.

Tejinder, a RMT member who works for London Overground, received his award for "Contribution to Hindi literature and community cohesion" in the city of London from Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace.

Tejinder Sharma is the first Hindi writer to receive this honour for his contribution to the Hindi literature. In various categories personalities like Om Puri, Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Vikram Seth and Anish Kapoor have received this honour.

Labour MP Gareth Thomas praised Tejinder Sharma as the editor of Purvai the only Hindi magazine published from London and the role of the Hindi editor in Community cohesion was specially underlined.

Another Labour Party member Virender Sharma has been involved personally in the literary activities of Tejinder Sharma.

"While other Hindi writers were deeply involved with nostalgia in their writings, Tejinder Sharma's focus in his writings has been the life in Britain," he said.

Tejinder's daughter Aarya Sharma; his long-standing



friend Yadav Sharma and the close family friend Labour Party Councillor Zakia Zubairi attended the event. Aarya, a

known TV artist in Mumbai, had specially flown to be on her father's side on his special day. ■

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### 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 also important to note that in order to keep members informed your union requires your mobile telephone number and email address.

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



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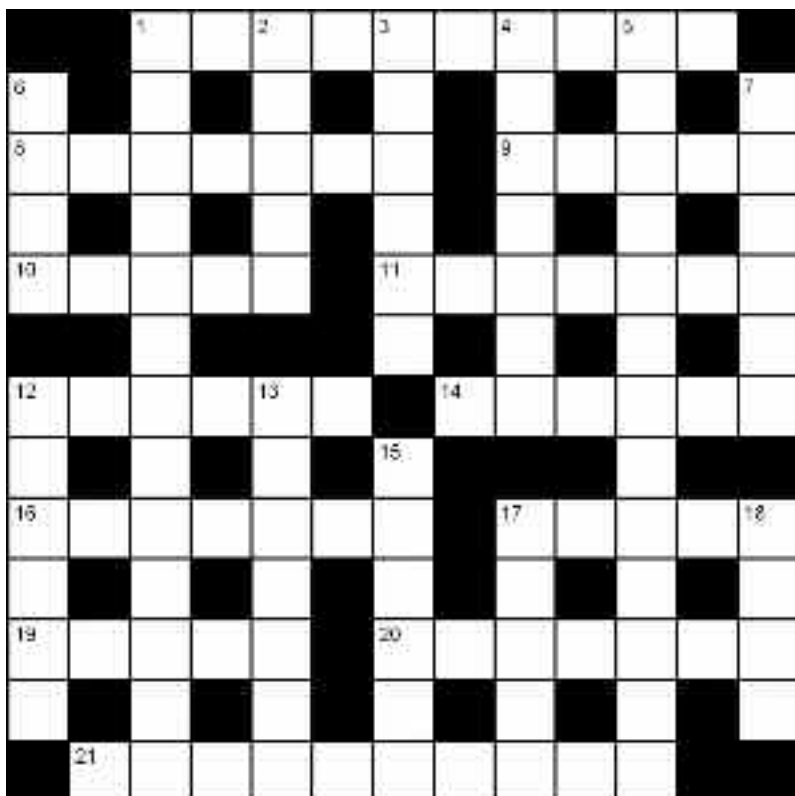


- Welcome drink on arrival (preception or house wine)
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- On 1 night a 3 course dinner with a 1/2 bottle of wine per person



All revenues at our hotel go to support trade union education.

# £50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



### Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Brenda Dockerty, Stourbridge.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by February 22 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



Crossword sponsored by UIA

#### ACROSS

- 1 Heavy shoe (10)
- 8 Too old (7)
- 9 Exceptionally bad (5)
- 10 Lofty nest (5)
- 11 Deadly disease (7)
- 12 Detector (6)
- 14 Repeat court case (6)
- 16 Gain with effort (7)
- 17 Cravat (5)
- 19 Aqua gear (5)
- 20 Understanding (7)
- 21 Container (10)

#### DOWN

- 1 Collection place (8,5)
- 2 Egg-shaped (5)
- 3 Braying sound (3,3)
- 4 Babble (7)
- 5 Fizziness (13)
- 6 Harness (4)
- 7 Potion (6)
- 12 Scattered (6)
- 13 Use (7)
- 15 Desert (6)
- 17 Odd act (5)
- 18 At that time (4)



# RMT CREDIT UNION LTD.

Finance Department, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

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

Email address

Date of Birth  /  /

Postcode

National Insurance Number

2 **Marrital Status** married  partner  single  divorced  Drivers Licence No.

3 **Your Employment.**

Employer

Job Description

RMT Branch

4 Mr  Mrs  Ms  Miss

5 **Membership Status**

RMT TU Member  Retired RMT TU Member  RMT Family Member

6 **How much do you wish to save** £  This is the amount you wish to save by Direct Debit monthly on the 28th  or date you next get paid weekly  if 4 weekly (Fri)  date here.....

7 Normally your payments are made once a month (28th) to RMT Credit Union Ltd.

8 **Next of Kin** .....

**Address** .....

.....

.....

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

Your signature

**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 020 7529 8835.*

Date  /  /



## 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., 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD

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

9  7  4  2  8  1

Reference Number

FOR RMT CREDIT UNION LTD OFFICIAL USE ONLY  
This is not part of the 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.

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- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
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- 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.
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- 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.

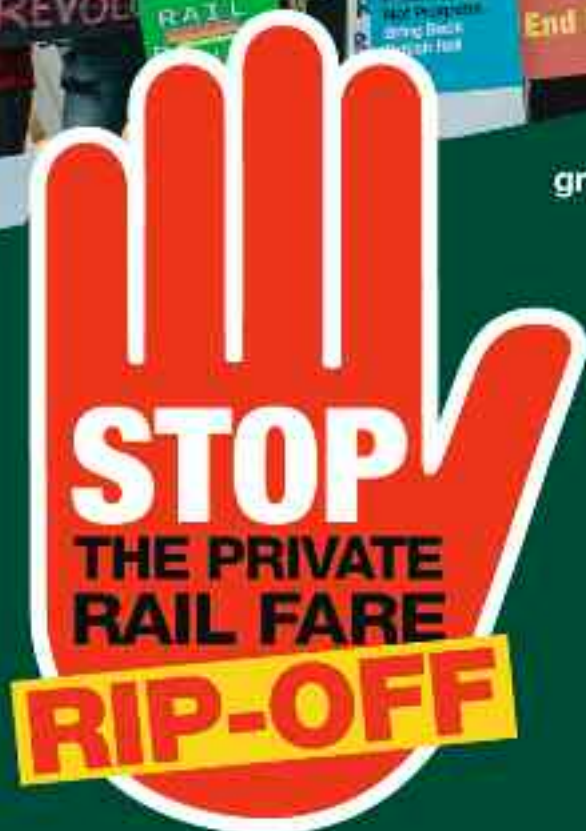






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Mick Cash, RMT General Secretary ”

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