



## TRUCKERS' TOILETS UK

Campaign to improve the health & wellbeing of lorry drivers

February 2014  
**NEWSLETTER 8**

**The Floods:** It's been a dreadful month for weather and for many of us it has been a time of misery and uncertainty. Not surprisingly the flood waters have been found to contain high levels of bacteria which could cause serious health problems. Warnings to avoid contamination and to wash hands and food preparation surfaces have been gradually increasing in the media. Reports of being unable to flush toilets and of waste being found in the flood waters add to health concerns. The advice given about health and hygiene in these circumstances emphasises the importance of the need to keep clean. Many drivers are doing their bit to help in flooded areas and their need to keep clean should be considered.



**Toilets in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:** This month, one of a series of programmes on Radio 4 called 'Costing the Earth' discussed the importance of toilets and sanitation. Whilst the focus was on ways of dealing with human waste in developing countries, the plastic bags known as 'flying toilets' used for the disposal of human waste which litter poor areas in Kenya are similar to the 'bucket and chuck it' approach of drivers in the UK who also have no acceptable means of disposing of their waste whilst out on the road. As in Kenya, these bags pollute the environment, attract flies and vermin and could spread disease. The programme emphasised the importance of hand washing and keeping clean but without access to clean water this is not easy to achieve for anyone!



In the meantime public toilets in the UK continue to close and the basic needs of drivers – and other mobile workers - are ignored!

**Community Toilet Schemes:** It would appear, from the increase in information received by *TTUK*, that a CTS is seen by a number of councils as *the* solution to closing public toilet facilities. Although in fairness, there are some council representatives and members of the public who understand that there could be problems of having a CTS as the only available toilet facilities in their area. For mobile workers and certainly for lorry drivers, the businesses who offer their facilities are often not suitable; parking being one of the major problems. But again their needs do not appear to be raised when discussions on such schemes take place! Yet should a lorry driver or taxi driver use an unpalatable alternative there is plenty of huffing and puffing about how disgraceful it is. Yes it is disgraceful; it is disgraceful that there is little toilet and hand-washing provision for those workers on whom we depend. It should therefore come as no surprise to councils when they find themselves with an 'environmental problem'!



**Tommy the Trucker:** Has anyone heard of *Tommy the Trucker*? In 2005 there was a campaign at Liverpool docks to encourage lorry drivers to eat more fruit and veg. Does anyone know if the project is still active and who runs it now? – Jo McCullough who launched the scheme which was established through Sefton Health Improvement Support Service is understood to have moved elsewhere.



**Mega Trucks:** There was an article in the media this month about the possibility of Megatrucks being used on our roads. This idea fortunately appears to have been shelved. How our roads and drivers' poor facilities would have coped with these huge vehicles is anyone's guess!



**Cab Drivers:** *TTUK* has been informed that a cab driver has been refused for the second time access to toilet facilities in a hotel! Parking near a toilet for cab drivers in London can be very difficult – traffic wardens and CCTV are there to record if drivers overrun their allotted free time of 2 minutes [can you use a loo in that



time?] and drivers are not allowed to leave taxis unattended at the rank. If they decide to pay to park in order to find and use a toilet it is around £3! In addition of course public toilets in London are few and far between and not always open at the times needed. There are a few urinals around – but this does not help women drivers! To add to the problems, TTUK understands that toilets in garages are frequently designated 'out of order'!

**The Good & The Bad:** There is a new truckers forum on Facebook called '*Name and Shame*



*Truckers Loos*'. The page displays the good loos and showers as well as the bad ones and many drivers give marks out of ten – a great idea. The good ones provide an excellent indication of what can be achieved and beg the question why can't ALL



facilities for drivers be similarly well kept? Some of the conditions are due to the drivers themselves but not all. There are well maintained toilets and showers out there and this is a good way of finding out where there are. *Truckers' Toilets UK* will be discussing with drivers ways of encouraging more good facilities. Look out for future news

**Campaign update:** Persistence is the current TTUK buzz word! Education is another!



Getting the message out there is vital. *Truckers' Toilets UK* is concentrating on welfare facilities but there are other driver groups who are focusing on improving working conditions generally. We are encouraging each other and are determined to make a difference. It's very difficult to change a mindset and as far as toilets and hygiene generally are concerned they are not 'sexy' topics. The media and politicians need to be encouraged to focus on sanitary issues in the UK because there is a potentially serious problem here. The dangers lurking within the flood waters should be a wake up call!

**Action Stations:** *Truckers' Toilets UK* has been informed that lorry drivers will be taking



action on the roads to protest against their working conditions from *Monday 14 April to Thursday 17 April. Between 0630 to 0930 and 1530 to 1730* lorry drivers will be reducing their speed to 35mph on single and dual carriageways and to 40mph on motorways. There will be a reminder of this action in the March

newsletter

**What can YOU do now?** *Truckers' Toilets UK* is very pleased with the support it is receiving from various groups. Invitations to speak or write an article are always welcome.



Your help in contributing to the campaign is much needed. Have YOU written to your local MP as was suggested in January's newsletter? Have YOU responded to questions raised on TTUK's facebook page? If you leave it to someone else little will change. We all have opinions on the subject – why don't YOU voice yours? *Truckers' Toilets UK* would love to hear from YOU either via Facebook or directly by email!

**Some light relief!** TTUK discovered there is a musical show in the Philippines called 'Toilet'!



But that's not all! Closer to home is the musical 'Urinetown', described as a '*hilarious satirical comedy finally hits London after its Tony Award-winning Broadway success*'. It will be performed at the St James Theatre, Palace Street, London from 22 February to 3 May. Check it out [www.urinetown.co.uk](http://www.urinetown.co.uk)

Don't forget to visit our Truckers Toilets UK Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Truckers-Toilets-UK/520313554691335>



Next issue of **Truckers' Toilets UK** newsletter will be March

*Gillian Kemp*

The British Toilet Association <[www.britloos.co.uk](http://www.britloos.co.uk)>