

RailStaff Award Winners

See page 4



Railway Mission

RM News

Issue 1 2024

Support on life's journey





Railway Mission

Support on life's journey

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Cover photo by Liam Johnston of a ScotRail train in the Cairngorms

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Scan to
find a
chaplain





The mission of the Mission

As a non-denominational Christian organisation, we believe that our mission is to serve the railway industry with love, compassion, and grace.

We are not here to impose any religious doctrines or traditions on anyone, but to share the good news of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again to give us eternal life.

God isn't interested in our religious rituals or ceremonies, but in our personal relationship with Him. He wants us to know Him as our Father, our Friend, and our Lord. He wants us to trust Him, obey Him, and worship Him in spirit and in truth and to experience His presence, His power, and His peace in our lives.

We believe that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes*. The gospel is not a set of rules or regulations, but a message of grace and mercy. The gospel is not a burden or a bondage, but a freedom and a joy. The gospel is not a religion, but a relationship.

We believe that the railway industry is a strategic field for the gospel. It is a place where people from different backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs come together. It is a place where

people face various challenges, pressures, and opportunities. It is a place where people need hope, comfort, and guidance.

That is why we provide chaplains to the railway industry. Chaplains are trained and qualified Christian workers who offer pastoral care, spiritual support, and practical assistance to anyone who needs it. Chaplains are available to listen, to pray, to counsel, and to refer, and they are respectful, confidential, and professional. Chaplains are not paid by the railway companies they work with but by our organisation through the financial support of our supporters, whether they are individuals or businesses.

We invite you to join us in this vital ministry as prayer partners, or by donating to us. You can also contact us if you want to know more about our work, or if you want to talk to one of our chaplains. We would love to hear from you and to serve you.

**Romans 1:16, New International Version (NIV)*

Liam Johnston
Executive Director





Railway Mission chaplaincy team has won the Health & Wellbeing Award at this year's prestigious RailStaff Awards; a national awards ceremony, that celebrates individuals and teams across the rail industry and shines a spotlight on the hard work and dedication that all provide in serving the British Public.

The Health & Wellbeing award applauds those who have promoted great practice around health and wellbeing, whose proactive activities and interventions have helped people lead healthier and happier lives.

Railway Mission's chaplaincy team were selected for the accolade due to their excellent practices and remarkable contribution to railway employees, having a profound impact on physical and mental health and ultimately saving lives within the industry.

There were 1,500 nominees across the 18 categories and after 144,000 votes were cast the entrants were whittled down to just 12 in each category, whereby a panel of expert judges made the final selection. Railway Mission's award was presented by Samantha Facey Health, Safety and Security Director for Govia Thameslink Railway.

"It's a tremendous honour for the Railway Mission chaplaincy team to receive this award and we are incredibly grateful to everyone who voted for us," commented Liam Johnston, Railway Mission Executive Director.

"I am extremely proud of our committed team, who value each and every member of the railway family and have transformed the lives of countless individuals."

RailStaff Awards

Railway Mission wins the Health & Wellbeing Award at this year's prestigious RailStaff Awards

The evening was held at Birmingham's NEC and hosted by TV's Gethin Jones. Representing Railway Mission were Liam Johnston (Executive Director), Claire Keville (Business Manager), and Dylis George (Chaplain for the South East) (all pictured above left with the award).

There was a champagne reception, then a delicious three course meal was enjoyed before the awards were presented, following which there was entertainment and dancing into the night to help the winners celebrate.

Collaborating and partnering with railway organisations, industry professionals and mental health experts, Railway Mission's dedication and innovative practices have resulted in remarkable success stories and play a pivotal role in providing support during crises, saving lives and



improving the overall wellbeing of railway employees.

Railway Mission proactively addresses mental health and wellbeing challenges through a variety of initiatives including innovative programmes to help rail staff manage stress and bereavement, providing confidential listening services and signposting to other organisations or support services where needed.

Iain's art offer

Network Rail Director turns pastel artist to support Railway Mission

Iain Ferguson, Director, Regulatory Liaison and Accident Investigation at Network Rail, has a stressful job that involves dealing with complex and sensitive issues on the railway. To unwind from his hectic work, he often takes to drawing with hard pastels (chalks).

His colleagues and friends noted his artistic skills and encouraged him to stop giving them away and sell them online instead. So Iain has set up an Etsy store where he is offering his original and unique artworks for sale. But he also wanted to use his hobby as a way to give back to the railway community.

With that in mind, if you put @railwaychaplain in any order, 77% of the price will be donated to the Railway Mission, a charity that provides pastoral care and support to railway staff and passengers across Britain.

Railway Mission has been serving the railway industry since 1881 and has a team of chaplains who visit stations, depots, offices and other railway locations. They offer a listening ear, a friendly chat, a shoulder to cry on, or a word of prayer to anyone who needs it.

Iain said: "I've been on the railway for over 25 years, it's a great industry full of brilliant people but I know how challenging and stressful it can be, especially in these difficult times. Time and time again I am told by frontline colleagues just how valuable and important the Railway Mission is for the railway family. They do a fantastic job of providing comfort, guidance and hope to those who are struggling, facing hardship or have encountered difficult events."

He added: "I love using "the chalks". They are messy, they rarely turn out as I intend and so you have to go with the





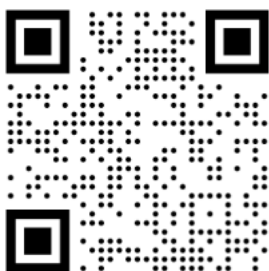
literal flow. It is a perfect way to decompress. I am happy to share my paintings with others and to support the Railway Mission. I hope that my paintings bring enjoyment and peace to those who buy them and to those who benefit from the Railway Mission's services."

You can visit Iain's Etsy store www.etsy.com/shop/pastelsbyiain (see QR code right) and browse his collection of pastel seascapes. If you want to support the Railway Mission, don't forget to put @railwaychaplain in the order and 77% of the order will be donated to the charity. This is a wonderful gesture and an opportunity to get your hands on a beautiful and unique piece of artwork.

Railway Mission is a national charity which provides a regionally-based chaplaincy service aiming to be an impartial 'friend' to those who work on the railway. Regardless of faith,

gender, sexual orientation or position in the industry, chaplains offer face-to-face year-round support, especially during an individual's time of loneliness, stress, depression, bereavement or illness.

You can also learn more about the Railway Mission and our work at www.railwaymission.org. You can also follow us on Twitter @railwymission and Facebook www.facebook.com/RailwayMission.



Scan for
pastels
by Iain
at Etsy



Tony Miller

Restoring faith in God

Tony Miller has been our chaplain for Southern, Tramlink, Docklands Light Railway and the Jubilee Line for just over a year now. He is also on the lead pastoral team for a local church in Croydon.

Tony has been noticing that rail staff are asking about faith as he visits them at their stations, depots and offices.

Tony tells us, “On my way from a station visit, I met two On Board Supervisors. They are Christian but have stopped going to church for one reason or another. Anyhow, they know me and where my church is because they live in the Croydon area and would like to attend our church one Sunday. I’m hoping that when I visit Victoria next, I may be able to reconnect with them again to help them in their faith.”

Chaplains often meet with Christians in the railways, sometimes leading or attending Bible studies and prayer meetings with them.

Another time, Tony was following up with staff following an incident at their station on a wellbeing visit to see how

they were coping. He says, “While I was speaking to the manager, the ticket office staff spoke boldly and loudly, “Can you help him with his faith? He is a Christian and he needs to reconnect back his faith to God.””

“I was astonished by the way the staff member said this while I was having a conversation with his manager. It reminded me of the story in Luke 19 about Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector in Jesus day in Israel. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he couldn’t, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him because Jesus was coming that way. Once again, I found this to be very interesting. so I’m hoping that the manager will call me sometime today.”

Chaplaincy is an ideal vehicle for people to reconsider their faith and to help restore those who may have slipped away.

Tony asks, “Please pray for those who need to reconnect with their faith.”

Welcome to

FIT & FUN

Bike- and hike week in Bernese Oberland

1st – 7th September 2024

in Krattigen (CH)

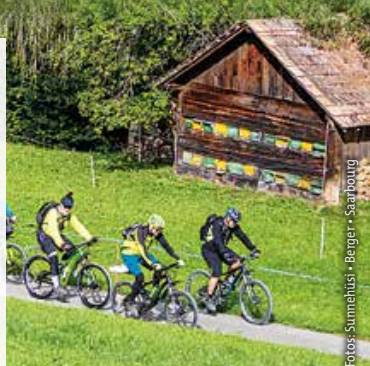
Lake Thun



Hotel Sunnehüsi

► **STAY FIT:** Discover fantastic regions in the Bernese Oberland during guided bike- and hiketours. During the week, free copies of railway calendars will be given away.

► **EXPERIENCE FUN:** Through international fellowship. Savouring the culinary delights from the region is fun and a great pleasure. Daily inputs from the Bible will encourage us to talk further about hope and doubts.



Fotos: Sunnehüsi • Berger • Saarbourg

Lodging in Hotel Sunnehüsi

Alte Gasse 10, CH-3704 Krattigen
Phone: +41 (0) 33 650 78 78
www.sunnehuesi.ch

Prices

Room prices per night:
Double room CHF 122.50
Single room CHF 129.–
Included: Dinner (3-course),
breakfast and visitor's tax.
Participant contribution of CHF 40.–
(tour guide, room hire, etc.)

Info & registration

ueli.berger@railhope.ch
Telefon +41 (0) 61 303 32 23
www.railhope.ch oder
www.railhope.net

The «Fit & Fun» offer is realized by «RailHope Switzerland» in cooperation with «RailHope International».

Agenda

Su: Arrival / 2:00 (p.m.)
Mon – Fri: Bike- & hike tours or individual tour
Sat: Departure after breakfast



Thanks for your thanks

Railway Mission relies on the generous financial giving of our supporters and partners. Our Administrator, Biljana Nenadovic (*pictured next page*), is blessed to receive all postal and online donations on behalf of the charity. Often, along with the donation, supporters send encouraging messages which are always gratefully received.

Biljana says, "Receiving heartfelt notes that accompany donations from our generous donors, or encountering messages of gratitude during the reconciliation of online contributions, fills my heart with immense joy.

"These notes serve as a small yet powerful testament to the profound impact of the work undertaken by all the dedicated chaplains throughout Britain, especially within the railway industry. Knowing that our efforts resonate with individuals and organisations, prompting them to contribute to our cause, reinforces the significance of the support network we've cultivated.

"It not only fuels our commitment to the well-being of those in the railway community but also serves as a heartwarming reminder of the positive change we collectively bring about."

To thank our supporters, we highlight here some of the messages you have sent during 2023. There just are too many to include all, but we warmly thank everyone who has given and

added a note for their continuing generosity and friendship through the years.

"I would like to donate £... to support the excellent work you achieve to those who work for the Railways."
M.G.

"Dear friends, Thank you for continuing to send RM News.... May you be blessed as you continue your ministries. Yours sincerely." J.B.

"Dear Madam, Christmas time is nearly upon us again and I would like to ask for my usual copy of the Railway Mission Calendar on behalf of my husband who worked on the railway for forty-two years.... I'm enclosing a cheque for the work of the Mission. Wishing all at the Mission a Merry Christmas and a prosperous, peaceful and healthy New Year in these very difficult times." P.T.

"Dear Liam and team, It's that time of year again, and I would request 25 calendars. Thank you for the weekly e-mail news updates and your messages. I hope you and your team and families have a blessed Christmas." D.C.

"To all at the Mission. All the best for Xmas and The New Year." D.A.

"Dear Liam, Biljana and Claire, Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you for all the work behind the scenes." J.J.





"To everyone at The Railway Mission. With Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year." J.A.

"Dear friend, Thank you for sending me three calendars for myself and friends. Wishing you all a healthy Xmas. Thank you for your help." W.P.M.

"Thank you so much Phil for coming to speak to us today. Every blessing from Mt Carmel ladies fellowship"

"Such a great cause. Keep up the good work!" B.E.

"Prayers and best wishes to all Chaplains." D.V.

"In memory of Alf Rowe ex Driver @ Exeter St Davids. With great thanks to the Rev David Hardy." M.R.

"Thank you to Angela Harwood and the entire LNER family for your support, help and love following the death of our brother Dan. He was truly blessed to have all of you in his life and as part of his family. Blessing to all, The Rutherford and McDonalds" D.McD.

"Keep up the excellent work!" F.C.

"Happy Christmas to the team. Thanks for all you do, and we hope you manage a bit of a chill-out over Christmas too. Martin and Emma." M.T.

"Liam and Johanna were there for me, when no one else was awake, I am eternally grateful to them both, I am forever in their debt, If not for their selfless actions so late that night, I would not be here today to celebrate my Nephew Max's 18th Birthday. God bless you. Please, forgive me." W.B.

"I heard John Roe talk two years ago. From my own experience (not on the railway) I know how valuable chaplaincy is. Jim Dunning, Wokingham, Berkshire." J.D.

"Thank you for all you do, guys." T.M.

"Brilliant charity - good luck." G.V.

"Thank you, Liam and Johanna you were both there for me when I was at my lowest." W.B.

Chaplains' news & info

Blessing the gatekeepers



Dylis George

Southeastern

It has dawned on me that I have continually enjoyed Divine providence.

I have had referrals from managers who recommended chaplaincy support to their team. Staff members continue to be supported in a safe space. I thank all those praying for our chaplaincy team as we continue to try to bring reassurance and hope to our rail family.

It's very encouraging to occasionally hear good news: "I am fine, I am happy, my partner recently gave birth to my beautiful daughter, and we are on the verge of starting our family life in our new home. For me, life is good!"

Please pray for effective open doors for chaplaincy in the area I cover.



John Roe

Southwest, Paddington

One of the important parts of chaplains' roles is the informal visit to railway

Installations: everywhere that railway staff are to be found. Those conversations are often fruitful, and most appreciate opportunities to respond openly to "How are you today?" and are grateful there is someone who is attentive, concerned, cares, and can offer help or signpost to professional help.

It is an ongoing challenge to remain visible, and known, to a diverse and widely spread workforce. I thank God for those workers who champion Railway Mission, and act as gatekeepers, opening up opportunities for chaplains, through prayer, to make connections in hitherto unchartered railway territories.

Supporting the living



Graham Whitehead

West Scotland, Glasgow

When I became a chaplain in 2017, a nearby station was a 'hot spot' for suicides.

One occurred shortly before I started, and another four weeks later. My predecessor and I organised a prayer walk, spending a few hours praying over the area. For over five years the area had no significant incidents.

As I write, the station has just reopened after a fatality, and I have been walking in prayer there, reclaiming the station in the name of Christ.

Let's give thanks and praise to the Lord who calls us to care for the desperate of this world, and who acts with us when we do, and pray that His Spirit will fight against the darkness which threatens so many broken lives.



Prayer, praise and stories from chaplains to the railways of England, Scotland & Wales



Dereck Grant

East Scotland,
Edinburgh

Over the last few months, I have been busy supporting suicide prevention events in my area.

I also enjoyed meeting up with many of my colleagues at our Railway Mission Conference. Thankfully, the Armistice Day service which I conducted at Edinburgh Waverley Station went well.

At the same time, God placed me in the right place that day at the right time because at Haymarket Station I was able to help a man who collapsed twice on the platform.

Lastly, I was able to visit stations in the North of Scotland after my predecessor, Ruth, left the Mission. In fact, it was so encouraging to be warmly welcomed back up there. My prayer for 2024 is that God will put me in the right places at the right time.



Steve Rowe

Area Manager London &
South, Kings Cross

Part of chaplaincy is spent with people who deal with sad events.

We support the living when facing up to tragic or sudden loss of loved ones or colleagues.

After a few days off at the end of last year I came straight back into a

number of deliberate acts of self-harm on the railways to support responders, and the death in service of a worker who was popular amongst colleagues.

There's no single way to provide support in these circumstances, and no checklist apart from empathy and applying experience to each situation.

Chaplains take care of the living to help them live in hope. Please continue to uphold us as we stand with those who survive the loss of others.

Weather forecast



Phil Tucker

South Wales & the
Marches

My wife and I have Maltese friends and we often visit them in February.

It's great to see them and when that plane door is opened, we see bright blue skies and sunshine that lifts our heart and mood.

Living in the UK can mean months of dark days and slightly depressing weather, and I find January and February difficult.

In these early months of the year, it is important that we notice what is going on with those around us who may be finding things tough, and try in every way that we can to bring a little sunshine into their lives.

Chaplains' news & info



Colin Fraser
East Midlands, Derby

December and January have seen significant travel disruption due to the weather.

As you can imagine this brings a lot of additional planning and increases stress levels for many people across the rail industry.

I met with a member of rail staff whose job is directly affected by any changes in the weather. To my surprise instead of being 'very British' and complaining about the weather, they asked me sincerely about Noah and the great flood. We then proceeded to talk about faith, creation, and life after death.

Please pray for many more questions such as the one above and that chaplains would have confidence as they share parts of their faith.



Andrew Hall
Area Manager, Scotland & the North, Birmingham

The year just gone had many difficulties for the rail industry and its people, ranging from industrial action to the vagaries of the British weather.

Individuals experienced times of blessing whilst others endured some very trying circumstances. We pray that in 2024 the light and peace of God will break through in the community we serve and that He will use us all to

minister to those we encounter on the railway.



Mike Roberts
Northwest, North Wales, Manchester

Winter is a time for gritting.

Everywhere you go, station staff are spreading salt with the intention of preventing slips and trips. It's easier to prevent an accident than to fix an injury.

Chaplaincy can be a bit like gritting. If we are wise and proactive with our visits we can often help with the wellbeing of staff around our patch. Whilst there will always be incidents to follow up, please pray that, like those station staff, we are wise to know where and when to be active and where the visits, calls and engagement is most needed.

Please pray that the support we offer in those normal, everyday and often seemingly unremarkable visits will help all those staff we support to stay on their feet.



news
type

**Find more news
at our website**

www.railwaymission.org

Gateway G3 for Poobay



Prayer, praise and stories from chaplains to the railways of England, Scotland & Wales

Christmas celebrations



Andrea Smyth

North London, London Overground, Chiltern

I'm writing this before Christmas, knowing it will be published after Christmas. And I wonder what sort of a time we have all had.

I expect that some of the troubles around the world will have continued throughout the Christmas period. But I do pray that there have been some gestures of kindness, and that there is some reason for hope going into the New Year, particularly for those who have been suffering greatly.

And I pray that all can receive the hope that comes from accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour and the Saviour of the world.



Christopher Henley

Southwestern, Waterloo

Let's celebrate and be hopeful. That is what I heard as we approached Christmas and the New Year.

It had been a challenging year. There was, however, much to celebrate; the 175th Anniversary of Waterloo Station, the first Anniversary of the Windrush Memorial, the 125th Anniversary of Feltham Station, the moving Armistice Service at the Waterloo War Memorial.

On 12th December we remembered the 35th Anniversary of the Clapham

Railway disaster. Hope is evidenced in that all who died, survived or continue to be affected, have made a huge impact on changing the railway industry.

We also celebrated the decision that Ticket Offices will remain open. Let us continue into 2024 in celebration and hope.



David Hardy

Gloucester, Retired Railway Staff

We were able to run a Carols and Steam train event at the Avon Valley Railway in December.

All the staff gave their time and so we are able to donate all the profits to our two chosen charities, Action For Children and the Railway Children's Charity.

We were blessed with dry (but cold!) weather, which made such a difference. The Bristol East and Kingswood Brass Band provided the music. We distributed literature about the true meaning of Christmas and invitations were issued for local Carol services. The Railway Mission was promoted, Calendars were offered, and donations were received.

This is always a good opportunity to reach out. We pray for a harvest.

HELPLINE•HELPLINE•HELPLINE
0203 887 7000

Chaplains' news & info



Angela Levitt-Harwood

East Coast, York

The last quarter of 2023 was busy with two significant events in my area.

The Remembrance Service was very well attended and again included a local Primary school. Two young children laid the wreath they had all made. The age range at the event was five to 100 which many found very poignant.

We also had the first Railway Carol Service in the North with industry representatives sharing in the Christmas story, accompanied by the new railway choir.

This year I'm looking forward to being part of a team developing a newly formed and first of its kind Welfare Hub in Hull. This is a place of safety and refuge for both staff and the public.



Helen Bartlett

Northeast, Newcastle

Last Easter, I was in Israel seeing how God is working there.

Post-Christmas, I am looking out for what He is doing there and everywhere. Our Christian lives give us hope in a difficult world and so we carry hope with us as we engage with railway people. In spite of all the stresses of life, amazingly God still

offers us support and strength, and each other.

We need to live; following Jesus, no matter the cost, circumstance or season. Storms and strikes are certainly out there but that's no reason to live in fear and disengage. We must live in confidence and faith in God who holds all things in His hands. He is in this with us.

Good reports on support



Alan Thorpe

Bristol

I have been helping a staff member who has an addiction problem.

Truth to tell, we have been meeting together over many years now. The pattern has been that we meet, we talk, we agree a plan, but after a day or two he resorts back to his addictive ways.

He does have a good local support group and medical care. But his problem is an illness.



Prayer, praise and stories from chaplains to the railways of England, Scotland & Wales

The encouraging news is that he has stayed clear and clean for several weeks now. Though he acknowledges he is not cured, but rather is still recovering, I am pleased to share this good news.



Tony Miller
Southern

My first request is about opening doors.

I hope and pray this year I'm able to get a breakthrough on the DLR line. Please pray with me for a breakthrough with the HR department.

The second is about accommodation. I spoke to a manager at Worthing railway station who would like me to have office space at this station to provide one-to-one support within the region to other members of staff.

We also got talking about faith and he was very concerned about all the churches closing down in that area and he wants to look into this to find out why.

I found this to be very interesting. Maybe God is up to something in the region, especially with the manager's faith. Therefore, my other prayer request is that God will give me the wisdom and insight on what to do next.

Prayer for 2024



Karen Schofield
Northwest, Liverpool

Karen Schofield, one of our chaplains in the Northwest has a prayer for everyone

this year as we journey into it.

“May the God of new beginnings bless 2024. May we be the change that is needed and bring His Peace to everyone we meet. Amen.”

Thanks, Karen, and thanks to everyone who supports our chaplains with their prayer and giving. We really appreciate you and your tireless partnership with Railway Mission.

Making history

Regular Historian Dudley Clark is looking for a collaborator to assist with research and writing

“

I have been working on the history and with the archives of Railway Mission since 2001 and my support of the Mission goes back to 1987. Although I am well past three score years and ten, I would like to continue for as long as my health permits. But I must be realistic, and I need to find a partner to work with me, and eventually replace me...





2023

23 Rail Industry
03 Memorial
23 Day

The year in review

Railway Mission is constantly in action, and there are many events and situations large and small in which our chaplains are involved over the course of any year, or we could better put it in the context of any day or week. 2023 was no exception, and it would be impossible to list every interaction we had in a single article.

On a regular basis we provide post-incident support to responders and rail staff, have a prominent role in Remembrance Services annually, engage in health and wellbeing needs of rail staff where it is requested, meet them during their induction into the railways, and provide professional, impartial, confidential and independent support. We also meet impromptu with rail staff daily as we travel around stations, offices and depots.

There's been an increased interest in the role of Railway Mission in supporting mental health initiatives across the railways as the various

organisations come to terms with the great need to support their workforce. Our chaplains are increasingly being engaged in working with health and wellbeing teams within the industry as this important niche is being developed.

Here are a few of the other recorded highlights for the year 2023.

New staff, new skills

We were blessed to have Claire Keville join our team as our new Business Manager, and Claire has already successfully set about reorganising the way we operate after a period of getting to know who we are and how the chaplaincy team she is supporting goes about our daily support work. Claire says, "a well-equipped and directed chaplaincy service will ensure that we are better placed to fulfil our mission's objectives."

Tony Miller, our new chaplain for Southern, joined us. He brings a fresh approach to chaplaincy with years of



experience including a background of working within prison chaplaincy and especially with young people to steer them away from youth crime and gang culture.

Karen Schofield also joined us as chaplain for Northwest and North Wales alongside Mike Roberts and Andrew Hall. Karen says, "Chaplaincy is about showing God's love in action."

Phil Tucker started with us as chaplain for Wales and the Marches. A former businessman with a heart for serving people. "It is my hope to end each working day feeling I have made a difference to someone," Phil said.

Awards and commendations

One of our chaplains who cover the North West and North Wales, Mike Roberts, was given the Outstanding Personal Contribution Award at the National Rail Awards, which recognises 'excellence and achievements across every aspect of the railway.' Mike says, "I know the whole industry appreciates and values the work of the chaplaincy."

Chaplains received a commendation from BTP Chief Constable Lucy D'Orsi following support for officers dealing with a stabbing incident at London Euston Station. "I have received an exceptional level of positive feedback over the last few months and in particular support given at Euston a few weeks ago when we had some particularly distressing incidents," CC D'Orsi wrote.

Area Manager for the North Andrew Hall was given the Chaplain of the Year Award at the BTP Citizens in Policing Awards, presented by ACC Alan Gregory. Andrew said, "I consider

this award to really be for Railway Mission and all the chaplains."

A major event for the year, and a Railway Mission/Network Rail initiative, led by Executive Director Liam Johnston, was the Covid Memorial Rail Industry Memorial Day held at the home of the National Railway Museum in York.

Liam said, "Throughout the pandemic families were separated and prevented from visiting one another." The Memorial Service was organised to give participants an opportunity to grieve in a gathering and included key members and supporters from across the rail fraternity. Associated services were also held at other venues around Britain to remember those who lost their lives to the pandemic and their families who mourned their loss.

Subsequently, The National Covid Memorial Day was honoured with an award for Extraordinary Partnership Working at the National Transport Awards. "We are delighted that this important event has been recognised with an award," said Liam Johnston.

Chaplains John Roe and Andrea Smyth talked about their support for Network Rail's Colleague Support Pods, where staff are offered support for themselves or a colleague in need. Project Manager Sharon Peirson wrote, "I cannot thank all involved enough. We have supported many vulnerable people; some were very serious situations which could have led to real tragedy."

And, of course, Railway Mission was given a major award at the prestigious Rail Staff Awards, the story of which see on page four of this magazine.



2023

The year in review *(continued)*

Journeys and events

Our Chair, Alex Volossevich, undertook a massive journey around the railways to visit and meet up with chaplains across the teams during two trips to gain an idea of how chaplains interact with staff and provide support. “I wanted to visit our front-line staff *in situ* and meet railway staff and managers to see for myself the interactions that our chaplains have with them...and I was not disappointed,” he said.

Claire Keville met up with Rail Minister Huw Merriman at the Rail Live outdoor railway show where we were exhibitors alongside BTP to give an overview of chaplaincy support. He intimated that he had already heard of the work of the chaplains and is keen to learn more.

Railway Mission was honoured with being the nominated charity for the Rail Industry Association, attended on behalf of the charity by Claire Keville and Area Manager for the South Steve Rowe. The event raised £2,500 in donations from the generous people present.

Chaplain Christopher Henley led the service of commemoration of 175 years of London Waterloo Station, also attended by Rail Minister Huw Merriman. Christopher prayed for all staff and workers of Waterloo Station, past present and future, including “the resilience of the human spirit, and the transformative journeys that shape our lives.”



Christopher also led the ceremony for the first anniversary of the Windrush Memorial at Waterloo (above).

“The national Windrush Monument by Basil Watson is a testament to the resilience, compassion, courage, diversity and enduring spirit of the Windrush generation.”

We’ve only scratched the surface of what chaplains achieved during 2023, and there’s much more we could say, but you can always talk to one of our roving chaplains about their year.

For more information on past, present and future events and news please take a trip around our website at railwaymission.org.

Women in the Shade Conference Report

Chaplains Andrea Smyth and Dylis George joined other women in policing for a conference in Birmingham

On Thursday 18th January, at the inaugural conference for black women in policing captioned 'Women in the Shade,' Andrea Smyth and Dylis George were honoured participants representing the Railway Mission chaplaincy.

This conference, held at the prestigious British Telecom, Birmingham, attracted women in policing generally but also from other professional sectors.

Dylis George summarised the event by noting the distinct nature of 'Women in the Shade' as clearly defined "to create an environment where black women's talents, unique experiences, and perspectives are acknowledged, respected and valued."

"It was absolutely phenomenal to see how black women in policing were encouraged, motivated and empowered to step up and be counted in leading roles," She added.

"As female chaplains serving a diverse BTP community, the thought-provoking panel discussions and the various presentations were an eye opener to some of the issues that BTP officers could be facing.

"As we grapple with the raw and honest issues that were brought to



light, we realised attending conferences like these broadens our understanding, and gives us deeper insight into the areas that we can focus upon when offering and giving chaplaincy support to our officers in their career pathway."

Andrea comments that for her "it was a profound experience, being accepted as an ally and as even a small part of this powerful community."

She looks forward to International Women's Day on the eighth of March, when she and Dylis have been invited to be a part of the organisation's celebrations, and to share with participants about chaplaincy.

"We sincerely look forward to many more opportunities that would enhance our vocation."



The unexpected phone call

Mike Roberts

When the phone rings at 11pm it is seldom good news. When it rang at that time last month, and it was the Operations Director of one of my Train Operators it certainly wasn't. They had, very suddenly and unexpectedly, lost a long-standing member of the team. Bereavement is often an unexpected visitor, and we are often unprepared for its arrival.

Chaplains are often asked to be present following deaths and our involvement can be with the colleagues of the person who has been lost, supporting managers who are supporting their teams through a difficult time or supporting family of the deceased through the next stages and the funeral.

Following a further request, I have brought together a training session for managers that has been now used with several TOC's about helping line managers be prepared in the best way to support their staff. The session helps us all to have strategies in place to help people in the early stages of grief, it gives practical ideas for ways that a community (like a depot team) can mourn together and helping deal with the challenges of communal grief in the reality of shift working patterns.

We leave managers with lots of tools to help, and make sure they know that their local chaplain is always available to help and support them. We talk about the nature of trauma and the stages of grief. Chaplaincy is so often responsive to situations, but it's so good to be able to help people be proactive. In preparing this I used CS Lewis' *A Grief Observed* which is an incredible book as well as some more academic theory, but it is absolutely about supporting those who help others to be prepared for the challenges that come with it.

My five top tips for managers are:

- ▷ Don't wait until a death occurs to be prepared for it.
- ▷ Don't assume everyone's reaction will be the same.
- ▷ Remember that grief is different every single time.
- ▷ Affirm, encourage, and care for those around you.
- ▷ Look out for yourself and don't try to be a superhero.

 **Mike Roberts** is chaplain for the North West and North Wales, including Manchester

Six ways to support Railway Mission chaplains

Payroll Giving*

Because every donation is taken from your gross pay, every pound you give will only cost you 80p, or only 60p if you are a higher rate taxpayer.

Cheque or Postal Order

A one-off or regular donation by Cheque or Postal Order sent to: Railway Mission, Rugby Station, Rugby, CV21 3LA.

Standing Order

A one-off or regular donation through your bank. Email our Administrator for more information: office@railwaymission.org.

Web Donation

A one-off or regular donation through our website. Visit www.railwaymission.org, and click on the Donate page to find easy-to-follow directions.

Wills & Legacy

To include us in your will, our charity name is Railway Mission, our charity number in England & Wales is 1128024, and in Scotland is SCO45897.

Gift Aid as an extra

Railway Mission can claim 25% from HMRC on donations made by UK tax payers who are signed up to Gift Aid.



*For more information on Payroll Giving, go to:
www.railwaymission.org/donate

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