

# RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

## STOP THE TICKET OFFICE MASSACRE



**SAVE TICKET OFFICES:** Use QR code to sign the petition and write to your MP or go to [www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk)



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

## 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



# END THE TICKET OFFICE CULL

RMT is calling for plans to remove all rail ticket offices in England to be abandoned following the extension of the flawed consultation process to September due to the sheer scale of public support for RMT's campaign.

RMT campaigning in conjunction with disabled peoples' groups, passenger groups, politicians and others has undoubtedly forced the government and train companies' hand and scrap the original 21-day consultation.

Once the consultations close there will be a 35-day period during which Transport Focus and London Travelwatch review the responses and either object or accept the operators' proposals.

Legal challenges are also underway in relation to the consultation process, one by a group of Labour metro mayors and one by disabled passengers and the union will also be considering all options to halt the ticket office closures.

RMT warned over a year ago that the government and the employers had concrete plans to dehumanise the rail network by removing workers in the drive to hand even higher profits to the shareholders. It does not matter to them that these proposals are bad for passenger safety, security, and accessibility.

The union has suspended planned strike action on the tube in the long-running campaign to defend pensions, jobs and agreements following progress on all issues.

London Underground has withdrawn plans for a new Attendance at Work policy. Current proposals have been halted on Trains Modernisation and further talks will take place at ACAS and no changes will be made without an agreement. The protection

of earnings has been improved for station grades and there will be no changes to the TfL pension scheme for over three years. As with all industrial relations, it is clear that we will have to continue to campaign on all these issues and job cuts will be resisted from whatever source.

This union has also urged the UK and French governments to get serious about enforcing minimum rules to rescue the failing ferries sector. The voluntary bilateral agreement between the two signed in Paris recently over seafarer employment and welfare standards is not good enough.

The UK government has also launched a voluntary seafarers' charter following P&O's illegal sacking of hundreds of workers and replacing them with cheap agency labour.

Now it's over to P&O Ferries, Irish Ferries, crewing agents and other shipowners to confirm whether they will or will not comply with this charter, including the two-week on two-week off roster pattern.

In July RMT marked the 35th anniversary of the Piper Alpha disaster which claimed the lives of 165 offshore oil and gas workers and two seafarers on July 6, 1988.

Piper Alpha remains a symbol of the threat poorly regulated, profit-hungry operators can pose to the lives of offshore workers and their families. No one has done more work in this area than our retiring regional organiser Jake Molloy. Our North West regional organiser John Tilley is also retiring after many years of service to the union and I would like to thank them both on behalf of the union and wish them a long retirement, good luck and all the best.

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

# DEFENDING RAIL JOBS AND SERVICES

Over 20,000 rail workers take action in July as privateers continue to profit from the network



RMT members working on every grade of 14 train operating companies took three days strike action in July in the national dispute over working conditions, pay and job security.

The strike came as rail bosses announced over 2,000 job cuts and the closure of 1,000 ticket offices across the network (see overleaf). Ticket office closures under Schedule 17 will mean that there will be no regulations on staffing levels at stations whatsoever.

This means companies will be unhindered legislation to de-staff stations across the country, affecting dispatch and non-ticket office staffing grades.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that he was proud of RMT members for showing such fortitude and resolve in

this long running dispute.

"Our national dispute is about pay job security and working conditions. The recent attack on ticket offices and the threat to de-staff our railways, has galvanised a huge groundswell of public support which we are grateful for.

"This union will not be cowed by rail bosses or government ministers and our dispute will continue until we can reach a negotiated settlement.

"We remain steadfast and are available for talks 24/7 with the train operating companies," he said.

As strike action began RMT released a report revealing that between 2006 and 2022, the train operating companies only invested just one per cent of the money spent on the railways.

It revealed that train operating companies took little risk with their capital but had benefited from profits before tax of 126 per cent of the capital invested by rail operators.

65 per cent of profits are

locked away in shareholder dividends instead of being redistributed into improving the railway or upping workers' wages and improving conditions.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the train





companies invested little or nothing into the railways yet make completely unjustifiable profits which they squirrel away in shareholder dividends and bosses pay packets.

"It is a scandal that the

travelling public is being ripped off by greedy rail privateers while at the same time the government oversees a corrupt system and prolongs a rail dispute for political reasons.

"It is high time this profits bonanza gravy train was halted, a deal done with the RMT and the railways returned to public ownership for the good of the country and railway workers," he said. ■

# RMT SECURES PAY DEAL ON EUROSTAR

Rail workers on Eurostar have secured a pay deal following negotiations between RMT and management.

The deal means directly employed Eurostar staff will get a pay rise between 8 and 17 percent depending on their grade and role.

All staff will get a minimum uplift of 4,300 for everyone on £45,000 or below.

Other measures included within the package are increases in travel benefits, 100 per cent basic pay for weeks 27-40 of maternity leave and support for bringing in greater digital services.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch congratulated members on securing a negotiated settlement on pay and conditions.

"We have negotiated a settlement on pay, secured jobs and improved the conditions for our members.

"This approach from Eurostar is a far cry away from the train operating companies who want to cut thousands of jobs, close hundreds of ticket offices and offer us a measly pay deal.

"RMT has negotiated pay deals on every part of the railway where the Department of Transport does not have the mandate over the rail operators," he said. ■



Liverpool



# CALEDONIAN TAKEN IN-HOUSE

RMT hailed a new beginning for the Caledonian Sleeper service following the Scottish government's decision to take it into public ownership.

The union played a pivotal role in campaigning for the low carbon London to Scotland service being taken

into public ownership after being poorly handled by private contractors.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that with all of its rail passenger services now in public ownership, the Scottish government needed to commence the long-awaited

national conversation on rail without delay.

"At the heart of this must be investment in expanding and improving services, ruling out cuts to ticket offices and properly staffing Scotland's railway to make it accessible for all," he said. ■

# END THE TICKET OFFICE MASSACRE

## Union calls for plans to remove all rail ticket offices in England to be abandoned

Following a massive response to the union's campaign to prevent over 1,000 ticket offices being axed the consultations has been extended to September 1.

The union has been inundated by public support for its petitions as well as taking part in more campaigning days throughout August.

As a result, RMT called for the closure plans and the wholly inadequate consultation process to be abandoned and announced that it was considering legally challenging it in the courts.

Rail workers are also being told to stop wearing 'save our ticket offices' stickers or face disciplinary action as the

campaign gains public support for station staff jobs.

The union warned that it will escalate its industrial response to any threat to dock pay or discipline staff for campaigning to save their jobs.

Writing to train operator LNER, RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the union had very disturbing reports that members were being threatened with disciplinary action and being sent home without pay as a result of them wearing "save our ticket offices" stickers.

"Threatening staff who are fighting for their very futures and for the services they provide in this way is a quite disgraceful tactic to use and I

can advise you that any moves to discipline any RMT member for having a simple statement on a sticker will be met with a full industrial response.

"I would therefore ask that any disciplinary threats are withdrawn and that you will assure your staff their democratic right to have their opinion heard on this extremely important matter will be respected," the letter said.

RMT has also received reports from members Northern, Greater Anglia and GTR where rail bosses have interfered with campaigns and removed petitions and materials from stations.

On the back of the announcement of plans to cut



ticket offices, train operating companies have been issuing statutory redundancy notices for hundreds of railway workers which represents the removal of many jobs, something RMT will fiercely oppose.

"The decision to close up to 1,000 ticket offices and to



Fenchurch Street



Northwich with MP Michael Amesbury - Weaver Vale





issue hundreds of redundancy notices to staff is a savage attack on railway workers, their families and the travelling public.

"Travellers will be forced to rely on apps and remote mobile teams to be available to assist them rather than having trained staff on

stations.

"This is catastrophic for elderly, disabled and vulnerable passengers trying to access the rail network.

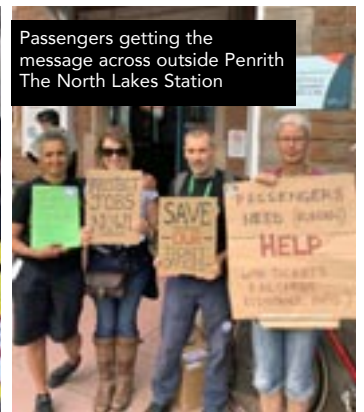
"The arrangements for ticket office opening hours, set out in Schedule 17 of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement, are the only

statutory regulation of station staffing.

"It is clear that the government and train companies want to tear up this agreement and pave the way for a massive de-staffing of the rail network.

"Fat cat rail operators and the government do not care

one jot about passenger safety, or a well-staffed and friendly railway open to all to use. They want to cut costs, make profits for shareholders, and run the network into the ground without a thought as to the vital role the rail industry plays in the country's economy," Mick Lynch said. ■



Passengers getting the message across outside Penrith The North Lakes Station



SUPPORT: Local campaigners organised a flash mob using RMT material and a public meeting at Lymington Town station to protest against Ticket office closures and 60 per cent staff cuts.



Douglas Rathbone Liberal Democrat Councillor for Oxenholme - the Lake District, Matt Severn Chair of Westmorland and Furness Council and councillor for Kendal Highgate with RMT assistant secretary Carlisle City Stu Clifford and Kieran Ditchburn, RMT Staff Rep at Oxenholme



Middlesborough



# DHL CATERING WORKERS TAKE STRIKE ACTION

Workers who are employed by contractor DHL providing catering stores for Avanti trains have been taking strike action against low pay.

These workers have not been offered a pay rise despite the cost-of-living crisis and rising inflation and DHL has pleaded poverty claiming that it cannot afford a rise

despite the fact its global business was worth £81 billion last year.

Avanti, who buy in the service from DHL, can also afford it. It paid its owners, FirstGroup, £13.5 million in dividends last year from profits from the West Coast franchise.

Instead of trying to settle the dispute, DHL management has sent communications to

staff using an intimidatory tone, instructing them not to speak to the media about their human right to take strike action.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that DHL members wanted pay justice from an employer who can easily settle this dispute with a decent offer.

"It is the workers at DHL in

catering and elsewhere that create the combined billions in wealth that shareholders and directors at the company enjoy.

"Our members are determined and resolute and will not be swayed from taking more action in the future by threatening letters from a greedy company," he said.



STRIKE: Striking Rail Gourmet Catering workers who provide catering services on TransPennine trains on their picket line outside Glasgow Central



# UNIPART RAIL WORKERS TAKE ACTION

Engineers, clerical staff and production operatives working for Unipart Rail in Crewe took strike action recently in a row over pay.

RMT members were offered a derisory 4.75 per cent which they flatly rejected. However, Unipart bosses failed to send management representatives to meet with the union, demonstrating their contempt for the collective bargaining process.

It was the second day of strike action Unipart rail workers have taken following a 24-hour stoppage the previous week. Unipart Group scored a 27.1 per cent increase in profits for 2022 financial year.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that Unipart Rail was behaving so arrogantly by not even attempting to negotiate a way through this dispute with the union.

"Unipart workers do a vital job in Crewe and need a pay rise that reflects the continuing cost of living crisis.

"The current offer is an insult particularly when you

consider the increased profits within the Unipart Group.

"Our industrial campaign will continue until our members achieve a negotiated settlement," he said.





# VOLUNTARY SEAFARER AGREEMENT NOT GOOD ENOUGH

## Union calls for mandatory rules between France and UK for seafarer employment and welfare standards

A voluntary bilateral agreement was signed in Paris between France and the United Kingdom in July over seafarer employment and welfare standards.

RMT urged the two governments to get serious about creating and enforcing minimum rules to rescue the failing ferries sector. The UK government also launched a voluntary seafarers' charter following P&O's illegal sacking of hundreds of workers and replacing them with cheap agency labour.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that the agreement recognised the threat that unlawful operators like P&O Ferries continue to represent to seafarers across the UK and

Europe.

"We need mandatory employment standards to grow jobs for our Ratings and Officers on short sea shipping routes from all UK ports, including to France. RMT looks forward to working on delivering fair pay and a new deal for this country's seafarers, consistent with the trade union rights of French seafarers on international routes, when the voluntary seafarers charter is reviewed after the next General Election.

"Now it's over to P&O Ferries, Irish Ferries, crewing agents and other shipowners to confirm whether they will or will not comply with the seafarers' charter, including the

two week on two week off roster pattern," he said.

European Transport Federation general secretary Livia Spera reiterated the need for mandatory standards and sectoral collective bargaining rights.

"The solution proposed by France and the UK is based on a voluntary agreement by companies to follow the 'rules.' This is not enough, as it does not force companies to be compliant and it does not establish enforcement mechanisms."

"This agreement will not unpick the effect of P&O Ferries' attack on its own workforce in 2022, when the company unlawfully dismissed 800 seafarers and violated

their rights.

"It remains to be seen if P&O Ferries, Irish Ferries, crewing agents and other shipowners would decide to comply with what was agreed by the two countries.

"From our perspective, the focus needs to be on eradicating substandard working conditions and re-establishing decent standards and rights through legislation and collective bargaining," she said.

Bilateral agreements with other nations on short sea shipping routes from the UK were part of the government's Nine Point Plan in response to P&O Ferries and DP World's unlawful sackings sixteen months ago. ■

# RMT MARKS PIPER ALPHA DISASTER

RMT marked the 35th anniversary of the Piper Alpha disaster which claimed the lives of 165 offshore oil and gas workers and two seafarers who were part of the emergency response on July 6, 1988.

RMT Scotland's Regional Council laid a wreath at the memorial in Hazelhead Park, Aberdeen to mark the event.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said that Piper Alpha remained a symbol of the threat poorly regulated, profit-hungry operators can pose to the lives of offshore workers and their families.

"The loss of those 167 workers resulted in much needed improvements to the laws governing health and safety offshore. One change was the legal requirement to establish safety representatives and safety committees elected by offshore workers.

"Today as we mark the 35th anniversary of the Piper Alpha tragedy, RMT again calls for a review of the effectiveness of the safety regime across the entire offshore and maritime sector.

"Booming profits and dividends for multinationals, the climate and cost of living crises, energy security, growing demands on a finite workforce, the safety maintenance backlog and the failure to deliver Just Transition policies all demand a robust and active safety representative structure to drive continuous improvement.

"Workers' voices must be heard and the legacy of the 167 Piper Alpha victims must be the safety of all those working across the North Sea today.

"We ask that offshore employers allow all workers to take a moment today to



REMEMBER: The Hazelhead Park memorial statue for the Piper Alpha victims in Aberdeen

remember the 167 offshore workers and the devastating effect that this disaster had on their families and communities, especially in northeast Scotland. The men of Piper are gone but will never be forgotten.

"This year, the anniversary of Piper Alpha again takes place during the UK

government's Maritime Safety Week. We once more call on Ministers to respect the memory of Piper Alpha's victims by delivering the offshore safety culture of continuous improvement recommended in the Cullen Report into the disaster," he said. ■

CEREMONY: RMT assistant general secretary John Leach and former GS Mick Cash take part in the blessing of the banner event



# NEW BANNER FOR CARLISLE

## New Carlisle banner blessed at Carlisle Cathedral at special dedication ceremony

A new RMT branch banner was unveiled at Carlisle Cathedral in June with a traditional trade union design, replacing the two old National Union of Railwayman banners from the RMT's predecessor trade union.

The new banner has been created by the renowned Durham Bannermakers who have created many banners for mining communities and progressive organisations.

The old banners, which are thought to date from 1913

and 1926, were officially handed over to the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery in the City for safe storage, restoration, conservation and eventual display.

The RMT Fishburn Band led

a march from Carlisle Citadel Station to Carlisle Cathedral with the new banner followed by some other RMT branch and regional council banners.

RMT assistant general secretary John Leach, retiring regional organiser John Tilley





SOLIDARITY: RMT banners at this year's Durham miners' gala



and former general secretary Mick Leach marched with the new banner alongside the local dignitaries.

Regional organiser Craig Johnson said that RMT members had travelled from all over the country to attend

"We were so proud that other RMT banners came to Carlisle for the event and marched through the city behind our new banner including our own regional council banner - Manchester and the North West Regional Council - was joined by the Scottish Regional Council banner then the RMT Western Isles Port Committee, and banners from Manchester South, Preston No1, Crewe No1, Liverpool 5, Stockport and District, Newcastle Rail and Catering, Blackpool and the Fylde Coast and Wigan.

"Members of PCS, Unite the Union and the NASUWT also joined the march - along with a number of Labour Councillors from the City," he said.

A special service of

dedication was arranged in Carlisle Cathedral following the tradition of miners in the North East who have historically taken their banners to be blessed at Durham Cathedral and still have their banners blessed at a service in Durham Cathedral on the Durham Miners Gala day.

The service was taken by the Rev Eleanor Hancock, whose father Matt Johnstone had been a signaller in Carlisle Power Box, chair of NUR Carlisle North branch and a frequent delegate to numerous RMT AGMs.

"Carlisle Cathedral was an obvious choice to get our new banner dedicated and blessed as a railway city with a proud history of railway trades unionism and NUR and RMT involvement in the community and civic life of our city over many years.

"All the supporting banners processed up the main aisle of the cathedral as the Fishburn Band played, it sounded and looked an impressive sight," said Craig. ■

## OUR HISTORY



1910: Graham Cass sent in an image from Dewsbury, West Yorkshire dating from around 1910 of members of RMT's predecessor union the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS)

marching. The ASRS was a trade union of railway workers which existed from 1872 until 1913 when it merged with other unions to form the National Union of Railwaymen. ■

# TUC BLACK WORKERS CONFERENCE

## RMT delegates elected to the TUC race relations committee

This year's TUC black workers conference included three days of panel discussions including Amazon trade union founder Chris Smalls, Q&A with addresses from the TUC President, workshops and much more.

RMT were represented with a full delegation of members including Sabia Adeel, Walé Agunbiade, Farooq Ahmed, Itohan Akpoveta, Olanrewaju Apantaku, John Feehan, Lamin Jaiteh, Ebony Kingston, Shoaib Malik, Melecia Mullings, Thobani Ncube, Uchenna Ngadi, Shirall Smith, Beverleigh Thomas, and Raymond Williams.

As the secretary of the black and ethnic advisory committee Mel Mullings was the delegation leader and despite RMT's relatively small number in comparison to other unions they were able to get motion 14 'End the Hostile Environment' voted to go to Congress in September. This was assisted by LTRC BSC holding a lunch time fringe meeting on the hostile environment.

Conference notes with concern that the Windrush Compensation Scheme was 'not fit for purpose' given that only one per cent of appeals are successful. Figures revealed through a Freedom of Information request showed that out of 3,479 claimant appeals in 2021, only 42 resulted in a settlement.

Conference noted that this low appeal success rate was unsurprising given that the

Windrush scandal was perpetrated by the Home Office and by having them run the Compensation Scheme was like marking their own homework. These figures show the need for an inquiry into the scandal and for taking the compensation scheme out of the government's hands and having it run by an independent body.

Conference therefore called for:

- a statutory judge-led public inquiry into how the Windrush scandal came about and the failings of the compensation scheme.
- the Windrush Compensation Scheme to be run independently of the Home Office.
- a Windrush Act which will place a duty on public bodies to reduce race disparities in areas such as education, criminal justice, work, health and community cohesion. This legislation to also establish a commonwealth community cohesion fund to tackle disparities and rebuild social and economic ties of communities damaged by the Windrush scandal.

Mel Mullings said that conference had been a resounding success and all delegates should be praised for their positive participation. Speaking up on so many issues, having both delegates elected onto the TUC race relations committee in their



ELECTED: Olanrewaju Apantaku and Mel Mullings

first attempt having our motion chosen out of 24 to go to congress and a full delegation in attendance.

"We must take this achievement and build on it for the future and Ray Williams and myself will be going to TUC Congress in September so our motion will be well

represented.

"You are welcome to our next B&EM advisory committee meeting and if there are vacancies in your region, please step up to fill it. We need your voice to represent our B&EM members fully," she said.





# AGM BOURNEMOUTH 2023





# FIGHTING ANTI-TRADE UNION LAWS

"Kill the bill!" was the call that **RMT general secretary Mick Lynch** ended a barnstorming speech to a standing ovation from AGM delegates against Tory plans to impose new anti-union laws which would conscript people to work through strike action.

Delegates backed a call to take to the streets with other unions in a national demonstration later this year against the minimum service legislation.

Dozens of delegates at the union's AGM in Bournemouth declared total opposition to the "conscripted of labour" and promised to take all action possible against this "dystopian" legislation.

Receiving rapturous applause, Mick Lynch declared: "We need a national mobilisation of the entire organised working class. We will fight this in the courts, the media and the workplace".

Although exact details of the legislation are not yet clear, unions could face devastating financial penalties with the courts forcing them to instruct their own members to cross picket lines if the union calls strike action.

In a clear message to the government and employers, Mr Lynch added: "This union will not be bowed, we will not be cowed. And we will continue to fight for our people and do whatever is needed to defend our members and the rest of the working class".

Delegates representing all parts of the union rose to speak on the unanimously backed motion.

Moving the motion, **Jim McDaid, Bakerloo** said that it was necessary to co-ordinate action to fight Tory legislation for minimum service levels designed to turn workers into 'conscripts'.

"This is the biggest attack on trade unionism for a generation which will allow the bosses to impose any bad deal they like," he said.

Seconding the motion **Noreen Hayes, Piccadilly and District West** said that the Act effectively gave employers the legal power to identify workers and demand they scab on strike action they had legally voted for.

"Members who refuse to scab face dismissal and trade unions could be sued for



AGM's hard-working reception committee

massive damages if workers refuse to comply," she said.

**James Haley, Leeds City** lambasted the draconian legislation saying: "This is another step towards dictatorship and act of class war."

**Jessica Robinson Darlington No.1** delegate, drew inspiration from the pension protests in France where "there was actual civil unrest, people thronging the streets, rubbish piled up and public transport ground to a halt."

"We need to take to the streets and show our strength."

**Julie Tobin, South Devon Bus** pointed out the legislation would affect bus workers.

"Bus workers will understand what they have not got when it is gone, when they bring in minimum service levels.

"So, it is up to us comrades to be in the forefront of fighting back and opposing the Dickensian attitudes from employers.

"We need to educate and





agitate our members and stand against this conscription of workers," she said.

**RMT parliamentary group chair Ian Mearns MP** also told union delegates "all means necessary" needed to be explored in opposing Minimum Services legislation.

Mr Mearns lambasted the Conservative government for the policy which proposes to render effective strike action unlawful and severely undermine the ability of workers to win better pay and conditions industrially.

"While Labour is committed to repeal the legislation, we cannot of course wait for that.

"Our group stands ready with you to explore all means necessary to continue to oppose this vicious attack on workers and their unions.

"We don't only want Labour just to repeal this legislation.

"We need to keep our pledge to implement the 'New Deal for workers' policy which will strength trade union and workers' rights.

"And I am glad to see Angela Rayner as deputy leader of the Labour Party has taken ownership of that and says she is taking it forward," he said.

Mr Mearns also pointed out that the Labour leadership remained committed to public ownership of the railways.

The MP for Gateshead said that the 47 MPs of the parliamentary group had also been highlighting the government's failures of the privatised bus industry.

"The monumental failure of the so-called national bus strategy which is doing nothing to improve buses and has presided over cuts to routes and funding - completely failing to recognise the need for good terms and conditions for bus workers," he said.

He added that MPs had pushed for amendments to the Seafarers Wages bill in a bid to support RMT maritime members.



**DAY OF THE SEAFARER:** AGM delegates took time out of conference to mark Day of the Seafarer a day on June 25, recognised by the United Nations for the contribution seafarers make to the world.

Mick Lynch thanked Ian Mearns for the important work he and the parliamentary group does for the union and outlined the future direction of the union.

"RMT is sound, robust and in good shape to meet the challenges ahead but we cannot be complacent because the challenges are significant.

"With the ongoing threat of job cuts, and members who are suffering in this cost-of-living crisis, we have a government intent on deliberately creating an economic recession.

"We need the right strategies and systems so we deliver an effective political and industrial punch when required.

"We have a high profile, not just in the labour movement but in society as

well.

"Not everyone likes us, but we are widely respected and that gives our members an advantage in their workplaces.

"When I spoke last year, we had embarked on one of the biggest waves of industrial action in our union's history, with 53,000 members across Network Rail, the 14 train operators and London Underground all involved.

"That is 65 per cent of our membership taking action all at once. Some have said that RMT has revived the trade union movement, putting our values and our politics back into the mainstream in this country. We can all be proud of that.

"Even though we have not sought a leadership role, by the actions of our members, we have led the labour movement. We are the most

active and high-profile union in the country. Where we lead, others follow.

"We have repeatedly smashed trade union ballot thresholds and we continue to use new organising techniques to achieve that which has confounded the employers and government.

"They thought this time last year that the public would hate us and that we would be out of this fight quickly.

"We are not giving up on this struggle. Our members remain committed to the action we will be taking, and they remain committed to our campaign.

"In our continuing dispute with the train operators, we won't take lectures from unelected Prime Ministers and millionaire politicians and employers about balloting our members.



Marc Harris



Wale Agunbiade

**AGM BOURNEMOUTH 2023**



Eddie Dempsey



Jim McDaid

"These are the same people who are accountable to no-one and have wreaked havoc on our railways in places like Avanti and TPE.

"The reason we are still in this dispute is because they want to end our strike mandate before we had even started discussing the changes they want to make.

"We have achieved much, removing the threat of driver only operation from the proposals and no ticket office has closed. There have been no cuts to catering or fleet engineering. And no compulsory redundancies.

"However, they remain intent on butchering our railway system. They are intent on butchering our railway jobs and that's why we need to re-double our commitment and stand up and fight until we get the result we deserve.

"Where we have made progress industrially on our objectives such as in Wales and Scotland, we have not had the Tories calling the shots.

"We haven't had to face the ideological hatred of trade unions from the governments there.

"RMT will remain unaffiliated to any political party, but we will be fully engaged and involved in politics.

"It is clear that it is in our

class interests and the direct interests of our members to get rid of this Tory government and replace it with a Labour government.

"It will be Tory or Labour - that is the simple truth. It would be a catastrophe for our industry, our members and our class if the Tories got in again.

"And it is my view that we have to do everything within our power to make sure the Tories are not in government at the next general election.

"Imagine how you will feel when you wake up on that election morning for your super early shift, and you find out they are back in again.

"That will be the worst ground hog day you have ever experienced during your service in transport.

"The Tories are vicious in the pursuit of their class interests, and we have to be strong in response.

"The trade unions must now in this time and under a new government exert themselves as an independent working-class movement.

"And we will put every politician whether they are in Scotland Wales the councils and the mayors, wherever they are, under extreme pressure.

"You can't cosy up to them and hope they will do you a favour.

"We have used the last year

to present a different vision for transport. Bus, road and maritime and rail - run in the benefit of the passengers and the workers.

"That is our vision, and we must always fight for it.

"November this year is the 30th anniversary of the legislation that privatised our railways.

"It is our efforts that have ensured that policies of nationalisation are incredibly popular with the public.

"We are fighting to win today's industrial and political battles in order to win a better tomorrow for our people and for all workers.

"We remain committed to our traditional values of

solidarity and equality - of peace and unity - for socialism and a better world for all. Let's stick together in the face of any challenge and build our union - strong, diverse and unified.

"Let's go forward unafraid and able to put up a fight because that gives us the opportunity to win," he said.

**DEFENDING CLEANERS**

RMT senior assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey launched a scathing attack on cleaning contractors when speaking in support of an unanimously backed motion calling for £15 wage for all cleaners and to be brought back in house by rail companies.

"I've seen undocumented workers being paid in little brown envelopes of cash money below the minimum wage.

"I've seen cleaners taken away by the border agency because they don't have the right documents.

"There are employers who've tried to use a race war in depots to turn workers from different nationalities abroad against one another to prevent them being organised.

"I've seen women forced to give sexual favours to get shifts in this cleaning sector and pregnant women made to work with dangerous



Mick Lynch with Parliamentary Group chair Ian Mearns MP





John Leach

chemicals in their jobs which may harm their unborn children.

"The reason you see all of this is because what we have on our hands is a racket.

"We have a system that is set up to allow private companies to exploit our members to the nth degree, in a situation that creates a permanent downward pressure on wages and conditions.

"80-90 percent of our members in outsourced cleaning grades are on wages that are so low they are forced to top up with benefits.

"We have to re-double our efforts because we are up against a series of people who are determined to exploit our members.

"A central plank of our campaign is the in-sourcing our members because they are railway workers just like us," he said.

**Roy Osarogiagbon, Jubilee South** told conference that contractors were exploiting the workers for their profits, not caring about our livelihoods.

"It is imperative we are bought back in house, paid £15 an hour and to get sick pay," he said.

He also said that the PPE cleaners were provided with was often of poor quality, and women were often forced to



Wayne Dixon

wear inappropriate and ill-fitting men's clothing.

### BUS WORKERS

RMT delegates also backed a comprehensive campaign to head off the threats to jobs and working conditions from automation.

Stagecoach has already launched an autonomous bus project in Edinburgh although at the moment, two staff members are required on board in case of any technical problems.

Moving the unanimously backed motion calling for a vigorous campaign on the issue, **Julie Tobin** said:

"Travelling by bus is currently the safest mode of road

transport. That is because as professional bus drivers we are the best, most tested drivers in this country and around the world.

"Whilst robots can use radar and GPS, it cannot legislate for other drivers on the road. So, whilst employers claim it is safer, unless every vehicle is automated, that will not necessarily be the case.

"All they care about is cost savings and efficiencies for the company.

"They have put millions into these projects to erode our jobs and our working conditions.

Julie Tobin concluded that although the autonomous bus project was in a trial phase,

eventually employers were looking to remove human bus workers from the industry altogether.

"By 2030, they are looking at driverless technology, where there won't be a need for any staff on board.

"In the trial phase, we have a safety driver monitoring the controls in case anything goes wrong. And a bus captain which will be used not only to jump into the cab when something goes wrong but to also selling tickets and getting into arguments with passengers who don't have tickets.

"We're effectively doing two jobs for the price of one.

"We need a concerted and concentrated campaign on where this is all going and how we are going to safeguard our terms and conditions," she said.

Eddie Dempsey said: "We have a crucial role in making sure when automation comes into the transport sector that it isn't just a vehicle that benefits private companies extracting more and more profits".

Conference also agreed a motion from the union's bus organising conference which met in Torquay earlier this year to set up an organising committee to oversee the recruitment and retention of bus workers into the union.

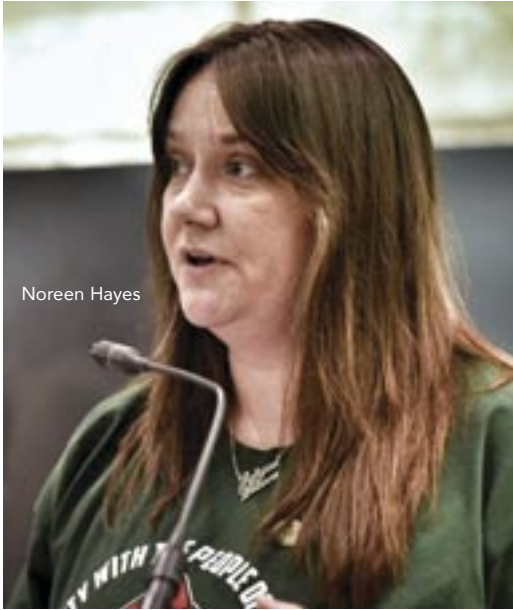


Stephanie Young



Freddie Seale

**AGM BOURNEMOUTH 2023**



Noreen Hayes



Mick Lynch

**FLEXIBLE WORKING**

Delegates slammed employers for continuing to refuse flexible working requests on the basis that the employer could easily reject it citing "business interests".

**Jessica Robinson, Darlington** said that flexible working could be requested by anyone regardless of gender, but it does happen to be that the majority of requests are made by women.

"That's largely because within the home it is mostly women who take on caring responsibilities.

"Flexible working works, I have seen in my own workplace we have now four women who fought for flexible working and now have suitable contracts," she said.

She added that any incoming Labour government must act on its promises and that the union was in the forefront in pushing for workers' rights.

"We need to make sure employers make flexible working the default," she said.

**Beverleigh Thomas, Waltham Cross and District** highlighted the need for flexible working to be the default after telling conference of tragic personal circumstances when her sister was terminally ill.

**TACKLING ASSAULTS**

The union was instructed by the conference to make sure every company operating on railway had a genuine duty of care policy and that is followed in post-assault cases.

**Central Line West delegate Ross Marshall** said: "We have members being treated for a broken shoulder as the result of assaults and members receiving mental health treatment."

He also highlighted the "truly shocking" footage of an assault on a gate line worker in Harrow.

"Companies must be forced to follow their legal duty of care when staff are assaulted," he said.

**Nathan Wallace, Central Line East** added: "We should be trying to stop these assaults taking place and to make sure stations are properly staffed.

"We are fighting to prevent 600 job losses on London Underground," he said.

**Wale Agunbiade, East London Rail** said: "On Arriva Rail London - the company has not taken the action they should have done. We do not go to work to be assaulted".

Assistant general secretary John Leach said that the union should not tolerate assaults.

"We are professional men and women who keep this

country running. The constant message I get is that it is a growing problem, and it is totally unacceptable," he said.

**SURVEY**

Conference called on the union to carry out a survey of all black and ethnic minority members regarding their experiences of the internal RMT structures.

**Wale Agunibadi** said that such a survey was aimed at increasing the level of participation in the union's internal structures.

"We need to calvinise and encourage black and ethnic minority members to be active in the union.

"We need to be fully inclusive and diverse. Our union is already at the forefront of the trade union movement, and we must continue to move in that direction," he said.

John Leach said that the survey should be a 'listening exercise'.

Conference also called for the empowerment of migrant worker members against exploitation and discrimination based on immigration status.

**Glenroy Watson**, said that electronic checks on status, workplace raids and other coercive measures were not only racist but also excessive and wrong.

"This union is punching

above its weight on this issue and has recently moved a motion at the TUC black workers conference opposing the so-called 'hostile environment' for migrants created by the Tory government," he said.

**APPRENTICES**

Delegates called for the end to outsourcing of the education of apprentices on the rail network.

**Fred Seale, LU fleet** said that outsourced education fell far short of what was promised.

"The state of apprentice education has never been worse as it has been outsourced and privatised, using tutors often with little or no railway experience as a result.

"This will not stop with apprentices because if training can be gutted and outsourced for apprentices, it can spread throughout our industry," he said.

**Marc Harris, Ashford** said: "Working on the track is already dangerous enough without the added hinderance of substandard education for apprentices".

**Paul Reilly, Nuneaton** said that were widespread concerns that apprentices were often used as cheap labour as a part of the erosion of standards.

Delegates supported a campaign to bring rail apprentice education in-house and lobby MPs, regional mayors and other politicians throughout the country.

**Eddie Dempsey** added: "This is about RMT campaigning the elements of apprenticeship schemes back in house where they have been outsourced.

"We will use research to look at the costs and waste of outsourcing and that will help to improve the schemes and will give us a leg up in trying to organise the next generation of trade unionists in the union," he said.



**SOCIAL CARE**

Delegates backed the campaign by the National Pensioners Campaign (NPC) for nursing care to be funded like the NHS through general taxation, free at the point of use and without means-testing.

**Retired RMT member Tony Donaghy** warned that

500 pensioners were dying every week due to lack of care.

"The current level of social care is shameful and unacceptable, an NPC survey recently revealed that the lack of support equated to 79 people dying each day particularly in poor areas," he said.

Mick Lynch backed the call

and said that the union should enhance and encourage the role of retired members in the union.

"We need to harness the experience of retired members as they have a lifetime of knowledge to offer," he said.

Retired member Leslie Finlayson also pointed out that the Tory freeze on personal tax allowances of

£12,570 until 2028 at the height of a cost-of-living crisis which meant that pensioners were being taxed on their pensions.

"Pensioners are being ripped off by this Tory government and they need the support of the trade union movement.

"We need to be saying 'lift the freeze'," she said. ■

## WHEN INDIAN FARMERS STOOD UP

Conference was addressed by Dr Ashok Dhawale, president of the 15-million strong Indian farmers union the All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) outlining how hundreds of thousands of farmers marched on New Delhi in protest at laws to restrict farmers rights.

"As part of protests that continued for over a year, men, women and children occupied the main roads around the capital.

"Protesters resisted cane charges, water cannon and government provocations in a

huge secular struggle which united Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

"Farmers united under the slogan 'no farmers, no food, no future' and showed great unity and determination to defeat the right-wing Modi-led regime.

"Finally in November 2021 the government backed down and removed the anti-farmer laws," he said.

He congratulated RMT for fighting for its members and inspiring other workers in Britain to stand up against low pay and cuts.



Dr Ashok Dhawale

He ended his speech by quoting the radical poet Percy Shelley who is buried in Bournemouth: "Rise like Lions after slumber In unvanquishable number—

Shake your chains to earth like dew Which in sleep had fallen on you— Ye are many—they are few". ■

\* Dr Ashok Dhawale is the author of a book on the farmers struggle called 'When farmers stood up'.

## PORTUGUESE SOLIDARITY

The Federation of Transport and Communications Trade Unions (FECTRANS) coordinator Jose Manuel Oliveira addressed conference with a message of solidarity and spoke of common struggle in defence of public services and workers.

He outlined how governments were increasing the exploitation of workers to accumulate wealth by the big economic and financial groups using all means including war.

"We must stop all wars whether in Europe or in other parts of the world to give peace a chance.

"In Portugal workers have been struggling against the intervention of the Troika of

the European Union, European Central Bank and IMF for many years to defend wages, rights and demands for privatisation.

"The government is now using the pretexts of the pandemic, war and sanctions to appease the interests of large companies which accumulate enormous profits while opting not to respond to trade unions demands and claims.

"In other words, the Portuguese government is submitting Portugal to the neoliberal policies of the European Union which promote the privatisation and the destruction of the public sector, limiting the country's capacity for sovereign



development.

"The interference of the EU has imposed a model of low wages and precarious work that makes about over a million workers in Portugal earn the minimum national wage, while attacking social and labour rights.

"In fact, in Portugal, we are witnessing the forces of

capital trying to reverse the victory of the April Revolution in 1974 which resulted in the overthrow of fascism.

"My union recognises the decisive role of the class struggle in defence of the legitimate rights, interests and the aspirations of the workers. The struggle continues," he said. ■

# US SOLIDARITY

The president of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) John Samuelsen brought solidarity from the United States.

He outlined the anti-trade union laws that exist in many states of the country which outlaws strike action.

"We recognise the current

attacks on your trade union rights as we have essential services laws which prevent us taking action. However, we find ways to take action anyway.

"As long as we keep fighting and have the audacity to fight, we can win whatever they throw at us," he said. ■



John Samuelsen

President's Column

## 'RISE LIKE LIONS'

### RMT president Alex Gordon's address to the Annual General Meeting



RMT's AGM this year meets in Bournemouth, Dorset, one of the birthplaces of the trade union movement where you can visit the Shelley Family tomb in St Peter's churchyard.

Mary Shelley, author of Frankenstein, was born in Somers Town, St Pancras in London in 1797, near RMT's head office, Unity House. Her mother Mary Wollstonecraft, author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and founder of feminism in Britain, died after giving birth and she was later buried alongside her daughter in Bournemouth.

Mary Shelley was buried in Bournemouth alongside the heart of her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley who on hearing of the massacre of workers by armed cavalry at St Peter's Fields, Manchester in 1819 wrote the words that feature on so many trade union banners:

"Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number—  
Shake your chains to earth like dew,  
Which in sleep had fallen on you—  
Ye are many—they are few."

Shelley's words inspired generations of workers facing powerful class enemies and repressive forces of the state. From the six Tolpuddle Martyrs, deported to Australia in 1834 for swearing an oath not to undercut each other's wages, to the Windrush survivors in 2018, wrongfully detained and denied legal rights.

We need Shelley's inspiration today when employers and government ooze contempt for working people. We remember the 800 workers sacked by P&O Ferries via video message to staff working on board its ships on 17 March 2022 – the St Patrick's Day Massacre.

One year later in March the Tory government awarded its flagship Thames Gateway freeport - a multi-billion-pound project to redevelop land, docks, and industry in the Thames estuary in a tax-exempt environment - to P&O Ferries' parent company, DP World owned by the Sultan of Dubai.

The message of the P&O debacle is that employers in Britain can break the law with

impunity and 'price in' a few weeks' pay in lieu of notice as compensation for unlawful mass sackings.

During the past year, our union can take pride in leading waves of strike action against employers' plans to serve notice on hard-won collective agreements and casualise employment contracts.

During 2022 working families also faced the fastest rising inflation since 1989. RPI inflation hit 11.8 per cent in June 2022 and has remained in double digits ever since. Whatever excuses from this government of the rich, by the rich, for the rich, the reality is that workers' wages in Britain continue to fall, while prices of energy, food, housing, and other basic necessities rise.

A government economic advisor also called on the Bank of England to "create a recession" to cut inflation. Karen Ward, from JPMorgan Chase, the world's largest Bank by capitalisation with deposits of \$3.7 trillion, told the BBC, "Workers when they're a little less confident about their jobs won't ask for a pay rise. It's that weakness

which eventually gets rid of inflation".

As the Bank of England raised interest rates to five per cent, Bank Governor Andrew Bailey, who was paid £600,000 in 2022 said: "We cannot continue to have the current level of wage increases".

He precisely represents the biggest banks and private corporations driving working people and small businesses into poverty to save the value of finance capital from the consequences of its own monopoly profiteering.

It is time to raise the level of class struggle to cut the unaccountable power of the Bank of England, the banking sector, and corporate monopolies, which are driving Britain into recession, and mass poverty.

The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill, intended in Business Secretary, Grant Shapps' words to "complete Margaret Thatcher's unfinished business" by banning strikes by health, fire and rescue, education, transport, nuclear energy, and border security workers, is a moment Shelley might have recognised.





## RMT young members vice chair Sarah Cundy reports on the annual course run alongside AGM

The annual RMT young members course offers an opportunity for young members to learn more about the union, our history and processes and to watch our union's 'parliament' in action at the annual general meeting.

This year the course joined the AGM in Bournemouth and was attended by 10 delegates from a wide range of branches and grades.

Over the course of the week delegates heard from several union officers, officials and international guests. RMT senior assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey kicked off the course with an introduction to the history of the union and the current dispute. Delegates also heard from Tony Donaghey, former RMT President and a comrade of NUR member Asquith Xavier. Tony talked about how Asquith broke the colour bar at British Rail in London, becoming the first black guard at Euston Station.

Jonathan White from RMT's policy department gave an insightful overview of the history of rail in Britain, the

failures of rail privatisation and the vision the union had for an integrated publicly owned transport system.

Young delegates also gained a greater insight into the union's current structures and processes. Outgoing regional organiser John Tilley talked to delegates about the role of regional organisers and NEC members Wayne Moore and Ajayi Oluwarotimi explained the work of the committee.

Ross Marshall from the Standing Orders Committee also spoke about its role at the AGM. RMT general secretary Mick Lynch also took time to address any questions that had come up over the week.

A delegation from the Transport Workers Union of the United States also spoke about how they navigate industrial action in areas where striking has been made illegal, such as on the New York Metro where the Taylor Law bans state employees from taking strike action.

As we face the implementation of the minimum service laws, hearing

their advice and tactics was particularly insightful.

Delegates also heard from Daniel Blackburn of the International Centre for Trade Union Rights who spoke about trade union victimisation around the world and how we can support other trade unionists internationally.

As well as hearing from guests and running through material with course leaders Rhys Harmer and Rupert Pickering, the course made time to watch plenty of the AGM in session. Hearing AGM delegates speak on issues and observing the AGM direct policy, it was a pleasure to experience the union's democratic decision-making process.

One of the delegation, Oliver, a signaller from Kent, said: 'It was fantastic to see the democracy at the heart of our union at the young members AGM course in Bournemouth this year. The course was extremely insightful, and we covered a broad range of subjects from the structure of the AGM, to organising our union and trade

union movement more widely.

"I'd highly recommend this course to any young trade unionists wanting to find out more about the inner workings of our union," he said.

The Young Members Advisory Committee would like to thank all those who dropped in to speak to the course and education officer Michael Cudjoe, who supported the programme's delivery.

We'd also like to thank Dorset Rail Branch for their hospitality in Bournemouth and for making young members welcome at all the superb AGM social events.

If you're a member under 31 and interested in getting more involved in the union, please contact me (Sarah) or our Chair Niamh at [YMChair@RMT.org.uk](mailto:YMChair@RMT.org.uk) or through our social media pages. Moreover, branches can nominate interested young members to the Young Members' Advisory Committee, which meets every quarter to organise campaigns and discuss issues relating to young workers. ■

# BRANCH SECRETARIES MEET

Jim Philp of RMT's branch secretaries conference reports from Walsall



This year's branch secretaries conference meeting in Walsall proved to be a success with guest speakers, superb hospitality from the branch and a full house of delegates plus extra on zoom.

Richard Rose of Unity Bank held a surgery on Saturday morning explaining how it had

changed the process making it easier to add and subtract signatories to accounts plus a union dedicated helpline.

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch gave a full account of the union's activities over the last year and praised the branch secretaries for their work and leadership through

the branch and on the picket line. RMT education officer Michael Cudojge spoke and delegates raised questions about courses that were required for new secretaries.

After 104 years conference has now opted to go into the Rule Book which will mean a slight change to its

constitution and standing orders. We hope to see a further increase in the number of delegates next year when we will be having our first conference under rule in Swansea. I'm sure it will be a great success with Mandy and her team leading the way.

## DAVE BOSSONS 50 YEARS

Long-serving member David Bossons picked up his 50 year membership badge from RMT general secretary Mick Lynch and incoming regional organiser Steve Shaw at Unity House

recently having been on the tools the whole time. Dave started at Crewe works as an apprentice in 1973. He currently works as a cleaner for Atalian Servest on the Avanti West coast contract. ■



## ENGINEERING AWARDS

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch made presentations for long service awards for members of LU Engineering branch. 25-year badges were presented to Paul Grant, Paul

O'Brien and Derek Lewis.

40-year awards were given to Michael Valbonesi, Len Ebanks, Clive Kelly, Hedley Francis, Christopher Gilbert and John Burke. ■







# WINDRUSH PROCESSION

Ebony Kingston reports on commemorations to mark the 75th anniversary of Windrush docking at Tilbury

June 22 2023 was a day for the commemoration of the 75th anniversary arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush ship that docked at the port of Tilbury, Essex in 1948. It carried 492 men, women and children from the Caribbean, many of them veterans of the Second World War.

The procession in South London started from outside 198 Gallery, 198 Railton Road, Herne Hill, making its way through Railton Road, touching onto Atlantic Road, then turning left onto Saltoun Road, before arriving at Windrush Square. The event, which was organised by The Brixton Project, included participants from RMT, Jewish Voices For Labour and many



others including an array of people in carnival inspired costumes, people wearing apparel that would have been worn while greeting these shores, namely smart suits and dresses.

These clothes would have been considered Sunday Best.

Of course, RMT members joined the ranks in carrying their banners in full flow. At the front of the procession were drummers to get the spirit going, as well as a float that was made into the shape of the very ship that transported many of the grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles and children that would make their lives and therefore make their contributions to British society.

Upon arrival at Windrush Square, we were met with a plethora of performances such as opera singing from Brixton based Pegasus Opera, Kinetika Bloco Steel Pans,



speeches from Reverend Bishop Brown, Lambeth Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Olivia Augustin, followed by performances from the Black British Ballet Project and Akomasa performing Arts before drawing to a close. ■







## Rupert Pickering of Camden No 3 branch reports on a brigade united in friendship and labour

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) sent 52 young trade unionists to Cuba for May Day and this year including myself, Niamh Ramsey of Birmingham Rail and Glenn Cameron from Inverness No.1. This provided an opportunity to engage with Cuban culture, witness the country's achievements, and demonstrate solidarity with its ongoing struggle against the United States on going genocidal blockade.

The US blockade against Cuba was introduced explicitly to make the Cuban people suffer enough to overthrow their government, so that US companies could once again extract resources and cheap

labour.

The blockade seeks to prevent any company around the world from trading with Cuba of face sanctions from the US. This means the vast majority of companies globally choose to not do business with Cuba even though many countries, including our own, consider this type of embargo to be illegal. We have laws in place that state British companies have a right to trade with both Cuba and the US, but in practice we ignore our own laws and allow the US to dictate our foreign policy.

The trip consisted of a series of lectures, agricultural work and visits to sites of

interest with regard to Cuban society and economy. However, outside of this a few things struck me as contrasting with the UK. Firstly, I saw no rough sleeping or homelessness in Havana or anywhere else on the island, and secondly, I have never seen so much live music and other performance art in such a short space of time. Art for art's sake is something that the government clearly recognise in the education system.

We saw many fascinating responses to Cuba's on-going struggles. We engaged in agricultural work like weeding and planting seedlings as Cuba struggles to import

farming machinery and fertiliser due to the blockade and many Cubans are involved in growing organic food on personal plots or as part of small collective farms that exist within and near to cities and towns.

We were welcomed at the opening ceremony by Cuban Hero Fernando Gonzalez Lloret, one of the Miami Five who was jailed for many years in the US for disrupting US terrorist plots against Cuba. We then received a lecture of the new Cuban Constitution. When first became active in the union, I remember people expressing concern about Cuba's supposed problem with



Homophobia. Therefore, it was interesting to see that after 14 months of consultations with civil society including trade unions, Cuban women's associations, local townhall meetings etc the new constitution's family code provides legal recognition of the right to marriage for same sex and trans gender people, non-marriage unions between people of the same sex couples, same-sex adoption and non-commercial surrogacy. It is one of the most progressive family codes in Latin America.

Another lecture was from presenter from the anti-propaganda show Con Filo. He said that the US initially excluded the country from the infrastructure program that provided broadband to the Caribbean and so many Cubans have only recently got online. As the internet is relatively new, he said that many Cubans will believe whatever news reports they see online. His job was to debunk the false reporting that US intelligence services push to Cubans on websites and twitter. He said that education

efforts like this were the preferred approach to dealing with fake news from abroad, instead of blocking foreign websites. Indeed, the only problems with accessing foreign websites that we had, was when using sites that the US had banned from operating in Cuba.

We visited a factory making electrical products, including solar panels. It was very interesting to speak to the manager of the factory who clearly had the needs of the wider Cuban economy at the front of his mind – solar panels help Cuba become self-reliant on energy. However, every question we asked was also answered by the head of the trade union in the factory, which had 100 per cent density. The trade union leader would occasionally forcefully disagree the manager, such as on issues like bonuses for meeting targets. It was really interesting to see how trade unions interact with management in an economy where there is less focus on shareholder profit and instead a focus on producing goods society needs.



On visiting a Cuban hospital, it was striking to see that the majority of doctors there had worked abroad as an important way to re-pay their country for the free training which they had received. They also saw it as part of their pledge to help the sick wherever they may be. The internationalism of the Cuban people dictates that they do not draw a difference between sick people at home or abroad.

Finally, I would like to say that the most moving visit we made was to a centre for people with special educational needs. What was most amazing, was the very

high amount of one on one contact with carers who were highly qualified in child development. We also saw the amazing programs for integrating the people cared for into the wider society, through support in their workplaces and homes.

This trip was a transformative educational experience for all three of us, which I don't doubt will influence the rest of our lives. It was amazing to see the social good that Cuba can achieve with so little. Cuba truly is a beacon to oppressed people all over the world, showing us all that another world is possible. ■



# REPORT CONCERNS ON THE GO WITH NEW APP



When workers asked us for a CIRAS reporting app, we listened, and now the CIRAS app is available to download for free on the App Store and Google Play Store.

The app features a simple reporting form, or you can press its quick-dial button to call the reporting hotline and speak to someone.

For faster reporting, you can save your details on the app. Then it'll take even less time to submit your concern next time.

Some of the reasons people asked us for an app was its appeal to younger staff and because it makes reporting on the go much easier. 'Everyone has a phone these days,' and another benefit of an app is

'you don't have to wait [to report] – people get busy and might forget otherwise'.

Confidential reporting

You can use the CIRAS confidential reporting service to share your health, safety and wellbeing concerns with your employer or another company. This helps to improve safety and reduce risk.

CIRAS listens to your concerns and sends them to the company in confidence, protecting your identity.

If you tell CIRAS about your concern, CIRAS will also send you the response from the company they shared it with.

CIRAS listens to a wide range of concerns impacting health, safety and wellbeing,

including about organisational and industry change, culture, infrastructure assets, systems and environmental issues.

Concerns do not need to have been reported through another channel before being raised with CIRAS. But if an issue is an immediate safety risk, it should be reported through appropriate alternative channels instead.

As well as the app, you can share your concern with CIRAS on 0800 4 101 101, use the reporting form at <https://www.ciras.org.uk> or use Freepost CIRAS.■

Go to [youtube.com/@CIRAS\\_reporting](https://youtube.com/@CIRAS_reporting) to watch a demo of the new CIRAS reporting app.







# CLEAN AIR AT WORK

## RMT marks Clean Air Day with online training meeting for safety reps to use air quality monitors

RMT organised an event to mark Clean Air Day on June 15 this year to highlight the fact that air pollution causes up to 36,000 deaths in the UK. The World Health Organisation and the UK government also recognises that air pollution is the largest environmental health risk faced today.

The union carried out an online training session for the use of clean air monitors purchased following resolutions from last year's health and safety advisory conference. Hilda Palmer from Hazards Campaign and the Trade Union Clean Air Campaign (TUCAN) and Sharon Isaac-Upton, head of UK operations at Smart Air spoke about how to use such 'Qingping' devices for safety reps in order to find out what levels of pollution RMT members were being exposed to in the workplace.

RMT reps asked the speakers what if employers questioned the efficacy of the device and Hilda Palmer

responded that handheld mobile air quality monitors had improved considerably in recent years in terms of reliability. But if employers do question the reliability of these monitors there was nothing to stop them procuring more expensive monitors.

All the information from the meeting can be found here on health and safety section of the RMT web site. RMT safety reps have been asked to inform the union at: [healthandsafety@rmt.org.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@rmt.org.uk) of progress made following readings taken.

Feedback from RMT reps in relation to London Underground revealed readings that were high in terms of harmful matter particularly in relation to readings taken at Stockwell, Vauxhall and Pimlico stations. The readings come as no surprise given that researchers from the University of Cambridge concluded last year that "the London Underground is polluted with

ultrafine metallic particles small enough to end up in the human bloodstream".

Safety reps on Northern Railways have brought the issue of Diesel Engine Exhaust Emissions to the director level at Northern Railways and a forum has been created and members can vacate the work area if they feel that the air quality in their workspace is compromised. Pressure from the reps has also convinced the local safety management team to produce a monthly bulletin, specifically detailing the current developments with this issue.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is also increasing their inspections of respiratory risks from exposure to dust. Checking the control measures in place to protect workers from inhaling construction dusts including silica and asbestos. The HSE has previously faced criticism for refusing to introduce a more protective standard for silica, one of the most deadly site dusts. Its own research

has shown that exposure to silica leads to many health problems including cancer.

The RMT campaign was initiated as a response to RSSB T118 report which included an analysis of air quality on board trains. This report hit national headlines when it showed that pollution on some new UK trains was 13 times one of London's busiest road and that nitrogen dioxide levels far exceeded average recorded on traffic clogged Marlyebone Road.

The government said that the RSSB study was designed to access typical passenger exposure and that working patterns may mean staff spend time in different interior areas of the train that were not sampled and over longer periods than passenger, and that this "may be an aspect of air quality on trains that could require more representative measurements to be made". RMT will be taking up these issues with Hitachi and the RSSB. ■



London

# TAKING PRIDE

RMT members join events celebrating pride in diversity





Brum Pride

RMT members took part in a number of LGBT+ pride and trade union events in the last couple of months. There were large contingents of RMT members at the annual London Pride in July and in Birmingham.

The union also sent delegates to the TUC LGBT conference and RMT member Colin Masters addressed delegates.

Meryn Finlay, Oban Shipping and Martin Duncan, Perth No.1 also formed the RMT delegation at the Scottish

TUC LGBT conference in Clydebank. The theme of the event was 'Scotland's LGBT+ Workers Demanding Better: Protecting our rights, fighting for our future'.

Many resolutions were debated including tackling the global rise of LGBT+ hate, trans and non-binary inclusion, reform of gender identity clinics, LGBT+ refugees, unequal health outcomes; fit funding for public services and improving LGBT+ diversity and education.

Meryn Finlay took to the

podium as a first-time speaker to raise the debate on International LGBT+ rights, where the bizarre decisions of FIFA regarding the World Cup and Qatar were discussed amongst related topics.

Delegates also took part in productive and interesting workshops which explored taking control of the narrative and political education. The depth of the debate, the wealth of knowledge in the room, and the importance of the issues at stake cannot be understated when reporting

on this event.

Every delegate demonstrated the common purpose of representing the concerns of their LGBT+ members and every delegate took the learning experience back to their workplace with renewed resolve.

If you identify as LGBT+ and would like to get involved get in touch with your branch. This type of friendly, diverse and inclusive event cannot be too highly recommended and is an excellent place to make your conferencing debut. ■



London



DELEGATES: A very busy and productive STUC LGBT+ conference was joined this year by Meryn Finlay of Oban Shipping and Martin Duncan of Perth No1 as a small but perfectly formed RMT delegation



TUC LGBT delegation

# RMT WINS TUC COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

RMT won best media story and best use of social media categories at this year's TUC communications awards.

Best story was awarded for utilising RMT general secretary Mick Lynch's 'exceptional' communication skills and exploiting the arrogance of broadcasters.

"Public opinion was swayed by Lynch's personable and quick-witted appearances on broadcast media were then amplified on Twitter and TikTok, making the general secretary a household name".

The social media award was given for an "excellent understanding of tone and humour on Twitter used to communicate a serious message and influence public

opinion.

"The judges loved how the RMT Twitter account made very effective use of quote tweets to engage their audience and to rebut arguments.

"The success is evident in the engagement numbers and shows what you can achieve with little money and a lot of imagination," it said.

The judges also thought RMT News was packed with strike news and updates across the transport sectors with "many great photos of union activity". They also liked the variation of content in the form of history, culture, environment and union survey results.

RMT's leaflet 'It's Time for



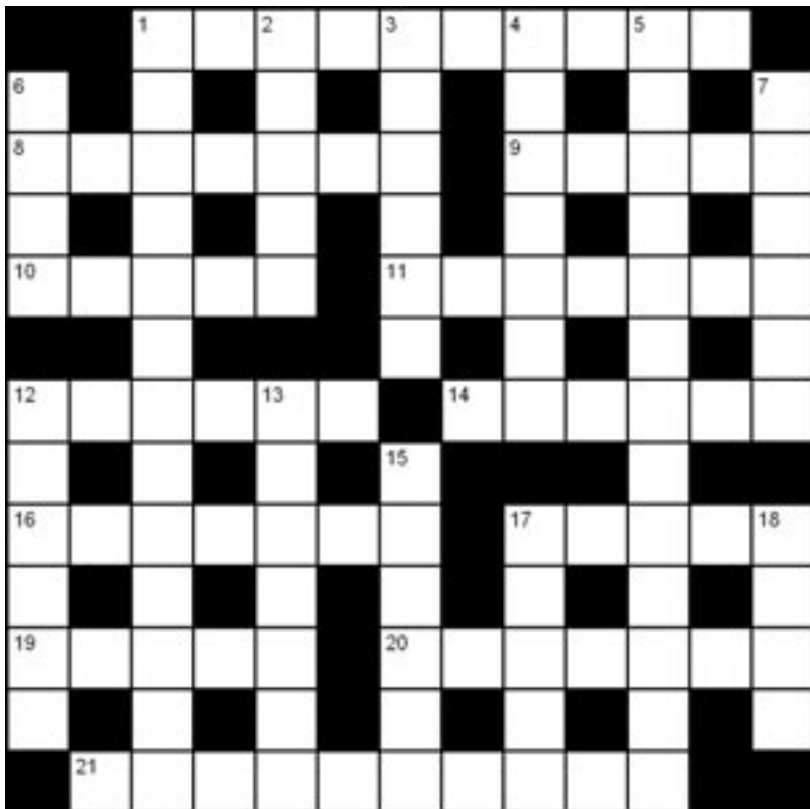
AWARDS: RMT press officer John Millington and social media officer Andrew Brattle

*Justice for Cleaners'* was also mentioned for having a "real authenticity to it.

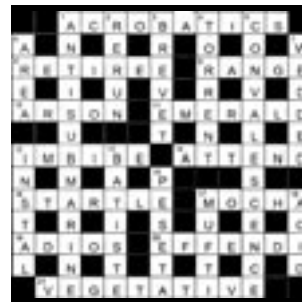
"The judges thought the

badge style campaign logo was excellent and identifiably RMT," the TUC said.

# £50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



## Last month's solution...



Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by September 4 2023 with your name and address.

Last month's winner is A Roberts, Mughall.

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

### ACROSS

- 1 Hot metal type setter (10)
- 8 Aquatic mammal (7)
- 9 Strainer (5)
- 10 Brief (5)
- 11 Serious (7)
- 12 Magnate (6)
- 14 Influenza (6)
- 16 Full (7)
- 17 Male duck (5)
- 19 Mistakenly (5)
- 20 Mournful (7)
- 21 Offensive (10)

### DOWN

- 1 Birth control device (13)
- 2 Not reflecting light (5)
- 3 Unsealing device (6)
- 4 Broker (7)
- 5 Exaggerate (13)
- 6 Express (4)
- 7 Water boiler (6)
- 12 Road surface (6)
- 13 Supervise (7)
- 15 Sorrowful (6)
- 17 Geek (5)
- 18 Every (4)



# Save money with your RMT membership!



"Any income RMT receives from these products goes into our dispute fund."

With household finances under mounting pressure from the current cost of living crisis, we wanted to remind you that your RMT membership is there for you both in and out of work.

Over 68,000 RMT members have benefited from membership services which offer a variety of savings, as well as legal and financial support from our trusted partners.

Members are benefiting from cashback on their everyday shopping, exclusive car and home insurance rates, as well as protection policies designed with union members and their families in mind. **Your family can benefit too!†**



## EARN CASHBACK ON YOUR INTERNET SHOPPING

Union Rewards provides cashback and discounts from hundreds of online retailers. Access to Union Rewards is free to RMT members and includes a £10 Welcome Bonus for you.

[RMTRewards.com](https://RMTRewards.com)



## FREE £5,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH COVER

Don't miss out on your RMT membership entitlement. Register for your FREE £5,000 Accidental Death Cover today:

[RMTProtect.com/Member](https://RMTProtect.com/Member)



## CAR INSURANCE COMPARISON

Compare quotes online to see how much you could save on your car insurance. PLUS don't miss out on their Price Match Guarantee - if you find a cheaper car insurance quote online, just call **0330 022 6657** and RMTCar guarantee to beat it!

[RMTCar.co.uk](https://RMTCar.co.uk)



## RMT PREPAID PLUS CASHBACK CARD

Earn up to 8% cashback on your everyday shopping with the RMT Prepaid Plus Cashback card!

[RMTPrepaid.com/Magazine](https://RMTPrepaid.com/Magazine)



## SAVE WITH THE **NEW** HOME INSURANCE COMPARISON SERVICE

With an expert panel of insurers, the home insurance comparison offers a discount for RMT members and searches for the best deals to suit your needs.

PLUS - get a quote before 30<sup>th</sup> November to be entered into our £2,000 prize draw!

[RMTProtect.com/Home](https://RMTProtect.com/Home)



## INCOME PROTECTION

Pays you a monthly tax-free income which can be used to pay your bills, your mortgage or your rent in the event you are unable to work due to an accident or sickness.

[RMTProtect.com/Income](https://RMTProtect.com/Income)



## GUARANTEED ACCEPTANCE LIFE INSURANCE

Life Insurance provides a cash lump sum payout when you die, money to help support your loved ones at a very difficult time. Key features of RMT life cover include:

- ✓ Guaranteed acceptance
- ✓ No medical questions
- ✓ Fixed premiums - will not rise

[RMTProtect.com/Life](https://RMTProtect.com/Life)

To find out more visit: [RMTProtect.com](https://RMTProtect.com)

†See terms and conditions for full details \*For prize draw rules visit [RMTProtect.com/win2000](https://RMTProtect.com/win2000) Terms and conditions apply to all products. RMTProtect is a trading name of Union Income Benefit Holdings Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority to distribute non-investment insurance products, register number 307575. This can be checked on the FCA website: [www.fca.org.uk](http://www.fca.org.uk). Free Accidental Death Cover and Income Protection underwritten by Stonebridge International Insurance Ltd. Life insurance underwritten by Scottish Friendly Assurance Society Ltd. RMTCar.co.uk is administered by Vast Visibility Limited. Home insurance operated by Ceta Insurance Limited, registered in England & Wales company number 2827690. RMT Rewards and RMT Prepaid Plus are trading names of Union Income Ltd who arrange RMT Rewards and the RMT Prepaid Plus Cashback card.

# JOIN RMT



## BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNION

Visit [www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk) to join  
online or call the helpline on  
freephone **0800 376 3706**

**Problems at work? Call the helpline**



### **Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date**

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

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

