



Railway Mission

Support on
life's journey

RM News

Issue 1 2025

200 
Years of Train Travel
since 1825



Railway Mission

Support on life's journey

www.railwaymission.org

**Railway Mission
Rugby Railway Station
Rugby • CV21 3LA**

office@railwaymission.org

support@railwaymission.org

0203 887 7000

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Cover photo by Samuel Ragan Asante for Unsplash of a Southwestern train slipping out of Waterloo in London.

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Scan to find a chaplain in your area



From the top

with Liam Johnston
Railway Mission
Executive Director



Celebrating 25 joyful years with Railway Mission

This year marks a truly special milestone: 25 incredible years since I first joined Railway Mission.

From my early days as the chaplain for the "West Midlands," a region that extended far beyond its name, spanning Marylebone in London to the Welsh coast, and stretching from Hereford and Oxford to Staffordshire, Bletchley, and Bedford; I've witnessed and been part of an amazing journey.

When I began, Railway Mission was already a beacon of hope and support for the railway community, but the changes over the years have been nothing short of transformative.

This progress is thanks to the unwavering dedication and hard work of chaplains and trustees, both past and present. Together, we've adapted, grown, and

embraced new ways to serve, ensuring that the railway family always has a compassionate ear and a helping hand.

As I reflect on this journey, now as Executive Director, I am filled with gratitude and excitement. The remarkable developments we've achieved inspire my hope and prayers for the next 25 years.

I dream of even greater improvements in the support we provide, of reaching more lives, and of strengthening the bonds within our railway community.

Here's to a future filled with kindness, resilience, and service, and to continue this mission of love and care for many years to come!

Let's celebrate the past, embrace the present, and look forward to a bright future together.



The Llanbrynmair crash

Chaplains Andrew Hall and Karen Schofield (pictured above) report on their response with colleagues Phil Tucker and Mike Roberts to a recent rail incident that took place in Wales

Andrew Hall reports, “On 22nd October 2024, news started to trickle through about a rail incident in Wales.

“Two trains had collided just west of Machynlleth in mid Wales, seventeen people had been taken to hospital and, tragically, one passenger had passed away due to a heart attack. The site was just outside the village of Llanbrynmair. From a chaplaincy point of view, Wales is covered by two chaplains: Phil covers South Wales and the English Marches. Karen covers North Wales and West Wales.

“As we started to respond to this incident the following morning, I spoke with Nick Millington, head of the Wales route for Network Rail. I also spoke with Transport for Wales and British Transport Police Control personnel to alert them to our

availability to respond and to determine the best response locations and our access to them. Karen set out for Machynlleth.

“Phil was already on his way to Birmingham for a pre-arranged meeting, so when he arrived we both set out for Shrewsbury. Mike was asked to visit personnel in Crewe. Phil and I visited BTP, Transport for Wales (TfW) and Network Rail staff in Shrewsbury then Phil returned directly to Cardiff to liaise with Control, Signal and Management staff.

“The following day I was asked to go to the Site Welfare facility which had been set up adjacent to the site at the Llanbrynmair village school. Support continued in various places for several days and in some cases has been ongoing. Karen took on the Lion’s

share of the support work and I will let her take up the story.

“On an October Tuesday morning I received a call from Andrew Hall informing me that there had been an incident in mid-Wales. We agreed that I should drive there as there were no trains running beyond Shrewsbury on the route. I jumped in my car ‘Peggy’ and drove off into the wilds of mid-Wales, into countryside undulating and muddy, where I found myself able to go 60 mph on single track roads with no-one else about.

“After about an hour I began doubting the Sat-Nav and stopped at a farm shop to ask if I was on the right track. ‘Where am I?’ I asked. ‘Good question’, they answered, ‘we are a little in the middle-of nowhere.’ We eventually arrived at the answer of ‘Corwen.’ I don’t know where that is either, but at least the Sat-Nav agrees, so off I go again, only to find that the scenery and epic roads that I’d previously encountered in Gwynedd were just the ‘warm-up’ for even more in Powys.

“I finally got to Machynlleth and sat in the car for a while. I was excited and somewhat distracted by the surprise of the grandiose countryside around me, and this wasn’t an appropriate state in which to meet the folks who had been affected by last night’s incident, so I calmed down a moment and took a call from Andrew.

“I don’t think he was particularly happy to discover that the furthest I’d driven before was Cheshire Oaks (35 miles), whereas Machynlleth is 120

miles from my house. But I was there, in one piece, and ready to offer support to the good people.

“They were in shock. No-one could quite believe what had happened. Some staff were angry, most of the others were recounting the connections that they had to the incident. “I swapped shifts with Y. They shouldn’t have been on that train,” or, worse, “Z has only just returned to work after another incident. I was only working with them yesterday. I just know that they aren’t going to be okay.”

Karen continues, “I sat with staff in Network Rail - the signallers, the MOMs and the crossing supervisors. I sat with the on-board staff, drivers and station staff from Tfw (Transport for Wales). They told me of their connectivity, their relationships with those affected. It was sad but also affirming, because you knew, in your bones, that these people not only knew one another but loved each other deeply and would absolutely support each other through this.

“It was so reassuring that Railway Mission had a plan for this type of thing. I knew that Mike Roberts went to see BTP in Crewe, that Andy went to the support unit at the site, and that Andy and Phil spoke with staff at Shrewsbury and then Phil concentrated on the Cardiff end of things. I knew I would not have enough time otherwise and would

[Continued on page 6](#)



Scene of the crash site at Llanbrynmair in Wales

The Llanbrynmair crash from page 5

have been more concerned for the more vulnerable folk who I could not see fast enough.

Karen continues, “The next day I went to Machynlleth again. I wasn’t to drive so I caught the available replacement bus, but wasn’t able to work on the bus with no Wi-Fi, or phone signal. I got to Machynlleth in time to be told to go home again soon “or you’re not getting home tonight.” I wasn’t there long. It was difficult for everyone, but I knew that my colleagues were also supporting staff closer to other depots, and that for today, they knew I’d tried my best and would be back again soon.

“The following day I went to visit the Shrewsbury Network Rail Depot. Many of the staff there have close ties to Talerddig (Llanbrynmair) or cover that area. They too were showing a mix of emotions, some incredibly sad and others angry that this had ever happened. A distressing detail here is that I received a call from an upset

staff member, demanding to know why the driver hadn’t been visited in hospital. After apologies I rang the boss, but up to that point there had been refusal to share the details of staff. Eventually I got a name and a hospital site and went off to find the injured driver. He was sore and worried for his family but also looking forward to his tuck-shop flapjack that had just about survived the crash. Afterwards, I also made a visit to Pwllheli to visit staff there.

“It was hugely rewarding, it was exciting, the driving bit at least, it was upsetting and unsettling. I truly felt honoured to serve the Railway Family in those circumstances.”

Andrew summarises, “These types of incidents are, fortunately, rare. When they do occur, however, I am always humbled and encouraged by the willingness of my chaplain colleagues to drop everything and go the extra mile to bring support to those who have been affected.”



“

I look forward to serving the people on the railway...

Andrew Mitchell joins Railway Mission as Chaplain for the Northeast

Railway Mission is pleased to announce Andrew Mitchell as the new Chaplain for the Northeast, taking over from Helen Bartlett as she steps into retirement after faithfully serving the railway community for over nine years.

Andrew, fondly known as Andy, brings a wealth of experience and a heart for community service to his new role. Prior to joining Railway Mission, Andy led a community project in West Auckland, where he oversaw The Well, a coffee shop and community hub that also provided vital services such as a foodbank, financial support, and listening services.

Andy expressed his excitement about his new journey: "Over the past couple of weeks, the people I've met have been very friendly, and I'm grateful for their support. I look forward to serving the people on the railway network in the best way I can."

Andy, a family man who enjoys flying drones and capturing the stunning landscapes of the Northeast, is no stranger to service and compassion. Alongside his wife, grown-up children,

grandchildren, and a springer spaniel named Rosie, Andy finds joy in everyday life and the opportunity to follow Jesus.

As Andy steps into this role, the Railway Mission would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to Helen Bartlett for her dedication and service. Helen's impact on the lives of railway workers and their families has been immeasurable.

Liam Johnston, Executive Director of Railway Mission, shared his thoughts: "Helen has been a beacon of hope and support for so many in the Northeast, and we wish her God's peace and blessings as she begins this new chapter of her life. We are thrilled to welcome Andy, whose passion and experience will undoubtedly continue to make a meaningful difference to the railway community."

As Andy settles into his new role, he asks for prayers for Helen during her transition and for wisdom to support those facing life-changing decisions in the railway industry.



The Railway Family Prize Draw

The Railway Family Prize Draw raised an extraordinary £10,000 for the Railway Mission, with funds going toward the vital pastoral and emotional support provided to railway staff and their families.

This remarkable achievement reflects the strength and generosity of the railway community, uniting individuals and organisations in support of a shared cause.

Heather Waugh (pictured right), the dedicated organiser behind this initiative, deserves special recognition for her tireless efforts in making the prize draw a resounding success. Her hard work and commitment ensured that the event ran smoothly and exceeded expectations.

Pictured above with the cheque are Mark Ilderton, Service Delivery



Director at ScotRail; Tim Shoveller, CEO of Freightliner Group; and Catrona Cowan, Station Staff at ScotRail, along with Andrew Hall, Karen Scofield, Liam Johnston, and Heather Waugh herself.

Their collective enthusiasm highlights the close-knit nature of the railway family and its unwavering support for the Railway Mission.



Photo by the1willy for Pixabay



Railway200 celebrations

In 2025, the UK celebrates 200 years of the modern railway, marking the Stockton and Darlington Railway's inaugural passenger journey. Rail200 events highlight this milestone nationwide.

The S&DR200 Festival, running March to November in County Durham and Tees Valley, features art installations and community events exploring railway heritage. The National Railway Museum in York and Locomotion in Shildon will host exhibitions, including the reopening of Station

Hall and a summer festival celebrating rail history.

In Scotland, the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum's "Smoke and Steel" exhibition from April to September explores Scotland's railway impact, while Fife Heritage Railway's Doors Open Day in September offers behind-the-scenes tours.

However, events will be held all over the country and they will provide opportunities to connect with the legacy of UK railways. Visit railway200.co.uk for details.

Visit railway200.co.uk for details



Trustee Q&A

journey, including overcoming challenges and finding strength through fellowship, has reinforced my belief in the importance of compassion and support networks. Becoming a Trustee allows me to contribute to the Mission's vital work, helping ensure railway staff and their families have access to the care and encouragement they need to thrive.

What do you hope to bring to the Railway Mission through your skills, experience, or vision?

I hope to bring a blend of strategic leadership, industry expertise, and a deep commitment to well-being to the Railway Mission. With extensive experience, I bring a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by railway staff and the broader industry landscape.

My professional background enables me to offer strategic insights that support the Mission's goals of pastoral care, emotional support, and well-being. Additionally, my personal journey, including overcoming challenges through community and fellowship, gives me a unique perspective on the importance of accessible, compassionate support. I am passionate about fostering resilience, collaboration, and a culture

What inspired you to become a Trustee for Railway Mission, and what personal or professional experiences connect you to the railway community?

My motivation to become a Trustee for the Railway Mission stems from my deep connection to the railway industry and a personal passion for supporting others. As a senior Railway Executive in Operations, I've witnessed the challenges faced by railway staff, from demanding working environments to the personal struggles that can arise in such roles.

The Railway Mission's commitment to offering pastoral care, emotional and spiritual support, and promoting well-being within the railway community aligns closely with my values. My own



with
Paul Verghese

of care within the railway community, helping the Mission expand its reach and impact.

Can you share a little about your background and how it aligns with the values and goals of the Railway Mission?

With a career spanning 33 years in senior roles in Railway Operations and other spaces with the global Rail sector, my background is firmly rooted in the railway industry. I've seen firsthand the challenges faced by railway staff, from the demands of safety-critical roles to the pressures of maintaining operational excellence.

These experiences have deepened my understanding of the industry and my empathy for those who work within it. Personally, my journey of overcoming challenges, has taught me the value of compassion, resilience, and the power of support networks—values that align closely with the Railway Mission's dedication to providing pastoral care and emotional support.

My professional expertise and personal experiences inspire me to contribute meaningfully to the Mission's work, supporting the well-being of railway staff and their families.

What excites you most about joining the Railway Mission, and what do you hope to achieve during your time as a Trustee?

What excites me most about joining the Railway Mission is the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of railway staff and their families by supporting their well-being and resilience. The Mission's dedication to providing pastoral care and emotional support aligns with my passion for fostering a culture of compassion within the railway community.

During my time as a Trustee, I hope to leverage my industry expertise and personal experiences to help the Mission expand its reach and impact, ensuring its services remain relevant and accessible.

I'm particularly eager to explore innovative ways to address the evolving challenges faced by railway workers and to support the Mission in building stronger connections across the railway industry. Together, I believe we can create lasting, positive change that uplifts individuals and strengthens the railway community as a whole.



42 years a railway chaplain

After eight years as a Church Minister in Eastleigh and then North Devon, I began working with Railway Mission in 1982, and my brief was to provide chaplaincy support for British Rail staff in the GWR region. This was the area south of Birmingham down to Penzance and included South Wales. The London end of the region was supported by London City Mission.

Our Railway Mission team included just three team members: John Riley covering York and the north, Phil Gomersall, the General Secretary, based in Leeds, and me, the new boy, in GWR. We also had several volunteers who were mainly rail staff themselves and were engaged in keeping a pastoral eye on staff in their locality. One such was George Chilton who later became Railway Mission chairman.

George's railway boss was Peter Parker. On one occasion Mr

Parker's wife wasn't well, and when George took the tea tray into Mr Parker's office, George bravely told his boss that he would pray for her. That simple remark was never forgotten, and when Sir Peter Parker became chairman of British Rail, he became very instrumental and supportive in promoting Railway Mission chaplaincy.

There had never been a chaplain in Bristol before my appointment, although Miss Emma Saunders did a pioneering work of evangelism from her local church. She visited railmen at work with gospel tracts, and though it may seem quaint to some, such was her regard that staff erected a marble memorial to her when she died in 1927. The plaque, dedicated to the 'Railwaymen's Friend', still graces the outer entrance to Bristol Temple Meads Station.

When I started, we had weekly prayer cells at various rail installations: Barry in South Wales every Tuesday evening; Bristol

Long serving chaplain Alan Thorpe talks about his time with Railway Mission

Temple Meads every Wednesday lunchtime; and Swindon was monthly on a Thursday night. Rail staff, families and supporters organised these meetings.

Each year, in October, we held an Annual Conference—a residential 3-4 days in a Christian guest house. We met in various locations including Torquay, Eastbourne, Herne Bay, Llandrindod Wells, Llandudno, Grange over Sands, Edinburgh, and, for an International Conference, took over York University. Solid Bible ministry was given by Evangelical expositors of the scriptures. There was also time for lighter moments with the Welsh contingent endeavouring to showcase their singing prowess.

'Derby Day' was always the first Saturday in March and was a time chiefly for chaplains' reporting, as were the South Wales Spring and Autumn Rallies. They were also times of physical nourishment too, as we were always well fed!

Since 1881

Railway Mission can trace its history back to 1881 and has been an integral part of the tradition of Britain's railways.

Providing support to railway staff throughout England, Scotland and Wales, Railway Mission has enjoyed respect and favour through the various adaptations of the railways over time.

We've seen changes also, but our consistent emphasis has been on the wellbeing of staff and finding ways to assist them through those times when challenges, whether personal or professional, come along.

We've been a listening ear and caring voice to thousands of railway workers through more than 144 years of the 200 years of the railway's existence thanks to the generosity of our supporters and of rail companies who have seen the value of chaplaincy over the years.



Chaplains' prayer & info



Bernadette Cendrowska-Salt

North Scotland

Life in the North of Scotland is very varied but the community is closely knit. Although people are thinly spread out, the network and technology keep them connected. Many have been on the railway for 30 years or more, some are second or third generation. Families know each other. There is a sense of the working people meeting each other more often as they are a smaller community than elsewhere. With that comes a very special way of being a chaplain to the North. Friendships can go deeper and walks together can have deep meaning.



Andrew Mitchell

Northeast England

Starting a new role must be up there as a major life event. Thinking back to when I started the role as chaplain a couple of months ago, the one thing that made a difference was the support that I received from many different people. Recently I was thinking about chaplaincy and how our experiences can prepare us for service. 2 Corinthians 1:4 '[God] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those

in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.' God creatively moulds us into the people we are today and continues to equip us for service as chaplains in the railway industry.



Phil Tucker

South Wales

As a chaplain, you meet lots of people going about their working day. Almost always in answer to the question "how are things" the automatic response is "fine thanks." Often this is the case but on many occasions, you know that "fine thanks" means something completely different. Sometimes you can sense they want to say more, you wait but nothing more comes. I pray that all who are struggling, in whatever way, find a way to open up when asked the "how are things" question and answer honestly, whether to family or friends, workmates or even the chaplain.



Helen Bartlett

Retiring from her role in the Northeast.

When you have been trying to retire and the last few weeks are upon you, it is a very strange feeling. A chaplain's job is all embracing and it's almost impossible

Chaplains' prayer & info

to say 'Goodbye.' I want to thank God for all the fun I have had, for the ' trials and tribulations' and most of all the fellowship and support I have given and have appreciated from others. Thank you, God, thank you Railway Mission, Liam, Andy and all the chaplains.



Mike Roberts
Northwest England

I spoke to a group of managers recently who all talked about work feeling

like running around keeping plates spinning and catching them before they fall. It also can be true for chaplains. We're constantly asked to be involved in so many things, and we just don't have the capacity for everything. Please pray for wisdom to know when to use our yes and our no, and which places to invest our time in. Ask God to open our eyes to the right relationships to really invest in, and the right times and ways to plant and nurture the seeds we carry.



David Hardy
Gloucester and Cotswolds

I always enjoy distributing the calendars. They provide a wonderful way of talking to staff. Many are glad to receive one

and to talk about the Mission, what we do and what we believe. When we visit offices through the year, we often see them in constant use. I always pray that the Bible texts are read and speak to people's hearts, that they will help them in their condition, prompt them to think about Jesus and His truths and to begin or grow in their faith. Please pray that these calendars are an effective tool for our mission.



Alan Thorpe
Bristol area

A member of staff told me she was feeling frustrated because she had already broken her New Year Resolution and had found the temptation of tobacco too much. She then said she would stop smoking 'One Day.'

I was able to share with her that week's RM Prayer email message, titled 'One Day or Day One'. The idea was that we can put off becoming a Christian till one future day, or, by asking Jesus to forgive now, today can be Day One of our new life. Because of life's uncertainties, 'Today is the day'.

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Railway Mission
with a donation?**



Chaplains' prayer & info



Karen Schofield

Northwest England,
Merseyside and North
Wales

Last week I celebrated my second year with Railway Mission. I feel I've learnt and taken on a lot, in a rewarding way. This year I have supported staff after forty suicides, four staff deaths, attempted suicides and the major incident at Talerddig. I have supported folk going through major life changes, from going through IVF to older children moving out. Assault and the threat of violence is a common theme amongst staff and can be difficult to 'bounce back' from. I ask that readers pray for peace amongst staff and customers, for folk to be able to relax away from work and that chaplains can reach all those who need their support.



Graham Whitehead

Western Scotland

Yesterday, the birth of my Senior Pastor's grandchild was celebrated. Also yesterday, there was a fatality on the railways in Scotland. These seem to be the two extremes of hope. The hope and joy of a new baby and the extinguishing of hope bringing devastation.

One of the privileges of being a chaplain is to bring love in both of these extremes, and everywhere in between. This is demanding and draining, but also energising and uplifting.

Please pray that we are able to sustain our work by sustaining our communion with God, and that we can continue to be present wherever we are needed.



Andrea Smyth

North London and
Chiltern

I was talking to a train company manager today, whose staff are mostly frontline, as is she. She feels that there is not enough done by the company to help staff grow in resilience. There is in-house training on resilience provided, but she feels it is long overdue an update. The impression is that it was written by people who don't really understand the challenges of customer service in what are often difficult situations.

She intends to broach the issue with the training department. Please pray for the situation - it can't be uncommon in the industry at the moment."

Emergency help-line

0203 887 7000

Chaplains' prayer & info



John Roe

Southwest England

I am writing this having just attended a 'Brew Monday' event at a large

Network Rail Installation (a response to so-called 'Blue Monday'). It was a positive time of sharing tea, cake, stories and experiences. Sadly, this time of year does see a spike in incidents involving greater numbers of members of the public presenting on the railways, some with fatal consequences. Please pray for the chaplains as we seek to support railway staff, not only at this busy time of the year, but indeed a consistent '365' service in a way that encourages and offers hope.



Michele Ashton

Anglia

How challenging Anglia found the end of the year. A member of staff lost his life whilst working on the platform at Ilford. A fatality at Romford was very confronting for managers and station staff. A physical attack in a station left a member of staff with life changing injuries. Please pray for protection and safety for all railway staff and chaplains as the

railway industry faces trauma and attacks from the public.

Train operating companies c2c and Greater Anglia face renationalisation in 2025 and are looking forward to working with the Department of Transport. I'm excited for the year ahead to support staff in the transition.



Dylis George

Southeast England

"All's well that Ends well." (Wm Shakespeare). 2024

ended well as the expected increased fatalities on my patch did not happen. It was still busy as I supported a number of staff with personal issues.

March marks a decade of my work with Railway Mission. The opportunities I have had to support staff and their families have been God-given. I thank Him for the continued wisdom, direction and strength to 'just be there.'

Therefore, as I give thanks and praise to Almighty God, I must register my thanks and appreciation to all our prayer supporters for continually standing in the gap for us.

[More on our website](#)

www.railwaymission.org

Chaplains' prayer & info



Colin Fraser

East Midlands

A sermon that I heard at the beginning of the year focused on Moses praying on a hilltop while the Israelites battled the Amalekites (Exodus 17: 8-16). The preacher stressed the importance of the support Moses received from Aaron and Hur in holding his arms up.

For me, the beginning of 2025 started with providing some very intense support to members of the railway community. I am very grateful for the support around me and it reminded me that the work of chaplains is a team effort.

Please pray for all RM chaplains that we will lean into the support around us as we continue in our work.



Tony Miller

Southern

I received a call from a manager regarding one of his staff passing away suddenly due to a heart attack at his home.

He asked me to support his colleagues. Later, I discovered that the deceased was a person I had been supporting for the past few weeks by phone but had never met. I was taken

aback by his sudden death and felt I should have done more to help as he was going through a very tough time with family issues.

I am sharing this because I rang Andrew and Steve, and I felt much better after speaking to them about how I was feeling.

Remember it's important to talk and not to suffer in silence or hold our challenges or fears in.



Dereck Grant

Eastern Scotland

Graham and I attended a special day at Waverley for World Mental Health Day.

We had some great conversations with staff about mental health and wellbeing. The Remembrance Service at Waverley was appreciated by many. In December there was the launch of the Cross Country service from Edinburgh to Cardiff, and I was able to help their team out in a small way.

It has been extremely busy so far this month. It just reminds me of how important we are to the rail industry, and the people we support. Finally, I want to thank all those who support us in prayer because it is making a difference.

Chaplains' prayer&info



Christopher Henley

Wessex

I was delighted to be asked to attend the Driver and Depot Driver Manager's Conferences as a speaker. The topic was, 'How do you look after the wellbeing of Driver Managers'? It was noted that railway chaplaincy provides exceptional support for drivers, so I pointed out that the managers should receive the same support. Of course this happens anyway, but I was highlighting why that support was important. It was clear from many of the comments made that chaplains are an invaluable support to the driving community. It was wonderful to share time with the managers at two separate conferences and receive such amazing recognition of the service provided. May God bless you all and keep safe.



Andrew Hall

West Midlands

My year had an unfortunate start with three deaths in service.

One was someone I had got to know quite well over the last eight years. These are tragic events but they give the opportunity to interact with and support a large number of staff. It was good to see company notification

procedures at work – there is nothing worse than finding out about someone's passing weeks after the event.

This year promises to bring much change. For us, one change is losing Helen Bartlett as she retires. Thanks to her for all she has done, she will be missed. We pray for a long and happy retirement.



Steve Rowe

Area Manager London & South

A glorious time with visiting family from

Australia set me up for a great start to the year. Workwise, looking after a great team of chaplains is made all the better as they have a high degree of experience, a wonderfully professional outlook, caring hearts, and a great handle on the job. As a team, we still deal with some familiar challenging situations in the railways, much of it around support for staff who are faced with railway incidents or tragic circumstances, so we include a strong emphasis on the wellbeing of our own staff members as we in turn put our arms around those who cope with difficult tasks. Many thanks for praying and supporting us last year and for continuing this year.



Trustee Q&A

What inspired you to become a Trustee for the Railway Mission, and what personal or professional experiences connect you to the railway community?

There were two things that inspired me to become a Trustee with Railway Mission in 2024.

Firstly, as a volunteer on the heritage Epping-Ongar Railway I thought carefully about how I could best serve our Lord and make a difference to the railway sector.

I have witnessed up close how important the human element is in times of crisis which our dedicated chaplains manage on a regular basis. Secondly, last year I became fully dedicated to exploring my Christian faith.

I find serving as a trustee an excellent way to support a cause that I am passionate about combining my belief in our Lord Jesus and my ability to lead on important HR outputs covering a variety of people management support.

What do you hope to bring to the Railway Mission through your skills, experience, or vision?

I wish to bring forward my extensive experience and knowledge working within Human Resources to support our Leadership team.

As a dedicated Recruitment Professional working for the Bank of England I can engage best practice and ensure Railway Mission adopts favourable practices to support the running of the organisation.

Furthermore, I am dedicated to finding new and better ways that our processes can be improved to ensure our hard-working chaplains have the right support behind them.

Can you share a little about your background and how it aligns with the values and goals of the Railway Mission?

I am a passionate Yorkshireman, and usually somehow manage to

with Phil Smith

get 'Gods own County' into a sentence or two! I was raised in an inner-city council estate in Leeds where we faced anti-social behaviour threats and financial hardship. This experience shaped the person I am today having had firsthand experience of living day to day with verbal threats.

What got me through this difficult period was my faith in our Lord Jesus Christ answering my prayers delivering safety and security. I now reside in Greater London and attend church regularly in the City.

I volunteer at a variety of events and at weekends I can be found working in a central London Library supporting many individuals often including the homeless and rough sleeper maintaining an inviting warm space to seek refuge in the winter months. My values are transport orientated which links directly to my new trustee role with the Mission.

What excites you most about joining the Railway Mission, and what do you hope to achieve during your time as a Trustee?

What excited me the most about joining the Railway Mission is the opportunity to make a difference to the overall direction of this unique charity working on behalf of Gods mission. I hope to achieve new ways of working that will streamline our Trustee decision making outputs.

Furthermore, I would like to see a cultural shift towards new HR processes and procedures that are far more people led and not just an empty policy email which may not get read. I will rate my own success on the personal and support offering I can make across the Mission.

I now pray regularly for the success of the organisation and the welfare for all staff, volunteers and trustees that make up our wider family.



Will Porter

Railway Missioner
(1897-1974)

Ray Porter reminisces on the conversion and mission work of his father

Aged twenty, Will Porter lay in a hospital bed in Gaza. For three years, during WW1, this working-class lad had been in the British Army.

He had joined up under-age as war was declared and with the Essex Regiment, he had seen service in Gallipoli and Egypt. He had survived thus far, but shrapnel from a Turkish bullet had now landed him in hospital with a leg that would forever be shorter. Aside from this, Will had built up gambling debts and the future did not look bright.

An Army scripture reader visited his ward and began to explain the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ to him. The Spirit of God worked within him, and he seized this new life. He prayed that

he might win enough to clear his debts and then gave up gambling for life.

Will returned to the UK invalided out of the services and was introduced to a Brethren Assembly near to his home in Ilford. There he began to grow as a Christian. His disability did not stop him resuming work at Bishopsgate Goods Yard driving a horse-drawn delivery van across London. But he was a changed man with an eagerness to tell others about Christ. He began to preach in the Mess Room to his fellow workers. It was there that a member of the Railway Mission noticed him and in 1922 invited him to join the mission as a full-time worker.

With his wife he was assigned as pastor at the Railway Mission Hall situated in Lillie Road Fulham. There he led a Bible Class for young men. Amongst them was Earnie Jealous, who would later lead the Open-Air Mission, and others who would become missionaries.

In 1936 Will's wife sadly died of cancer. It was during his disorientation after that, that he was given the responsibility to be the Missioner (as



chaplains were then called) responsible for Bishopsgate Goods Yard and the lines running out of Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street, where he ministered to the material and spiritual needs of railwaymen.

He developed a strong relationship with Mildmay Mission Hospital where he preached to the Matheson Men's Ward every Wednesday morning. More importantly he was able to obtain treatment for sick railway personnel which was especially important in the years before the National Health service. The sick were able to recuperate in the Mildmay Mission Convalescent home in Worthing.

Will married my mother in 1940 and continued his evangelistic and preaching ministry into his 70s. He was able to begin a friendly conversation about Jesus Christ with anyone he met and there would have been many to greet him in heaven when he died in 1974.

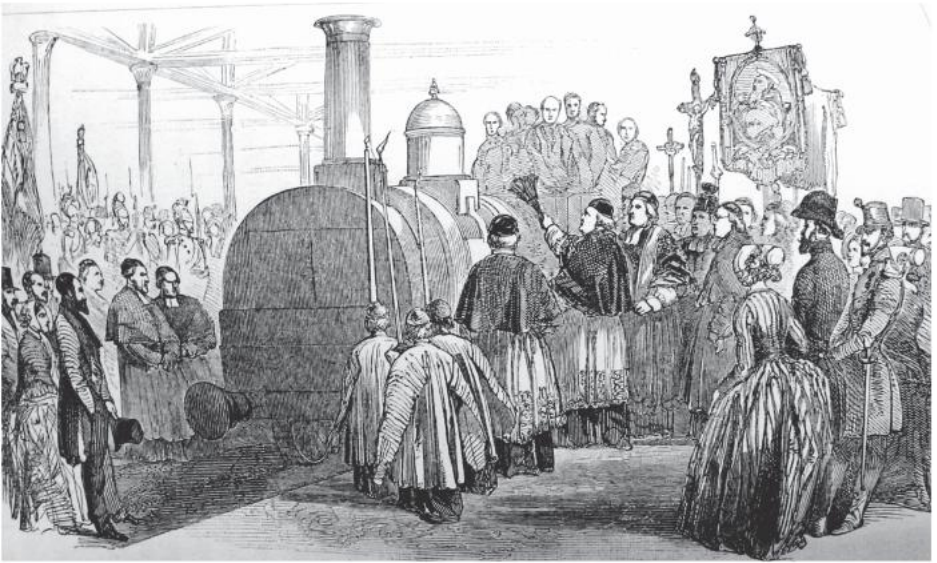
Ray Porter is a former Railway Mission Trustee and remains a pastor to chaplains.

Grief & Trauma Publications



For when we face challenging situations and need a directing hand and comforting words





Opening of the Havre and Rouen Railway in 1847 - constructed by British contractors using mainly British labour

200 years of railways and religion

by Dudley Clark

As we celebrate the birth of the modern railway this article sets the Railway Mission in context.

Were it not for the restriction placed on religious dissenters in public life railways might well have not developed so rapidly, with Quakers, excluded from much of public life, able to focus their intellectual and financial skills on railway investment and development. This is the background to the Stockton and Darlington railway.

One Victorian view of railways was affirmed at the opening of the

Llanidloes and Newtown Railway. As the ceremonial train arrived at Newtown a leading shareholder was loudly applauded when she declared that “the iron road is destined to act beneficently in the humanising of nations, next only to Christianity itself.”

The arrival of large numbers of railway navvies was often feared and they acquired a bad name. Their condition came to the attention of devout Christians, and one wrote to the London City Mission (LCM) in 1837 recounting his discoveries on the Grand

Junction Railway. He described the 'immoral and depraved condition of these men' as he sought to awaken attention to 'the eternal welfare of some hundreds of our fellowmen.'

The ever-generous LNWR paid the LCM £80 per year 'for its efforts among its servants' in the Camden area. The missionary described how visits included theological debates with members of the Locomotive Department.

Christian railwaymen met in the workplace at Derby from 1857; where 'a few men used to meet in a workshop or running shed to eat their breakfasts'. Services were arranged specifically for railwaymen and while many were in public halls or station waiting rooms some happened in unusual places such as under a railway bridge on Seven Sisters Road.

Railway Mission was founded on Monday 14 November 1881, 'when it was resolved to recommend to the Committee of the Railway Boys Mission to merge their work in that of a larger society to be called 'The Railway Mission' (now simply 'Railway Mission'), which should have for its object the moral and spiritual advancement of railway employees of all ages.'

It reached a peak at the turn of the 20th Century with claims of 400 branches; membership varied from an individual to over 100. These met in a variety of buildings

from 'tin tabernacles' (prefabricated iron churches) to brick-built halls. They were not intended to become independent churches but as bases for outreach.

At the end of WW2, the number of branches had fallen to 83 with sustained losses in the 1930s; partly reflecting the national decline in church attendance. Other reasons given in 1945 were that branches had become small churches that did not attract outsiders and had lost touch with the workplace. The Railway Mission sought to define a future policy, and negotiations were begun with Welfare departments for access to staff in the workplace, and 1976 marks the foundation of today's chaplaincy.

In the 21st Century stronger links were established with British Transport Police and LCM's railway work has been merged with that of Railway Mission. Today it has no buildings, but chaplains cover England, Scotland and Wales offering care and support across the rail industry. They meet with tragedy and celebration sharing their faith as appropriate.





A trip through the Baltic with RailHope International

In this 200th year of the modern railway, you could join RailHope International on a railway journey through the Baltic. This is a marvellous opportunity to travel by train from Warsaw in

Poland to Tampere in Finland with RailHope International stopping off at various centres in different nations along the way.

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