

SALISBURY

Huge Russian flag hung from cathedral

By Oliver Barnes

A huge Russian flag was unfurled on scaffolding at Salisbury Cathedral nearly a year on from the Novichok attack in the city.

Workmen were spotted removing the flag yesterday morning after it was reportedly hung overnight.

The stunt was branded a "slap in the face" after former Russian

spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were poisoned with the nerve agent Novichok on March 4 last year.

Local MP John Glen tweeted: "What a stupid stunt - mocking the serious events sadly experienced in Salisbury."

"Residents will be very upset, it's just a little bit of a slap in

the face," said local Conservative councillor Jo Broom.

Dawn Sturgess, 44, died after she came into contact with a perfume container used to carry the Novichok on 30 June.

A police inquiry found that two agents from the Russian secret service, the GRU, carried out the attack.



TRANSPORT



Independent analysis shows that 300 million more journeys might be made on UK railways if the ticketing system was clearer and simpler GETTY

Rail industry planning 'pay as you go' train fares

By Simon Calder

Proposals for a sweeping overhaul of rail ticketing in Britain aim to make it easier to buy the cheapest possible tickets for a train journey have been made by an industry body.

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) wants "tap in, tap out" pay-as-you-go systems with built-in fare caps rolled out across the country.

"Commuters that currently buy weekly season tickets could save money when they travel fewer than five days a week or are able to travel off peak," says the RDG.

"The proposals are built with a simple proposition at their core: that customers only pay for what they need and are always charged the best-value fare."

Train companies will, the RDG hopes, be able to create "discounted, premium, train-specific and personalised variations" of fares, such as charging less at quieter periods.

The RDG says that under its proposals "many people would pay less, particularly on long-distance routes", but concedes: "Some people would see what they pay increase slightly, potentially at the edge of current peak-time restrictions."

After carrying out the biggest-ever rail fares consultation, the RDG says there is overwhelming support for overhauling the fares system, extending smart or electronic tickets and adjusting prices to fill empty seats.

The RDG claims one-third of non-rail users are put off travelling by train due to complexity in the fares system, and says: "Independent analysis indicates that making fares easier in the way set out would encourage over 300 million more journeys."

Its proposals would also mean the end to "splitting tickets" - a practice in which passengers pay separately for different sections of a journey rather than just one ticket. For example, on a mid-morning train from Manchester to Edinburgh, buying one ticket to Preston and a second from there to the Scottish capital saves 38 per cent on the "walk-up" fare.

Anthony Smith, chief executive of the passenger watchdog Transport Focus, said: "Passengers want to see root and branch reform to the outdated fares and ticketing system."

The Campaign for Better Transport's chief executive, Darren Shirley, said: "The fares and ticketing system needs fixing, so we welcome these proposals." THE INDEPENDENT

Splitting the cost When the indirect route is cheaper

What is split ticketing? This involves buying multiple tickets instead of just one ticket to cover different parts of a journey.

five to 10 minutes for passengers to research possible savings. Some websites search for you.

Why does this happen?

Passengers do this to save money. The UK's complicated system means it can be cheaper to buy tickets from A to B and B to C, even when travelling on a single train from A to C.

£20

The reduced cost of a £50 fare from Doncaster to Southampton when split at London

What savings are possible? Examples include: Manchester to Edinburgh split at York (£150 reduced to £92.20) and Doncaster to Southampton split at London (£50 reduced to £20).

How easy is it? Consumer website MoneySavingExpert.com says it takes

Is it legal? Yes - as long as a train calls at the stations where tickets are bought for.

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