



Railway Mission

RM News

Issue 2 2023



Railway Mission

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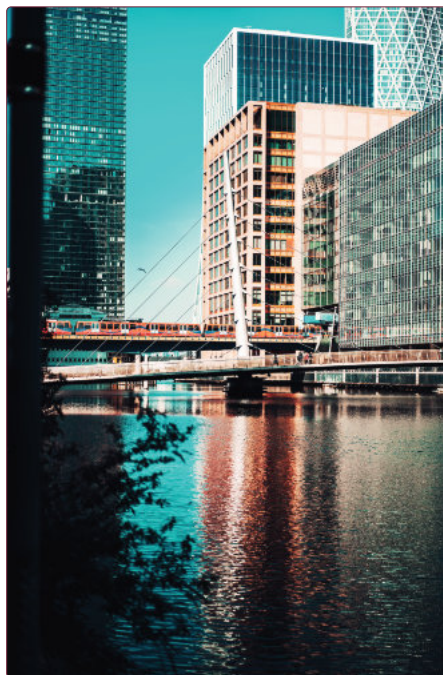
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Railway Mission

From the Top



Ulleo for pixabay

Seedtime and harvest

"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." - Genesis 8:22

Summer is a time of warmth and growth when the earth is filled with the abundance of life and the promise of new beginnings. Similarly, the railway industry can also experience periods of growth and expansion, as new routes are developed and passenger numbers increase.

However, just as the changing seasons bring different challenges and opportunities, the railway industry must also adapt to changing circumstances and evolving technologies.

This can include investments in high-speed rail, improvements in safety and security measures, and

the adoption of sustainable practices to reduce the industry's environmental impact.

It is important to remember that the railway industry, like the changing seasons, is a part of God's creation and subject to His sovereignty.

So let's join together and pray for all those who are involved in shaping the future of the railway; that they will approach each new challenge and opportunity with humility; that those who have faith in the sovereignty of God will hold firm, trusting in God's wisdom and guidance to lead them and the industry into the abundant promise of a bright and fruitful future.

Liam Johnston is the Executive Director of Railway Mission





Andrew's award

The BTP Citizens in Policing Awards took place at Islington Assembly Hall on Tuesday the 4th of April. Among the winners was Andrew Hall, who was awarded the accolade of Chaplain of the Year. This was presented by Allan Gregory, Assistant Chief Constable for Network Policing.

Andrew is one of the Railway Mission chaplains and one of the Area Managers for the chaplaincy team that works across the rail network.

As well as supporting members of rail staff and members of the public affected by rail operations, chaplains provide a very welcome,

independent, and confidential listening ear to British Transport Police. This award was in recognition of Andrew's support following the tragic and sudden death of a BTP colleague.

We add our congratulations and offer thanks to him and all he and the chaplaincy team do across the network.

Andrew said, "Thanks, everyone. For my part, I consider the award to really be for Railway Mission and all the chaplains. You all do an incredible job on a daily basis."





Introducing Karen Schofield

Karen Schofield is our new chaplain for the Northwest and North Wales, working alongside Mike Roberts and Andrew Hall, and she is learning how to be the best chaplain for the railway she can be.

She says “Chaplaincy is about showing God’s love in action. My prayer is that through what I do and say, people will see me as an approachable Christian presence and be empowered to turn to God.”

Karen was trained by the Manchester Diocese as an Authorised Lay Minister (ALM) to provide pastoral assistance and to be an active listener, supporting

people throughout both life events and the day-to-day.

As a transition teacher in a school, and through her role working at Wythenshawe Hospital, as part of the caring chaplaincy team, Karen learnt the importance of therapeutic relationships, companionship, and dependable support.

“I am excited to undertake the role of Chaplain. I feel God’s calling in this. To me, it is as though my whole life, and each role that I have undertaken, has led me to this moment”.



Network Rail Photo

COVID Memorial

Rail Industry Memorial Day

On the 23rd of March, the railway industry gathered, united by our sense of loss, to mark the third anniversary of the first COVID Lockdown. All in some way experienced that loss. For some, that loss is the loss of loved ones or colleagues, friends, or neighbours.

The service was led by Liam Johnston, Railway Mission Executive Director, who said, "Throughout the pandemic, families were separated and prevented from visiting one another, even if it was parents or grandparents in care homes or hospitals.

"When there was bereavement, they could not grieve the way they would wish, with restrictions on funerals and gatherings. Many were robbed of their peace of mind, afflicted by the fear and anxiety caused by the wave of uncertainty.

"Masked and sanitised, distanced and silenced, we stood in line; although some of this uncertainty has lasted, it is now fading into a memory of a past pandemic; a shadow of something that clouded our skies; but we know it will eventually pass and our troubled minds will be stilled, and the sun will shine again."

Frontline staff

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an incredibly challenging time for key workers, who have been at the frontline of the pandemic response.

Key workers include healthcare workers, grocery store employees, delivery drivers, police and our own public transport workers, and many others who have played critical roles in keeping society functioning during the pandemic.





Network Rail Photo

Many faced increased risks of exposure to the virus while carrying out their duties and have had to take extra precautions to protect themselves and their families. They have often worked long hours and experienced significant stress and exhaustion as they worked to meet the increased demand for their services while balancing their own health and safety concerns with the need to provide for themselves and their families.

Despite these challenges, many in the railway family have shown incredible dedication and resilience throughout the pandemic, working tirelessly to serve our industry and support others. Their efforts have been essential in helping to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and keep society functioning during this difficult time.

23 # Rail Industry 03 Memorial 23 Day

Across the UK, there were events, some large some small, but all with the same aim, to honour the memory of those lost, reflect on the service and dedication of frontline rail staff, and to look forward as an industry with hope.

Service

The main service was held at the National Railway Museum in York where we had the Blue Light Orchestra, the London Transport Choir and the soloist Marcella De-Gale.

Andrew Haines, CEO of Network Rail opened the service and Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill unveiled a plaque. The closing remarks were made by Lucy D'Orsi Chief Constable of BTP and the service was led by Liam Johnston of Railway Mission. But the heart of the service was the individual stories of the pandemic.

First Annie Coker shared her family's pain of losing her husband John, in the early days of the pandemic. Then Maddy Corper told how she can no longer work as a freight train driver due to long covid. Maneet Hayer shared how the pandemic affected faith communities and how they



adapted and continued to support those in need.

Stories

Following this, Jamie Scott, Craig Payne, Vicky Lowth and Stuart Rawcliffe gave a shared narrative of the industry response to the pandemic.

Jamie works at Atalian Servest who set up specialist COVID teams and established a system for managing customers who were NHS Track & Traced on board.

Craig Payne is one of the Disaster Victim Identification team leads at British Transport Police, specialising in complex body recovery following events such as rail crashes, Grenfell Tower or terrorist attacks.

The teams have specialist training and equipment which meant, working with the other policing and emergency services of London, we were asked to deploy to London during the pandemic to undertake the role of the Pandemic Multi-Agency Response Teams to prepare for those who had died outside of the hospital for collection by funeral services in a biologically safe way.

Vicky Lowth, one of the Pandemic Multi-Agency Response Team



Network Rail CEO Andrew Haines at York

members, said, “I was acutely aware that that my family were anxious for me to carry out these recoveries; they were frightened for my safety, but also scared and nervous about the possibility of me contracting the virus and potentially bringing it into the family home. However, I felt committed and proud to play my part in this unique and valuable team.”

Stuart Rawcliffe works at York Railway Station for LNER as a Duty Team Leader, but he also works for the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service as an On-Call Firefighter in York. “In 2020, as a blue light driver with the fire service, I was asked to assist the Yorkshire Ambulance Service in driving ambulances for the Nightingale Hospital operation and later assisted with the COVID vaccination program.”

COVID Memorial services were conducted at other venues around Britain as people gathered to remember those who were bereaved as a result of the pandemic and those who were on the frontline of care provision during this time.



Make a
Will
for Free

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RBF & Railway Mission &
kindly supported by **RROS**



Free Wills Month extended

For the second year running Railway Mission are delighted to announce that we are continuing to provide our valued supporters with the opportunity to make a Will free of charge.

'Being there' is the main aim of Railway Mission and this is another way of us 'being there' for you.

Due to the high level of uptake last year, and the ongoing cost of living crisis, we have recognised the need for more people to be able to access this vital service and by partnering with RBF (and kindly supported by RROS), we are proud to extend the offer for a further year to allow even more people to take advantage at **www.bequeathed.org/railwaymission**.

There is certainly no obligation for you to leave a gift in your Will for Railway Mission, but if you do, it will help us to reach even more of the railway community, to offer support during an individual's time of need and allow us to keep 'being there' into the future."

**BEING
THERE**

Railway Mission

Scan
for link





Edna Taylor

Andrew Hall remembers one of the great characters chaplains encounter in the course of their journeys, a memorial garden, and the incident that led to their meeting and ongoing friendship.

Often, as chaplains, our encounters with people are fleeting. We may engage with someone for a short while, perhaps minutes, and then not see them again for ages. Sometimes they may never cross our path again.

Occasionally the engagement becomes a long-term relationship, and a person becomes part of the history of Railway Mission. Edna Taylor was one of these. I am the third (possibly fourth) chaplain in succession to have engaged with her over the last 25 years.

Tragic incident

The incident that led to this friendship took place on 19 September 1986. The signalman at Colwich saw that the 17:00 express train from London Euston to

Manchester Piccadilly was approaching the junction at roughly the same time as the 17:20 express from Liverpool to Euston. He decided to give precedence to the latter and so the Manchester train might need to wait its turn to cross over the junction.

The Manchester train needed to cross from the Down Fast to the Down Slow line before turning off towards Stoke. After passing over the crossover he saw that a signal was still red. Having interpreted the previous signal to mean that the route was set all the way over the junction to Stoke, he was expecting this signal to clear as he approached it. But as he got nearer, he realised it had not.

The driver made an emergency brake application, but the train did not stop



before reaching the diamond crossing. At that moment he saw the Liverpool train approaching at high speed and shouted a warning to a trainee driver who was also in the cab. They both jumped from the locomotive seconds before the Liverpool train collided with it.

The locomotive of the Liverpool train (86211 City of Milton Keynes) hit the other locomotive (86429 The Times) side-on, finishing up in the wreckage with its body twisted and split open. The passenger coaches were scattered in all directions, and some had their ends badly damaged. Eric Goode, the driver of no. 86211, was killed. It was also reported that Nicaragua's ambassador to Britain, Francisco d'Escoto, was one of the injured passengers.



Memorial garden

Local railwayman Alf Taylor established a memorial garden to driver Eric Goode. I understand that the Railway Chaplain at the time had some involvement with this. Alf and his wife were invited to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party in recognition of this.

Alf, sadly, passed away in September 1997 and Edna had his ashes scattered



in that memorial garden in 1998 by the Railway Chaplain.

I first met Edna about 14 years ago. She wanted me to promise that I would scatter her ashes in the memorial garden. I got written permission from Network Rail to help put her mind at rest.

I have visited her a number of times over the years, most recently in a hospice in Stafford just a day before she died. She had invited me to share communion with her. She was 97 and still enjoying a good joke despite her frailty and pain.

I took her funeral service on 9 March and will be scattering her ashes in the memorial garden in Colwich in the summer.

Andrew Hall is Railway Mission's Area Manager for the North and chaplain for the West Midlands.

Railway Mission and Social Class

The Railway Mission (RM) was begun in a class-conscious society and its upper echelons were drawn from among the aristocracy, the professions and senior railway management.

The Railway Boys Mission (1874), from which the RM had been formed, had as its patron the Earl of Shaftesbury who willingly gave his name to a great number of Christian charities.

The following members of the Mission committee in 1883 illustrate the social mix. The Treasurer, S. Gurney Sheppard, was a stockbroker; the Hon Arthur Kinnaird, son of a lord, was a banker; W Adams, Esq., was superintendent of the LSWR Locomotive Works at Nine Elms and George Williams, Esq. a businessman and founder of the YMCA.

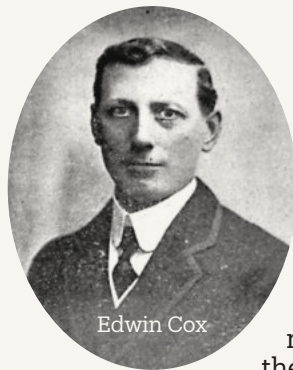
Arthur Kinnaird became Lord Kinnaird in 1887 and held the presidencies of a great number of charities particularly supporting work among youth. He was a keen sportsman and had played football for Scotland. He was instrumental in the development of association



Lord Shaftesbury

football and became president of the FA in 1890.

Lady Hope an active supporter of the Mission illustrated the prevailing class-consciousness at a 'drawing-room meeting' to raise funds when she enquired: "Why did they not [take an interest]? They all took an interest in their domestic servants, then why not in railway men, who were equally their servants?"



Edwin Cox

From 1884 the Mission had had a branch structure for individual membership through the Railway Mission Christian Association (RMCA). The main positions in branches of the RMCA were 'superintendent' and 'secretary'. Most superintendents were drawn from outside of the railway and in 1900, of the 143 superintendents in England, 104 were women; these were mainly single and living on their own means.

Railways are hierarchical organisations necessarily disciplined with opportunities for progression. Some positions carried responsibility for the safe operation; others demanded manual or administrative skills. But it was the talents of individual members that equipped them to become branch secretaries. Drawn from a range of grades from platelayer to station master, the largest group were signalmen.

There were several railwaymen that, starting from a basic grade, rose to be senior officers, who, nevertheless, gave time and effort to the activities of the RM. Commencing work as a railway clerk at 15, Edwin Cox joined a branch in New Cross and 'threw himself into the work with enthusiasm and devotion.' He was promoted to Superintendent of the

Line, South East & Chatham Railway, and although moving away from New Cross maintained his interest in the branch and the Mission as a whole.

Another senior officer was William Marriott, of the Midland & Great Northern Railway. His working life had started as an apprentice and then progressed to Locomotive Superintendent. He joined the RMCA, becoming branch superintendent at Melton Constable. He spoke of the "Gospel of Christ showing its power as it always will in changing the hearts and... lives of men".

Today class divisions still exist despite social mobility. In earlier years promotion could be remarkable with a porter rising to General Manager, or an apprentice to Chief Mechanical Engineer. Now academic qualifications and increased mobility between companies play a greater part. Few senior executives may take an active role in the Mission, but most express their appreciation for the work of the Mission and the welcome support it provides.

Dudley Clark



Chair Travels

Edited excerpts from Alex's journal



Railway Mission Chair Alex Volossevich recently set out to meet up with Mission chaplains. These are a few highlights.

During March, Railway Mission Chair, Alex Volossevich, embarked on a journey of discovery out of London Kings Cross to visit and spend time with some of our chaplains.

Starting on the East Coast, "I wanted to visit our front-line staff *in situ* and to meet railway staff and managers to see for myself the interactions that our chaplains have with them – to note first-hand the service that we provide, and I was not disappointed," said Alex.

His first journey took him to Newcastle via York, where he met up with local chaplain Helen Bartlett. "We visited the offices of Transpennine Express and Lumo as well as meeting various Network Rail staff including the Station Manager covering Newcastle, Durham, Darlington and York," he said.

Alex then headed back to York for the National Rail Memorial Day, where he met up with Angela Levitt-Harwood, who covers part of the Yorkshire area, and Steve Rowe, up from London for the event. He also met up with Dudley

Clark, our historian, plus four other Railway Mission Trustees, and, of course, Liam Johnston who helped organise the event. More on this on pages 6-8 in this magazine.

Alex took the overnight LNER service to Dundee, where he met with Dereck Grant, chaplain for East Scotland. "On arrival, we were invited to a management 'listening' exercise with local staff, to improve customer service in that part of Scotland." Alex Hynes, MD for ScotRail and COO Joanne Maguire headlined the event.

A trip to Edinburgh with Dereck for several meetings with staff that "left our heads buzzing" was followed by the journey back to Kings Cross in London on the "09:33 to Penzance," which actually started out at Aberdeen.

After a well-earned rest, Alex departed on the West Coast from London Euston to Liverpool Lime Street where he met up with Karen Schofield, one of our newest chaplains, first up for a visit to Hannah Tabassum, Customer





Alex met with Alex Hynes, CEO for ScotRail

Experience Manager at Merseyrail, who looks after wellbeing initiatives for the railway group.

Alex shared that Hannah “showed us marketing material co-branded Merseyrail and Railway Mission and described how the two organisations had worked together on several programmes.”

Following time spent on the Merseyrail underground, a journey to Birkenhead and lunch in Chester, Alex bade farewell to Karen to embark on the next phase of his travels.

Heading to Glasgow to meet up with Graham Whitehead, who looks after West Scotland, Alex looked forward to a meeting with BTP Chief Superintendent Gill Murray at Scotland’s Divisional HQ. “CS Murray expressed appreciation for the work of the Railway Mission which she considered an indispensable part of the railway infrastructure,” Alex noted.

Taking the Transpennine Express to Manchester, Alex met with Mike Roberts, who looks after the Northwest and North Wales. Alex told us, “I was impressed by how our chaplains must interface not just with so many staff but also all the organisations for which the staff work.”

Visiting the regional Rail Operations Centre at Ashbury, through tight security, to meet up with Rail Management, Signalling and Policing, Alex and Mike conversed with several staff leaders. “What impressed me most was the integrated nature of the ROC as these teams cooperated and worked together: an intention of the design of the place. As with everywhere else we were welcomed, and the work of the Railway Mission appreciated,” he said.



Chaplain Helen Bartlett at Darlington

On the Northern service to Preston, “we learnt from a friendly staff member that one is allowed to take three dogs on the train free of charge, but the fourth one you must pay for,” said a bemused Alex, before he and Mike visited the BTP Operations Room there.

After his busy schedule of visits, Alex reflected on the different levels and roles of staff engaged by chaplains, “Though their roles are varied, what united them was both the spirit of working for something much bigger than themselves or their area – the railway – and the positive esteem in which they all held the Railway Mission and its contribution.”

[A fuller account of Alex's journal can be found at the Railway Mission website.](#)

Chaplains' prayer & info



Andrew Hall

Area Manager North • West Midlands

Two things struck me from the BTP 'Citizens in Policing' awards Liam and I attended at Islington Assembly Rooms.

Firstly, it was amazing to see the wide variety of people who give their time to support the work of this superb Force in so many ways.

Secondly, it was good to see the high regard in which the Railway Mission is held within the Force and get a sense of some of the history. Among those I spoke with were a Chief Superintendent I first worked with fifteen years ago when he was a Temporary Sergeant. Another, a Chief Inspector when we first met, is now ACC.

Sometimes we feel that chaplaincy should have immediate results, but we also need to settle in for the long haul.



Mike Roberts

North West & North Wales

Some weeks there's barely a moment of free space. Other times chaplains find a bit more flexibility.

There are some depots, offices and stations I've been 'popping into' for almost five years, so I'm not always seen as a newcomer, and managers are calling more frequently to ask for support for their teams. Trust is a huge element of how we work. People have to trust us to help.

As I write I feel a sense of inadequacy for some of the life changing issues we deal with. Chaplains can't know everything about every subject. Please pray that we have the wisdom and knowledge to support where we can, signpost to relevant places and always speak words of hope into dark places.



David Hardy

Gloucester & Retired Railway Staff

During March, I went to Cheltenham for the Race Days to support staff coping with crowds who use trains. Thousands go through the station.

It's highly organised with fleets of buses taking them to and from the course. This interest in horse racing set me thinking about St Paul and his comparison of the Christian life to a race.

In Timothy 6:12 he writes "Run your best in the race of faith and win eternal life for yourself." To do this Paul urges us that we "must strive for righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness."

As we seek to share Christ's love and saving truth with the railway community, may God give us the grace to fulfil our calling as chaplains.



Dereck Grant

East Scotland

Having been busy with suicide prevention events at Edinburgh Waverley, Dundee, and Edinburgh Haymarket, I attended a ScotRail road



Views, news and requests from around the nation

show Q&A—a good opportunity to speak to senior management—then enjoyed a day with Alex Volossevich, Railway Mission Chair.

Yet, we never forget those who retire from the rail industry, staying in touch with them. I was asked to conduct the funeral service of one former Network Rail staff member who lost his brother to cancer. I also visited the British Transport Pensioners' Federation meeting in Glasgow, and I was able to encourage many of their members.

It's important that as chaplains we work as a team to support staff in difficult times. To everyone who prays for the work that we do: It makes a difference.



Dylis George

Southeastern

The Lord is faithful, and I continue to receive calls from staff, HR, and management requesting support.

Recently, I supported Network Rail staff following two deaths in service. It's a time of reflection for many who lose a colleague. Remember in prayer their immediate family and colleagues.

I have also been supporting staff with difficult relationship issues where children are involved. Please pray for godly wisdom and hope to be restored and for direction for these staff members.

Wellbeing Days organised by Southeastern Trains and Network Rail have raised the profile of chaplaincy.

Please join me in praying for more meaningful opportunities to share what we do and be of support to staff members.



John Roe

Southwestern • Paddington

Phew! It's been a busy and challenging time on the Railways since the beginning of the year, with double the usual volume of railway incidents, including fatalities, to follow up in my area, offering post-trauma support to railway staff, and an increase in requests for support from staff, impacted in many ways by industrial action.

It continues to be a privilege to support staff through the hard times, but mindful too of the demands placed therein upon chaplains, and grateful for the support and prayer I have experienced and received.

Amidst these challenging situations, there have been plenty of rays of hope shared, and plenty of opportunities to reveal the Christian hope that shines in and on the darkness.



Andrea Smyth

North London & Chiltern

After taking a week's break at a guided retreat at a Bible College in Hertfordshire, I spent the first few days back at work thinking, wow, the Lord has really shaken things up while I've been away.

Chaplains' prayer & info

I get this thought every time I return to work after a break, and it always feels like something has changed while I've been away.

As I was reflecting on this today, I realised that what had changed, while I was away, was me. Each time I return from a break I feel refreshed and inspired, which demonstrates that it is so important to take regular breaks from our normal day to day life, so that we can return with a fresh perspective.



Alan Thorpe

Bristol Area

One Saturday in mid-March I spoke at a Men's Breakfast event at Westward Ho! Baptist Church in North Devon, a Church for whom I served as Moderator during their interregnum of 1980-1981.

It was a super, cholesterol-filled breakfast, but it was especially good to share with over thirty men something of the work of Railway Mission. Not everyone had wanted to be a train driver when they grew up, but there was certainly much interest in chaplaincy.

I am grateful for all of you who share an interest in our ministry and encouraged to know that our witness is backed by your prayers. Thank you.

Support a chaplain



Helen Bartlett

Newcastle Area

Life hasn't stopped. Since Christmas, we have had strikes, silences, chatter, inductions, deaths, memories, engagements, illnesses, laughter, thanks, stories, and now for me a little break.

I had the privilege of flying to Israel and celebrating Easter where it all first happened. There have been some deep moments, 'touching' something of the life of Jesus and grasping a feel of the miracles, Jesus' life leading up to his crucifixion and resurrection. I've looked forward to coming back and sharing something of the experience, hoping it has given my faith a real encouragement and boost. Shalom.



Angela Levitt-Harwood

North East • York

During the Covid Memorial service in York we met those who had suffered great loss in their lives over the pandemic; the death of a loved one; the loss of the life they once knew due to the ongoing effects.

We celebrated those who kept the country moving and others who diversified from their day jobs to fulfil a vital role. There was a real feeling of togetherness.

As I write, I'm in a large office taking a moment, hearing the chatter around the coffee area (the 'water cooler moments' they call it), catching the



Views, news and requests from around the nation

sense once again of what is known as the railway family, and I am both humbled and thankful to be a part of it.



Ruth McBean

North Scotland

Since starting back with the Railway Mission last June, it has only been in the last few weeks that I have had to follow up and support staff following two fatalities. Please join me in praying for the staff, families and passengers affected. Thank you.

The BTP officers here in Inverness are looking to start an outreach group into the schools, primarily to tackle trespassing, and they have asked me to join them. Please pray for favour with the schools, and that they will welcome this initiative.

Building relationships and visiting stations continues to be my priority within my area. Please continue to pray for trust to be established, relationships to be formed and openings for sharing the gospel.



Colin Fraser

East Midlands

In the last edition of the RM magazine, I asked for prayer for more opportunities to share about my faith.

The Lord certainly did answer those prayers in different and unexpected ways. For example, a member of staff asking heartfelt questions about faith. Then at the end of the conversation, for them to say that they were in "the wrong physical place but at the right

time" because our conversation had helped in their journey of faith.

Answers to prayer like this encourage me greatly, even as we live in uncertain times, be it globally, nationally, within the railway industry or personally. I am grateful for the faith we share that teaches that God is alive, He is faithful and merciful in His love.



Karen Schofield

West Midlands

Getting the role that I prayed for and felt called to has been more challenging than I anticipated and in ways not considered. But there you go; our God is the Lord of surprises.

But apart from feeling discombobulated by all the new stuff, all the different folks and the sheer difference of what I am doing, I am enjoying this new role so much.

Whether I'll turn out to be half as good as my wonderful peers remains to be seen, so I appreciate your prayers to help me to 'step up.'

Kindly pray for all who work on the railways; especially all those experiencing doubts about the future.



Graham Whitehead

West Scotland

Last week I attended the funeral of one of the kindest and wisest men I've known.

Then I returned from Northern Ireland, where, with my family, I'd organised my father-in-law's funeral. Almost

Chaplains' prayer & info

immediately, I was called on to spend extensive time supporting a driver following a fatality.

Reflecting on these events, the thoughts I've had relate to helplessness in the face of mortality; the inevitability of death; onset of serious illness; or a driver whose train cannot avoid a person on the track. However, we can hope in the promises of our God, who will always be with us.

Please pray for everyone affected by death, whether sudden or expected. Pray for the enfolding of God's perfect love, which comforts us and changes outcomes.



Christopher Henley

Southwestern • Waterloo

I've had the most fascinating time over the past few months; being accepted as part of Network Rail's Periodic General Inspections (PGI); visiting Signal Boxes in the Wessex Area.

PGI's demonstrate the vast knowledge, procedures and protocols our Signallers must have in protecting the traveling public (find my Signal Box adventures on LinkedIn). Signallers have such interesting stories to tell of years past and future.

It got me thinking about those dreadful Covid-19 years and the suffering so many went through and those who continue to suffer.

The professionalism of our Signallers in getting us from our point of departure to our destination is a sure sign of our

journey and the future to which we can now look forward.



Tony Miller

Southern

Thank God for my chaplain family colleagues, manager, and Director for all the love and support during my difficult moments since being a part of the Railway Mission for the past six months.

Currently focusing on the Jubilee Line, I emailed area and depot managers, sending my poster to introduce myself as their new chaplain.

Because of my previous background working with the Metropolitan Police Trident Serious Gang Unit tackling gun and knife crime, Brighton BTP have invited me to support them with their county lines and knife crime Operation at Brighton Station gates.

Please pray for favour in building a closer alliance with BTP staff so I can provide them with a greater level of chaplaincy support. Psalm 37:23-24 fits.



Michele Ashton

Anglia • Liverpool Street

These are some kind words I received from Greater Anglia:

"Two drivers had been involved in fatalities which affected them to quite an extent. Through the company's CASS system they were supported, however, both felt the greatest support they received was from the Railway Chaplain Michele Ashton.



"Both drivers are different characters and found it difficult opening up and dealing with the event. They turned to Michele, and they don't believe that they would have gone back to driving as soon, or would be the people they are now without the support, sincerity, and kindness that Michele gave to them.

"Michele is a very warm and giving person who represents the Railway Mission impeccably."



Stephen Rowe

Area Manager South • Kings Cross

Someone said to me recently, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks," which is somewhat ageist, but the reality is that we are, by necessity, constantly learning new things regardless of our years on earth, especially in the increasingly digitised world.

Our railway used to be incredibly institutionalised and intransigent but is now fast moving and change is taking place. Thankfully, some of the better traditions are engrained, one being that the railway fraternity is a family and accepting of all-comers, which is a strength.

Some of us also believe in lifelong learning as a means of staying vital, alive and interested. Maybe we all need to be streamlined and updated without losing the benefit of experience and wisdom.

Something to pray about.



Out and about

Railway Mission chaplains are consistently out and about engaging with staff, on days when life is good and things are running smoothly, or in moments when it's not so great. Always ready for the times when challenges or unforeseen difficulties arise, to be a listening ear and comforting voice for those who work on and around the railways of England, Scotland and Wales.

You can help us continue this vital service with your financial support that can help us reach more people with this important wellbeing wing of the railway family.

every gift counts





John Roe pictured with Sharon Peirson with one of the Colleague Support Pods

Colleague Support Pods

Network Rail Project Manager **Sharon Peirson** has written to Railway Mission commending the Colleague Support Pods initiative

For over a year now Christopher Henley, John Roe and recently Andrea Smyth have been supporting Network Rail with their Colleague Support Pods.

The pods directly link back to a generic email which is then allocated to one of the above chaplains to offer support to the colleague in need.

This has already proved to be very successful in helping to give direct support which has been amazing. But even further support has been given by the chaplains with them joining me on many engagements to frontline staff across the Wessex route.

Very often on these engagements, the conversations can lead into serious topics and have often resulted in support being offered and received directly.

As the Project Manager for Network Rail, I cannot thank all involved enough. We have supported many vulnerable people; some were very serious situations which could have led to real tragedy.

The continuous support and care given is a real credit to such a wonderful charity organisation, and I would like to personally thank you all for the amazing work you do.



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

Scan the QR-Code to go to our Donate page online



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They were there
when I needed
someone to talk to

Support on life's journey