



## TRUCKERS' TOILETS UK

Campaign to improve the health & wellbeing of lorry drivers

AUGUST 2015  
NEWSLETTER 3-2



**Fit for a Prince!** Gloucestershire services on the M5 were officially opened at the end of July by Prince Charles [Forecourt Trader article 31 July]. He met several suppliers of the locally sourced food but there is no mention of what he thought of the toilet and shower facilities! Comments have been left to our lorry drivers who to date are very pleased with what they've found at these services. The family firm who runs these services also own Tebay Services on the M6. Are these as good?



**And for the rest of us?** "When it comes to public restrooms, cleaners have two important jobs: cleaning for appearance and cleaning for health" [The Cleanzine 6 August]. It's the health bit that *TTUK* is interested in exploring further - particularly in view of some of the photos we have seen on our facebook page!



**The Road Haulage Association:** Both Richard Burnett and Jack Semple have been on television talking about the issues surrounding Operation Stack on the roads around Dover where lorry drivers are still held up. The RHA continues to be in touch with *TTUK*.



**Is Kent still the Garden of England?** A member of The Alliance of British Drivers has been in touch. It would appear that the situation in Kent, even without the current problems of Operation Stack, is pretty dire. It seems that some on-going parking problems have been getting worse for some time and have nothing to do with Operation Stack. *TTUK* is informed that only recently Highways England has closed many of the laybys on the A2 approach to Dover. It comes as no surprise therefore that lorries are forced to park in unsuitable areas and roadsides become used as toilets. This inevitably leads to drivers being castigated in the local press. It is even worse in the Ashford area because of its proximity to the ports with lorries parked overnight on surrounding roads and industrial estates. Why has this been allowed to happen? [Thanks to Terry Hudson of the ABD for this information]



**Laybys:** As we know lorry drivers use laybys to take their legally required break. However it is very frustrating to learn of toilet closures in the very areas where they are needed and even more frustrating to read that local communities are horrified that laybys are used as toilets. Whilst 'misuse' cannot be condoned what else are drivers expected to do when councils such as Devon County Council for example close facilities along the A361/A39 as 'part of a cost saving move' [North Devon Journal 26 July]? Having driven past many laybys and pull ins recently seeking relief, our Ed finds the lack of toilet facilities and thought for drivers' health and safety appalling.



**Driver safety:** As has been mentioned in previous newsletters, research shows that 'urgency' and 'holding on' affect health and concentration – both of which are costly in terms of medical care and road accidents. And then there are the clear up operations which have to be carried out bringing with them the serious health hazards to those who carry out the task – and the distress. Is



this really cost saving?

**All is not lost!**: There were 2 responses to the issues mentioned in the paragraph above on Laybys [North Devon Journal 26 July]. One was (a) to suggest use of 'facilities in local towns adjacent to main routes' [unlikely to be suitable for HGVs in *TTUK's* view] (b) to dispose of the picnic sites and (c) possibly prevent access and secure the sites ie stop people's enjoyment all because of the lack of toilets! The second response was far more positive. Bideford UKIP County Councillor Robin Julian took action! He passed the comments he'd received on to the Highways Department and also included *TTUK's* response to the situation as our Ed just had to comment! As a result the Highways Department has agreed to reconsider and open up the toilet facilities in some areas and are now looking for outside bodies to maintain the lay-by!! This is a very encouraging result and *TTUK* applauds Councillor Julian for being so proactive.



**Commercial Motor**: Thanks to Chris Tindall for mentioning *TTUK* [3 August] in his article '*Drivers need to spend a penny, says freight minister*'. Andrew Jones MP had responded to the letter from Grant Shapps MP who had outlined the fact that Gill had been passed from Department for Transport to the Department of Health and back again. Mr Jones has said all the right things – let's hope he will act on them quickly! *TTUK* will be following up the issues in due course.



**And the Prime Minister?** 'David Cameron has pledged to do more to save Britain's dwindling number of public lavatories' [Christopher Hope, Daily Telegraph 24 July]. Part of the problem to date has been the taxes levied on toilets. Mr Cameron is reported as saying that there is more that can be done and 'we will be looking at all these things'. He must be encouraged to do so! This could help with the layby situation for starters.



**Driver Shortage**: A press release [20 July 2015] by Comensura on the Driver Shortage mentions that '*.....Over half of recruiters also say that it is a challenge finding drivers able to do manual work: another factor that dissuades young people to enter the profession, in addition to uncomfortable working conditions, such as lack of lavatory facilities, and the lifestyle impacts of long and difficult shifts.*' As one of our supporters, Sam says: '*it is not just a job, but a way of life. In order to make it attractive to younger people there needs to be a vast improvement in the working environment.*' Surely we can start by ensuring access to decent toilets?



**New Statesman**: An article by Beatrix Campbell published on 28 July headed '*The politics of sanitation: why we urgently need more public toilets*' included a mention of our *TTUK* campaign. Beatrix noted that '*Sanitation – and the lack of it – is an occupational hazard for cabbies, street vendors, truckers, couriers and homeless who, like everyone else, average at least eight visits per day, or about 2,500 per year.*' She mentions how Gill Kemp overheard two women drivers discussing the difficulties of finding toilets while on the road and how some lorry drivers are refused toilet access by clients and resort to a "bucket and chuck it" approach with women drivers having to cope with periods, too. She includes the following quote "*Lorry drivers are not treated with respect,*" says Kemp. "*We expect 24-hour deliveries, but we don't think about the needs of the person delivering.*" Beatrix adds that '*Like most of the "toileteers", she [Gill] advocates a statutory obligation.*' Gill certainly does and she's not alone!



**Hand Hygiene:** *The Cleanzine* [6/8] has an article from ContractCleaning.co.uk which reminds us that gel dispensers are not as good as soap and water – and of course they're more expensive. This is why TTUK is trying to get access to proper hand washing facilities as well as toilets. With goods being passed from hand to hand and shelves to truck it is important that drivers have the opportunity to maintain a decent level of hygiene. The US Government's *Center for Disease Control* [CDC] is reported in the article as saying that most gel sanitisers do not kill some types of germs, and some bacteria are showing signs of becoming resistant to alcohol-based gels. They may not even work at all when hands are visibly dirty or greasy. The best way to thoroughly clean hands is to use soap and hot water. [This information, provided by Mark Hall of ContractCleaning.co.uk comes from 'peer reviewed research over several years from scientists around the world.']



**Accessible toilets:** Thanks to *Tewkesbury Toilets* on Facebook, our Ed came across *Accessible Toilets* a very informative facebook page containing all sorts of information and discussions on disabled people's experiences. What caught our Ed's eye was the launch of the first of 3 new publications - *Guide to Accessible Toilet Standards and Equality Act Requirements* - that can be downloaded from their links/resources page. There is mention of 'hidden' disabilities' and the importance of dignity which is particularly relevant to some of our drivers. It certainly provides food for thought and further ideas to investigate re: getting decent facilities for lorry drivers. It's a very clear and easy to read booklet so do take a look and spread the word: Download the pdf version [Guide to Accessible Toilet Standards and Equality Act requirements](#)



**Anxiety UK** If you or someone close to you suffers from any kind of anxiety condition, there is help available! Do get in touch with *Anxiety UK* on 08444 775 774, email the support service: [support@anxietyuk.org.uk](mailto:support@anxietyuk.org.uk) or visit [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

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*Gill Kemp*