RM News Issue 1 2023 Railway Mission



Support on life's journey

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Cover photo © 6089Gardener taken near Chesterfield Station during January 2023.

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First things first

2022 was a challenging year for many. The continued effects of COVID, the war in Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis, and industrial action caused turmoil in both public transport and the NHS, and so 2023 starts with a degree of uncertainty. You might say, "it is a worrying time."

But in Matthew 6:31–34, Jesus says, "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

The truth is that being fretful gives rise to all kinds of problems. What Jesus is speaking of in this verse is that we do not need to be anxious about the things necessary to live our daily lives.

If we conscientiously pursue righteousness as our priority, we can trust God to meet our needs. We must put first things first, and God should always be first. Consider this as a thought for 2023. When we put the second thing first, then we are in danger of losing connection with the first and the ability to enjoy all the secondary things.

This year let's be encouraged and know that God is in control; the God who created and controls time; the God who created the heavens and the earth, and who separated the light from darkness. This is the God in whom we trust.

We will have trouble, but our lives are worth living because He lives.



LIAM JOHNSTON IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RAILWAY MISSION



Mike Roberts (above centre) writes: "The National Rail Awards are awarded each year for "excellence and achievement across every aspect of the railway" and are a huge celebration of some of the amazing work that happens across the industry each day and every year.

However, this year, I was hugely shocked to receive an email last June telling me that I'd been nominated for the Outstanding Personal Contribution award at the NRA's. The nomination had been supported by several people who I massively respect and admire including one of my local senior officers within BTP, directors of Train Operating Companies and representatives of Community Rail and frontline rail staff.

Someone asked me, on the day of the awards, if I had to say anything if I won. I laughed and said I wasn't going to win, but I had been humbled to be nominated. The awards, held in London, celebrated the very best of our railway. This year we recognised work to restore a lost Devon railway line, the dedication of six staff who intervened to save the lives of vulnerable people and the endeavours of people who joined together to raise £25,000 across the railway family to support the critical aid operations in the Ukraine.

When the results for Outstanding Personal Contribution award were announced I was, and this doesn't happen often, truly speechless. The judges recognised the ethos of the whole chaplaincy team, saying, "How do you prove someone goes

'over and above', when their day job demands you have to routinely go the 'extra mile' every hour of every day?"

It's humbling to have the work I've done recognised by an industry that I've come to love and care about. Each of the chaplains works with so many of the people and each one gives a piece of themselves. I know the whole industry appreciates and values the work of the chaplaincy. Isaiah records the words of God saying, "See! I am doing a new thing..." and each day God seems to be doing new things through the chaplains across the country. Winning this award seems to have opened some new doors and opportunities for the work we're doing.

To conclude, I want to share something that Kathryn O'Brien, a director at TransPennine said in her commendation to the awards panel. It seems so true of the role that chaplaincy seeks to offer, and that each chaplain is doing each day. She said, "he has a magic way of just 'being there' for people. He is discreet and ever the professional, never failing to pick up when someone needs a hand, however big or small the issue."

Mike Roberts is chaplain for the North West region out of Manchester and Liverpool

Independent Confidential Impartial

Did you know?

Railway Mission has been serving the railways since 1881.

Whilst we are a Christian based organisation, we provide support to people of all faiths and of no faith.

We have 20 chaplains, full and part time, serving all rail staff in England, Scotland and Wales.

As British Transport Police chaplains, our vetting is extremely high.





Claire joins the team

We're delighted to announce the appointment of a new Business Manager for Railway Mission. We spoke to Claire Keville about her role with the mission.

Can you tell us a little bit about your working background before joining the Railway Mission?

I have come directly from the fashion industry, but before I hear another request for a uniform redesign, it was in production management – which involved managing the entire process from a designer's sketch to delivery of final product.

Before that, I have worked in many different industries and in many different management roles over the years so have a wealth of skills to bring to the position.

What is your role with Railway Mission; what does that look like and what will it bring to the mission?

Business Manager is a new position within the charity, so it will develop and grow according to the charity's needs and the needs of those who work within it.

But essentially, I am here to support Liam Johnston, our Executive Director, with the day-to-day running of the charity and to help link the Trustees to the work of the chaplains and vice versa.

What have you learned about the work of Railway Mission so far?

I have learned what a valuable and important service all the Chaplains provide.

I have been shadowing a few of the Chaplains (and hope to do more) and it has been inspirational to see the impact they have in supporting and helping the people they come across.

What kind of challenges do you think we face as the rail industry goes into a time of transition, and how do you think we will we fit in to those plans?

I imagine there will, unfortunately, only be more need for chaplains within the rail industry as it progresses through these times of change.

With restructuring resulting in job security issues, financial impacts and a growing onus on technology over people it's a tough time to be in the rail industry and this will naturally have an impact on people's mental health.

What are the advantages of a wellequipped and directed rail chaplaincy to the rail industry?

Our charitable objective states our purpose is: "To propagate the Christian Gospel and preserve and protect mental health, primarily amongst railway and transport staff



...it's a tough time to be in the rail industry and this will naturally have an impact on people's mental health...

and also members of the public affected by railway operations, by all appropriate means."

From a secular viewpoint, a wellequipped and directed chaplaincy service will ensure that we are better placed to fulfil our mission's objectives; being there for the individual in their time of need and being more visible and available than before.

Eventually, we hope to grow the mission and reach more people. This in turn results in a better-supported industry, with less sickness and absence due to mental health issues, resulting in less disruption to railway companies and to passengers alike.

Everyone wins.



About mental health

Railway Mission chaplain Mike Roberts now has a regular column in Rail Director magazine. He tells us how this came about and why the rail industry has interest in chaplaincy support

Lots of the work that your chaplaincy team do is responding to situations after they've happened.

However, we also try to be proactive in supporting the railway industry in areas around the wellbeing of employees. It's fair to say that the period since Summer 2022 has probably been the hardest and most challenging that most of the chaplaincy team have experienced, with the demands associated with the recovery from Covid and the ongoing strikes and disputes.

When I was asked to write a regular column in Rail Director magazine about the issues that the chaplains experienced on the railway, I was excited to get my teeth into some of the big challenges that we all face day to day. Rail Director is primarily aimed at managers and senior leaders across the industry, and I've so far explored issues including

Mental Health (Why Mental Health Shouldn't be like Pulling Teeth, May 2022), Wellbeing in the Workplace (All You Can Eat Wellbeing, August 2022) and Trauma and response (When Trauma Clouds Gather, November 2022).

Writing for publications gives the Railway Mission greater exposure in the train companies we work with and enables us to have opportunities we otherwise may not have had. I'm grateful to the publishers for the invitation to write, hoping and praying that those words reach the right people on the right themes at the right time.

You can read Rail Director, online, at https://issuu.com/raildirector





Introducing...

Following the departure of John Robinson in the Southern Railway area, Tony Miller has become the chaplain.

For a month Tony worked alongside John, and his feet hardly touched the ground as John whisked him from place to place, leaving Tony's head in a spin. But now he is beginning to settle into a routine of visiting and supporting railway industry colleagues.

With a wealth of experience, from prison chaplaincy to working with young people to steer them away from youth crime and gang culture in London.

Tony thought the railway industry would be a breeze. However, the complexity of the railway and the scale of the industry have meant that Tony has found starting work as a chaplain anything but a breeze.

Any new job is a challenge, and as Tony admits he 'has big shoes to fill.' It takes time for relationships to be made, trust to be won and even longer to understand the complexities of the railway with different companies, procedures and aspects of operation on the network.

Slowly, slowly, Tony is beginning to find his feet and settle into the uncertainties of the railway.

Please pray for Tony and his family as he begins this new adventure.

Rail Industry Memorial Day



National Rail Museum York

Look out for Covid Memorial events in your local area, or check the Railway Mission website for more details.



Covid Memorial

The 23rd of March is the anniversary of the first COVID-19 Lockdown. As an industry, we will be marking this event with a commemoration service at the National Rail Museum in York.

There will also be other simultaneous events around the country as we stop and take time to reflect on the loss we have suffered, but also to acknowledge the service and dedication of the railway throughout the pandemic.

From the train and station cleaners to the drivers, track workers, gateline and managers, police officers and support staff, our industry kept goods and key workers moving while maintaining the safety and security of the railway.

For more information, please visit railwaymission. org

Chaplains'

news & info



Andrew Hall

AREA MANAGER NORTH • WEST MIDLANDS,
CHILTERN

So, another New Year is upon us. As usual the year will introduce new events, new circumstances, new joys and new sorrows together with those that have come through the festive period.

As we meet rail staff during the year we will have the opportunity to come alongside people as they go through all of these events, whether they be small or life-changing.

In our ministry we have the privilege of taking the unchanging Christ with us into these moments of personal change. Please pray for us all to be sensitive to the still, small voice in the clamour around us.



Mike Roberts
NORTH WEST, MANCHESTER, LIVERPOOL

It's tough in the Northwest and for many staff the second half of 2022 has been the toughest part of their career. Staff wellbeing will always have an impact on the wellbeing of the chaplaincy team, and I ask you to pray that as we all walk through tough and dark places that God would give us moments of joy and light to sustain us.

We all know that the role will bring us into the lives of people at some of their darkest moments, but the moments of laughter, joy and hope sustain us through the many dark days. Give thanks for those, and may God keep us well balanced between ministering in darkness and rejoicing in the light.



Alan Thorpe BRISTOL AREA

A 'new' couple came to our church recently. After the Benediction the lady turned round and said, 'Alan Thorpe! The last time I saw you was when you preached in our Railway Mission Church in Derby over 30 years ago.'

Somewhat flattered that she still recognised me after so long, we then had a good 'catch-up' reminiscing about former members and supporters - some of whom now promoted to Glory.

We press forward as a mission into a new year, with fresh challenges and opportunities, but remain grateful to God for those who have gone before and by their prayer and practical support have paved the way, laying good foundations, and enabling this ministry to continue.





Helen Bartlett NEWCASTLE AREA

The strikes continue. So do the vulnerable folk, and life is still as complex. This new year, I am hoping and trusting that we can benefit our country with a new and improved train service, hoping and praying for safe and reliable journeys and for new opportunities to share ourselves and our faith.

In the words of Philippians 4 v 6 and 7: 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'



David Hardy
GLOUCESTER & RAIL RETIREMENT HOMES

2022 was a sad year for the Railway communities in the area I serve. We have had an unprecedented number of deaths amongst our retired and inservice people. At Exeter alone there have been about 25 that I know of, and I have been involved in taking a number of funerals.

Having been chaplain there from 1988 to 2004 meant that I got to know a lot of people. I have been privileged to go to

the retirement events since moving to Bristol and have kept in touch with them. Although funerals can be sad occasions, it has given me the opportunity to share our Christian faith. Please pray for all who mourn the deaths of their loved ones



Christopher Henley WEST LONDON & SOUTH WEST

Happy and blessed New Year railway family! We've heard so much recently about industrial action, the economy and uncertainty.

As I travel around the Wessex Area, I am constantly meeting people from Network Rail and BTP teams, SWR Gate line, Ticket Office, Dispatchers, Station Management teams who are hopeful and optimistic.

Just recently I met a manager (despatching a train) at a London station, who I last saw working the gateline on the south coast. They were full of optimism for their future and the railway. I have found this positive attitude across the Wessex Area.

My prayer is that we continue to be optimistic and hopeful. If we are, I am sure we will get the outcomes we desire.

Chaplains'

news & info



Dereck Grant EAST SCOTLAND

In August I moved to Dundee and will cover the East of Scotland. We live in a world of pain and suffering. I am, therefore, glad that one manager asked me to support her staff when one of her colleagues passed away.

It meant everything for staff members that I attended the funeral. One of the stories that has touched me the most was during a suicide prevention event at Edinburgh Waverley Station where a young woman shared her story of trying to end her life (she had just been released from hospital).

A few hours later she came back with a cup of coffee to thank me for listening to her story because it made her feel valued.



Dylis George SOUTH LONDON, SOUTH EAST

Iremain grateful for the opportunity to serve in every new opportunity. It has been exciting to be able to sow seeds of Christ's love over the last seven years. I am confident that the Lord will continue to use me as we move forward.

At Christmas, the Head of HR Southeastern Trains expressed his appreciation: "Thank you for your support to my Area HR Manager team by talking to colleagues after some of the most difficult issues we deal with. Next year, it would be great to get you more involved with the Area HR team, to help them be more resilient and to provide them with somebody impartial to talk to about the situations that they face."



John Roe
LONDON, SOUTH WEST

If there's one word which sums up my thoughts and expectations for this year, it is the word, 'Hope'. At the time of writing, the industrial action in the railways has not been resolved. As I travel around the network, holding dozens of informal conversations each day, there seems to be a climate of despondence, anxiety, fear, fatigue and general low morale.

As I listen, I pray for opportunities to offer a word of hope - yes, including the hope that the industrial dispute will soon be resolved - but much more than that: that the Christian hope we have, of eternal worth, may see the light of day in peoples' lives.



Andrea Smyth
NORTH LONDON, CHILTERN

I've come to feel passionately about the importance of looking after your own physical, mental and spiritual



health. We can't serve other people if we have nothing inside ourselves to pour out.

If we are feeling drained, and we attempt to spend our time helping others, we run the risk of burning ourselves out. And then we're no good to anyone.

Also, will people listen to our advice to them to "look after yourself" (I put this at the bottom of so many of my emails) if we're obviously not looking after ourselves?

We can be a light in the darkness of the world, but we can also be a witness to the importance of taking care of yourself.



Michele Ashton EAST LONDON, ANGLIA

Thad the privilege of taking Claire Keville our Business Manager out for the day to experience the life of a chaplain in Anglia.

In the driver's depot, all seemed in good spirits and engaged with my visitor. As we left the depot, we bumped into a man I had been supporting with health conditions over the last five years. We had some perfect photo opportunities.

At Freightliner, we saw a man I had supported a year ago and spoke about the difficult work situation. In London, another chance meeting with a BTP member of staff who spoke of a traumatic work situation.

You never know what is around the corner as a chaplain.



Angela Levitt-Harwood

Over the last few months, I have been working with a Wellbeing Manager who is new to the industry.

As part of a team putting on wellness days, it has been an opportunity for me to reconnect with staff and it has enabled interventions both from referrals and ad hoc conversations due to the relaxed environment and time to sit and share a coffee.

I've noticed more managers reaching out to Railway Mission for support as they juggle their workload and look after staff who are under increasing pressure.

Please do continue to pray for your chaplains; for the health and strength to carry out these requests and for the leading of the Holy Spirit as we respond to often very difficult situations.

Chaplains'

news & info



Ruth McBean NORTH SCOTLAND

Thank you for your time and interest in praying for us. We have wonderful opportunities to listen and share. Sometimes we can share our faith in a meaningful way.

Just recently one of the managers shared with me that she had been reading Corinthians. She was delighted to accept a Railway Mission Bible. I put her name and a Bible verse in the front of it to make it more personal.

Recently Graham, Dereck and I visited the West of Scotland Signal Centre. We spent most of the day chatting with the staff, and while we were there a fatality occurred on the tracks. Please do pray for the staff who deal with fatalities and for their families.



Colin Fraser

Tam grateful that my Christian faith is built on sure foundations.

Both before and since the festive period I have encountered people of the railway family that are in mourning for various reasons, but what has really struck me is the hopelessness that people carry with them.

I was welcomed with literal open arms and with real sincerity with the words "the chaplain has hope" by a member of staff at a rail installation today.

The conversation that followed gave me the opportunity to share my testimony about the hope my faith gives me in these uncertain times.

Please pray for more opportunities for all chaplains to share their testimony.



Graham Whitehead
WEST SCOTLAND

Like the rest of the industry, the railway in Scotland has been seriously disrupted by disputes over job security, working practices and pay. Some groups have reached agreements, whilst some disputes seem interminable.

As chaplains, we walk through this world, trying to bring the light of God's love into some very dark places. Everyone in the industry is affected by the disputes, and none of them want to see the railway we love in difficulty.

An incident in my church has reminded me that it isn't just what we intend to say and do, but also what people hear and see.



Please pray that we chaplains would be seen to care with God's love for all of our people.



Tony Miller

SOUTH LONDON AND SOUTHERN ROUTE

I am believing God for more of His wisdom in supporting all the staff that I engage with in the Southern-Sussex area.

Another thing that's on my heart is for prayers for safety and protection while being out and about on the trains.

It is also very important to pray for our organisation, Railway Mission, that God would grant us favour in this current financial crisis to sustain us as a small charity in the fantastic work that we are providing right across the National Railway.



Stephen Rowe

AREA MANAGER SOUTH • EAST COAST

As you will have heard, chaplains have had to negotiate industrial action on the railways recently, with some rail staff members requesting support.

Chaplains are not here to take sides in disputes, but to be available to help rail personnel through tough times. This isn't always easy, so prayer for wisdom and guidance is appreciated.

We've also had opportunities to speak with leaders and management teams to let them know of our availability to staff.

The railway is one big family, so there are times when we have to navigate difficulties together and come to the best resolutions when we face challenging issues.

You can support chaplains with your giving by going to our website's donate page. Simply scan the qr-code below

Don't forget to add Gift Aid to donations.



SCAN ME



Denominations and spirituality

I have been asked more than once: "what was the denomination or the denominational origins of the Railway Mission?" When it was founded, there was a large group of prominent Evangelicals, both Anglican and Nonconformist, who supported many Christian charities including the Railway Mission (RM). Although established in 1881, it was not until 1887 that its Object and Basis of Belief were set down.

The Object of the Railway Mission was to preach the Gospel to employees on all lines, hold weekly meetings for Prayer and Bible Study, help Christians to 'make known the Gospel to their mates' and promote Temperance. Its Basis of belief was firmly Evangelical with its acceptance of the Holy Scriptures, the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the fall by sin and redemption from sin through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ

with justification by faith alone. And key to note was:

'The Railway Mission does not encourage the formation of distinct churches, but counsels all those who are spiritually influenced by its operations to attach themselves to the churches already in existence.'

The branches were nondenominational and outside observers regarded them as working-class mission halls or nonconformist chapels resembling the Baptists. The latter because they practiced a form of congregational church government, not because of their baptismal practice.

Those seeking adult baptism might apply to a local Baptist Church or Brethren Gospel Hall. Until 1930 branches were also discouraged from observing Holy Communion, as this would identify them as independent churches.

The practices of early branches owed much to the Primitive Methodists who attracted working class men more than other churches, and in its early days the Mission had quite strong links with them. Some branches adopted their 'camp meetings' when the assembled membership would lead a parade through their town to a meeting place on the outskirts, where they would hold an evangelistic service.



Other denominations were also supportive of this 'mission agency' as illustrated by Congregationalists from Bury St Edmunds and Boston. At the former, local railwaymen approached a Mrs Ridley in 1895. about starting a railway mission. She was a Congregationalist from the Northgate Street Chapel and began by leading services at the station using a room in the Station Master's house. In 1909 the Boston branch recorded that 'members of the Mission Choir of the Congregational Church most kindly gave the service of song, "Spring Flowers", for the benefit of our

work.' Perhaps surprisingly, so were some Quaker Meetings, with examples from Saffron Walden and Wisbech; note that many nineteenth century Quakers were Evangelical in belief.

Over the years there were various 'movements' prevalent in the Church, such as the 'Holiness movement' from the 1930s and Pentecostalism from the1950s, that influenced some branches, often to the concern of the General Committee. In 1945 the General Secretary complained to the Committee, that contrary to the founding vision of the Mission, "It is sad to note that there are branches which have settled down as small churches... and have lost their evangelistic vision..."

In a very different context, the present-day objective of the Railway Mission is:

'To propagate the Christian Gospel and preserve and protect mental and physical health primarily amongst railway and transport staff and also members of the public affected by railway operations, by all appropriate means.'

DUDLEY CLARK

Pictured:

Page 20: Opening of a Mission Hall at an unknown location. This page: Letterhead from the Worcester Branch 1950s.

BTP support in sharp focus

Your chaplains spend their time visiting stations and other railway installations offering help and support wherever it is needed.

Most of this support goes unnoticed by senior managers in the industry because the care and compassion offered is personal and confidential. But then on occasions, there is something that brings this support into sharp focus.

One such event was when, on the seventh of October, a man stabbed himself in front of horrified passengers on a train at London Euston station.

As he was being treated for his injuries, which we understand he assumed were fatal, he confessed to a murder; this led to the discovery of a 36-year-old mother's body seventy miles away...

Paramedics rushed him to hospital for emergency treatment where he remained under police guard and medical supervision before being charged.

At the time of the incident on the train, BTP had a number of trainee officers at the station, all of whom

were supported by the Railway Mission chaplaincy. Steve Rowe and Andrea Smyth attended Euston while John Roe visited the officers at the Hospital, who had travelled with the suspect.

Everyone in the Railway Mission is immensely proud of the work done to support officers and staff in BTP.

On the eleventh of November, the Chief Constable of BTP wrote:

Hi Liam.

I am writing to thank you and all at the Railway Mission for the support you give BTP and our people.

I have received an exceptional level of positive feedback over the last few months and in particular the support given at Euston a few weeks ago when we had some particularly distressing incidents.

Thank you to your team for all that you do

Lucy

Lucy D'Orsi QPM Chief Constable





They're an amazing asset that we often signpost people to. They support everyone and anyone throughout these processes.

But there are many occasions that chaplaincy is asked to support officers, and the value of this is recognised by the senior officers, as in this response to a police chaplain for Lancashire Police from Chief Superintendent Chris Casey shows.



In the tweet CS Casey says, "The @railwaychaplain team at BTP are exceptional in this regard. They're an amazing asset that we often signpost people to. They support everyone and anyone throughout these processes."

Railway Mission chaplains are always available to support BTP officers on request.



Six ways to support Railway Mission chaplains

Cheque or Postal Order

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

2 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, where you will 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.

6 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.



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

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







Your donation takes us further...

Here is my gift of £10 \bigcirc £15 \bigcirc £20 \bigcirc Other £
I enclose a cheque postal order made payable to Railway Mission
Yes, I would like to make regular donations
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Regular standing orders help us support staff more effectively Please fill out your details above and we'll get in touch to let you know how you can be even more involved in supporting rail staff through the valuable work of Railway Mission. We'll never share your details with other organisations We'd like to let you know how your donations are helping us support rail staff, and how Railway Mission is making a difference in the industry. You can opt out at any point by simply letting us know through our contact details below. Please complete and return this form with your donation to: Administrator, Railway Mission, Room 66, Rugby Railway Station, Warwickshire, CV21 3LA
Make your gift worth 25% more at no extra cost to you! I am a UK taxpayer and I would like Railway Mission to treat all donations I have made now and in the future as Gift Aid until I notify otherwise. Signature

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