

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

SIGNALLING BATTLES AHEAD



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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

ONLINE SHOPPING DISCOUNTS

Shop online with RMTrewards.com and earn cashback savings from hundreds of retailers, like B&Q, Argos and Tesco. It's free to join, plus you'll get a FREE £10 Welcome Bonus in your online account! (Terms and conditions apply)
www.rmtrewards.com

FINES POOL

if you drive a company vehicle as part of your job you can join the RMT fines pool for £7 per year. The Fines Pool will reimburse members for any speeding fines, related court costs and lost time to attend a court hearing.
www.rmt.org.uk/member-benefits/fines-pool

BEREAVEMENT BENEFIT

A Death Grant of £600 is payable to the nearest relative or legal representative if a member dies through any cause prior to retirement.

CASHBACK PREPAID CARD

Fancy cashback on your everyday shopping? Use your RMT Prepaid Plus Cashback card at over 50 partner retailers, including Sainsbury's, ASDA and Boots, and earn unlimited cashback! It's

different to a credit or debit card - you can only spend what you load so there's less chance of getting carried away.
www.rmtprepaid.com

FREE £5,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH COVER

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

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

www.rmtprotect.com

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

Join RMT by visiting www.rmt.org.uk

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EDITORIAL



BEATING LOW PAY

I am delighted to be able to report this month on the huge victory that the union has secured in our on-going fight against the scourge of low pay in the transport sector.

The agreement by Network Rail to respond positively to RMT's hard-fought campaign and to guarantee that staff working for contractors on their supply side will from April be paid the real living wage is a massive breakthrough. It has been achieved by a combination of strong organisation on the ground, pressure on both NR and the cleaning companies, political support and tough negotiations.

I want to pay tribute to our negotiators, our members and to Ian Mearns MP from our parliamentary group whose tireless efforts helped us to get this ground-breaking deal over the line.

The response from across the across the trade union movement has been phenomenal as once again RMT is seen as leading the way - chalking up real victories, fighting and winning for our members regardless of industry, employer and grade.

We know that there is much more to do but the message has gone out loud and clear across the transport industry, when it comes to jobs, pay and working conditions when RMT is on the case there is nowhere to run and nowhere to hide.

In this issue of RMT News you will see a new report by the union which reveals that government plans to overhaul the privatised railway will only lead to more profiteering and more dividends flowing overseas.

RMT's new report 'Reanimating the Corpse' examines the record of management contracts and concessions on the privatised railway, widely touted as being the government's favoured option for the future and it is doomed to failure.

That is why RMT has launched a campaign to keep Northern Rail public following the collapse of the franchise and its renationalisation this month. This has to be a permanent move followed up with the investment and planning needed to deliver the rail services that passengers deserve after years of privatised chaos.

RMT also welcomes the government's renewed focus on bus services, which have been in decline for many years, and are an essential public service for all of our communities.

Since 2010, over 3,000 bus services have been cut or withdrawn - and for many years, the number of bus passenger journeys has fallen, thus urgent action is needed to revive our bus networks. It remains to be seen if the government is willing to move away from the failed privatised model and invest for the long term.

The union also believes that it is time that the issue of pensions was brought to the top of the maritime and offshore agenda. RMT ran a pension survey amongst maritime members last year to find out more about workplace pension options and how to improve pensions for seafarers and over 700 shipping and offshore members responded. See the results inside and what action the union wants to take.

As we go to press it remains unclear how the corona virus pandemic will develop but clearly big decisions are going to have to be made soon and transport workers are clearly in the front line. This could mean the cancellation of many public events. RMT will keep you posted as to what action this union will take to ensure the safety of members and staff.

Mick Cash

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



WHO'S GOING TO BUILD IT?

Following HS2 finally getting the green light RMT calls for taskforce to address skills and jobs deficit

RMT has warned that the government will fail to hit the High Speed 2 targets if it doesn't address decades of under investment in skills and training as a matter of urgency.

RMT has called for the setting up of a jobs and skills taskforce with the unions at its core which will map the scale of the deficit and set out a plan

of action to deliver HS2 and other projects.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said that it was welcome news to finally see the government recognise the benefits that high-speed rail will bring and commit to the HS2 project.

"However, my union is concerned that after decades of

under investment in the very skills, training and workforce planning we need to fully deliver the HS2 project that the Government will continue to be asleep at the wheel of this project.

"To address this shortage this government must urgently set up a skills taskforce with unions at its core to address

this deficit and fully deliver the project.

"If they do that not only will HS2 improve the wider rail network for passengers, HS2 is the once in a generation opportunity to build the jobs, training and apprenticeships to serve the wider rail industry well into the future," he said.

CAMBRIDGE THREE BACK AT WORK

Three young members of Cambridge branch employed as facility cleaners by Churchill Services (GTR Contract) at Cambridge Station have had their suspension lifted followed the intervention of the union.

The three had been suspended on trumped up charges and their initial hearing was fundamentally flawed and RMT regional organiser Eddie Dempsey (right) halted the proceedings.

Following a press campaign by the union and high-level talks with the company a Churchill director agreed to restart the process and was in attendance with Eddie Dempsey at the investigation stage where it was successfully concluded. ■



SOLIDARITY: London assembly member Unmesh Desai joined the Elephant and castle picket to support workers striking against an unreasonable timetable and bullying.



BAKERLOO LINE STRIKE SOLID

Tube drivers take two days of 24-hour strike action last month with more in the pipeline

Strike action on the Bakerloo line in a dispute over the impact on train drivers over unworkable timetable changes that place operators under intolerable levels of personal stress went ahead last month after tube bosses, under the direction of the London Labour Mayor, refused to reach a settlement that puts safety first.

Despite intensive efforts by RMT negotiators to broker a solution, the LU failed to agree a plan that would deal with the issues at the heart of the dispute.

As a result, the strike action goes ahead with the widespread disruption across the weekend and into next week solely the responsibility of London Underground and their intransigence when the union had made it quite clear that there is a deal to be done.

A ballot for action covering driver members produced a 95

per cent vote for action and they took two 24-hour days of strike action.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union was angry and frustrated that hard work by reps aimed at reaching a negotiated solution had been wasted as the company failed to make any kind of serious progress.

“Their behaviour has been nothing short of outrageous as

they ignore clear union warnings on the safety of passengers and staff alike.

“That failure by London Underground chiefs mean that the action goes ahead as planned today and the London Labour Mayor, as chair of TFL, has to share responsibility for that.

“Drivers voted overwhelmingly for action in this dispute which is all about the

management imposing timetable changes on the Bakerloo line without any serious recognition of the stress impact on the operators expected to implement them.

“The bottom line is that you cannot place intolerable stress and pressure on tube drivers that impacts on their safety-critical role and that is what this dispute is all about,” he said.





JUSTICE FOR MITIE MERSEYRAIL CLEANERS

Mitie Group pays millions to shareholders but refuses to pay cleaners the Real Living Wage

RMT held a protest last month in Liverpool as part of the campaign for Justice for Mitie Merseyrail Cleaners and to demand real living wage now for this crucial group of transport workers.

Held outside the meeting of the Liverpool city region transport committee, activists were joined by Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham.

RMT activists and supporters made the case against poverty pay outside the combined Passenger Transport Authority and Executive for Merseyside's offices on behalf of a group of crucial staff who do some of the dirtiest jobs on the railways.

Merseyrail outsourced station cleaning and maintenance a number of years ago, the work is currently undertaken by Mitie

Facilities Management, part of the Mitie Group plc. Mitie Group paid nearly £49 million to its shareholders in dividends in the last five years. But it won't pay its cleaners the Real Living Wage.

Merseyrail latest profits were £16 million and just £70,000 would fund the Real Living Wage just 0.004 per cent of the profit level. A recent survey carried out by RMT of Mitie workers came back with 50 per cent of respondents saying they struggled to make ends meet. The union believes that Merseyrail should not be allowing its contractors to pay poverty wages and that these workers should be bought back in-house.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the campaign was gaining momentum with growing political and public support.

"We are determined to fight for pay and workplace justice and it is time for Mitie and

Merseyrail to end this disgraceful exploitation and take urgent action.

"It is a scandal that the staff employed by outsourcing giant Mitie who clean stations for Merseyrail, doing some of the dirtiest work in the rail industry at all hours of the night and day, are struggling to make ends meet.

"A company that can pay nearly £49 million to its shareholders in dividends in the last five years for doing nothing can afford a tiny fraction of that to pay its cleaners a decent wage for the work that they do. Merseyrail needs to take urgent action to facilitate payment of the Real Living Wage.

"RMT welcomes the support of the Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham, who recognises that these cleaners should be paid at least the Real Living Wage, and we now call on Merseyrail and Mitie to sort this scandal out and end poverty pay," he said. ■

MASSIVE CLEANERS PAY VICTORY AT NETWORK RAIL

Union wins real living wage for workers who clean Britain's railway stations

RMT has secured a massive victory against the scourge of low pay on Britain's railways after striking a ground-breaking deal that means that all staff employed in the cleaners' supply chain on Network Rail contracts will be paid the real living wage from April.

The deal will benefit hundreds of staff on contracts cleaning Network Rail managed stations and estates and staff in London will be guaranteed a minimum of £10.75 an hour and staff outside the capital will earn no less than £9.30 an hour.

Network Rail has five separate five-year outsourced contracts: two station cleaning contracts with a combined estimated value of £120 million and three that cover NR's operational buildings with an estimated value of £43 million.

The southern stations contract was won by troubled outsourcing giant Interserve while the other four were won by Mitie plc.

NR's tender documents show that it was simply looking for the cheapest possible bid and the outsourcing companies won with offers that came in significantly under the contracts' estimated value.

Given that cleaning is a labour-intensive industry in which wages can be as much as 85 per cent of costs, low value bids mean companies pressing to cut staffing costs. For cleaners working on these contracts, this has meant cuts to staffing numbers, growing

workloads, and for many of them, pay rates below the Real Living Wage.

With neither company willing to recognise the union across all sites, RMT has been organising and fighting to win recognition and tackle low pay at each station while building public and political pressure on Network Rail, Mitie and Interserve.

Last year, RMT waged a highly successful campaign to win the Real Living Wage on

Mitie's stations contract, with more than 80,000 people signing a public petition and motions of support from MPs in Westminster and the Scottish Parliament.

Following the news that these workers would have their pay lifted to at least the Real Living Wage, RMT sought to get this extended to the operational building contracts, arguing that Network Rail had a responsibility to lift pay across its cleaning contracts.

The latest deal has been secured with the support and assistance of Labour MP and RMT Parliamentary Group chair Ian Mearns.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the deal represented a significant victory for RMT and its members in the battle to eliminate low pay on the rail network.

"It sets a floor for the rest of the industry and will be a springboard to pushing ahead with our campaigning with the train operators and others in the rail sector.

"RMT has set as one of its core objectives the battle to value our cleaners and caterers and let the message ring out loud and clear – we are fighting and we are winning.

"I want to pay tribute our negotiators, Ian Mearns from our parliamentary group and most of all our members who have got themselves organised and proved the point that when RMT is on the case no one gets left behind.

"This is a massive shot in the arm and we are sending a signal to the remaining cheapskate employers in our industry that we are coming for you," he said.



VICTORY: Negotiators RMT regional organiser Craig Johnston with Labour MP and RMT parliamentary chair Ian Mearns and regional organiser Eddie Dempsey following the breakthrough victory

REBOOTING RAIL PRIVATISATION

RMT report warns the government plans to resuscitate rail privatisation

RMT has warned that the government's Williams expected review to overhaul the privatised railway – badged as the 'end of franchising' – will only lead to more profiteering and more dividends flowing overseas while leaving passengers trapped in a fragmented and expensive rail network.

RMT's new report *'Reanimating the Corpse'* examines the record of management contracts and concessions on the privatised railway, widely touted as being the government's favoured option for the future of privatisation, revealing that:

- There is no evidence that concessions and management contracts will be any better than the current franchises in running a punctual and reliable service.
- Out of total profits of £204 million made by the concessions since they began, £196 million (96 per cent) has been turned into shareholder dividend.
- The concessions account for

eight per cent of the total dividend payments made by TOCs in the last 10 years, but they account for less than four per cent of the passenger kilometres on the network.

- 65 per cent of this dividend bonanza has flowed overseas because of the degree to which private rail companies are owned by overseas (often foreign state-owned) companies.
- Concessions and management contracts will represent no break with the failed privatisation of the past 27 years and may even offer greater opportunities for private companies to extract value from our railway system at public expense.

The report found little evidence that any attempt to resettle Britain's privately operated railway network on the basis of some variant of concessions or management contracts will do anything but continue to deliver a fragmented system that's bad for passengers but great news for shareholders.

The UK rail sector also has a growing problem with the overseas ownership of the private companies operating its network. Overseas ownership of the UK rail industry has more than doubled in the last decade and, as RMT revealed back in 2011, these companies are using profits and dividends extracted in Britain to cross-subsidise their own railway.

In 2011, a German transport minister explained that "we're skimming profit from the entire Deutsche Bahn and ensuring that it is anchored in our budget - that way we can make sure it is invested in the rail network here in Germany".

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that there was going to be a lot of big talk shortly about a new beginning on the railways but the reality was that any attempt to re-establish privatisation on the basis of concessions and management contracts is going to be another pathetic attempt to reanimate a corpse.

"Grant Shapps knows that it was public ownership that rebuilt our infrastructure and public ownership that improved

services on the East Coast Mainline and that's why he announced the nationalisation of Northern recently.

"Any government that wasn't in bed with big transport companies and City financiers would turn its back on this failed experiment, follow the logic that's staring it in the face, and bring the whole network into public ownership.

"The real solution is staring the government in the face.

"The infrastructure network was nationalised in 2002 following a record of appalling private sector failure. By March, the East Coast Mainline and Northern will be in public ownership following years of dismal private sector failure.

"Instead of trying to reanimate the corpse of privatisation - breathing life into this failed and decomposing carcass for one more round of profiteering at public expense - it's time to draw the curtain on the failed experiment once and for all and bring the whole network into public ownership," he said.



'KEEP NORTHERN PUBLIC'

RMT has joined forces with passenger groups and politicians to launch a campaign demanding the government keeps Northern Rail public following the collapse of the franchise.

This month, after years of mismanagement by successive private train operators, Northern Rail was taken into public control by the Department for Transport but a forthcoming Government review into how are railways are run could move it back into the failed private rail sector within weeks.

Now RMT, politicians, passengers and campaigners will be at train stations across the North of England to send a clear message to the government that private franchise model is broken and must be replaced by an integrated, publicly owned railway from top to bottom.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that private speculators had driven Northern Rail to the brink and its return to public ownership, joining the East Coast Main Line, should not be seen as a short-term fix whilst we wait to see what scheme this Government comes up with next.

This has to be a permanent move followed up with the



investment and planning needed to deliver the rail services that passengers deserve after years of privatised chaos. “

Campaigns Officer at We Own It Ellen Lees said that the calamity of Northern Rail was all the evidence required to see just how disastrous privatisation has been on our railway.

“They’ve caused misery for passengers and it’s a huge relief that their services will now be in public hands. It’s vital that Northern stays public now, to avoid causing further disruption to passengers.

“But Northern aren’t the only ones. From South Western to West Midlands Trains, franchises are collapsing up and down the country. It’s time to face reality - we’ll only fix out broken

railway by bringing it all into public ownership,” she said.

Bring Back British Rail of Ellie Harrison said that the country needed a world-class, fully-integrated public transport network which everyone can afford to use, in order to address the climate emergency and tackle chronic inequalities across our country.

“Public ownership and control of all elements of the network (rail, bus and more) is vital for delivering this and ensuring passengers always come before profit.

“With plans for publicly-controlled bus networks in Manchester and Liverpool, a publicly-owned Northern rail is the final part of the puzzle. We cannot allow Northern to be re-

privatised,” she said.

Emily Yates, co-founder of Association of British Commuters, said that rail franchising was collapsing all over Britain due to toxic relationships between government and private companies.

“There is now a great danger that we will see these same toxic relationships dictate transport policy into the future, via the completely unscrutinised ‘Williams Review’.

“Northern passengers deserve a transparent and accountable system going forward, which means democratic public ownership with passenger and worker representation at its heart,” she said. ■

ITALIAN JOB ON C2C

RMT accused Italian state operator Trenitalia of trying to force the British people into a £20 million taxpayer bail-out of their failing C2C franchise in the latest scandal to rock Britain’s collapsing private rail industry.

It has emerged that Trenitalia have underestimated passenger income on the C2C service and have racked up debts of £20 million.

The company is now reported to be threatening to pull the plug if secret talks with the Government don’t

give them the taxpayer cash they are demanding. The public sector Operator of Last Resort is known to be monitoring the situation and is ready to step in if the Italians decide to throw the keys back.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the crisis on Britain’s privatised railways was deepening by the day.

“The Tories have been forced to strip Arriva of the Northern Franchise, South Western Railway is on financial life support and likely to be the next to fall and now Trenitalia

have taken C2C to the brink. This madness cannot be allowed to continue.

“With the publication of the Williams Report repeatedly delayed we can smell panic right at the heart of Government as even hard-line Tories start to realise that the only solution that can keep trains running is to bring these basket-case franchises into public ownership.

“For passengers and staff alike these constant reports of private rail operators driving services into financial

meltdown is deeply unsettling and means we are running on an ad-hoc, short-term basis when we should be investing and planning for the long-term future.

“RMT will continue to monitor the situation and while we campaign for the integrated, publicly-owned railway that the country is crying out for we will also defend the jobs and conditions of our members caught in the crossfire as the privatised franchises go down like dominoes,” he said. ■



NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION!

New anti-avoidance tax legislation 'IR35' due to come into force next month will hit contractors hard warns RMT regional organiser Eddie Dempsey

A recent protest at parliament saw hundreds of workers protesting the introduction of anti-avoidance tax legislation 'IR35' contained in the 2017 finance bill due to come into effect this April.

IR35 is ostensibly aimed at recovering tax at the appropriate rate from what the HMRC has designated 'disguised employment' – individual contractors employed through a system whereby they have set up as a limited 'personal service company' providing a service of 'labour' rather than having a contract of employment.

In such cases workers employed in this way only pay corporate tax rather than

income tax and national insurance contributions, but are not legally regarded as a 'worker' forfeiting all legal protections and statutory employment rights.

IR35 shifts the onus from individual contractors to nearly all employers for assessing the employment (tax) status off all 'off-payroll' workers hired and making them liable for the employers' national insurance contributions they have so far avoided.

Personal service company contractors will now be taxed the same as directly employed workers, in some cases they will also be liable for paying the employers national insurance

contributions too, but crucially, without any legal or statutory employment rights.

The incoming legislation is thought to affect as many as 200,000 workers.

At the top end of the market in labour contracted through personal service companies highly skilled specialists who often work nationally as genuine temporary/freelance contractors for whom direct employment is unsuitable. However, that does not mean such individuals should be bereft of basic workers' rights or have to face a financial penalty.

At the mid-level of the market skilled workers in addition to the sudden financial

impact face a sudden shift in employment practices by employers seeking to protect themselves from the incoming legislation.

At the lower end of the market unskilled and semi-skilled workers such as transport cleaners find themselves hopelessly exploited carrying out permanent work functions at the bosses whim.

Nearly all personal service company contractors use one of the myriad of umbrella companies, often a subsidiary or holding of the company contracting them to handle their tax and pay arrangements mediating between them and their employers.

The umbrella company bosses are lining up at the trough, seeking to use the disruption arising from the incoming legislation to expand.

Many workers have been lured away from direct employment into what is effect 'no rights employment' by the offer of relatively higher wages and lower contributions trading away their rights to do so.

According to the TUC as many as 3.3 million workers are now employed via various schemes ranging from outsourcing to personal service company contracting bosses use avoid risk associated with employment and their responsibilities to the people that deliver their profits.

A web of lobbyists promote 'no rights employment' to the bosses – openly boasting that employers have no need to worry about trade unions, having a diverse workforce or employing maternity-risk young women. Forget about tribunals you can hire and fire at will. Forget about employee rights of

any kind or sick pay, maternity pay, holiday pay our any other inconvenience.

RMT has long argued that companies should be responsible for setting the employment terms within their supply chains – and should have a joint legal liability with their labour suppliers to protect workers rights.

This has been dismissed by government and industry on the basis that where a company contracts out the responsibility for the conditions overseen by contractors are the responsibility of the contractors alone.

However workers are workers regardless of whatever contractual sleight of hand is used to engage them. This argument too has been dismissed by government and industry.

Yet the government now recognises that all types of contractors are employees and it will tax them as such. Now it suits them, they also concede the principle that companies have a legal responsibility for

their supply chains.

The new Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Suni admitted recently in a public speech defending IR35: "Some people were operating in the way that they weren't paying the tax that they probably should have been, essentially they were employees and were being taxed as if they were self-employed."

Clearly then we have an opportunity to put the case for workers' rights – no taxation without representation. No taxation of contractors as if they're directly employed workers without the corresponding statutory rights and protections.

If companies are responsibility for setting the tax status of workers in their supply chains then they must be jointly liable for the employment rights for them too.

Meanwhile RMT must continue to develop policy in tune with the reality of contracting that go beyond simplistic repetitions of the 'no to zero-hour contracts' mantra,

as we have done with RMT's contractors charter.

As RMT delegations prepare to debate at AGM how the union can be fit to fight for members for another generation, it is becoming clearer by the day that we need to refocus toward organising on industrial lines to tackle the complex problems thrown up by the contracted out labour market among other things.



RMT is ahead of the curve in the movement in prioritising winning agreements that cover supply chains including contacting out from top to bottom in the coming period.


We need to perhaps consider innovative membership solutions for this difficult market and democratic fora to bring the voices of contracted out workers into the decision-making structures of our movement.


In the meantime, RMT will loudly declare on behalf of all contractors caught up in the IR35 introduction – No taxation without representation! ■


RMT union app

Packed with exciting features the new app allows you to update your personal details, follow all the latest news, campaigns and events and keeps you in contact with the union and your branch.







MAKING WAVES IN OFFSHORE WIND

RMT has held talks with Italian offshore energy company Saipem, following its successful bid for a Tier 1 contract to build the £2 billion Nart na Gaoithe (NnG) wind farm off the east coast of Scotland.

NnG is a joint project between EDF Renewables and Irish state energy company ESB for 54 offshore wind turbines that will generate 450MW, enough power to supply 375,000 homes in Scotland. Saipem's £350m contract is for the engineering, procurement, construction and installation stages. Construction is due to start in June.

The BiFab factory down the east coast in Burntisland has been handed a contract for eight of the turbine jackets and foundations. The rest, including the turbines themselves will be manufactured in Indonesia and assembled in Dundee, in a clear

example of the need to better regulate the offshore wind supply chain in favour of local workers and their trade unions.

Saipem will use the mammoth Saipem 7000, a Bahamas-registered pipe laying crane vessel on the NnG contract. 'Low-cost' seafarers worked on the ship when BP chartered it to decommission the Miller Platform in the North Sea in 2017. RMT was clear that it wants to work with Saipem to avoid any repeat of this

exploitation on the UK Continental Shelf.

The talks also centred on the ITF Continental Shelf Policy which asserts that only ITF-acceptable agreements should apply on flag of convenience vessels working in the offshore energy sector. Saipem confirmed that they are not seeking to undermine local collectively bargained terms and conditions established by RMT.

The meeting with Saipem representatives concluded with a joint commitment to ensure that UK terms and conditions are respected during this and other North Sea contracts which the company might secure in the growing UK offshore wind industry.

Separately, pressure is being applied at ITF level in pursuit of jobs for RMT seafarers on decent rates of pay in the offshore wind industry, including crew transfer, workboats and other ships chartered to supply specialist ships like the Saipem 7000 with crew, turbines,

engineers and provisions.

Getting around the table with offshore wind contractors like Saipem is another front in the fight to deliver jobs for Scottish and UK workers in the offshore wind supply chain. As part of the strategy for the sector, RMT members and officials are working hard in established offshore ports like Aberdeen and growing hubs like Grimsby to organise the thousands of seafarers that will be needed in the offshore wind sector over the next thirty years and beyond.

Work with our sister offshore unions, TUC and STUC also continues to ensure that major wind farm projects off the UK coastline genuinely boost the number of trade union organised jobs, in line with 'Just Transition' policies. The Saipem meeting registered the union's intent with a major Tier 1 offshore wind contractor and the industry knows that RMT is here to stay in offshore energy. ■



RFA DRUGS BUST

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) helped seize more than £35 million worth of drugs in the Caribbean last month. Working with the United States Coastguard and law enforcement 1.4 tonnes of cocaine was confiscated.

On board RFA Mounts Bay was a MH65 helicopter, which was on patrol when what was described as a 'go fast' craft was spotted.

The 'go fast' boat was then intercepted by the RFA vessel, and US Coastguard personnel then sent to stop the craft and

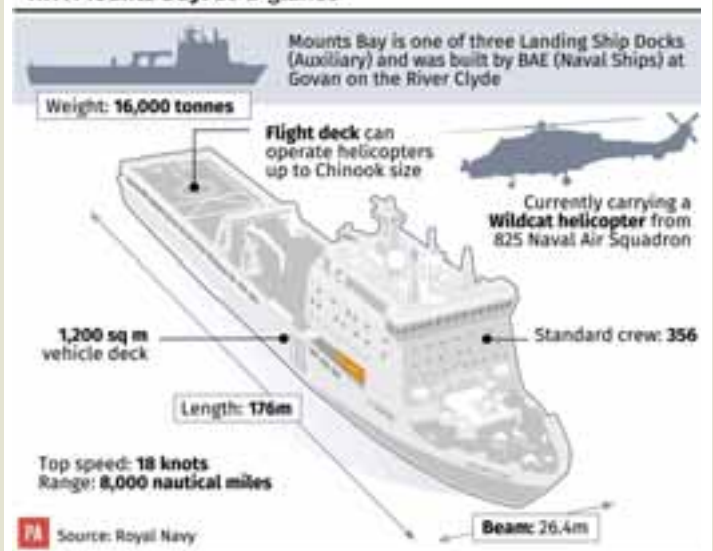
seize its cargo.

Mounts Bay's commanding officer Captain Kevin Rimell said that his crew should "feel proud" about their role in the drug bust.

Staffed by merchant sailors, RFA vessels such as Mounts Bay are involved in counter-narcotics, law enforcement, disaster relief and evacuation.

Last year, RFA Mounts Bay completed a ten-day aid mission in the Bahamas following Hurricane Dorian, highlighting the RFA's support to those inside and outside of the military. ■

RFA Mounts Bay: at-a-glance



MARITIME PENSIONS

If you are a maritime or offshore member without a pension you need to take action now

Since the closure of the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund in the early 2000s and also various shipping companies closing their final salary pension scheme to future service, many RMT members' working in the maritime industry are either not saving enough for their retirement or are not even contributing to a workplace pension scheme.

RMT has decided that it is time that pensions were brought to the top of the maritime industrial relations agenda.

While some members will be contributing to some form of occupational pension schemes, many in the maritime industry were not members of their employers' pension scheme and not saving for their retirement. With this in mind the union has launched a survey asking employers what type of pension scheme they offer to their employees' i.e. Defined Benefit (DB) or Defined Contribution (DC).

In the case of DC RMT also asked what level of contributions did employers' pay into their employees' pension pots. This question is very important if members are trying to build up a level of pension which is likely to give them a decent standard of living during retirement. As example pension specialists, First Actuarial, state that if an individual wanted a pension of half their salary at retirement they would need to have contributions of at least 16 per cent per annum going into the pension pot for 40 years.

The results of the survey revealed that the majority of employers who offered some form of DC pension arrangement paid the minimum contribution allowed under legislation of just three per cent.

Clearly if a worker wanted to receive half their salary at retirement they would have to make contributions of at least 13 per cent on top of the employers three per cent which we would



RMT national secretary Darren Procter with young maritime members

suggest is for the vast majority of workers unaffordable.

While the results of this short survey indicated that many employers were paying as little as possible, RMT was further alerted by union representatives that many seafarers' were either not members of an occupational pension scheme or, where an employer had more than one pension arrangement they were contributing to, was an inferior scheme which offered the lowest level of employer contribution.

Even more concerning was that many of members were in a pension scheme which did not offer any life cover even though they had the option to join a scheme which offered dependants benefits for no extra cost.

RMT ran a pension survey amongst all maritime members last year to find out more about workplace pension options and how to improve pensions for seafarers and over 700 shipping and offshore members responded

- Just under eight per cent of those responding were female maritime members
- 37 per cent of those responding were aged between 51 and 60 with four per cent of responses from members aged between 17 and 30
- Just under 16% of members were not contributing to their employers occupational pension scheme
- Almost 13% of members had opted out of their employers'

pension scheme

- 58% did not know which type of pension arrangement they were a members of i.e. Defined Benefit or Defined Contribution
- Almost half of responses did not know what level of contribution they were paying into their pension scheme with almost 59% not knowing how much their employer was contributing
- 54% did not know if they had death in service (life cover) protection

RMT findings revealed that 13 per cent of seafarers had opted out of a workplace pension scheme and therefore were not contributing to their employers' pension scheme.

Yet, when you consider that employees' contributions receive tax relief and they are also receiving contributions from their employer it is concerning that individuals are not taking advantage of building some form of pension pot.

The survey findings revealed that 54 per cent of respondents did not know whether their loved ones were protected in the event of their death by some form of life cover. We found that some of the pension schemes offered to employees' have no death in service cover. However, often an employer will have two pension arrangements running side by side where one will offer such protection and the other will not.

Employers' will often facilitate

more than one pension scheme, a statutory auto enrolment vehicle and a scheme employees can join if they so wish. RMT has found that the scheme which offers lower employer contributions and no life cover will often be the employers' auto enrolment qualifying arrangement. Therefore, if employees' want to receive the higher employer contribution and the life cover they have to make an informed choice to opt out of the auto enrolment scheme and join the better scheme.

The results of this survey have been considered by the union and who have come up with the following action points in respect of having a clear strategy on pensions which include:

- Educating reps and members by using union resources such as running a maritime pension course
- That there are clear and understandable pension materials made available so that pensions can be seen as a key part of our members' terms and conditions
- initiate meetings with employers' to discuss pensions and that pensions are included on the agenda when discussing our members' terms and conditions
- That it approaches employers' in respect of establishing pension forums within individual companies which would discuss pensions on an on a regular basis ■

ZERO TOLERANCE ON VIOLENCE AT WORK



RMT's 2020 health and safety conference in Doncaster focused on work-related violence

In the light of recently released RMT figures revealing that assaults on London Underground staff have risen by almost a quarter over the past three years, with more than 600 attacks last year and with 35 such incidents also involving a knife, it was appropriate that this year's very well attended health and safety conference should be focused on work-related violence.

This worrying trend was reiterated by senior assistant

general secretary Steve Hedley when he said that "no-one goes to work to be assaulted".

He backed this up by reporting that RMT research has identified that 72 per cent of members have witnessed violence in the last year, with 25 per cent of members having been actually assaulted. "Our members are at the frontline and are being assaulted every day. The British Transport Police's reaction is to try and make our members complicit by implying

they have in some way encouraged, or exacerbated, the situation. Indeed, our London Underground members will be balloting on this very issue shortly.

"There is clearly an onus on the trade union to do something about this to ensure that management have to take legal action against those that assault our members.

"Revenue Protection Officers have experienced a 300 per cent increase in assaults. The

message has to be enough is enough, the ultimate protection from the RMT will be that we ballot our members and we will protect everyone," he said.

Speaking on behalf of the National Executive Committee, Paul Howes also spoke out against the scourge of workplace violence and called for a zero-tolerance approach whenever and wherever it reared its ugly head.

"We must call loudly for appropriate sanctions against



the perpetrators of workplace violence and not allow it to be swept under the carpet," he said.

Conference heard from Tony Snellgrove, an RMT guards rep from South Western Railway, who spoke about an on-going issue on the Guildford to Portsmouth line that has a particular problem with a group of youths that has been spitting on, pushing, punching and assaulting members in an unacceptable example of anti-social behaviour that has escalated out into the local area.

As a result, staff have been going sick and local residents have organised meetings with South Western Railway, the local police and council. Tony reported that the BTP had put in extra patrols but that these had little effect so Portsmouth branch have now submitted a resolution. Despite this, the behaviour has continued and incidents seem to spike around school holidays.

A motion from Bakerloo Line branch further reiterated this theme. It was written in light of a 2018 RMT survey of Night Tube workers, which found that 88.2 per cent of workers had been verbally assaulted in the workplace, with approximately a third of female workers and a fifth of male workers having experienced physical assault whilst at work.

delegates called for the union to continue to campaign for increased staffing levels, an end to lone working, adequate and accessible places of safety and for the introduction of additional safety measures.

Moving the resolution on behalf of Jim McDaid of Bakerloo Line branch, conference secretary Willie Strang said; "Right across the industry these attacks are going on left, right and centre and whilst we have requested extra police presence, more CCTV and other measures to be implemented what efforts are employers making?"

"We have seen a rise in the number of agency staff; why are these people not being employed full-time and directly by the train operating company? Why are they not ensuring the role of the guard? "Why are they not ending the practice of lone working? Why are they not employing more platform staff? Workers should have an adequate place of safety.

"In some instances, guards have been told that this place of safety is the rear cab, or members have been told they have to ring up and ask for permission to access the place of safety. This is not right," he said.

Darren Pilling, Liverpool No.

5, who seconded the motion said: "I think it's important to stress that this is not an issue that just exists on the railway, but equally affects bus drivers, ship workers and, indeed, track workers. There are safety issues throughout the industry and it's very important we all stand behind this resolution."

The conference also featured speeches and presentations from guest speakers from within the rail industry.

RMT health and safety officer Paul Clyndes spoke on the industries inadequate response to workplace violence, an industry partnership between the union, RSSB, BTP, South Western Railway and the courts lead to the creation of a workplace violence group whose aim is to work toward a workplace violence reduction.

Mark Newton from the Rail Delivery Group spoke of his passion for this subject as he himself had been assaulted six times when he was on the frontline and of how we can work together to keep staff and passengers safer.

"The purpose of the partnership is to explain the problem, explain the history, shine light on solutions and invite evidence-based activity and engagement," he said.

Following this Dr Michelle O'Sullivan, from RSSB, spoke

about preventing and mitigating work-related violence and its consequences including staff wellbeing, employee perception and public perception, etc. and what we can all do.

She asked union members to keep the pressure on by continually reporting incidents but also asked for us to be patient whilst we the strategies are thoroughly researched. Most staff, she claimed, want support and increased security and training and of how RSSB was working towards providing this.

One key finding of the RSSB research is that, to date, 55 per cent of rail staff have had no training on work-related violence and for those that have 66 per cent rated the quality of that training as poor.

Conference guests also participated in a very useful and informative Q&A session with delegates who repeatedly stressed the need for the industry to take this issue far more seriously and to put in place far greater resources.

The health and safety conference was also used to launch a new RMT publication: 'Campaigning for Mental Wellbeing at Work', that will shortly be issued to all health and safety reps and more information will appear in next month's edition of RMT News.

■





SIGNALLING BATTLES AHEAD

Signalling grades conference calls for action on staffing levels, line blockages and failing disciplinary systems

RMT general secretary Mick Cash opened the 2020 national organising conference for signalling grades with a warning that the Tory government was planning to attack the right to strike by introducing minimum service levels.

He said that the entire trade union movement needed to resist this direct attack on a basic human right to withdraw labour.

“We have not seen the details yet but it could mean that when members vote for industrial action some of them may be forced to work in order to provide minimum services.

“This will affect our ability to defend pay and conditions, pensions and the role of the guard to name just a few issues and undermines basic trade union rights.

“The Tories talk about

leaving the European Union but they are using the minimum service level model which, ironically, comes from the EU.

“Therefore, we need to fight these plans in every way possible and to build the union across all grades in order to increase our industrial power so they can’t pick off different grades,” he said.

He also warned that the long-awaited Williams review into the railways which will come out next month would not propose renationalisation which the public clearly wants.

“The Tories will only tinker with a franchising model that is clearly not working and will be ideologically opposed to providing a publicly owned rail service run for the benefit,” he said.

Ian Allen, speaking on behalf of the national executive

committee, also warned that the union needed to defend jobs and terms and conditions as well as reporting on previous items the conference voted for last year.

Delegates also called on the union to negotiate with Network Rail proper staffing level at all signalling locations.

Phil Boreman, Ashford No.1 said that currently there were many locations that did not have the number of staff agreed which meant that staff were expected to work overtime.

“Members need to work overtime in order to allow colleagues to take their contractual leave, receive their training and keep their competency.

“Currently we estimate that we need a ratio of 3.2 signallers for every relief signaller to deal with this problem but this would need an extra 600 signallers

which would cost £26 million to train up but Network Rail does not want to spend that money.

“Network Rail needs to agree to properly staff locations so that no staff feels pushed into working overtime and such agreement should be adhered to nationally, so there is no difference for staff working in different routes or regions,” he said.

Delegates called on the union to raise the issue of expanding the grading of signalling locations with Network Rail and that any such new grades not be exclusive to ‘Traffic Management’ or new technology and that an industrial strategy to obtain such expanded grades be put into place.

Phil Heaton, Wakefield & Healey Mills said that as Network Rail continued with its strategy of consolidating

signalling into Rail Operating Centres, along with increases in numbers of trains and complexities of the network, the workstations created are becoming busier, more complicated and more stressful to operate.

“As a result, the current grading structure of signalling jobs is too restrictive and the opportunity for jobs to be graded at higher than the current grade 9 should exist.

“Any such grade 10 or 11 signaller role must be exclusive to ‘Traffic management’ and new technology and should be available for any job that is fairly assessed by the grading panel as being at that level,” he said.

LINE BLOCKAGES

Delegates were disappointed that a call from the union for line blockages to be kept to the shortest limits for safety reasons has not been taken on board by Network Rail.

Alan Rodgeron, Newcastle Rail & Catering said that planners were still booking multisite blockages covering vast areas in the involving complex junctions that would be more suited to T3 possessions.

“This is an unsafe system of work in any signal box/IECC or ROC, placing immeasurable pressure on the signaller as arranging, preparing and protecting these blockages,” he said.

Delegates called on the union to raise these concerns with Network Rail and if they continue to ignore them to take this up with the health and safety executive due to the seriousness of the matter.

Chris Bown, Wakefield & Healey Mills said that signallers were very concerned about what appears to be moving more responsibility to the signaller following the tragic events at Margam which killed two RMT members.

“Red zone working has been prohibited on most routes with the responsibility for those staff now being put onto a signaller who is already swamped with LB requests and the day to day

running if trains safely,” he said.

Delegates called on the union to hold urgent talks on the stress that the risks associated with red zone working be fully evaluated and not just passed onto another group of staff.

“No signaller should be challenged when refusing a request due to workload,” he said.

Delegates were also alarmed at the extended length of time it was taking Network Rail to investigate and conclude cases of alleged disciplinary misconduct against members.

“The company’s procedures are seldom complied with and it is failing to promptly deal with such cases.

“A clear workable procedure needs to be agreed so that members can be back at work as soon as possible and not suffering both stress and financial worry,” he said.

Mark Bellenie, national lay council rep, said that many grievances were dismissed with no case to answer after long periods of suspension up to 22 months.

“We had three signallers suspended for many months on bogus bullying charges but they were fortunate enough to have Wayne Dixon as their area rep who took their cases right up to directors review.

“As a result, these charges were withdrawn with no case to answer and they returned to work with substantial payment for loss of earnings,” he said.

AJ Yates, South London Rail also called on the union to take up with Network Rail the definitions of what is suspension for signallers that is being carried out informally which is akin to punishment by stealth as members cannot claim back loss of earnings and it is causing stress and anxiety.

“Too often due to incidents or errors signallers are being removed for long periods of time whilst the signallers are investigated or a local manager is just waiting to know what to do about them,” he said.

Steve Loeber, Colchester & District also said that the disciplinary process was also

getting more complex.

“This situation is unacceptable, because this not only impacts on the mental health of the individual concerned but also on their work colleagues, their immediate family and friends,” he said.

Conference called on the union to develop a specific guide to assist Area Council reps giving clear guidance and examples in organising members, undertaking recruitment and how best to

assist local representatives.

Phil Borman said that some reps were unsure of who they should be organising, what their levels of membership are and how to effectively assist local reps.

“We need to provide guidance on how to organise this grade and to ensure that RMT Area Council reps know what their responsibilities are and how to effectively carry them out,” he said. ■



Ian Allen



Nikki Roache



Phil Borman speaks



RMT WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Barrow-in-Furness RMT branch host the union's annual women's conference

Looming large on the agenda of this year's women's conference in Barrow-in-Furness was a survey conducted by the women's advisory committee.

The survey which engaged 1,978 members, approximately 15 per cent of female membership, focused on how best female workers can engage with and participate in the union.

The biggest bulk of respondents were stations/ticket office/revenue protection (30.60 per cent) and traincrew/on train (30.20 per cent), and 95.94 per cent were permanently employed.

Nearly 7 out of 10 of respondents received information about RMT from their rep (67.14 per cent), while 59.84 per cent through text messages, 46.77 per cent through the union's journal RMT News and 46.61 per cent

through speaking to other members.

42.24 per cent of workers thought they received enough information to follow the union's activities, while 36.14 per cent disagreed.

More mixed results came from whether female members have attended RMT events.

Only 10.95 per cent of women said they regularly attended workplace meetings, while a similar number (11.28 per cent) had regularly attended branch meetings.

Less than 10 per cent of female members said that they regularly attend RMT picket lines (7.15 per cent), demonstrations (2.64 per cent), and women-only RMT meetings (1.31 per cent).

The most common reason that respondents gave was time pressures (33.87 per cent), while timing problems (33.51 per

cent), not being told about events (30.31 per cent), and childcare issues (26.94 per cent) were also common reasons.

However, more than half said that they would consider attending women's conference (75.84 per cent), workplace meetings (55.39 per cent), branch meetings (50.41 per cent), and union education courses (33.87 per cent) in the future.

On International Women's Day delegates were visited by Labour shadow cabinet minister Cat Smith who congratulated the RMT on their recent victories.

"It's a sign of success from that you have recognition as a bogeyman of the unions by the Tory government.

"It is very easy to think about those campaigns off the top of my head, because they cut through.

"But it's because the RMT has many of the answers we need to hear in political discourse," she said.

After discussing the guards dispute, Ms Smith said that she was standing "shoulder-to-shoulder" with union members fighting to keep staffed train

stations.

However, she warned of new anti-union legislation proposed by the Tories, such as the minimum service measures, saying that "if some of these union restrictions come into force, you will be fighting the employers with one hand tied behind your back".

Delegates were also joined by Aisha Sidawi and Sahar Shehadeh from the Coalition of Women for Peace, which organises Palestinians and Israelis to fight injustices occurring in Israel, Palestine and the Occupied Territories.

The guests brought attention to female political prisoners in Palestine, such as the infamous teenage resistance fighter Ahed Tamimi and the Palestinian poet Dareen Tatour, who was sentenced to five months in prison last year for posting a poem on Facebook which urged Palestinians to resist the occupation.

They also discussed the "racist legal initiatives" of the Israeli government, including the Nation Law, which they said "erases the culture and language of 20 per cent of the citizens of Israel" and makes Arab-

Palestinians in Israel "feel that we are third or fourth class citizens".

A collection was held for the Palestinian sisters, as RMT president Michelle Rodgers reminded delegates that "when these women go back to Tel Aviv Airport, they will be arrested.

"This makes what they do absolutely important and shows that what they're doing is so brave," she said.

Carol, Newcastle Rail & Catering branch moved a motion urging the union to pressure train operating companies about providing proper breastfeeding facilities and spaces in the workplace.

A second motion on combating the gender pay gap called on the union to prioritise the welfare of the lowest paid by fighting to push up the wages of the lowest paid.

Moving the motion on behalf of Piccadilly and District West branch, Marie Harrington said: "Lots of jobs are poorly paid because women do them and they are undervalued, they are underpaid.

"If we increased the wages of the lowest paid workers, we are

closing the gender pay gap by default.

"The way to do that is by flat rate pay increases. A £2,000 pay rise might be buggier all to a highly paid engineer, but its an awful lot to a cleaner who is barely making £15,000 a year.

"This is calling on the union to prioritise the welfare of the lowest paid workers," she said.

A motion from South Devon Bus Branch called for menopausal bus drivers to be taken off duty at bad times, as well as for improved facilities and other conditions, was passed.

Delegates voted to send the first two resolutions to the union's 2020 AGM, while the third will still go to the NEC.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash addressed conference and discussed how the union has forced train bosses into a "standstill" over driver-only operations and cutting station staff, Cash urged members to carry on fighting with "same determination and resolution".

"We're changing. The workplace is changing, and we must reflect that workplace and be more diverse," he said. ■

RMT AT WOMEN'S TUC



TUC DELEGATION: Millie Apedo-Amah, South London Rail, Janine Booth, Finsbury Park, Jasbint Breyal, Derby Rail & Engineering, Shirley Fulton, Dover Shipping, Marie Harrington, Piccadilly & District West, Mary Jane Herbison, Glasgow No. 1 & 2, Joanne Ibinson, Newcastle & Gateshead, Ann Joss, Aberdeen No. 1, Leanne Louch, East Midland Central, Linda Moseley, Cambrian, Stacey Murphy, Liverpool Shipping, Josie Partington, Blackpool & Fylde Coast, Claire Sweetin, Aberdeen Shipping, Amanda Walton, North Clyde, Christine Willett, South East Essex.

MORE BUS FUNDING ANNOUNCED



RMT seeks meetings with ministers to ensure experiences of bus workers are incorporated into new £5 billion Bus Strategy

RMT has welcomed the government's renewed focus on bus services, which have been in decline for many years, and are an essential public service for all of our communities.

Since 2010, over 3,000 bus services have been cut or withdrawn – and for many years, the number of bus passenger journeys has fallen, thus urgent action is needed to reverse these cuts and revive our bus networks.

Bus fares continue to rise, disproportionately affecting passengers in rural and non-metropolitan areas and local authorities remain prohibited from running bus services in the public sector.

This is why RMT has been urging the government to ensure its National Bus Strategy acts on the recommendation of the Transport Select Committee and allows local authorities to set up publicly owned municipal bus companies. This would allow them to run bus services directly rather than presiding over continual decline.

In a statement to Parliament, the PM announced a £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London.

The package of investment is set to include:

- Higher frequency services, including evenings and weekends, to make it easier and less restrictive for people

to get around at any time of day

- More 'turn up and go' routes where, thanks to higher frequency, people won't have to rely on timetables to plan journeys
- New priority schemes will make routes more efficient, so that buses avoid congested routes and can speed passengers through traffic
- More affordable, simpler fares
- At least 4,000 new Zero Emission Buses to make greener travel the convenient option, driving forward the UK's progress on its net zero ambitions

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that bus services are a vital lifeline for millions of people, connecting communities and preventing social isolation.

"While we await further details of how this funding will be allocated, RMT is seeking urgent meetings with ministers to ensure that the experiences of bus workers are incorporated into its Bus Strategy, which is due to be published later in the year.

"Bus workers know first-hand how cuts to bus services impact communities, affecting access to vital services such as health, education and work, thus it is vital that the government's Bus Strategy listens to our bus workers," he said. ■

YOUNG MEMBERS GROW



Incoming young members conference chair Rhys Harmer reports on a record attendance last month

The annual young members conference met in Scotland last month hosted by Glasgow Shipping branch.

A record number of over 50 delegates attended this year's conference to discuss and debate the future the union, organising our workplaces, potential minimum service laws, and motions to be sent to the AGM and NEC.

Conference also had a special focus on the SOS 2020 campaign and the organising of maritime grades in general with speeches from both national secretaries and a very welcome delegation of two activists from the Maritime Union of Australia, who reported on worryingly similar efforts by

their government to suppress trade unions and collective rights.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that young member activists were no longer just "the future" but also the present, and it was in our power to change the entire labour movement for the better.

The two motions that will be going to RMT AGM are: "Campaign for 'fair' housing for Young Members", calling for support and solidarity to renters' unions, and "Electronic Votes and Ballots", calling for an update to our balloting system so that there is a higher turnout of young members in particular while saving the trade union money.

Glasgow Shipping branch in conjunction with Bro. Cheyne from Inverness No. 1 branch organised a Red Clydeside Walking Tour that was led by local historian David Jamieson. Well attended by delegates, it gave an insight into the working-class history of Glasgow including the renters' strikes, World War One and Two, and the Spanish Civil War in which many working-class men and women from our predecessor unions went to fight fascism.

This is commemorated by the RMT's Blockade Runners to Spain memorial that was unveiled in March last year.

Being educated on the history of our union and the

working class in Glasgow inspired many delegates to make sure we remember our history and that we draw from their experiences to carry on the fight ahead of us.

We aim to have an even larger turnout to next year's conference and more involvement from a wider spread of young members as we expand as an organised group and genuinely representative advisory committee.

Special thanks are due to the 'Banter Thiefs' who performed at our introductory social, and we'd like to end by also thanking the outgoing chair and vice chair for all their work over the last few years.





STEAMING IN DUNGENESS

RMT signalling conference delegates descend on Kent's most famous steam railway

RMT signalling members meeting in Folkstone took the opportunity to support the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway (RH&DR) last month, a 15-inch gauge light railway in Kent that operates steam and internal combustion locomotives.

The 13 3/4-mile line, which is a registered Train Operating Company, runs from the Cinque Port of Hythe via Dymchurch, St. Mary's Bay, New Romney and Romney Sands to Dungeness, close to Dungeness nuclear power station and Dungeness Lighthouse.

The railway was the dream of millionaire racing drivers Captain John Edwards Presgrave Howey and Count Louis Zborowski and was opened in 1927. However, Howey was not satisfied with just 8 1/4 miles of track from Hythe to New Romney and plans were in hand for an extension even before the original section had opened and

a year later it was completed.

Since it was laid directly onto the shingle forming the Dungeness peninsula it has been suggested that the extension was the most cheaply constructed railway in the world.

In 1940 the railway was taken over by the military during World War II, and a miniature armoured train was used on the line.[9] It was also used by the Department of Petroleum Warfare in the construction of PLUTO ("Pipe Line Under The Ocean") intended to supply fuel to the Allied forces after the D-Day Normandy landings.

The line re-opened between Hythe and New Romney in 1946, the New Romney to Dungeness section following with a formal opening by Laurel and Hardy on 21 March 1947.

In June 1947 the Duke of Westminster's railway from



Hurricane



WARTIME: Troops from the Somerset Light Infantry on the armoured train in October 1940.

Eaton Hall, Cheshire was transported by the Great Western Railway and Southern Railway from Balderton, Cheshire to New Romney in Kent. It comprised an engine, nine coaches and trucks, and track totalling 222 tons.[11]

The railway's role as part of the local public transport network was extended when Warren Halt re-opened in 2009, providing a link to the Romney Marsh Visitor Centre. Further discussions with local councils took place regarding the possible expansion of Burmarsh Road and the provision of a new station at the gravel pits in West Hythe, in connection with both

the proposed extensive new housing construction and the need to provide alternative transport to the A259 coast road.

The railway, which carries over 150,000 passengers each year, will celebrate its 93rd birthday this year and The Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway Association of supporters continues to grow with thousands of members including RMT member Jared Wood.

@For more information go to: <https://www.rhdr.org.uk/>
Telephone: +44 01797 362 353 or Email info@rhdr.org.uk



THE WORLD'S SMALLEST MAINLINE RAILWAY

RMT member Jared Wood recalls a lifetime enjoying the Romney

I was maybe too young to remember the first time I was taken to the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway (RHDR) but the third scale trains locos would've have been just like the real things are today. So were the stations, signal cabins, level crossings, P-way trucks and everything else that make the RHDR "The world's smallest mainline railway".

What sets the railway aside from standard gauge heritage railways is that a RHDR loco, pulling a full set of carriages at a line speed of around 20mph is working to its full capacity. You get a real sense and soundtrack of a mainline loco pulling an express. A standard gauge heritage railway, limited by regulation to 20mph never really gets going.

The locos are exact copies of mainline Pacifics, Mountain Class and other locos of the 1920s. But I think what I loved so much on my first visits was how it was all played so seriously by the volunteers and full time staff. It really is run as a mainline Railway, not a novelty ride.

There are a few open carriages but in the main, you climb inside and close a door. If you're in luck there will be a buffet car at one end. A third scale licensed buffet car serving beers, tea, coffee, sandwiches and cakes. A few TOCS could learn from that.

If you have a taste for the absurd as well as steam railway's you'll love it. In 2011, I took a one day driving lesson. Up front it was even more impressive. I try to get there once a year now. As I get older, I still love the railway but I have also come to appreciate that part of the Kent coast that the railway serves, from the Nuclear power station and beach shacks at Dungeness to Hythe, via New Romney and Dymchurch, that still resemble Walmington on Sea.

I get that it's all very train spottery. It's uncomfortable, slower than a bus and the Romney Marsh, more often than not, is windswept. But there is nothing quite like the sight of Hythe station from the back of your Dad's car.



Jared Wood (in the hat) gives on-the-spot guidance



Southern Maid

THE DEFEAT OF FASCISM - 75 YEARS

HONOURING THE



The National Battle of Britain Memorial in Kent honours those who fought fascism in the air

The Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne in Kent, perched on top of the White Cliffs of Dover just east of Folkstone, is dedicated to those who fought in the battle during this country's darkest hour.

The Memorial is built on a former World War Two coastal

battery overlooking the Channel.

The idea for a National Memorial to The Few came from one of their number. Wing Commander Geoffrey Page had been a 20-year-old Hurricane pilot with 56 Squadron in the Battle of Britain.

On August 12 1940, Pilot

Officer Page was shot down and bailed out into the sea with terrible burns. He went on to become a founding member of the Guinea Pig Club for RAF personnel treated at the Queen Victoria Hospital by the team of plastic surgeons led by Archie McIndoe.

Determination and courage ensured that Geoffrey returned to operational flying, becoming a wing leader. He was awarded the DFC and bar and at the time he received the DSO in 1944 he was credited with having destroyed 15 enemy aircraft. A crash late in the war seriously



FEW



injured him again and he returned to East Grinstead.

Years later, Geoffrey realised to his astonishment that there was no memorial to his comrades who had flown with him in Fighter Command in 1940.

His determination that The Few should be remembered found a focus at "Hellfire Corner", the area of Dover and Folkestone over which so much of the fighting had taken place in 1940. The Battle of Britain Memorial Trust was established and fund raising began.

On July 9 1993, the National Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne was opened and Geoffrey's dream realised. He died in August 2000, shortly after attending the Memorial Day marking the 60th anniversary of the Battle.

The starboard wing of the Wing building, a dedicated interactive education resource for schools, is now named the Geoffrey Page Centre in honour of the man who was the inspiration for the site. It is well worth a visit. <https://www.battleofbritainmemorial.org/>



A BUSY YEAR SO FAR

I really can't believe it's March already and what a busy year it's been so far.

I'll start this month by offering solidarity not just to members but to the communities recently ravaged by the floods all across the UK . At a time where this seems to be a reoccurring theme those Tory B@&!@£*!s have ignored the warnings and allowed whole families to be decimated.

Back in February I was honoured to chair a meeting around the fight back across the trade union movement on Minimum service levels. I was also lucky enough to be with assistant general secretary Steve Headley to welcome good comrades Matthieu & Axel from CGT Versailles and listen to how our french comrades have recently took the fight to Macron and won!

Our local battles continue with our Bakerloo line members recently out on strike and our LU members being balloted on pay which has the potential to shut down the underground prior to the London Mayoral election (we did warn you Sadiq).

So please let's smash the thresholds on that and send the message WE SHALL NOT BE DEFEATED. Good luck to our Rail Gourmet members at Paddington who are also out again on strike.

I've read a couple of interesting articles this month on something that's going to effect some members big style and to be honest I'm no tax expert so take the time out and find the written articles by two regional organisers Jake Molloy and Eddie Dempsey as they both offer an interesting insight into IR35. The union is already briefing our members on the potential of this so have a read.

I'll keep it a bit shorter this month as conference season is upon us and no doubt there will be loads more to write on. Before I go I would like to offer the equality groups an opportunity to take my column over this year by writing an opinion piece to be published. Please limit submissions to no more than 400 words and have them emailed to me P3@rmt.org.uk

Solidarity Michelle

DISABLED MEMBERS SPEAK OUT



My name is James Denny, a signaller at Thames Valley Signalling Centre (TVSC) in Didcot, having worked for almost twenty years in a variety of jobs around the railway, both on the main line and for preservation groups. I'm an area health and safety representative and chair of RMT's Reading branch, and temporary equalities officer for Reading Trades Council.

I have been becoming aware that I am neurodivergent over the last few years, thanks to the growing publicity surrounding neurodivergence and the conditions it includes. The union movement, and especially the RMT, has played a big part in this. The big 'penny drop' moment came for me, though, in one of the training sessions I organise for the team of reps and managers I co-chair.

I had invited our local IT agent, who is autistic, to speak to us about neurodiversity in the

workplace, to give our team a better appreciation of what we can do to help. As he talked through his slides, I noticed that I related to everything he was saying. I already believed that I had some form of dyspraxia, but had never considered autism.

It all felt distinctly surreal: how could I, having spent nearly two decades in safety-critical jobs, not to mentioning charring committees and running events, have 'something wrong with me'?

Then it dawned on me: it's not 'something wrong', it's simply that my brain is wired differently and, in some cases, this is a distinct advantage. In the health and safety projects I have run, the 'thinking outside the box' that comes with my neurodivergence has been a big part of the success.

Despite my initial concerns about how my manager would react – would I be taken off safety-critical duties? – I've

received nothing but support. It's clear to him, and to me, that whatever my exact condition, I can do the job I do with no need for concern.

My message to all of you is have the confidence to talk to someone. It's much easier to make the adjustments required if it's known what those

adjustments are. If you do experience problems, have confidence that your company and union can help you. I'm now a member of the union's disabled members advisory committee as well as Neurodivergent Labour, and there are plenty more groups out there who can help. ■

RIDING FOR CHARITY

Richard Constable, a member of the RMT disabled members advisory committee, is going to do a charity bike ride "Football to Amsterdam" in aid of fighting Prostate Cancer, which he is a survivor.

It starts at the London velodrome and ends up in Amsterdam via Harwich and the Hook of Holland from Friday June 5 - Sunday June 7. If you feel that you could

sponsor him please send your donations into head office at Unity House marked for the attention of Jessica Webb before Sunday May 31. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation in this appeal.

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/get-involved/football-to-amsterdam>

There is also a just giving page that donations can be made on as follows on Facebook "Richard David Constable" events



REMEMBERING MOORGATE

RMT News marks the 45th anniversary of the worst peacetime accident on the London Underground

The Moorgate tube crash occurred on February 28 1975 at 8:46 am on the London Underground's Northern City Line killing 43 people died and injuring many more after a train failed to stop and crashed into the line's southern terminus, Moorgate station.

Standing on Platform 9 at the terminus, Railman Andrews had watched the train approaching and knew that it couldn't stop in time. He immediately decided to ring for Control from the adjacent platform, but he was already too late.

Nearby, Guard Friar stood among the 20 to 30 people waiting on the platform. As he heard the train approaching too fast, he looked round to see the driver Leslie Newson sitting in a normal position in the cab, looking straight ahead of him. The train knocked down the red marker light, and sand blew into the air as the train hit the sand pit and ran into the overrun tunnel.

The crash forced the first carriage into the roof of the tunnel at the front and back, but the middle remained on the track bed and the 52-foot coach was crushed to 20 feet. The second carriage was concertinaed at the front as it collided with the first, and the third rode over the rear of the second. The brakes were not applied and the dead man's handle was still depressed when

the train crashed. The London Fire Brigade, Ambulance Service and Police took 13 hours to remove the injured from the wreckage, many of whom had to be cut free.

With poor ventilation temperatures in the tunnel rose to over 120 °F. It took a further four days to extract the body of the Newson, whose cab had been crushed to 15 centimetres.

The post-mortem showed no

medical reason to explain the crash and a cause has never been established. The inquest also deemed that the incident was accidental.

In the aftermath of the crash, London Underground introduced a safety system that automatically stops a train when travelling too fast using 'sleeping policemen' system which became known informally as Moorgate protection. ■



DISASTER: Squashed against the roof of the Tube tunnel at Moorgate is the first coach of the train that smashed into the tunnel wall. Amid the wreckage are the front bogie wheels from the second coach. The foul air forces the fireman to wear a breathing mask.

WITH BANNERS HELD HIGH

RMT will be supporting this year's trade union event in Wakefield on Saturday May 16

This year's With Banners Held High event will see activists carrying their trade union banners marching through the Wakefield's city centre accompanied by brass bands and flags generally creating a party atmosphere to celebrate solidarity amongst the whole working class movement.

This event is to mark the historical roots of the mining heritage of Wakefield and to celebrate the enormous contribution to the local economy that came from coal mining, not just from the miners but also the jobs that relied on the industry such as engineering which provided the machinery that was used down the pits.

Most of these engineering companies have now gone due to Thatcher's government closing the industry down after the bitter miners' strike in 1984/85.

The theme of the event this year is the current global climate emergency which is unfortunately a legacy that we will be leaving for future generations to live with. This year's logo will be "The past we inherit, the green future we build". Last year we used the 100th Anniversary of the signing of the end of World War One entitled 'A Land Fit for Heroes' as many working-class men were taken from their communities to fight in an imperialist blood bath.

This year's event is a full day of celebrating the working class struggle against a government which is determined to take away any rights that workers currently have to enable the bosses to do whatever they need to do to maximise profits and the exploitation of workers.

There will be guest speakers, music, poetry, children's activities, trade union stalls and various campaign groups, food stalls and workshops taking place to highlight the urgent need to act now on climate change and to promote awareness amongst today's youth of the need to join a trade union and fight the bosses.

It is hoped that many RMT branches will discuss attending this year's event and bring along your banners to the largest trade union event of the year in Yorkshire and is getting bigger and bigger every year.

RMT activist and With Banners Held High organising committee member Trevor Howard said that the event take a lot of time and effort to organise and the financing of the event is purely through contributions from various organisations, we have the stage to pay for, seating, stalls, marshalls for the march, Town Hall use, licenses etc.

"We would gladly welcome donations from branches and Regional Councils to ensure that this event can grow and have the full participation of the union," he said. ■





50 NOT OUT AT THREE BRIDGES

Three Bridges branch celebrated Martin Bartlett's over 50 years as an RMT member recently by presenting him with a belated 50-year medallion.

On July 29 1965, after leaving school, Martin joined the railway at the age of 15 years old when his passion for trains drove him to Three Bridges station where he sought employment with Mr Bennett the then Three Bridges Station Master.

Martin got a job as a box boy in the Three Bridges signal box which involved keeping

data entries/logs of the trains running between Balcombe Junction, Gatwick and Crawley.

In July 1968, the then area inspector, George Lloyd, offered Martin a job as a signaller at Merstham Station and attended the signalling school at Beckenham Junction.

In 1971, Martin got a job in the Gatwick signal box, and worked there diligently until 1978, when the signal panel to control Gatwick, was installed at the Three Bridges Signal Box where he formerly served as box boy.

The Gatwick Signal Box was

closed, then in 1983 the Three Bridges Signal Box was also sadly closed and he was transferred to the Three Bridges area signalling centre (ASC) where he worked for the next 36 years.

Even now he remains a passionate train enthusiast and Martin's colleagues say that he had a good work ethic which allowed him to move through the ranks while remaining an active trade union member.

Between the year 1980 to 2007, Martin also served as a special constable with the Sussex Police force but left the

post at the age of 60 years. The people he worked with over the years described Martin as a quiet, caring, observant and a positive influence within his workplace. One colleague said, "he is a jolly good fellow".

May 31 2019 was the last date brother Martin worked on the railway but be ready to offer him a well-deserved brew because you may bump into this historical railway man holding his camera ready to take a picture of one of the many vintage trains or the new contemporary trains on the network. ■

WOLVES AWARDS LU FLEET AWARDS

RMT general secretary Mick Cash did the honours at Wolverhampton branch recently and presented 40-year, 25-year and 10-year badges to Alan

Hooper, Julie Smith, Farakh Yasin, Karen Bannister, Joanna Blackburn, Paul Hamer and Ant Biring.

London Underground Fleet branch presented Daniel D'Cunha and Muzammil Hussain (last two on the right) with their long service awards recently with Mick Cash, branch chair

Tony Carter-Leay, secretary Neil Atkinson, regional organiser John Leach, guest FBU London Region NEC member Dave Shek and assistant general secretary Mick Lynch. ■



CROYDE BAY CALLING

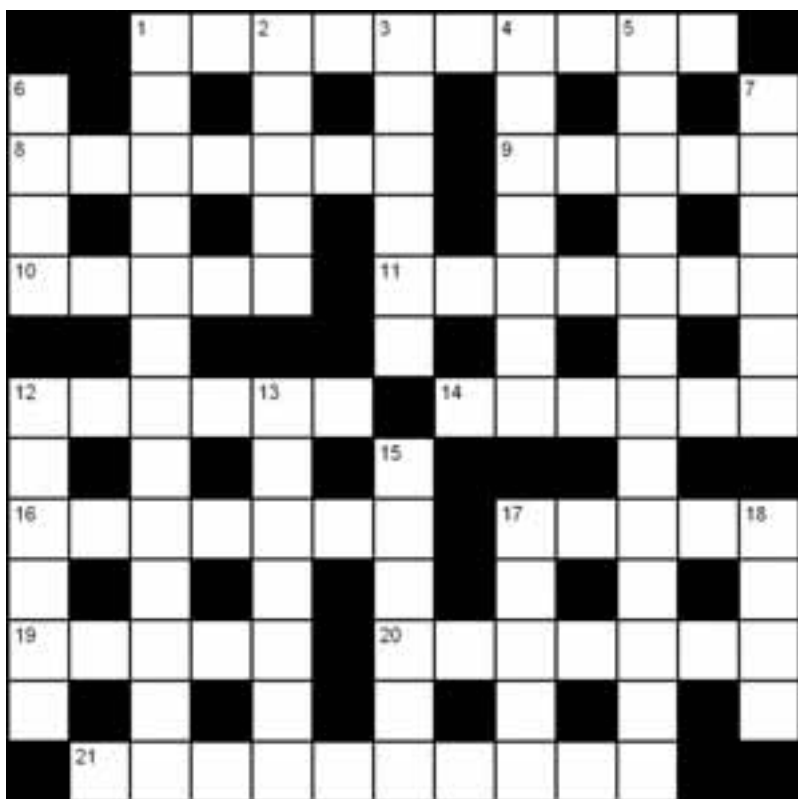
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£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is A Bains, Sutton Coldfield.

Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by April 9 with your name and address.

Winner and solution in next issue.



Crossword sponsored by UIA

ACROSS

- 1 Generous manner (10)
- 8 Festoon (7)
- 9 Rate (5)
- 10 Small knife (5)
- 11 Helper (7)
- 12 Fame (6)
- 14 Travel up (6)
- 16 Gain with effort (7)
- 17 Penchant (5)
- 19 Rejoice (5)
- 20 Blind (6)
- 21 Incessant (10)

DOWN

- 1 Central collection place (7,5)
- 2 Later (5)
- 3 Emetic drug (6)
- 4 Female performer (7)
- 5 Boundlessness (11)
- 6 Exchange (4)
- 7 Exceedingly bad (6)
- 12 Peruser (6)
- 13 Struggle (7)
- 15 Inconsolable (6)
- 17 Subject (5)
- 18 At a previous time (4)



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Date of Birth / /

Postcode

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3 **Your Employment.**

Employer

Job Description

RMT Branch

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