

RMT *news*

Essential reading for today's transport worker

ROSCCO FIASCO

**RMT exposes billion pound
privatised rail rip-off**



**1919 STRIKE
CENTENARY
FOUR PAGE
PULL-OUT
INSIDE**



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



FIGHTING AND WINNING

I would like to thank those who put their faith in me for a further five-year term in the recent general secretary election. I consider it a privilege to be trusted to take this union forwards in the many challenges that lay ahead.

Every part of this union should now be focussed on our industrial and political campaigning strategy as we seek to extend and defend our members working conditions, jobs, pay and pensions in every sector where we organise.

As you will see from this latest issue of RMT News, we are celebrating the centenary of the great 1919 rail strike which improved conditions and won a guaranteed working week for hundreds of thousands of workers.

As NUR president Charlie Cramp told strikers in a packed Albert Hall following news of the victory: "I want you to understand that you have won a battle not merely for yourselves, but for the organised workers throughout the country".

The message today, one hundred years later, is that it is business as usual and my message to the employers is simple, this trade union will leave no one behind in the pursuit of workplace justice and we will stand and fight wherever that principle comes under attack.

And there are many battles to be fought. New RMT research has revealed that the private companies responsible for supplying trains to the railways have been paying massive dividends to their shareholders while shuffling money away into overseas companies based in Luxembourg to avoid paying tax.

Three rolling stock leasing companies (ROSCOs) paid £1.2 billion in dividends to their shareholders in recent years, enough to fund 700 new vehicles.

The franchising chaos is also rolling on as Italian state railways Trenitalia gets hold of the West Coast Main Line in December.

As a result more than three-quarters of rail franchises in Britain will be overseas controlled by the end of the year.

It is clear that, under the Tories, any state can run our railways other than the British state which means that British passengers are directly subsidising rail operations across Europe and beyond as profits are shipped overseas starving the UK of desperately needed investment.

South Western Railway will also rake in a £32 million strike bailout from the tax payer even when they have not run trains on strike days.

RMT has also called for an absolute ban on contracting out and an end to the cuts culture following a shocking RAIB report into a track worker death near Purley.

What a way to run a railway.

RMT held protests in Liverpool recently under the banner of RMT's SOS 2020 campaign to ending the scandal of seafarer exploitation and increasing jobs for ratings on RMT terms and conditions by securing equal rights for UK seafarers

We need statutory targets to train thousands of UK ratings, improved safety standards in UK shipping and protect the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's merchant seafarers from privatisation.

We have made huge strides over the past five years and as the programme of on-going disputes and campaigns shows we are united moving forwards as a militant, democratic and campaigning trade union that is all about fighting and winning.

Mick Cash



SOLID EAST MIDLANDS TRAINS STRIKE

RMT took a fourth day of solid strike action on East Midlands Trains last month the day before new franchise holder Abellio over from Stagecoach.

Stagecoach stands accused of cutting and running before being dumped from the rail network in a row with the government over pension obligations. Abellio, which is owned by the Dutch national rail operator Nederlandse Spoorwegen, won the contract back in April and took control of East Midlands Trains last month.

The dispute is over EMT's management's failure to bring a meaningful resolution to RMT

members' concerns over Sunday working, pay discrimination and Contract issues.

RMT is calling on Abellio to do the right thing and enter into meaningful talks as the new franchise holder to help bring a resolution to this long-standing dispute.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that RMT senior conductors on East Midlands Trains took further strike action because of management's intransigence and lack of commitment to deal with contractual issues such as compulsory Sunday working, wage discrimination and other matters.

"I want to congratulate members for their magnificent show of strength during the previous weekends of rock-solid action in their fight for decent working conditions and respect at work.

"Abellio, as the new franchise holder need to do the right thing and put an end the bad practices of the previous franchise holder and enter into meaningful talks that can bring an end to the dispute," he said.

He said that members on East Midlands Trains were standing firm as Stagecoach attack pay and working conditions before the government ban them from the

railways in the wake of the pensions row.

"The disruption is solely down to the slash and burn tactics of Stagecoach as they run their franchises down before they are booted off the railway. It is the company's hostile attitude to their staff that has forced us to strike again today and put a further day of action on in a fortnight's time.

"RMT remains available for talks but we know when we are being strung along and I repeat the call for the company to stop playing games, cut the excuses and get back round the table ." he said. ■

MERSEYRAIL STRIKES SUSPENDED

RMT suspended strike action on Merseyrail last month following a positive meeting with Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham, MerseyTravel and RMT and fresh proposals have been made which represent significant progress towards addressing union concerns.

RMT agreed to suspend industrial action called for August 24 and September 3 and

5 to allow further negotiations on the crucial issue of a safe method of train dispatch.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that RMT members on Merseyrail remained ready to take action after 15 months of difficult negotiations with the company at ACAS failed to agree a safe method of despatch.

"We have made it clear right from the off that this trade

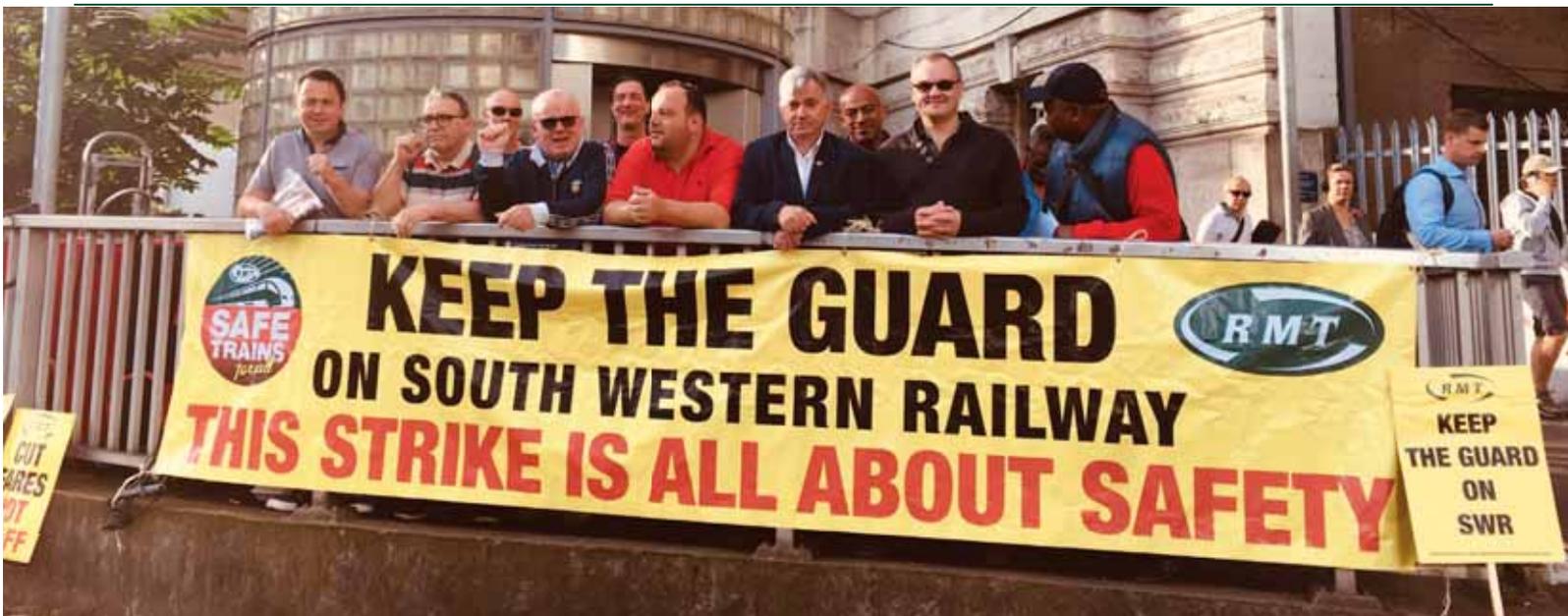
union will not compromise on passenger safety and the company know that.

"We have reached a point where our members feel so strongly that the proposed method of dispatch for the new trains is a less safe option that they are prepared to go back to the picket lines and demand an operational role that applies to all Merseyrail stations that the

new trains call at.

"Crucially, the train drivers take the same view as the guards that operate the trains day in and day out and if they are saying that they can't accept the proposed method of operation then they must be listened to," he said.

Detailed discussions are planned with specified review periods. ■



SOLID ON SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

RMT members on South Western Railway stood "rock solid and united" again earlier this month in the latest round of action in fight for the safety critical role of guard and the safe operation of trains.

As guards began the four days of strike action it was revealed that the company would receive at least a £32 million strike bailout from the tax payer for strike action taken to date, meaning they will be paid by the government even

when they have not run trains on strike days.

In response to Parliamentary questions the new Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps has refused to say what the final bill for tax payers will be saying the matter is "subject to commercial confidentiality."

But the latest report and accounts of South Western Railway's co-owner First Group, says that "progress has been made" as to the "level of strike amelioration recoverable from

the Department for Transport".

RMT has calculated that if the four days of action were included then the total strike bail out that South Western Railway can expect to get to date is £32 million, the equivalent of a 3.4 per cent annual fare cut for South Western passengers.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that passengers would be outraged to know that South Western Railway was being paid by Ministers even when they

don't run trains on strike days.

"Thanks to the generosity of the government South Western Railway don't lose a penny from strikes and therefore have little incentive to negotiate seriously.

"RMT members have not come this far in the long fight for safety on South Western Railway only to be snubbed when a deal is clearly there to be done. It is now down to the company to get serious and listen to what their own staff are saying," he said. ■

TUBE ACTION SUSPENDED

RMT suspended Tube strike action on the Central Line last month after London Underground agreed to address a number of the core elements of the dispute including increasing Train Operator levels on the line.

The company also agreed to review the application of the Attendance At Work Policy and

address a number of other health and safety matters.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union would be closely monitoring future industrial relations on the Central Line.

"All members and reps must be congratulated for reaching this position and seeing these issues resolved," he said.

The union also suspended strike action on the Victoria Line following a series of talks with the company at ACAS.

During the talks proposals were made to find a resolution to the dispute which included Service Control and Reps Release, Pay Deductions, Disciplinarys, Attendance at Work and the Framework

Agreement.

The company has committed itself to implementing jointly agreed proposals to improve working relationships between RMT members and Victoria Line management and further detailed discussions are planned with specified review periods. ■

TYNE AND WEAR METRO STRIKE

RMT members working as skilled maintainers for Nexus on Tyne & Wear Metro took strike action earlier this month following an overwhelming vote in a for action.

Members are demanding a

fair regrade for skilled maintainers by calling for parity with technicians who are currently on a higher grade.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that members at Nexus had delivered an overwhelming vote for the

second time as a mandate for industrial action in support of their call to have their jobs regraded so that they have parity with technicians who are currently on a higher grade.

"The company continues to drag its heels and has failed to

produce and agree a reasonable timetable process towards a regrading.

"Nexus needs to come to its senses and regrade these workers without delay at a level that reflects the skilled work that they do," he said. ■

RIP-OFF RAIL FARE INCREASE

Union research shows that most travellers are struggling to keep up with ticket prices

RMT members held protests at stations across the country last month as news broke that rail fares will rise by 2.8 per cent in January.

The latest rise, set by the July retail price index figure published by the Office for National Statistics, will add more than £100 to many annual season tickets, amid warnings that passengers were being priced off the railway.

Labour also said that the average commuter would now be paying more than £3,000 for their season ticket, 40 per cent more than in 2010.

The overall cost of train travel has gone up by 46 per cent since 2009, while wages have only grown by 23 per cent, according to TUC analysis of ONS figures.

An RMT study of 1,000 people found that most commuters complain of having serious pressure on their monthly finances as a result of expensive train tickets, and that they are forced to cut back on other necessities as a result.

Other respondents said that the cost of tickets stops them from visiting family and friends more regularly, and that the high cost of rail travel means that people consider other forms of transport such as cars.

Despite the rise in fares the union has complained that private train companies continue to cut and under-recruit workers in both station

and onboard roles.

Additionally, 60 per cent of commuters said that rail fares offer “poor and awful” value for money, and 73 per cent said that their train company is motivated primarily by making a profit ahead of ensuring a good service for passengers.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was a national disgrace that the majority of rail passengers say that rising rail fares have forced them to make cutbacks elsewhere.

“Our railways should be run as an affordable and accessible public service and not for private profit.

“Rail tsar Keith Williams has said he will prioritise passengers in his rail review. But unless he recommends renationalisation, it will be clear he is merely giving lip service to the idea of improving our railways for the benefit of passengers.

“A publicly owned and nationally integrated railway, which was not focused on draining profits from the system, would mean revenue could be reinvested in the network and in making fares affordable for all,” he said.

Labour shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald reiterated that Labour would take the railways back into public ownership in order to improve services, cap fares and to make it work for passengers, not shareholders. ■



LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

RMT has launched a series of campaigning events across the country demanding Justice for Mitie cleaners on Network Rail managed stations and urging the public to sign the petition supporting a living wage for a group of crucial staff who do some of the dirtiest jobs on the railways.

The union also welcomed the news that MSPs from across Scotland's political parties are supporting a motion in the Scottish Parliament calling on outsourcing firm Mitie to pay the Real Living Wage to cleaners who work at Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Central stations.

The motion, tabled by Elaine Smith MSP, follows protests from cleaners at both stations recently and a petition which has secured more than 60,000 signatures.

First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon has encouraged businesses in Scotland including those delivery public contracts to move toward paying the Real Living Wage.

"I would encourage businesses and organisations to recognise the benefits of the Real Living Wage which is not only helping to ensure people's basic pay meets the cost of living but is increasing staff retention, productivity and boosting morale in the workplace," she said.

Mitie was awarded the



cleaning contract by Network Rail, which runs the stations at Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Central. The company has paid out nearly £49 million to its shareholders in dividends in the last five years but refuses to pay its cleaners the Real Living Wage.

Network Rail has outsourced the work of cleaning at many of its stations to a company called Mitie Facilities Management, part of the Mitie Group plc. That won't pay its cleaners the Real Living Wage.

A recent RMT survey of Mitie workers came back with 50 per cent of respondents saying they struggled to make ends meet. The union believes that a multi-million pound public company like Network Rail should not be allowing its contractors to pay poverty wages.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that RMT's campaign was gaining momentum in



Scotland with political and public support now rolling in.

"We welcome the motion in the Scottish Parliament tabled by Elaine Smith MSP. The fact that it has quickly gained support from MSP's from across the political parties is a real boost to our campaign.

"In addition to this political support, the strength of support from the public can be seen by the fact we now have over 60,000 signatures on the petition in support of this fight for pay and workplace justice.

"It is a scandal that the staff employed by outsourcing giant Mitie who clean stations for Network Rail, doing some of the dirtiest work in the rail industry at all hours of the night and day, are struggling to make ends meet on poverty pay. It is time for Mitie and Network Rail to end this disgraceful exploitation and take urgent action," he said.

The petition can be found at <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/pay-the-living-wage-to-mitie-cleaners-now>.

RAIL RENEWALS STRIKE

RMT members employed by rail renewals contractor Clarke Chapman Facilities Management took further strike action last month in their fight for pay justice.

Clarke Chapman Facilities Management are a contractor carrying out work across the UK for Network Rail. Previous strike in July resulted in all the

contractor's scheduled work being cancelled.

A continuous overtime and rest day working ban remains in force until further notice.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that members had been forced to take strike action again in their fight for pay justice at Clarke Chapman Facilities Management.

"I would like to congratulate them for their steadfast determination. Last time they took action all of the company's planned work was cancelled. This was an absolutely fantastic outcome and proves what can happen when union members stand together.

"Despite this shut down, the company has still not contacted

the union to try and resolve this dispute. It is clear that they are burying their heads in the sand, in hope that the dispute will resolve itself.

"This is an appalling way to hold negotiations and just shows the clear contempt management has for its workers," he said.

THE ROSCO RACKET



RMT exposes new £1.2 billion privatised rail rip-off

New RMT research has revealed that the private companies responsible for supplying trains to the railways have been paying massive dividends to their shareholders – money that could have funded hundreds of new vehicles – while shuffling money away into overseas companies based in Luxembourg to avoid paying tax.

Three rolling stock leasing companies (ROSCOs) paid £1.2 billion in dividends to their shareholders between 2012 and 2018, enough to fund 700 new vehicles, while figures on inter-company lending suggest that this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The firm's own 87 per cent of the rolling stock on Britain's railways and were formed after the Tories privatised British Rail in 1993 and handed BR's stock of 11,250 vehicles, assets which had been funded by public investment.

When the then Tory PM John

Major privatised the railways under EU directive 91/440, travellers were told fares would fall, but the cost of some tickets has risen by 250 per cent in the intervening 26 years.

ROSCOs revenues have risen steadily since 2012, from around £800 million in 2012 to around £1 billion in 2017.

Department for Transport data also shows the average age of rolling stock has risen since privatisation, from 16 years in the last year before privatisation to almost 20 years in 2017/18.

RMT's report *The ROSCO Racket* shines a light on the shady world of rolling stock provision by examining company accounts of the three companies between 2012 and 2018 and tracing their ownership structures, including uncovering their use of Luxembourg based companies set up with the sole intention of channelling money up through

company structures without paying tax.

- Between 2012 and 2018, the ROSCOs passed on a total of £1.2 billion to their parent companies or owners in the form of dividend payments. To put that in context, three companies paid out the same amount as all the Train Operating Companies managed across 20 franchises over a five-year period between 2012 and 2017.
- The dividend payments the ROSCOs have made to their overseas parent companies between 2012 and 2018 would have financed the capital costs for a further 700 vehicles. This is more than enough to fund the demand for rolling stock on High Speed 2 over Control Period 7.
- In addition to the dividends

they pay, these companies engage in extensive inter-group financing which enables them to extract profits in the form of interest payments. Most of this is concealed within company accounts, but one interest on one loan paid by Eversholt to a parent company in Luxembourg amounted to almost £328 million, more than its dividend payments over the same period and enough to finance the capital costs for 172 new vehicles.

- The three ROSCOs are now owned by large asset management funds working for investment banks and institutional investors focused on the market in infrastructure such as ports, toll roads, airports, water and electricity companies and rail. Infrastructure is

attractive to these funds because it is characterised by investment costs, predictable income, low exposure to economic cycles or market volatility and high barriers to market entry that prevent competition and allow the companies to raise prices over time. In other words, they are reliable sources of income based on services that people will always need which are relatively easy to monopolise.

- All the ROSCOs have owners with companies based in Luxembourg, which is a low tax regime in which interest payments between companies are not taxed. In 2014, the LuxLeaks (leaked papers revealing the tax agreements of dozens of companies in Luxembourg) revealed that in 2009 AMP Capital, who now owns 65 per cent of Angel Trains, were using a complex web of companies using various forms of intra-group lending to avoid paying tax on money they were extracting from Angel Trains and other investments.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the figures should be a wake-up call for the new Transport Secretary.

“For years, we’ve known that the rolling stock companies have failed to deliver new investment in vehicles for a modern railway, leaving passengers paying the highest fares in Europe to travel on clapped out, overcrowded trains.

“Now we can see some of what they’ve been up to. Huge dividend payments and interest on group loans have been flowing away from our railways.

“Because of their shady group structures and their use of companies in low tax regimes and tax havens, we’ll probably never know how much they’ve salted away from our railways, but what we can see shows that passengers and tax payers are being ripped off every day.

“It’s not just the train operating companies we need to see off, it’s time to end this racket once and for all and take control of our rolling stock,” he said.

Parliamentary Column

STANDING FOR LABOUR



RMT member Chris Atree has been selected as Labour’s candidate for the Barrow and Furness constituency to stand in the next General Election.

Chris was born in Barrow and works for Network Rail as a signaller on the Furness line.

Chris has deep connections to Barrow and says that he will work hard to protect jobs and fight for investment in manufacturing so that all corners of Barrow and Furness can thrive.

Speaking after the selection, Chris said: “I am proud to have been selected to be Labour’s candidate for the next general election.

“Labour is meant to be the political arm of the ordinary people and it should never forget that.

“This Tory government has overseen the biggest cuts to our public services in a generation. The NHS and social care is in crisis, our schools are struggling under the weight of the budget cuts and cuts to police budgets are putting our safety at risk.

“People here in Barrow and Furness need a local representative that will put them first.

“I feel that now is the time for more working class people to stand in politics and help get the party back to fighting to improve the lives of working people.

“Many bright young people

leave the area so we need vibrant, diversified industry, harnessing the industrial power we already have here.

Transport is also key, I know more than most how vital it is to have a nationalised, safe service that properly connects the Furness peninsula to the rest of the North,” he said.

When asked how he got involved Chris explained that he enjoyed vital support from the union. Furness was built on both sea and rail- the bedrock of organised labour which was provided by the forebears of the current RMT, which brought both together.

So what advice would he give to RMT activists who want to stand for political office?

“Get a small team around you of people you trust, with a range of skills and be passionate and believe in yourself- don’t let anyone tell you it’s ‘too much’. Parliament should represent the people, it’s one of the main reasons I stood.

“RMT members can help locally by supporting local labour Party events and union members are fantastic on the doorstep- this area was built on the marriage of rail and manufacturing and their voice will speak loud in this constituency.

“We must shout from the rooftops, the positive Labour message of hope and fantastic policies which will transform this country for the better,” he said. ■

ORGANISING INFRASTRUCTURE WORKERS IN SCOTLAND

Wishaw and Motherwell branch secretary David Hainey explains the latest campaign to recruit rail infrastructure workers

I recently visited a blockade at Mossend West along with RMT regional organiser Gordon Martin, Donald Graham from the organising unit and Dennis Fallen and Mike McCaig, who are currently helping out with the rail infrastructure campaign in Scotland.

It really was an eye-opener and an education as to how a formerly well-organised section of our union has become unorganised and largely disconnected from the union structures, but also how in Scotland the campaign team with support from Regional Council and branches are attempting to rebuild the membership and reorganise this vitally important sector of the RMT.

The Rail Infrastructure Campaign has been up and running for a while in Scotland now and, following my visit with the campaign team, I now fully understand the desperate situation our union faces within the Infrastructure Renewals and Enhancement sector.

With a myriad of contractors, self-employed and bogus self-employed workers on these sites, organising the industry back to pre-privatisation levels is going to take a lot of hard work and resources over a long period of time.

Regional Organiser Gordon Martin has written to all general grades branches in Scotland, seeking support for the campaign whenever they are within the branch sphere of

influence.

With sites already visited right across the central belt of Scotland, as well as Aberdeen and elsewhere in the northeast of the country, and with further

site visits planned in the southwest and south east of Scotland in the coming months, I hope officials and activists from the respective branches are able to attend and help out. ■



RMT STATEMENT ON TRACK WORK

Full application of safe systems of work for people working on or about the line

Recently there has been a series of very serious near-misses that have taken place during track work activities. This series of near-misses, coupled with the tragic fatalities at Port Talbot in July 2019 and Stoa's Nest in November 2018, is alarming for everyone in the sector.

Your union's top priority is the health and safety of members and, given the escalating numbers of incidents, RMT is now issuing advice to all members working in track maintenance and on the national railway infrastructure

as follows:

"All members working on or near the line on Network Rail Infrastructure governed by the 019 Standard (NR/L2/OHS/019 – Safety of people at work on or near the line), should ensure that they are in full compliance with, and are fully applying the safe systems of work and protection methods given to them in the Safe Work Packs (SWP) planned for the task in which they are engaged.

Where members cannot comply fully and apply the methods set out in the Safe

Work Pack, they should not implement any other systems or ad-hoc arrangements, and should request that a revised Safe Work Pack is issued.

Any members that feel that they do not have a safe system of work or one that cannot be properly applied and are pressured in to working unsafely should invoke the Work Safe Procedure (NR/L2/OHS/00112 – Work safe Procedure)."

Members are advised that RMT has previously reached agreement with the company

that any member of staff invoking the Work Safe Procedure will not be subject to the company's disciplinary procedure, this agreement remains in place.

RMT will continue to engage with Network Rail as a matter of priority on all aspects of track worker safety with the intention of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries. That may mean a change in the culture and practices of track working with an emphasis on the safest systems being designed and fully implemented. ■

SOMETHING'S WRONG

“Victorian” methods of protection amongst zero hours’ contract rail staff blamed for track death

RMT has called for a ban on contracting out, an end to the cuts culture and the replacement of the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) with a genuinely independent safety regulator following the release of a shocking report into a track worker death at Stoats Nest Junction near Purley.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) report into the accident attacked “Victorian” methods of protection and fatigue amongst zero hours’ contract staff.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that once again the RAIB had criticised safety standards for the protection of track workers exposing casual working and the zero hours culture on the railways.

“This latest shocking report should force real change across the industry and it should force it right now.

“Warning after warning from this trade union on fatigue, zero hours and casualisation has not been properly addressed by Network Rail or the safety regulator the ORR.

“As a result, lives are at a risk and that is a scandal. For all the talk of a modern, digital railway those in charge can’t even guarantee basic levels of safety for track records.

“If those responsible for protecting the safety of rail workers are not doing their job then we need a genuinely independent safety inspectorate with real teeth not linked to budget controls and the cosy world of the industry players which is the reality of the failed ORR model,” he said.

The report was into a fatal accident near Purley which occurred in November last year.

A passenger train from London Victoria to Three Bridges struck and fatally injured a track worker in the vicinity of Stoats Nest Junction, near Purley. The accident occurred after the track worker had placed equipment on the track as part of the arrangements for the protection of an engineering possession.

Having placed the protection equipment, the track worker then walked along the track until he reached the end of the protected area, and continued walking with his back to rail traffic on an open line. He may have been going to look at some lineside equipment, and believed that no trains would approach on the line he was walking along.

Underlying factors associated with the accident included the nature of the work which exposed the track worker to risk while he was putting out protection for the possession; that the labour supplier’s management processes had not sufficiently identified and addressed the risk of fatigue among zero hours contracted staff; and that the labour supplier’s management processes had neither identified nor prevented staff absenting themselves from work without being detected.

The RAIB has made two recommendations and identified three learning points. One recommendation is addressed to Network Rail, to improve the way its labour suppliers manage the risks associated with the use of workers on zero-hours contracts, in particular the management of their lifestyle and fatigue.

The second recommendation is addressed to

Vital Human Resources Ltd, the labour supplier, to commission an independent review of the actions it has taken following the accident at Stoats Nest Junction to assess their effectiveness in detecting and preventing the type of behaviour seen in the accident, and reduce the risks from fatigue.

The RAIB has previously made recommendations about reducing the exposure of staff to risk while carrying out possession protection duties, and these are still being considered by the railway industry.

A learning point highlighted the need for safety-critical staff to be aware that distraction caused by family issues or other employment may affect their fitness for duty.

Other learning points highlight the importance of track workers being alert to the risks on the railway, even when they believe that they are working under protection, and the limitations of the railway industry’s ‘Sentinel’ system if it is used for establishing the presence of staff on site.

Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents Simon French said that when workers are employed on a casual basis on zero-hours contracts, there can be great pressure for them to try and juggle multiple jobs to make ends meet.

“The possible effects of such patterns of employment on fatigue and fitness for work are significant. We are therefore recommending that the railway industry reviews the way it manages the use of staff on zero-hours contracts, to minimise the risk associated with this pattern of work.

“The continuing requirement for people to go onto the track to place and remove red lamps and explosive detonators, as part of the arrangements for protecting engineering work on the railway, is something that RAIB has queried before.

“Following a fatality at Reading in 2007, and again after a near-miss in north London in 2017, we recommended that the railway industry should find ways of eliminating the need for people to be exposed to the risk of being struck by trains in these circumstances.

“Modern technology means that there are many ways in which the position of trains can be established, and warnings given to drivers and to track workers, if a train movement goes beyond a safe limit. I believe that the industry should continue to explore ways of eliminating the need for Victorian methods of protection on the twenty-first century railway.

“It is deeply saddening that another person has died while putting down protection for his fellow railway workers - there must be a better way.

“The need to better manage the continuing risk to those who work on the tracks has again been highlighted by the tragic death of two track workers who were struck and killed by a train at Margam, near Port Talbot, on 3 July.

“RAIB has started a detailed investigation into the causes of this dreadful event. This will clearly identify the lessons to be learnt and any necessary recommendations for the improvement of safety,” he said.

■

FOREIGN GRIP ON UK RAIL TIGHTENS



RMT slams franchise chaos on Britain's railways as Southeastern granted a government extension

Italian-Scottish firm First Trenitalia will take over from Richard Branson's Virgin Trains on the West Coast Main Line from London to Glasgow in December.

The announce-ment means that more than three-quarters of rail franchises in Britain will be overseas controlled, with the inclusion of the Abellio takeover of East Midlands Railways, by the end of the year (Full table opposite).

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that under the Tories any state can run our railways other than the British state.

"It is a scandal which means that British passengers are directly subsidising rail operations across Europe and beyond as profits are shipped

overseas starving the UK of desperately needed investment.

"Instead of following the popular public-sector route, the Tories are taking yet another gamble on the crucial West Coast lines with one of the dwindling number of private operator consortia left in the game, in a move that RMT believes is doomed to failure and sure to result in yet more rail chaos.

"RMT will take whatever action is required to protect members pay, jobs, working conditions and pensions on these vital inter-city routes.

"The only solution to this racket is public ownership and it's now no longer a question of if, it's a question of when," he said.

The union also slammed the franchise chaos on Britain's railways as Southeastern was granted a government extension.

"The corporate monopoly of the Southeastern franchise shows yet again that the whole privatised rail system is broken and coming apart at the seams.

"The chaos of short-term extensions to get the government off the hook is a measure of just how rotten their rail policies are.

"You cannot run a serious and reliable rail service on the hoof and yet that is what the

government are doing and passengers paying a small fortune to travel on the Southeastern services will be rightly outraged.

"The only viable alternative to this nonsense is public ownership and that is exactly the model that the Williams Review has explicitly ruled out,"

Mick Cash said.

Labour's shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald MP said that it was a "gross error of judgement" by the Department for Transport.

"The ghost of Chris Grayling's rank incompetence haunts our rail services as the new Transport Secretary Grant

Shapps follows his predecessor in putting private profit before passengers and the public interest.

"The government cancelled the Southeastern rail franchise competition, admitting that the rail franchising process will not deliver for passengers or the taxpayer.

"It's time for our railways to be brought into public ownership so they are run in the interests of passengers, instead of ripping them off to line the pockets of profiteers and shareholders," he said.

The takeover of the West Coast Mainline by a joint operation of Italian state operator Trenitalia and First Group means that nearly 80 per cent of the UK rail network will be in foreign hands.

Contract / Route	Operator	Operator Owner name	Operator Owner - Country
Caledonian Sleeper	Serco Caledonian Sleepers	Serco	UK private company
Chiltern	Arriva	Deutsche Bahn	German State Railways
Cross Country	Arriva	Deutsche Bahn	German State Railways
Crossrail	MTR Crossrail Ltd	MTR	Chinese State
Docklands Light Railway	Keolis Amey Docklands	Amey / Keolis joint venture	French state owns Keolis
Essex Thameside	C2C	Trenitalia	Italian State Railways
East Midlands	East Midlands Trains	Abellio from 18 Aug	Dutch State Railways
East Coast Mainline	LNER	DFT OLR Holdings Ltd	UK state owned company
Gatwick Express	GTR	Govia (comprising of Go-Ahead (65%) and Keolis (35%))	French state owns Keolis
Grand Central	Arriva	Deutsche Bahn	German state railways
Greater Anglia	Abellio East Anglia Limited	Abellio 60% AND Mitsui 40%	Dutch State railways and Japanese firm
Great Western	First Great Western	First Group	UK registered private company
West Midland	West Midland Trains Operating as London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway	Abellio (70%) JR East (15%) Mitsui (15%)	Dutch state railways and two Japanese private firms
London Overground	Arriva Rail London	Deutsche Bahn	German state railways own Arriva
Northern	Northern	Arriva	German state railways own Arriva
Scotland	Scotrail	Abellio	Dutch state railways own Abellio
South West	South West Trains	First MTR (comprising First Group and MTR)	MTR is owned by the Chinese state.
Southern	GTR	Govia (comprising of Go- ahead and Keolis)	French state owns Keolis
South Eastern	South Eastern	Govia (comprising of Go- ahead and Keolis)	French state railways owns Keolis,
Thameslink,	GTR	Govia (comprising of Go- ahead and Keolis)	French state railways owns Keolis,
TransPennine	First TransPennine Express	First Group	UK registered private company
Tyne & Wear Metro	Nexus	Nexus	UK
Wales & Borders	Keolis Amey Cymru	Keolis owns 60% and Amey 40% of the joint venture	French state railway own Keolis while Spanish infrastructure multinational Ferrovial owns Amey
West Coast	West Coast Partnership	First Trenitalia – From Dec 19	Italian state owns Trenitalia. First is a UK registered private company.
Hull	First Hull Trains	First Group	UK registered private company
Merseyrail	Merseyrail	Serco / Abellio	Dutch state railways own Abellio
Eurostar	Eurostar	EIL is owned by SNCB (5%) and SNCF (55%) and other private investors who bought the UK Govt. stake	SNCB is the Belgian State railway and SNCF is the French State railway.
Heathrow Express	Heathrow Express	Heathrow Airport Holdings	Heathrow Airport Holdings is a consortium, 41.88% of which is owned by the sovereign wealth funds of Singapore, China and Qatar.

IRISH SEA PROTESTS



SOS: RMT national secretary explains the union's campaign to Merseyside police

RMT held two demonstrations in Liverpool last month highlighting the scandal of low pay, recruitment of UK and Irish ratings and the failure to redeploy members.

The first protest was at P&O after the company sold the Bahamas registered ro-ro passenger ferry European *Endeavour* to Finnish ferry company Eckerö Line. The *Endeavour* worked between Liverpool and Dublin, with UK crew employed but these jobs are now at risk.

Dubai-owned P&O Ferries – which made pre-tax profits of £40.6 million last year with directors on as much as £692,000 – is refusing to re-deploy RMT members on the Irish Sea fleet.

This refusal to maintain seafarers on collectively bargained terms and conditions in the Irish Sea is another demonstration of P&O's intention to maximise profits from low-paid agency workers at the expense of directly contracted UK seafarers.

The next protest was held at Seatruck, which operate 76 freight sailings a week on three

Irish Sea routes, Liverpool-Dublin, Heysham-Warrenpoint and Heysham-Dublin.

Seatruck, which recorded post-tax profits of £9.4 million in 2017 and has paid out £23.5 million in dividends in the last three years to shareholders, do not recognise UK or Irish trade unions.

Their vessels, registered in Cyprus or the Isle of Man, are crewed with EU seafarers on rates of pay below the National Minimum Wage, as low as £3.78 an hour for ratings. By contrast, Seatruck's highest paid director received a 17 per cent pay rise in 2017 to £304,780.

Seatruck's safety culture is also shameful, with the investigation into the tragic death of an Assistant Bosun on Seatruck Pace in December 2018 revealing that the chief Safety Officer on the vessel had received no training in how to carry out that role.

The protests were organised under the banner of RMT's SOS 2020 campaign which is committed to ending the scandal of seafarer exploitation and increasing jobs for ratings on RMT terms and conditions by

securing the following reforms:

- Equal rights in employment, equality and immigration law for UK seafarers
- 'Cabotage' protections for UK crew and ships based on the USA's Jones Act
- Statutory targets to train thousands of UK Ratings
- Improved safety standards in UK shipping
- Protect the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's merchant seafarers from privatisation

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that it was a scandal that after announcing the sale by P&O of the European *Endeavour* members were not offered redeployment on one of the company's other Irish Sea

vessels when suitable positions exist.

"Instead, P&O are filling ratings positions on the Irish Sea with agency crew, citing that their 'business model' needs to be maintained.

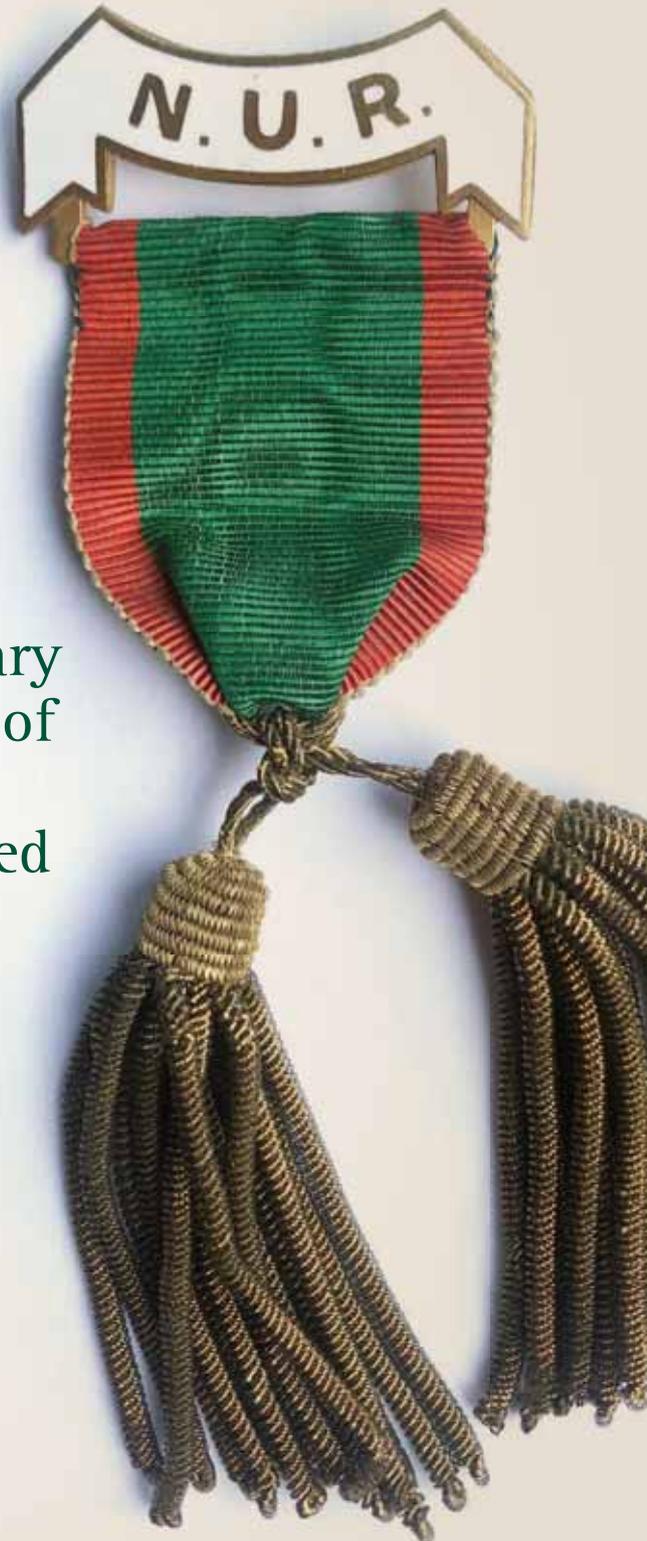
"It is shameful that shipping companies like P&O choose a business model that replaces long-standing seafarers with 'low-cost' workers.

"With this attitude from a major shipping company it is no surprise that of 101,000 ratings and officers that make our shipping industry tick, under 20 per cent of these jobs are held by British seafarers, most of whom will retire in the next decade," he said.



NO GOING BACK!

RMT News celebrates the centenary of the successful great rail strike of 1919 which standardised wages across the industry and guaranteed working hours





COMMITTEE: NUR strike committee in Frome, Somerset

The great 1919 railway strike – which saw over 500,000 members of the National Union of Railwaymen bring the rail network to a complete standstill– lasted from September 27 until October 5 before forcing a deeply hostile right-wing government to reach a settlement.

The strike was provoked when the newly-elected post war government announced heavy-handed plans for a 20 per cent cut in rates of pay which had been negotiated by the railway unions under a nationalised railway during the First World War.

Yet, after nine days of strike action, the government capitulated and agreed to maintain wages for another year. Subsequent negotiations resulted in the standardisation of wages across the railway companies and the introduction of a guaranteed maximum eight-hour day.

This heralded the end to the culture of zero-hour contracts which had blighted the industry since its inception.

Despite these dramatic and historically significant events it is curious that there was only one major study of the dispute

in the 20th century by the labour historian Philip Bagwell in his *The Railwaymen: A History of the National Union of Railwaymen* in 1963.

In his book he asserts that the NUR leadership did everything it could to avoid strike action but the breakdown in negotiations was caused by an aggressive government cabinet that contained deeply right-wing members, such as Winston Churchill, the Geddes brothers and Bonar Law, who were all aiming for “the restoration of Britain’s competitive position by reduction in wages”.

Bagwell describes the enormous efforts the government was prepared to go to defeat the rail workers including a call for strike-breaking volunteers, the harnessing of road transport and the use of military force.

He also deals with the now familiar use of the mass media by the government via the national newspapers and even the cinema. At a huge strike rally at the Albert Hall NUR president Charlie Cramp warned the assembled strikers that “all the powers of hell, the press, platform and perhaps the pulpit”

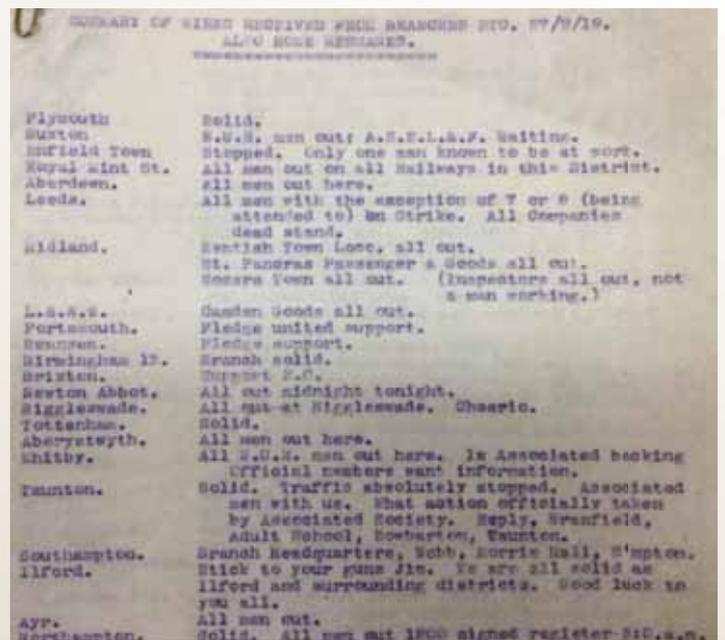
would be used against them but unity and determination would win the day.

Bagwell argued that the national press was “almost unanimous in opposition to the railwaymen at the beginning of the strike”. This is highlighted in a revealing letter held by the Peoples History Museum in Manchester from NUR general secretary JH Thomas to Plymouth branch about the

media at the height of the strike.

“The Times has given the show away when it stated that we must be fought like we fought the Germans. Who fought the Germans? The workers, and they will not fight their own class”.

However, by the end of the strike the media was much more circumspect and even sympathetic to the railwaymen’s cause.



WIRES: NUR headquarters received thousands of reports from branches across the country including: “All out at Biggleswade, cheerio!”

The same newspaper conceded by October 3 that it was “sufficiently apparent that the wages question has not been handled well by the government” and “the whole question should be reconsidered with an open mind”.

This volte face by an entrenched establishment media was caused in no small part due to the union counterattacking with propaganda of its own with the assistance of the Labour Research Department including full-page advertisements in major national newspapers and a film of its own featuring Thomas shown in cinemas across the country.

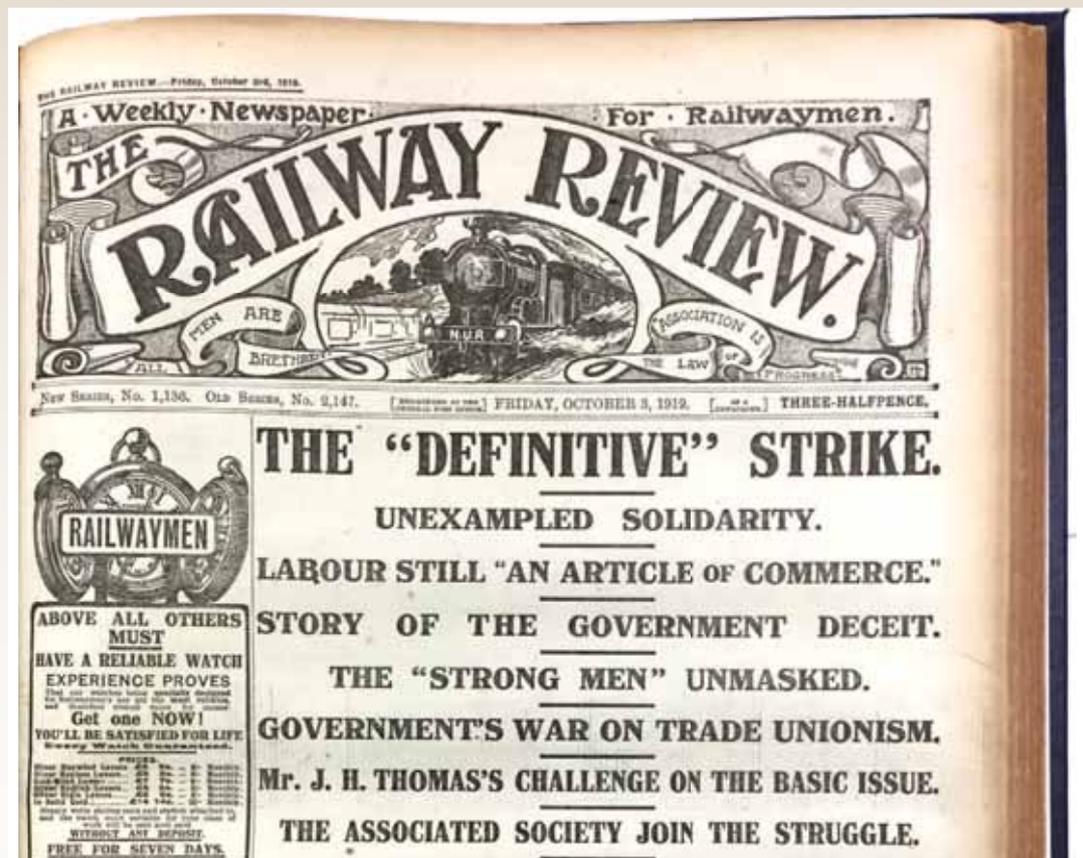
The government and the establishment had also been taken by surprise by the sheer size of the solid response from the rail workers to stop work. On the first day of the strike the union declared in a press statement that the numbers that stopped work had “gone beyond all expectation”.

Warwick University archive holds hundreds of short one-line reports from branches to union headquarters which read remarkably like tweets today – Oldham: *100% out, wonderful enthusiasm; Ilford: Not a wheel moving; Carlisle: Unprecedented stoppage – we hold North fort; Ashford: Out to a man; Truro: We stand united, loyalty prevails; Tottenham: Solid; Ayr: All men out; Rutherglen: Solid and behind you, don't yield; Bradford: Jimmy go to bed for a week, all well here.*

WINNING

This solid national response contrasts with the 1911 national rail strike which began unofficially and only really took effect in the industrial centres including the north, Midlands, and South Wales.

The main reason why the strike was more solid than the 1911 dispute was because of developments in railway trade unionism. The foundation of the NUR in 1913 with the merging of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, the General Railway Workers' Union and the Signalmen's Society, meant that workers had a union which



could represent the large workforce collectively.

Union membership grew substantially from 159,261 at the union's formation in March 1913 to 267,611 by the end of the year. This unity allowed the union to push for improvements in wages and conditions. During the First World War, both the NUR and the ASLEF gained trade union recognition, a significant step forward which meant that they could negotiate directly with the companies.

Joshua Edgcombe in his work

The 1919 Railway Strike: the Government's Response, also emphasises the importance of the decision made by the ASLEF to come out on strike in sympathy due to the fact that the NUR was the dominant union of locomotive workers at the time. The ASLEF only became the dominant locomotive union much later.

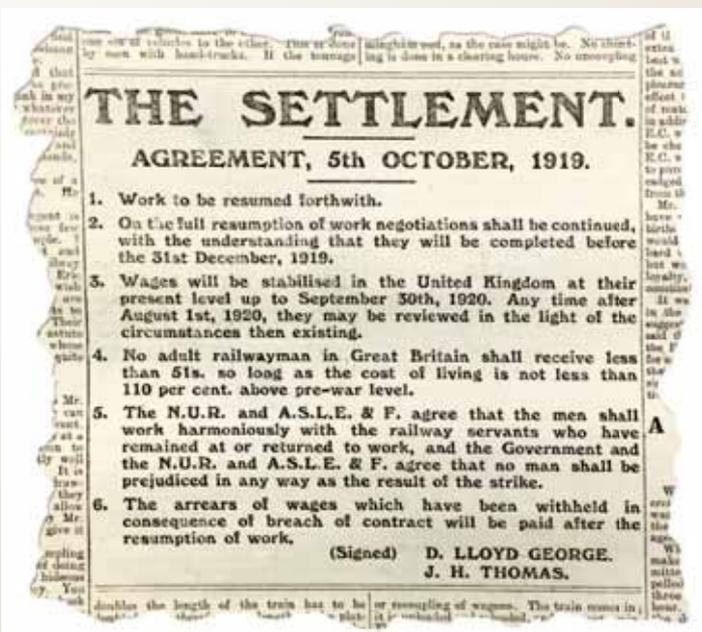
Another reason why the 1919 rail strike was successful was the importance of community and social solidarity amongst rail workers. There were

hundreds of family events including charity football matches and parades organised across Britain. The importance of family and community was even more significant in small communities which were reliant on the railway.

Another reason was the fact that the government ultimately wavered when it came to using the armed forces against striking rail workers as had it had done in the 1911 strike. The police and military campaigns in 1911 were extremely aggressive against striking workers particularly in South Wales with police baton charges and rumours of troops being instructed to shoot to kill.

For instance, what started out as a peaceful strike by railway workers in the Welsh town of Llanelli turned into violence, destruction and deaths after a bayonet charge and the shooting of two unarmed men by the army.

However, during the 1919 strike a meeting of the government's strike sub-committee, formed to assess the use of military force for maintaining rail services, decided that it was “most undesirable to compel serving





A selection of rail union badges from The Great 1919 Railway Strike

soldiers, sailors or airmen to assist in maintaining the railway services of the country”.

The world had clearly changed following four years of imperialist trench warfare and ordering soldiers to act as strike breakers in a growing class war was a dangerous gamble in a country already teetering on the edge of anarchy with mutinies and widespread rioting earlier in the year.

Another argument against the use of military force was the largely peaceful and disciplined behaviour of the strikers in the

face of the state’s anti-strike machinery. The way rail workers conducted themselves also helped win evermore public sympathy.

This support developed into growing calls for solidarity action and the Transport Workers Federation held a conference at Caxton Hall in London on October 1 where railway union leaders explained their case to delegates from the Labour Party, the TUC, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Railway Clerks Association and the National

Federation of Women Workers to name a few.

After declaring support for the rail workers and a number of unsatisfactory meetings with the government, a deputation wrote to Prime Minister Lloyd George warning him that unless “a more reasonable attitude” was adopted by his cabinet “it would be impossible to avert a widespread extension of the strike”.

The government blinked and agreed to discuss a settlement throughout Sunday October 4. As the proceedings came to a close, mediators could hear members of the NUR executive singing the Red Flag and the Internationale being sung in 10 Downing Street for the first time.

That very night strikers re-assembled at the Albert Hall to hear NUR president Charlie Cramp explain the events that had led to victory and it is worth taking time to read a section from it.

“Comrades, fellow workers, a week ago we met in this hall having just entered upon what has proved to be the greatest fight of organised workers in history. Tonight we are met together to listen to the terms of a settlement which has only been reached after much negotiation this afternoon. (Applause). If ever there was a moment when I felt proud of being a railwayman, it is this moment.

I will remember what took place in the year 1911, when the first great strike took place on British railways, but I am going to say that that was a mere

fleabite as compared with what has taken place during this last week. You have been solid, you have been loyal, you have been peaceable and orderly, and you have given, I think, an example of how a trade dispute can be carried out by the working class....I want you to understand that you have won a battle not merely for yourselves, but for the organised workers throughout the country”.

The 1919 rail strike showed that, following the dreadful conflict in the trenches during the war, rail workers were determined that there would be no going back to the poor conditions and low wages suffered before the war and that militant industrial trade unionism was a powerful tool in the hands of the workers.

FURTHER READING

- **The Railwaymen:** A History of the National Union of Railwaymen, Philip Bagwell 1963
- **Respectable Radicals:** Studies in the Politics of Railway Trade Unionism, David Howell 1999
- **The 1919 Railway Strike:** The Government’s Response, Joshua Edgcombe 2017
- **1919: Britain’s Year of Revolution,** Simon Webb 2016
- **Pulling Together:** A popular history of RMT 2009

Thanks to the Peoples History Museum and Warwick University for support with photographs, documents and illustrations



THE RETURN OF THE "STRONG MEN."
THE BOSS: "Well, did you carry Labour's first line defences?"
THE VICTOR (?): "Oh, yes—er—well, that is—er—we'd better say we didn't half give 'em a good licking!"



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RMT member, work accident claimant

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



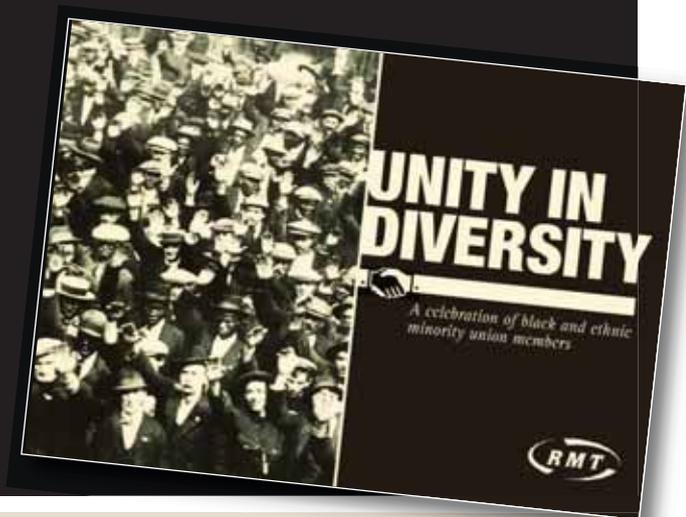
Wigan branch members Paul Talbot and Steve Rennox receive 40-year badges from regional organiser John Tilley.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

A celebration of black and ethnic minority union members

RMT published a pamphlet last year to mark the 25th anniversary of the union's black and ethnic minority members' advisory committee and its annual conference.

Unity in diversity, a celebration of black and ethnic minority union members is available from head office by emailing: j.webb@rmt.org.uk



RAIL WORKERS WORLD WAR ONE MEMORIAL SERVICE

Over 185,000 railway workers from Britain and Ireland fought in World War One and around 19,000 lost their lives, these people were remembered at a service in 1919.

To mark 100 years since the original service, a centenary service, coordinated by Network Rail is being held on November 6 2019 to remember the railway workers who died in WW1.

Current and retired members from the railway industry are able

to register their interest in attending the service. It is free to attend, and there will be a selection process for tickets if it is oversubscribed.

The service is being held at 3pm on Wednesday November 6 2019 at Southwark Cathedral in London. Doors will open from 2pm and the service will finish at 4pm.

For more details and to register interest in attending, please see <https://rwcms.co.uk/home> ■

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE POLITICAL FUND

In accordance with section 84A of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 we are obliged to inform, on an annual basis, any member who joined the Union on or after 1 March 2018 that they are entitled to choose to withdraw their contributions to the Union's Political Fund if they submit a withdrawal notice. For the avoidance of doubt, the Union does not recommend that you do this as the money it receives from the Political Fund is vital to much of the campaigning work it undertakes. However, notwithstanding the Union's position, if you wish to withdraw your contribution to

the Political Fund you need to submit a withdrawal notice making clear you no longer wish to contribute to the Union's Political Fund. In this notice you should set out who you are, what your address is and what branch you are in. You can submit the withdrawal notice either by delivering it by hand to the Union's head office or your branch office or by emailing info@rmt.org.uk. The Union will then action your request. You can also ask us to provide you with an electronic version of a withdrawal notice for you to complete to facilitate your withdrawal and we will do this immediately if you email info@rmt.org.uk.

VIC HALL RETIRES



Train named after Vic for 50 years of service at Watford Junction



RMT member Vic Hall retired from the rail industry last month with a send-off which included a train being named after him and being presented with a Watford Junction sign marked with love and affection by staff and friends.

Victor Hall, known as Vic to his mates, worked at Watford Junction Station for 50 years. He started his railway career on Monday August 4 1969. This was the same year that current Watford branch secretary Stewart Cameron was born.

Vic joined British Rail at the tender age of 16. He was a Junior Railwayman and worked up to Senior Railwayman. Vic has always worked at Watford Junction Station. His passion has always been about trains,

especially Diesel engines, his favourite being IMPECCABLE 50039.

He worked as a guard on the DC Line which is now Arriva Rail London and has many fond memories of these days. He also worked at Red Star dealing with parcels and letters for British Rail which he cherished. Vic later took a change in his career to become Watford Junction's train announcer and then his final role to date, a train dispatcher, up until his last day on the railway.

Stewart Cameron said that all would miss Vic dearly as he was a true Watford legend. Well done Vic from all your brothers and sisters at Watford Junction Station.

RMT AT LGBT

RMT sent a full delegation to the TUC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans + conference.

There were a wide range of topics discussed throughout the two days including harassment awareness and training, full access for all to PrEP, LGBT+ rights around the world, LGBT+ asylum seekers, Trans rights and many more.

There were some fantastic speakers including Maria Exall, Chair of the TUC LGBT+ Committee and Dr S Chelvan who spoke on LGBT+ asylum seekers.

RMT member Alex Grant spoke on the motion on LGBT+ inclusive sexual harassment awareness training and Georgie Duane spoke on tackling LGBT+



PRIDE: RMT's delegation to the annual LGBT TUC conference

hate crime and Trans rights.

John Shackelford spoke on the RMT motion on outlawing LGBT+ 'Cure Therapy'. This was

well supported by several other speakers from other unions who also spoke in favour of our motion.

The emergency composite on tackling LGBT+ hate crime was voted to go to the TUC Congress later in the year. ■

DISABLED MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

My name is David O'Donnell, employed by Network Rail as a Boundary Inspector in Edinburgh Delivery Unit.

I am the local Health and Safety Rep and RMT Equality Rep. I started on the railway in May 2001 as a contractor, eventually becoming full-time in 2002.

I've always struggled with numbers and process, and in February 2018, at the age of 52, was diagnosed with Dyscalculia*. This was after having a referral from physiological report via my employer.

I went on a journey to get this diagnosis. After having worked with paper reports for years, in 2016 my employer introduced iPads and I was failing miserably with using them. It was so much easier to rub out a mistake or Tipp-ex a wrong piece of info than to follow Ctrl Alt Del on the iPad.

My work was now laid out and duplicated and it did not correspond with what I was inspecting. It was so different on the iPad to what I had been doing for years. Added to this, I was working alone. I had a problem and informed my manager that I was struggling with stress, anxiety and low mood. I then sought support through a referral to Occupational Health. That didn't really help that much, although I was taken off safety-critical duties for several months.

Eventually, after a further physiological referral, it was decided that I would be referred for a Dyscalculia assessment, which came back positive.

I haven't really had the adjustments that I thought I could have. I have agreed to try different processes with limited success. But I have created an awful lot more awareness of this condition by becoming involved

in help groups such as the employee-run network Can Do (advising disabled employees).

I am excelling in other ways though, including a sponsored hair and beard shave, a volunteer tour guide for all things railway, and joining RMT's Disabled Members' Advisory Committee

My impairment isn't stopping me or holding me back.

* Dyscalculia is a neurological condition associated with difficulties in understanding and manipulating mathematics but strengths in acquiring language. It can be thought of as 'dyslexia with numbers'. ■



Letters

REMEMBERING FRANK EDWARDS

Dear editor,

An article appeared in the June edition of RMT News on 30th anniversary of the saving of the Settle Carlisle railway, a very good article I might add.

However, Leeds City members who remember it well have noted that there was no mention in the article of the fact that it was one of our own members that was one of the major players in securing that success.

Brother Frank Edwards MBE was instrumental in getting the then NUR and Jimmy Knapp involved along with all the sponsored MPs and MPs along the route to spearhead the fight to save the line.

Frank was branch secretary of the now defunct Leeds no 13 branch and also President of the Leeds Joint branches, and later an officer of the current Leeds City branch. Whilst accepting that there were many great contributions to this momentous battle, not all of which could be mentioned, we at Leeds city do believe bearing in mind the article was in our own publication Frank should have been worthy of a mention.

Thank you

John Stewart

Branch Secretary, Leeds City

WHAT ABOUT TAXI DRIVERS?

Dear editor,

Having read the AGM report in the last issue of RMT News, in particular the perilous conditions being faced by bus workers and the union's resolve to launch a national campaign for a "bill of rights" for bus drivers. This is highly commendable.

Now turning to the plight of Hackney Carriage drivers in Solihull I wonder what steps if any are being taken by RMT to safeguard the livelihood of us taxi drivers after the influx of unlimited drivers with Wolverhampton taxi plates and badges, resulting in our earnings dwindling to almost below poverty levels.

Surely there is a limited amount of work in terms of number of passengers needing taxis.

At present it seems there are much more taxis than passengers needing them.

As an RMT member and Solihull Hackney Carriage Driver I would request your organisation to pay some attention to our plight and earn blessings of our families.

Regards,

M. Saleem

President's column

**TIME TO UNITE**

Now the general secretary election is over I'm asking every member to look at their work place issues with the same militant trade unionism.

We must unite and fight to address the imbalances in our work places and use the same determination to put right the bad conditions and low pay we must renew our focus on contractors and when possible gain in house roles. We must turn our energy into making gains on work place rights.

Democracy is a right we all fight for as lots of bosses attack our conditions by stealth now we fight back with the same passion and actions they will understand, militancy and direct action when not listened too, is our power.

I am at a loss, after over three years of driver-only operations being peddled to raise more profit with little or no regards for the travelling public, we as a union through our members watch the increase in crime across the rail network, where front line staff still exist they would have been abused in some way whilst carrying out their duties.

We have to unite, no matter your company or grade, and we have to fight together to stop the cuts on our railways, we need to organise and start fighting to free our union from the anti-

trade union laws imposed by past governments.

We have all taken part or seen the renewed fight for climate change that's the fight we must see in trade unions together we can make changes, direct action together.

We must also be ready to see more destruction to our communities by the outrageous behaviour of this rotten out-of-control Tory government whose aim is to destroy our country so only the rich have a say and take us back to slum housing.

They already have us fighting amongst ourselves over Brexit while they deliver more misery to our services such as hospitals, schools and local council cuts making services near impossible to operate.

More and more working families visit food banks so they can pay basic bills such as gas and electric. No matter what side of Brexit you're on remember if we lose our rights to be heard by those in parliamentary power we all lose.

It was a real pleasure to attend Wimbledon branch to share 40 years membership with members, something that will become less and less with the attacks we face as an industry, time to stand together and make our trade union the one bosses fear!



THE WORLD'S FIRST COUNTRY BRANCH LINE

Marc Davis Senior Conductor at Watford celebrates the Cheddington to Aylesbury Line

Opened June 10 1839 it was the world's first country branch line. The seven-mile line ran between Aylesbury High Street Station to Cheddington, with an intermediate stop at Marston Gate Station. At Cheddington passengers could then proceed onto the London to Birmingham main line which had opened fully in September 1838.

Services to London took just over two hours, before the railway horse drawn coach would take more than half a day to reach the capital.

Passenger rail service ran until January 31 1953 with freight services lasting till December 1963. There is little evidence of branch line existing only at Marston Gate Station the old station building is private home now called "Beeching House" and Cheddington part of the old platform and cottages next to the old goods yard which is the car park now.

On exactly 180 years to the day. We celebrated the opening of the line with full support and help of my company West Midlands Trains and local railway historian Alan Vessey and opened the ticket hall in the early morning and early evening.

We talked to passengers and a group of pupils from Cheddington Combined School who had made us art work of a passenger train and the surrounding countryside, supplying them all with information, fresh orange juice and a snack! (right)

The Cheddington to Aylesbury Line, sometimes referred as the Aylesbury Railway was a railway line between the village of Cheddington and the major town of Aylesbury. The line had one intermediate station at Marston Gate and four level crossings – one at Park Street,

one at Broughton and one at Marston Gate. The line formed a junction with the LNWR mainline at Cheddington. The terminus at Aylesbury was in the High Street and made no connection to the other railways in Aylesbury. The line was completed in 1839.

The Aylesbury Railway was independent, but was operated by the London and Birmingham

Railway, (later the London and North Western Railway (LNWR)). A few years later it was absorbed fully into the LNWR, and the line is regarded as the world's first branch railway line.

Until the late 19th century, the line was heavily used for the transportation of the famous Aylesbury duck from Aylesbury to London markets.



DEALING WITH MIGRAINE



Helen Balami, Head of The Migraine Trust's Advocacy Service writes on the importance of supporting employees with migraine

Too often dismissed as a headache, anyone who gets migraine knows that it is a complex neurological condition and one that can impact on all aspects of life.

One of the most significant ways that it can affect a person is their working life.

This is particularly the case for those working in transport where many do shift work and are exposed to the changing weather in their roles, both of which are common triggers for migraine.

The transport industry isn't just an environment that can be difficult for people with migraine, many of the roles cannot be performed when a person is having a migraine.

That is why it is crucial that the problem of lack of awareness and understanding of migraine in workplaces across the UK is urgently tackled in the transport industry.

WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO TO HELP PEOPLE WITH MIGRAINE

While an employer can't always prevent an employee from having a migraine attack, it can make a significant difference on how it impacts on their work. Workplaces can exacerbate the condition but, on the other hand, they can also help someone manage it.

First of all, they can be 'Mindful of migraine'. By that, we mean that they should be aware of the high numbers of people who get migraine, that it is very common and that there

is a strong possibility that someone they employ might get migraine. They should also have an understanding that it is a complex neurological condition and that people can experience migraine very differently.

They then should make reasonable adjustments once they become aware that they have an employee whose migraine is impairing on their day to day activities. An employee's GP or neurologist, or an Occupational Health practitioner, can advise on whether a person is likely to be covered under the Equality Act 2010, and help identify any changes that would be helpful.

Examples of reasonable adjustments that may be helpful for people living with migraine in the workplace are:

- Working practices
- Flexible breaks to give an employee the time to stretch, relax muscles and manage trigger factors.
- Time off for medical appointments. It can be helpful to discuss and reach an agreement with an employer in advance so that an employer can be flexible to accommodate this.
- Moving to a different site or team, a reduction of hours or a new role entirely may help an employee to manage their migraine.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Having regular one-to one meetings with a manager

can help identify work triggers or stress factors and lead to discussions about how they may be able to support an employee.

- A colleague or representative who has an understanding of or training about migraine can provide support to an employee which can ease anxieties about attacks happening at work.

PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Fluorescent lighting can be a particular problem due to flickering. However, the newer generation of fluorescent lighting should only give out a minimal flicker. If an employee and an employer have any queries about the quality of the light, they should seek an assessment from a lighting consultant.

SPEAKING TO YOUR EMPLOYER

Before any of these reasonable adjustments can be made, an employer needs to know that an employee gets migraine. This can sometimes feel like a daunting prospect but talking to an employer will help them to understand how migraine affects a person. Before approaching a manager or HR about migraine issues, an employee may want to speak with Occupational Health or their GP or neurologist first to explore suggestions regarding the support an employer could provide.

While employees sharing with their employers that they get migraine and employers being supportive won't mean that people with migraine never struggle at work again. However, we believe it is an important step in helping people with migraine work. For those working in transport, when getting regular migraine can have particularly serious implications, this help and support is urgently needed.

HELP WITH MIGRAINE

- The Migraine Trust has produced toolkits to help people at work. Help at work, provides general information about ways to manage migraine in the workplace. It can be downloaded at migrainetrust.org/asking-for-support
- The Migraine Trust's Advocacy Service can be reached via its website migrainetrust.org or by calling 0203 9510 150

STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE MIGRAINE TRUST

- To keep up to date on all things migraine related, you can sign up to The Migraine Trust e-bulletin at migrainetrust.org, and by following us on Twitter – @MigraineTrust and Facebook – themigrainetrust

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NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

WATFORD BRANCH
SUPPORTS
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

CARDIFF RAIL BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER

MEDWAY & DISTRICT BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
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LONDON, ANGLIA AND MIDLAND ROAD
TRANSPORT BRANCH
SUPPORTS
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FINSBURY PARK BRANCH
SUPPORTS
GLEN HART
FOR THE POSITION OF RRO SOUTH

BLETCHLEY AND NORTHAMPTON BRANCH
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FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

MARCH & DISTRICT BRANCH
NOMINATES
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NOMINATES
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FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH
NOMINATE
GLEN HART
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

CARMARTHEN BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

CENTRAL LINE WEST BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

WATERLOO BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER (SOUTH)

CENTRAL LINE EAST BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

GREAT NORTHERN BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

SOUTH HANTS & EASTLEIGH WORKSHOPS
NOMINATE
GLEN HART
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

THREE BRIDGES BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

LU FLEET BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

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ORPINGTON BRANCH
NOMINATES
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PRESTON BRANCH
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SUPPORTS
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FOR REGIONAL ORGANISER REGIONS 2 AND 3

ASHFORD 1 BRANCH
NOMINATES
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FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

SOUTH LONDON RAIL BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

JUBILEE SOUTH BRANCH
NOMINATES
GLEN HART
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER

SOUTHALL, EALING AND SLOUGH BRANCH
NOMINATES
EDDIE DEMPSEY
FOR RELIEF REGIONAL ORGANISER SOUTH

BASINGSTOKE 1 BRANCH
NOMINATES
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Keep your RMT membership details up-to-date

In the light of draconian anti-trade union laws that have been used against the union, members should keep their personal data up to date. It 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.

ON THE EAST SOMMERSET

PATHWAY: ESR provides a pathway for young people to learn a trade. Chief engineer Steve Masters (second right) and Ray McNeill (last right)

The East Somerset heritage railway has gained a reputation for engineering excellence

Prior to Beeching's axe which destroyed thousands of miles of railway in Britain, the East Somerset heritage line was once part of the former Cheddar Valley line that ran from Witham to Yatton, meeting the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway at Wells.

But passenger services ceased in 1963 following the infamous Beeching report.

However, a few years later the artist David Shepherd, outspoken conservationist and steam enthusiast, purchased Cranmore station and a section of the track to run his two locomotives the *Black Prince* 92203 and Class 4MT *The Green Knight* which he had bought from British Railways.

The Green Knight was later sold to the North Yorkshire

Moors Railway to finance *Black Prince's* overhaul and then in 2015 that was sold to the North Norfolk Railway.

Today the East Somerset Railway runs steam and diesel engines along the 2.5-mile line between Cranmore, Cranmore West, Merryfield Lane Halt and Mendip Vale. Between the last two sections, the railway runs through the impressive Doulling Railway Cutting.

In 1992, a new station building was constructed at Cranmore which now includes a cafe, booking office, gift shop and toilets. The platform also extends to the old station which is now a museum.

The East Somerset may be a small heritage line but it is gaining a reputation for its engineering prowess.

Chief engineer Steve Masters oversees an incredible amount of work with volunteers, young and old.

He explains that Cranmore Traincare and Maintenance and Services (CTMS) was set up in 1995 and has gained quite a



Kerry Haines

reputation for restorations and overhauls.

In 2014, a LMS Ivatt Class 2 was restored to working order from scrapyard condition, being followed by a very similar loco in 2017 for the Isle of Wight Steam Railway. The boys are currently overhauling GWR 5205 Class Goliath for the Dartmouth Steam Railway.

“Some of our young volunteers have learnt valuable engineering experience here and have gone on to work for Network Rail, Great Western and Freightliner,” he says proudly.

As well as being a pathway to employment for young people, retired aircraft engineer Ray McNeill is also busy passing on skills and getting on with his own projects.

“We are currently re-fitting a railway coach to allow wheel chairs users and others to access the railway and dine at the same time,” he says.

Veteran guard Kerry Haines who happily engages with



passengers of all ages, also expounds on the virtues of the East Somerset.

“We are the friendly railway and we intend to keep it that way,” he says with an infectious

laugh.

It is this level of enthusiasm and expertise that has built up the reputation of the East Somerset and has drawn in crowds for their dining trains,

family days and the usual seasonal events from nostalgia days to the ubiquitous Santa specials. A very special place.

For more information go to eastsomersetrailway.com. ■

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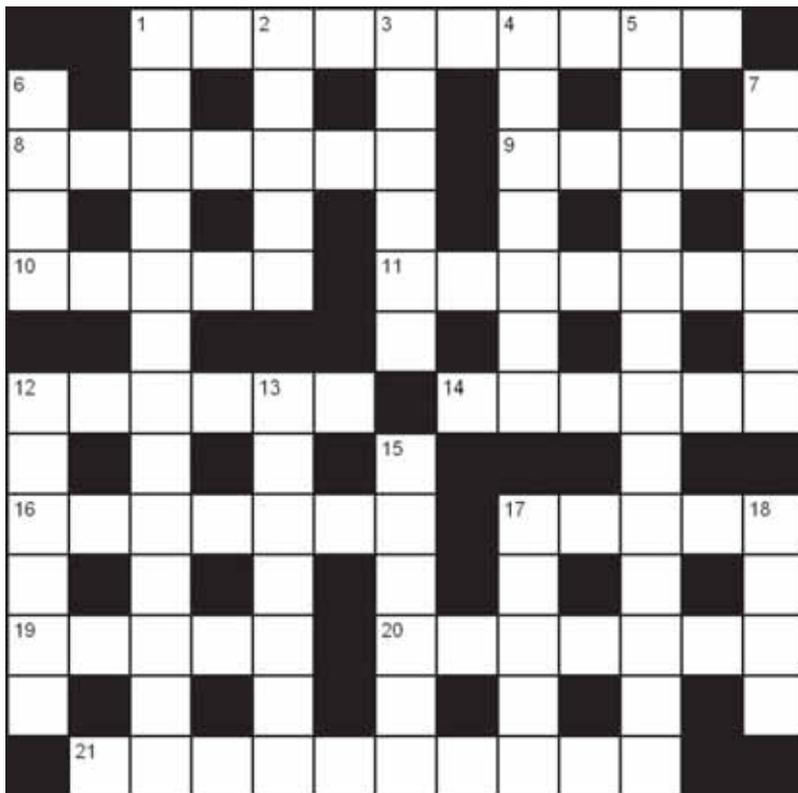
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£50 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Last month's solution...



The winner of last month's prize crossword is Steve Wood, West Mids
 Send entries to Prize Crossword, RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD by October 6 with your name and address.
 Winner and solution in next issue.



- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1 Genius (10) | 1 Weatherman (13) |
| 8 Fill (7) | 2 Serpent (5) |
| 9 Awareness (5) | 3 Small hole (6) |
| 10 Group of animals (5) | 4 Allot cards wrongly (7) |
| 11 Voter (7) | 5 Absence (13) |
| 12 Quantum of electromagnetic radiation (6) | 6 Employed (4) |
| 14 Wool (6) | 7 Funeral car (6) |
| 16 Unit of sound in a language (7) | 12 Tree (6) |
| 17 Mosquito-like fly (5) | 13 Supervise (7) |
| 19 Farewell (5) | 15 Warm again (6) |
| 20 Turkish term of respect (7) | 17 Muslim legal expert (5) |
| 21 Resourceful (10) | 18 Rewrite (4) |



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RMT Branch

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Mick Cash,
RMT General
Secretary

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