



CROAT CREATION IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR SUMMER SAILING ON THE DALMATIAN COAST **P16-17**

NEED SOME PEP IN YOUR STEP? CITY UNSTUCK IN TOON BATTLE **P20**



PUT PAY DEAL TO WORKERS, LYNCH TOLD

PRESSURE BUILDS ON RMT WITH MORE STRIKES LIKELY

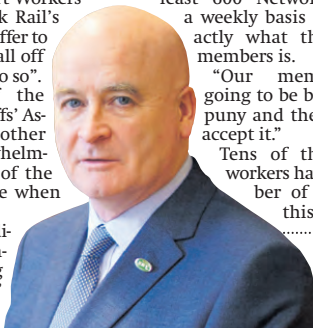
STEFAN BOSCIA

PRESSURE was piled on transport union boss Mick Lynch this weekend to put a pay proposal to a vote of his members as tens of thousands of rail workers prepare for further industrial action this year.

Transport secretary Grant Shapps said it was "only right" for the general secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) to offer Network Rail's eight per cent pay rise offer to his members and to "call off the strikes whilst you do so".

Some members of the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA), another transport union, overwhelmingly voted in favour of the eight per cent pay rise when given a choice.

The wage offer is conditional on union members accepting "modernising reforms"



RMT boss Mick Lynch is calling for widespread action

to the railways – a sticking point for Lynch and the RMT bosses.

Shapps said in a letter to Lynch that "it is in no one's interest to take away members' opportunity to resolve disputes", while accusing him of doing "long-lasting damage" to the rail sector.

In response to Shapps' letter, Lynch said: "I speak to thousands of our members every week, we consult at least 600 Network Rail reps on a weekly basis and we know exactly what the mood of our members is."

"Our members are not going to be bribed, the offer is puny and they're not ready to accept it."

Tens of thousands of rail workers have gone on a number of crippling strikes this summer, with

unions asking for better pay and promises that jobs within the sector will not be lost to automation.

Rail strikes on Thursday and Saturday saw the rail network running at just 20 per cent capacity, with sports fans and concert-goers all hit by disruption.

Lynch has said his union is prepared for months more strikes and has called on wider industrial action across different sectors.

"I'll be talking to senior executives in the industry all through next week trying to create solutions to these problems and then we'll decide whether we need to take more industrial action but I've got to say that it's very likely given the gap between us at this time," he told the BBC.

Tory leadership contender – and favourite to be the next Prime Minister – Liz Truss said over the weekend she would not allow the UK to be "held to ransom by militant trade unionists".

● **FELIXSTOWE ON STRIKE: PAGE 5**



FLOWERS IN THE FORESTS Kyiv readies for invasion milestone

JAMES SILVER

THIS WEEK will mark six months since Russian forces invaded Ukraine – plunging the country into a vicious economic and military war against its aggressive neighbour.

Ukrainians continue to rebuild, including using the aftermath of war – such as burnt out vehicles in Bucha above – as signs of hope.

The Kremlin's forces crossed the border on 24 February, expecting a quick victory over the seemingly over-matched Ukrainian military.

However, Russia failed to strike quickly and has now become bogged down, focussed instead on holding on to territory in eastern Ukraine.

● **ZELENSKY WARNING: PAGE 11**

Water companies under fire again for malfunctioning sewage detectors

JAMES SILVER

WATER bosses are again in the firing line after new figures suggested one in eight 'sewage monitors' installed for designated swimming areas in the south of England are either faulty or not installed.

The analysis, compiled by the Liberal Democrats from Environment Agency data, comes just days after images of untreated sewage being pumped into the seas around England made headlines.

The number and scale of so-called "sewage dumps" from storm overflows is measured by Event

Duration Monitoring, however a host of popular swimming spots – including Littlehampton in Sussex and Lee-on-Solent in Hampshire – do not have such a monitor, despite the presence of sewage overflow pipes.

According to the Lib Dem analysis, one in four sewage discharges went unmonitored last

year "because water companies either failed to install monitors, or the monitors weren't working for at least 90 per cent of the time."

A spokesperson for Water UK challenged the figures, saying after installation monitors "go through a period of calibration until they are considered fully operational" and

said every overflow will be monitored by the end of next year. "Companies agree there is an urgent need for action," the spokesperson added.

In July, the water regulator said bosses should face jail unless their firms brought the number of overflows down.

TRAVEL

Adam Hay-Nicholls discovers secret coves within Croatia's Dalmatian Islands with the aid of a 35-metre sailing yacht

Our tender skims into an empty and secluded turquoise bay, the only sign of civilisation being a 300-year-old fisherman's cottage and a rowing boat on the shore. It's the kind of place you might see at the end of a Jason Bourne movie: Matt Damon safe in an exotic hideaway as the camera pans out and Moby's Extreme Ways strikes up.

Smrka Bay was once a smuggler's cove, and there's a sense of excitement that we're off the beaten track, visiting somewhere tourists never set foot. We're in a southern inlet on Brac, the largest of the 79 islands off the Dalmatian coast of Croatia and Montenegro. The rose-hued fisherman's cottage at which we alight belongs to the Tomas family, who farm sheep and make olive oil and wine.

This is not a restaurant, it's a private – and incredibly friendly – home, and thanks to the Tomas's and our yacht charter company we are welcomed with generous platters of homemade sheep's milk cheese and lamb prosciutto, octopus, anchovies and buxom olives. Our visit has been arranged through High Point Yachting's Croatian founder Sasha King, whose knowledge of the islands means that in addition to having a sybaritic vessel for the week we have the most fantastic concierge with whom to plot the perfect bespoke holiday.

Our floating abode, San LiMi, disguises its size well. It's discrete, classy, but incredibly luxurious. A 35-metre fly-bridge sailing yacht, finished inside and out in soothing shades of grey and white, it has four en-suite guest cabins and a crew of five – who are all Croatian – headed by Captain Ivo. My master bedroom is particularly vast, with four wide portholes on either side, a king-size bed, a dressing room and a double-sized jacuzzi. Or just use the hot tub on the top deck and enjoy the sun and the stars.

Additionally, we're joined by a second craft, as we are a party of nine singletons in total. The 34-metre Dolce Vita is very different in style; a most handsome Turkish wooden gullet, built in 2005 with a vintage aesthetic, offering generous deck space and five en-suite cabins, which also had a full refit four years ago. It too has a local crew of five, led by Captain Niko. Both crews couldn't be more charming.

Our six-day sail starts in Split, the biggest city on the Dalmatian coast, into which it's easy to get flights from the UK. The centre of Split is pretty, teaming with restaurants and bars and home to the impressive Diocletian's Palace, built for the 4th century Roman emperor. We depart the marina early on Sunday morning and make a course for Vis. Just under 40 nautical miles, this will be our longest sailing day for the week. Once Yugoslavia's 'forbidden island', Vis was a military base and visitors were only permitted in the 1990s. It's the farthest inhabited island off the mainland and has just two small towns; noble Vis and bohemian Komiza (there's a centuries-old rivalry). The sea here is rich with sardines, mackerel and anchovies, which make their way to our plate. As our on-board chef Josip told me: "Here, fish must swim three times. First in the sea, then in oil and wine, then in the stomach."

In the evening, we take cocktails in the gothic renaissance garden of the Villa Kaliopa before hopping in a jeep across the island to Roki's restaurant, specialising in

UNTOUCHED CROATIA



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the favourite local dish. 'Peka' is a slow-cooked stew of octopus or meat with potatoes and other veg simmering in a large pot. Such a hearty meal, and the day on the water, leads to a deep night's sleep with the barest rocking of the sea.

The following morning we visit the stunning Blue Cave on the islet of Bisevo, a cavern so named because the sunlight bounces under the rocks and off the sandy bottom to illuminate the tall grotto in vivid cerulean. After another wonderful stew – this time 'gregada' made of langoustines and potato at Meneghello in Palmizana (a favourite with yachties), we drop anchor that afternoon in the quiet Pakleni archipelago and indulge in the water toys. San LiMi boasts superyacht-levels of kit, including two new and powerful jetskis, paddleboards, Seabobs, wake-

boards and a Lampuga jet board – a surf board with a water jet on the back. I also scuba dive with the PADI-approved Aqualis Diving Centre on Hvar, which boasts a rustic and picturesque wooden beach bar; a cold lager is just the ticket after a 28m dive among moray eels and octopi.

In the evenings, we alternate between the two yachts for dinner when we're not dining out. Josip treats us to such stand-outs as crispy-skinned fillets of salmon and sea bream, and black truffle caserecca, while chef Marko on the Dolce Vita rustles up fabulous risotto. John Dory cooked in a paper bag, and mojito cheese cake.

When we sail into Hvar, the stakes get even more glam. Hvar Town is the St Tropez of Croatia, and there's a throng of tourists on the busy quay curious as to



which perma-tanned multi-millionaire is mooring today (if I'd said I was a journalist they'd have never believed it).

Here, 13th century walls surround ornate gothic palaces and traffic-free marble streets. Looming above the town, the Venetian Fortica and its cannons remind us that this was once a strategic trading post and how Marco Polo's ships once ruled these routes. Today – possibly as then – Hvar is a noted party town. Twenty thousand tourists descend every day in the height of summer, and the few who can get a reservation (cue Sasha) head to restaurant Gariful. Positioned in front of where the biggest gin palaces dock and with a view of the setting sun, family-owned Gariful has been serving A-listers just-caught seafood and serious wine since 1981, and it has a glass floor through



BOOK THIS



TAKING TO ASIA THIS SEPTEMBER AND YET TO PLAN THE WHOLE TRIP?

Two hours south of Singapore is the Pantii Forest, one of the largest areas of rainforest in Malaysia, where bird watching is among the best in the world.

The newly-opened One&Only Desaru Coast hotel has two-night packages including bird watching trips with local experts from £480 per night.

26th - 29th Sept, and 2nd - 7th Oct.
Oneandonlyresorts.com/desaru-coast

which one can view lobster and giant crab swimming around, waiting to be chosen for the pot.

From there we take a tender to a new luxury hotel which is earning rave reviews. The Maslina Resort near Stari Grad also on Hvar welcomes guests with a 'welcome stone' - a giant 12-tonne Brac limestone front desk. With stunning modern furnishings and fittings (Scandi in style, but 80% Croatian-designed) and eco-credentials, Maslina has established itself as a 'mindful' luxury hotel in Dalmatia. We're not seeking accommodation, but the resort's infinity pool and a massage at the Pharomatiq Spa provide a spoiling excursion.

Our final night is spent in a deserted bay in Solta, our last stop before returning to Split. Despite my usual habit of awaking closer to brunch than breakfast I am up at 5am the following day, stirred by the sound of engines but also spurred to watch our final morning's sail from the top deck.

We don't sail towards the city's marina from which we departed, but direct to the airport, at a mooring so close you can smell the jet fuel. I've enjoyed more than my fair share of chauffeur drop-offs at terminals, and even the odd helicopter, but I've never arrived for my plane by yacht before. The whole week felt like a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

NEED TO KNOW

Weekly charter rates for Sailing Yacht San LiMi start from £33,100 and the Gulet Dolce Vita from £26,700, excluding taxes and expenses. Highpointyachting.com. Rooms at the Maslina Resort start from £570 in peak season, with full-body massages available from £130. Maslinaresort.com



THE LONG WEEKEND

THE LAKES BY YOO LECHDALE, COTSWOLDS

Siobhan Grogan checks into a cabin at a secret countryside celeb haunt

THE WEEKEND: The chance to get back to nature without sacrificing creature comforts, just 90-minutes from London. Spend days roaming woodlands, swimming in freshwater lakes and cycling for miles, but there's no need to rough it by night. Think gourmet breakfast deliveries, spa treatments and alfresco cocktails. You're on holiday after all...

WHERE? The Lakes by Yoo is a seriously exclusive 850-acre estate in Gloucestershire, close to Lechlade-on-Thames. Once a quarry, it was transformed by property entrepreneur John Hitchcox into a gated country commune for celebrities, hedge fund managers and London's mega-wealthy, with nearly 150 multi-million-pound holiday homes scattered around nine lakes. Some of these were originally designed by the likes of Philippe Starck, Kate Moss and Kelly Hoppen and a handful have long been available to rent for a minimum of seven spendy nights. However from summer 2022, the estate has unveiled nine two-bedroom lakeside cabins and 18 three-bedroom apartments available to rent for just three nights.

THE STAY: There's nothing rustic about these cabins. Mine sleeps four and has an open plan, double height living space with a wood burner, a freestanding bath and a large deck hovering over Marley Lake. There's a surprisingly comprehensive kitchenette tucked magically behind a dresser, oversized lamp shades made of locally woven willow, Cotswold stone walls and masses of Conran cushions everywhere. If you want, you can hunker down and be left entirely alone for the weekend to watch the ducks glide by from your deck. Your personal concierge can also



TOP TIP
There are tea rooms and independent boutiques aplenty in the nearby Cotswolds villages of Burford and Stow-on-the-Wold, while pretty Bourton-on-the-Water is known for its five arched bridges spanning the River Windrush

arrange almost anything you fancy, whether you want a mixologist to serve drinks in your living room or a personal chef to whip up a lakeside barbeque.

THE FOOD: Opt for a breakfast hamper delivery and still-warm pastries, smoked salmon and farm-fresh eggs appear on your doorstep. Generously-portioned dinners can be delivered from a local private caterer too - don't miss the outstanding chocolate brownies - while a fairy-lit teepee serves toasties, coffee and wood-fired pizzas. If you prefer to cook yourself, stroll to the main gate each morning where heritage vegetables, eggs and even jars of honey from the estate's own farm and beehives are left for guests to collect. Off-site, nearby, The Double Red Duke serves oysters and loaded burgers in a picture-book pretty beer garden, while 18th century inn Five Alls is the place for hearty pub classics and local ale. If you fancy a waterside picnic, pick up homemade sourdough and cakes at Blake's Kitchen and traditional pork pies at Lechlade's Cutler & Bayliss.

DON'T MISS: Though the estate's hub - with a spa, 17-metre indoor pool and vintage gin van - is steps away from the cabins, The Lakes' real charm lies away from its manicured pathways. Hire a bike and explore wild meadows, shaded woods and a gurgling stretch of the River Coln. If you have kids in tow, it's paradise for den-building, tree-climbing and lake splashing. Elsewhere, there's a high ropes course, tennis courts, kayaking, paddleboards and tiny, tucked-away slivers of beach where you can wade straight into the lake.

NEED TO KNOW: Cabins cost from £650 a night. Reservations@thelakesbyyoo.com; thelakesbyyoo.com.