



TRUCKERS' TOILETS UK

Campaign to improve the health & wellbeing of lorry drivers

JUNE 2015
NEWSLETTER 2-12

Dehydration! A fantastic meeting on the subject of hydration and dehydration this month organised by the European Hydration Institute and held at the Royal Society of Medicine. The talk that resonated most with *TTUK* was the research carried out on the effects of dehydration on drivers. The effects on health of dehydration are horrendous and one of our own *TTUK* supporters has described her own experience of landing up in hospital because of dehydration. Dehydration causes lapses in concentration so the consequences can be dire not only for lorry drivers but for other road users. Needless to say there were discussions about the lack of toilets for lorry drivers which encourage drivers to reduce their fluid intake so they don't have to pee. This is a highly dangerous situation which Government is failing to recognise. Do our drivers have to wait for even more research to be carried out before action is taken?



Department of Health: Well, in answer to the question above it seems they do. A letter was sent to Jeremy Hunt, our Secretary of State for Health about the importance of hand hygiene and the need for facilities for lorry drivers. Mr Hunt had visited the company of one of our supporters and apparently recognised the importance of hand hygiene in hospitals. However, he didn't think it that important when it came to improving facilities for lorry drivers. His response was to suggest it would be better to contact the Department for Transport! Do you remember the DfT's response dated 19 December last year? Let *TTUK* remind you 'the Government has no powers to intervene....'



Hand hygiene: If you're lucky enough to have access to a washroom with both paper towels and hand driers which should you choose? According to the latest research by the University of Westminster [commissioned by the European Tissue Symposium and based on previous work by University of Leeds] paper towels are best [The Cleanzine 30 April]. However what isn't stated is whether there are any problems apart from unpleasant messiness if the user misses the bins.



Commercial Motor: Taking up the cudgel on our behalf once again, Chris Tindall wrote an excellent article dated 4 June headed '*Truckers' Toilets founder says government doesn't give "two hoots" about drivers' health*'. He asked Gill for quotes and got them! The article also mentioned how *TTUK* and Blue Arrow are working to get Government to agree minimum standards for HGV toilet facilities.



Blue Arrow A lively meeting with the Drive with Pride team was held this month. As awareness of the driver shortage increases - partly due to the lack of toilet and washing facilities - we brainstormed some solutions and ways they could be progressed. Watch this space for updates.



Drive with Pride Petition: The petition is gaining momentum. Forecourt Trader [15 May] included a piece on it and mentioned *TTUK*'s partnership with Blue Arrow. The lack of toilet facilities for drivers was suggested as a contributing factor to the driver shortage. Have YOU signed it yet?



www.tinyurl.com/drivewithpride

New Services: Gloucester Services have been given a big thumbs up from Marcus Green [StroudLife 28 May] and many of the lorry drivers who've already visited have reported on the 'fab' toilets. Long may this continue! And more similar facilities please!!!! [Ed: especially on the M25!]



Just keep on trucking! *TTUK* was in the minds of one of our truck driver supporters in Australia who says she thought about us as she 'wandered into the darkness at night with a torch and a toilet roll'. She reckons – and our Ed is sure you will agree – that if you were offered a job with fab pay but had to bring your own toilet roll and dash off into the bush for a pee, it would be broadcast on every television and radio station; but the 'humble old truckie gets told to just keep on trucking'.



What's in a name? Thank you to one of our *TTUK* active supporters, Michelle, who recently pointed our Ed in the direction of a DfT document '*The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development*' dated September 2013. Apparently this replaces a document of 2008 '*Policy for Service Areas and other Roadside Facilities on Motorway and All-purpose Trunk Road in England*'. The new document includes requirements for service areas and truck stops at regular intervals and states the facilities to be provided – including toilets and showers – and the length of time they are to be open although there is nothing about cleaning!!! So it seems that the DfT *does* have input into facilities! [Our Ed finds this all rather confusing and as our supporter points out, the title of the document itself is not particularly enlightening as to the content.]



Wrong tree? The first paragraph of the document mentioned above states: *The Highways Agency is an executive agency of the Department for Transport and is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport, guided by its core principles of 'safe roads, reliable journeys, informed travellers'*. So perhaps *TTUK* has been barking up the proverbial wrong tree? We shall see.



Unite the Union: Adrian Jones, National Road Transport Officer and one of the supporters we have at Unite gave a presentation under their campaign heading *Better Loos 4 U* to the Freight Transport Association's Health and Safety conference recently. All the major issues related to toilets and hand washing appear to have been covered. The presentation included employers' legal responsibilities but noone apparently cheered at the suggestion that employers should invest in facilities on sites for which they are responsible – but if only *one* person present took it on board, then it was worthwhile. Thanks to Adrian for sharing this with us.



Menstrual Hygiene Day: This is a global event held on 28 May and was the second occasion on which the subject of menstruation had its own day. The aim is to talk about periods and build awareness of the need for good menstrual hygiene. Again the words 'dignity' and 'safety' were used, the focus being, it seemed, on those countries where periods are a taboo subject and facilities to cope with them are virtually non-existent. Perhaps next year we should highlight the position of women lorry drivers in this country. They have to cope without proper access to hygienic facilities which lead to some of them taking drastic action to avoid what is after all a natural part of being a woman. This is



another topic which is ignored when it comes to providing proper facilities for female drivers.

Anxiety UK You are not alone! If you or someone close to you suffers from Toilet Phobia or in fact any kind of anxiety condition, there is help available! Do get in touch with *Anxiety UK* on 08444 775 774 or email the support service: support@anxietyuk.org.uk There are also many resources available on the Anxiety UK website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

HOT OFF THE PRESS! Another active *TTUK* supporter, Sam has passed on some VERY interesting, recently published information direct from HSE concerning lorry drivers which ends with the following statement

Health and safety should not be used as a reason for failing to provide him [sic] with safe and easy access to toilet facilities.

A very positive year! We end the second year of *TTUK* on a high note. We are getting known. People are beginning to take notice of YOUR concerns. We are learning a lot from trying different routes and exploring ways to make positive moves forward. There is still a long way to go but we are garnering in active support from a wide range of people and organisations. Thank you everyone. We really appreciate it.

In addition *TTUK* has 'palled' up with the director of a haulier company who is being very proactive in getting the issues out into the wider arena. This lady has a great deal of experience in the field which she is willing to share and is not afraid to dip her toe in the water – in fact the whole foot! - and it's just what we need. Thanks so much Sam for your help.

BUT we also need YOUR contributions. Your comments are vital to the campaign's success. Please continue to respond to any requests for help – however odd they might seem. There is method in our 'oddness'.

So stick with us. Pass the word around. Year 3 is going to be a very busy year.

TRUCKERS' TOILETS UK
www.facebook.com/TTUKcampaign



Next issue of the **Truckers' Toilets UK** newsletter will be July 2015

Gillian Kemp

The British Toilet Association < www.britloos.co.uk >