

# Merseylearn Case Studies 2013



Merseytravel



## Supporting Transport Sector Skills

## Merseylearn case studies 2013 – supporting transport sector skills

Merseylearn is part of Merseytravel, the Integrated Passenger Transport Authority (ITA) on Merseyside, and in our role as the Executive, we oversee the public transport network and are responsible for coordinating bus and rail services, maintaining transport infrastructure, providing public transport information and operating the Mersey Tunnels, the Mersey Ferries and their associated visitor attractions.

This is a big responsibility, and one which we take seriously, to support the economy of Merseyside and help people to travel for work, leisure or pleasure. The transport sector is vital to tourism, business and essential services and makes a major contribution to the regeneration of Merseyside and the Liverpool City Region agenda.

Our core values are:

- Put our customers first
- Act with integrity and respect
- Champion the development of our communities
- Be progressive

But Merseytravel is only a part of the public transport services, the bus, rail and taxi services are largely independent and beyond our direct control, so we strive to support these other partners to help their workers gain the skills to deliver a service which reflects our values and will make public transport services on Merseyside truly world class.

To enable this, we have set up a dynamic partnership with Unionlearn called Merseylearn, which engages with sector workers, employers, learning providers and People 1st, the Sector Skills Council, to help people in the sector do NVQs, professional qualifications and apprenticeships, and also build cornerstone skills in Maths, English and ICT.

Unions have a long and successful history of helping people gain skills, so by bringing together this partnership, Merseylearn helps sector employers and workers improve both the services provided to the public and the possibilities for sector staff to improve their chances of promotion or advancement.

We also work with employers, to identify people who would be an asset to them as employees, and with people who would like to work in public transport but may not have the skills, experience or understanding needed to effectively compete for jobs. We have an employability team, who can help with careers advice and work with colleges and learning providers to help people gain the skills and qualifications they need to succeed.

We work closely with unions, supporting Union Learner Reps within organisations to engage with learners and learning providers and offer information, advice and guidance through contact with the project workers and on our websites.

Because passenger transport is a specialist area, many people don't know all of the qualifications or funding streams, so Merseylearn also works with employers, Union Learner Reps, unions and other agencies such as taxi licensing authorities to help everyone get the best from the opportunities available.

Merseylearn supports the visions of Merseytravel and Unionlearn by effectively bringing together the resources and passions of our innovative partnership, providing transport sector workers with the skills they need to deliver the best possible service to the travelling public and support the regeneration of Merseyside.

Here are some case studies of people we've met on our journey so far...



## **Bernie Hughes** **Bus Gateway Officer**

*"I've got 11 years' experience with Merseytravel, working directly with the customers. I love the challenge of never quite knowing what people will ask you and finding ways to help wherever we can – I'm not even sure I'd fancy a desk job now, because I really get a buzz out of the job I do. Working directly with the customers means you can*

*help people in very direct and meaningful ways – they have all kinds of needs and I like being able to add something positive to their travelling experience.*

*I think Merseytravel will be a very different organisation in the future to what we've been in the past, because everything around is changing, so people have got to change too. But people won't feel comfortable and confident about it unless they have the skills in place to do new things or get to grips with different ways of working, and learning can really help by giving people new skills and new confidence.*

*Believing in yourself is really important and one of the main reasons I became a ULR through Unison was because I've seen many people – including myself – become more confident through learning. People are often frightened of new things and learning is a good way of finding out about new ideas or ways of working in a really supportive way, so that when change comes it's much less scary.*

*Sometimes just having the piece of paper that says you've got a qualification can make a huge difference – you feel different about yourself, it makes you proud. It's like opening up a doorway, and people change when they go through it – they get more confident, they believe in themselves more.*

*I know from my own experience, because I've done a lot of different learning, including ICT, a level 3 NVQ, health and safety courses and a qualification in leadership and management. At the moment I'm developing my maths with Julie Mooney and finding things I never thought I could do. I really think every course I've done has helped me feel ready to take on new things.*

*That's why I'm pleased to be a Union Learner Rep. They will be really important as we move forward – we can signpost our colleagues to Merseylearn or other organisations and help them cope with new things they need to do or to understand. Also, because we're with them in the workforce, we understand the difficulties they might face and we can help them overcome them, sometimes by giving them confidence from our own experiences, or linking with the learning team to discuss options to make life easier.*

*The ULRs are also important because there's lots of changes happening outside the organisation too, such as the introduction of Functional Skills and the new apprenticeships, and the ULRs will be really important in helping everyone understand how they work and how the new qualifications will benefit them.*

*Overall, I think this is going to be a difficult time for Merseytravel staff, but the more skills and qualifications people can gain the easier it is to adapt to new ways of working, so I'm sure the ULRs will have an important role to play. Everyone needs to pull together to make sure Merseytravel has the skills we need for the future, and that means we're all more secure as individuals and an organisation."*

Bernie recently passed his maths and is working with Julie on the new Functional Skills qualification.



## Hattons Bus Operator

As well as supporting individuals to access training, Merseylearn also has a key role in working with organisations such as bus, taxi and rail companies to help their management access the training for their staff. Because of the specialist nature of the sector, the Merseylearn team can offer guidance on the type of

qualifications needed and link operators with the providers who can deliver it.

As part of European legislation all bus and coach drivers must gain a Certificate of Professional Competency (CPC) by September 2013. This qualification has been designed to improve the knowledge and skills of professional drivers, including health and safety and customer service, and which will help improve the professionalism and reputation of passenger transport in line with Merseytravel's core values.

Hattons Transport Services is a bus and coach operator based in St Helens employing 29 drivers. They have been operating in the Merseyside region since 1987 and have a reputation for a quality service and great customer satisfaction with both bus and coach provision.

John Chesworth is Assistant Operations Manager at Hattons and is responsible for ensuring his drivers have completed the required 35 hours of training by this time.

*"We were aware of the legislation a number of years ago so we have set out a plan to have all of our drivers accredited well before the time, but it's not easy to identify the best providers and know about the different options available.*

*We worked with Merseylearn and discussed the training and development of our drivers and they recommended we use a recognised training provider. We teamed up with Warrington Business School to provide all the training, as we identified that they have a solid reputation and could deliver what we needed for our staff."*

Warrington also offers bus operators an opportunity to engage in further training with their Business School. Phil Kerr, Business Development manager explains: *"While we are working with bus operators we help them to further improve the skills of their drivers. In line with Merseytravel's guidance we also provide drivers with the NVQ in Passenger Carrying Vehicle (Bus and Coach). It's a Level 2 qualification and enhances areas such as customer service and learning to deal with passengers. This approach really works and provides the driver with all-round skills."*

John agrees: *"Our drivers are able to provide a quality service. They get up to date information and training, they are legally qualified and they have additional skills. This is a result for the driver, our organisation and of course for the customer."*

As Merseytravel evolves, Merseylearn will continue to support transport organisations to train and develop their staff to provide the travelling public on Merseyside with the best experience in terms of safety, quality and customer service, as well as supporting people into jobs and careers in the sector.



## John Webster

### Integrated Transport Information Officer

John started his Merseytravel career 17 years ago as a clerical apprentice and is currently employed as an Integrated Transport Information Officer. He appreciates the benefits of lifelong learning and has taken full advantage of Merseytravel's learning offer. John has

completed a range of qualifications including a Level 3 NVQ in Management, ILM at levels 1 and 2, ECDL and most recently Level 2 Certificates in Adult Literacy and Numeracy.

John said: *"I was pleased to achieve management qualifications but felt my CV was weakened by my GCSE D grades in maths and English. I felt I had developed these skills since leaving school but my existing qualifications didn't reflect my competence in these areas, so it was something I really wanted to catch up on and be able to demonstrate for any future jobs."*

Following completion of his ECDL qualification, ICT Tutor Norman Hunter suggested he explored the range of English and maths learning and qualifications available through Merseylearn. He undertook a quick skills check and an individual learning plan was drawn up with the tutor, Julie Mooney, which focussed on the areas that he needed to brush up and refresh.

With the support of his manager, John utilised the Merseylearn Learning Centre to access online learning activities and continued to work with Julie as needed. He soon passed his Level 2 Certificate in Adult Numeracy and followed this with his Level 2 Literacy five months later.

He was delighted to achieve the new qualifications in these subject areas which are acknowledged as similar in level to GCSE grades A\*- C, just what he needed to round off his CV effectively.

John said: *"I have really benefited from my learning experience, not only through developing a stronger CV but also through increased confidence in using these skills in everyday situations. I'm a lot less reliant on my calculator!"*

John admits that a big incentive to learn has been the availability of learning within the workplace and especially the flexibility of the ways of accessing it.

*"Having a learning centre and tutor support on hand has been invaluable. I have been able to learn at a time and pace that has suited me without impacting significantly on my work commitments."*

Through the IPP process, John is now hoping to fully utilise his skills by discussing with his manager any further development and progression opportunities that might be relevant and available to him.



## Shaun Carr Taxi Driver

Merseylearn has been very active in supporting taxi drivers to access the training which is now required by all of the local licensing committees. Initially this was delivered through colleges, but more recently taxi operators have been involved directly in training new and existing drivers. One of the new “academies” is run by Delta Taxis, where

one of their drivers, Shaun Carr, was keen to reflect on the effect the training has had on his career.

*“The first course I completed was a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving. This course was put in place by the partnership of Merseylearn, training providers, licensing authorities and the trade to help professionalise the taxi driver industry.*”

*Delta Taxis assisted me in gaining this NVQ, which was assessed by Knowsley Community College. I believe this course is an important part of professionalising the taxi industry, as it creates more knowledgeable taxi drivers and that gives the customers a better experience and opinion of the taxi trade. It’s important that drivers have the chance to gain the skills they need to effectively provide a quality customer experience to the public.*

*I found the NVQ Level 2 extremely helpful, as it answered a lot of questions I had regarding certain rules and regulations in the taxi industry, especially the Health and Safety unit. This helped when dealing with customers as I was confident that I was correct with my information and could handle difficult situations professionally.*

*I have been working for Delta Taxis for about four years, and since doing my first qualifications I’ve been offered a fantastic range of development courses through the Delta Taxis Training Academy.”*

Nicola Lee, from Delta Taxis, said:

*“Historically, taxi companies operated a one-size-fits-all approach to the drivers they dispatched. Applied correctly, modern technology allows data dispatch systems to select from a wide range of skill bases, reserving some work exclusively for drivers of a certain calibre, or at the very least prioritising bookings to those drivers with more qualifications. This gives drivers a financial incentive to commit to additional training, not just for the sake of the industry but for the sake of the individual within that industry.”*

Whilst Merseylearn is supporting the provision of entry level and professional learning and development within the transport sector, the Delta Academy has taken this approach even further by adding training options for drivers which will have a really positive impact on their service to the customers, which is helping to professionalise the trade.

Shaun said: *“I’m the type of person who is always willing and eager to learn in the hope of benefiting myself in both the short and long term, so when I heard that Delta Taxis had put a continuous professional development plan together for the drivers, based on their customers’ needs I got in touch straight away to explore the opportunities”.*

Delta has now developed a range of courses which are beneficial to the job, such as Transportation of Specimens, Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults, Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children and a Visual Impairment Awareness course, as well as First Aid and Apprenticeships in Customer Service.

Shaun says: *"The training initiatives that I have taken advantage of at Delta Taxis have been of a huge benefit to me and it gives me great pride to know I'm trained to a professional standard and able to cope with pretty much anything that comes my way – many drivers aren't that lucky.*

*Recently I have had jobs transporting VIPs, including Cherie Blair, around all afternoon whilst she was on business in the area and the additional training gave me great confidence in my skills.*

*I'm really looking forward to continuing my learning journey – a few years ago this type of training would have been unthinkable for taxi drivers, but now it's changing the trade for the better!"*

This case study demonstrates that although core skills are essential for staff in our sector, this is not enough by itself. There is a great deal of added value in supporting people to gain skills which not only allow them to function at their job, but to excel at it, making passenger transport in Merseyside something we can all be proud to be part of.



## David Walberg

### Merseyrail

David was working in the Queen Square Travel Centre, where he enjoyed the challenge of working in a very busy environment and meeting the different needs of the customers but wasn't sure that this was something he wanted to do long-term, so he came to see a Merseylearn adviser to discuss his career prospects.

David's previous role as a manager of a busy city centre pub certainly gave him skills and experience that would be of great benefit in any number of roles. He was used to making big decisions under pressure and was highly experienced in working with members of the public so he felt he had skills and abilities that would help gain a career in many different sectors.

Merseylearn has trained career advisers working in partnership with the National Career Service, who can offer ideas on ways people might be able to progress according to their individual skills, ambitions and circumstances. David sought the advice of Steve Woods, and in discussion, they identified that David was keen to gain a career in the rail industry, perhaps as a train driver.

*"I've always been interested in working as a train driver. I suppose it's a desire that's been with me for a number of years and it's a great career to have, but I didn't have any idea where to start or how to get a job like that."*

Steve and David got together and looked at the skills and qualifications required and the jobs available in the rail sector.

*"We discussed various job options in Merseyside and Steve was realistic but very positive about opportunities in the sector. He understood the local job market and together we looked at a wide variety of jobs that would suit my current skills or, with some development, I would be able to look at in the future."*

David was particularly interested in learning more about Merseyrail as he had recently looked at applying for a role with them. Because Merseylearn advisers have specialist knowledge of the taxi, rail and bus sector requirements, Steve was in a position to use his expertise and contacts to give David important information to help with his application.

*"Steve understood the company. He gave me ideas of the recruitment, the skills they would be looking for and how I should research the organisation before I applied for a role as part of the online ticket inspectors. Steve gave me details of what skills would be needed and how to "sell myself".*

*It all helped because I got the job, and am now part of Merseyrail's revenue protection team.*

*I'm now enjoying my new role and working on developing it into a career, and I'm building up my experience and gaining new skills every day.*

*If anyone's looking for advice on developing their career, particularly in the transport sector, I'd recommend speaking to one of the Merseylearn team, as I certainly gained a lot of useful advice and even a new career!"*



## Helen Kettle Health and Safety Rep

Changing attitudes towards health and safety in the workplace has earned UNISON rep, Helen Kettle, a major national award this year.

Helen is currently studying for the NEBOSH Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health at Wirral Metropolitan College and was named Achiever of the Year at the prestigious Safety and Health Practitioner/Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) awards held in London.

Helen was presented with the award for her work in helping to promote positive attitudes towards health, safety and wellbeing among our workforce, which has had a positive impact in helping Merseytravel to achieve the prestigious OHSAS 18001 standard.

While studying on her health and safety course, Helen was elected by Merseytravel unions to the post of lead safety representative on the Joint Health, Safety and Wellbeing Forum and since then she has worked hard with colleagues across the organisation to promote awareness of safety management.

*Helen said: "Working to change the safety culture and promote safety awareness within Merseytravel has not always been an easy process and, when I first adopted the role of lead safety rep, I felt quite daunted by the task ahead. I had completed all the trade union safety courses and then went on to do the NEBOSH General Certificate. It was on this course that I really started to gain a proper understanding of what health and safety means in the workplace.*

*I have now progressed on to the Diploma and again this has allowed me to promote health and safety positively. It has given me confidence to discuss safety-related issues with staff and managers and, although I have not yet completed the Diploma, I look forward to finishing all the exams and putting what I have learned into practice."*

Cllr Liam Robinson, said: *"Merseylearn is a key part of everything that we do at Merseytravel. We recognise the value in supporting people to realise their potential and in turn the benefits this brings to the organisation.*

*"For Helen to be recognised nationally is testament to her hard work and dedication to promoting health, safety and wellbeing within Merseytravel."*

Kevin McLoughlin, Wirral Met's course leader for the NEBOSH Diploma, added: *"I am delighted that Helen has been recognised for her valuable work in health and safety and congratulate her on this outstanding achievement."*



## George and Norma Dixon Sunflowers

Merseylearn has always worked in partnership with organisations and projects across Merseyside and the North West of England supporting digital inclusion. This is an integral part of our Union Learning Fund work and supports Merseytravel's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy. One such group we have been supporting this year is Sunflowers.

Based in South Liverpool, Sunflowers provides a unique support service to individuals and families affected by a cancer. Merseylearn was asked to provide a basic introduction to computers to a group of service users for a two hour session each Tuesday morning.

George and Norma Dixon are two of the many people to make use the informal learning on offer. Born and bred in Liverpool, 72 year old Norma worked as a cleaner and 76 year old George was a BT engineer before retiring in 1992. They have been married for 49 years, bringing up three children. Now living in Netherton, Norma was diagnosed with cancer in February 2011.

*"The Macmillan nurses recommended Sunflowers so we nervously came along and were welcomed by some wonderful people. Neither of us had ever used a computer before but we were encouraged to have a go, and Norman started by showing us how to use a mouse by playing a card game."*

Norma took her time, progressing slowly but steadily and gaining confidence with first the mouse then the keyboard. The GoOn online basics course was used to help build upon the first steps and show what the Internet can offer. George was bitten with the IT bug from day one, and quickly bought a laptop.

Often trying to run before he could walk, he rushed ahead jumping from one part of online basics to the other, full of enthusiasm for new things.

Merseylearn IT Tutor Norman Hunter commented:

*"A few times I had to say "slow down George - lets go back over that..."*

By week four, George had an email address and broadband at home and was emailing his mate Ken, helping to build confidence.

*"A month ago if you said I would be able to send a message on a computer I would have laughed at you. One of our sons has been trying to show us bits at home, but he does not really have the patience. Norman breaks everything down into small steps and will go over it again and again"*

The small amount of time Merseylearn spends helping Sunflowers is immensely satisfying for the people involved. It supports Merseytravel, for example showing people how to access transport information. It supports our partners such as GoOn It's Liverpool, and Unionlearn, helping getting people online and accessing digital services. But most of all it is helping people to make their lives just that little bit more inclusive.



## Karen Dowson Gateway Officer

Karen Dowson's been with Merseytravel for 11 years, initially working in the Travel Centres before becoming a member of the Bus Stations team. She now works the combined role as a member of the Hubs team where she really enjoys the variety of the role and working with the public.

Karen's been passionate about learning throughout her career, because it's something she really enjoys. Working in a busy operational environment, she recognised that there were challenges for her colleagues to access learning so when she learned that new Union Learner Reps were being recruited this seemed a natural way to help.

Karen said: *"When the opportunity came about, I thought I could try and make a difference."* Making a difference is really important in the bus stations, because it's an area which has evolved a lot under One Team One Family, and is a vital part of how customers interact with Merseytravel and build their understanding of our organisation. *"We're the public face of Merseytravel so it's important we make a good impression first time and are positive about things"* said Karen.

*"Whether we like it or not we are in the middle of very uncertain times and naturally some people don't like change, so I see my role as one of encouragement. I have tried to present change in a positive way. Sometimes if people can gain new skills it can really benefit them and the organisation, so I try to be on hand to advise or signpost staff as needed."*

For operational areas where staff are providing a service to the public, this support is particularly valuable, as not everyone knows about the flexible learning options which are available and the range of different ways to learn. These include time-back for some courses where people do the learning in their own time and claim time back afterwards and also the interest free loan available for learning activities.

Karen says: *"ULRs recognise that not everyone's comfortable with the idea of learning – and many people haven't really done any formal learning since they left school."*

*Also everyone has their own learning style, and their own ambitions, barriers, experiences, and hopes for the future, so it's really important to be able to understand all the issues and identify how learning can help individuals.*

*Then we work with the learning team to see what's the best way forward, helping people understand what's on offer and linking them into the opportunities available through Merseylearn and in the community."*

Karen's also firmly convinced that helping people gain new skills will help them meet new challenges as the organisation changes. *"Learning helps people gain confidence and new skills, which makes them more in control of their career and gives Merseytravel a stronger and more knowledgeable workforce"* she said.

But it's not just our workforce that has benefited from Karen's enthusiasm. She was also recently involved in a MerseyLearn event on the Mersey Ferries, encouraging members of the public to sign up as "digital champions" to help others get online, and linking in with the very successful Go On It's Liverpool campaign.

Karen's also passionate about families getting involved in learning, as she says: *"I've used my role as a ULR to help family also, by accessing various web sites, and I've re-done my partner's CV and even signed my parents up as digital champions!"*

Karen's energy levels have taken a recent boost, as she's really proud to have recently lost a stunning six and a half stone, and she says: *"Now I need all the extra energy to keep up with my five year old daughter, Brieanna!"*



## Dan Finnegan Taxi driver

Taxis are a very important but often forgotten part of passenger transport. The opinion visitors receive of our region is often determined by the experience they have in taxis and private hire vehicles, which also do a key role in transporting people for business, schools, hospitals and leisure.

Merseylearn have worked with People 1st, the Sector Skills Council and all five of the Merseyside licensing authorities to introduce a qualification for taxi drivers. In addition to driving the vehicle, drivers need to have an awareness of health and safety, equality, customer service and the legal side to the taxi trade.

Merseylearn works closely with drivers, learning providers, taxi companies and the licensing authorities to make sure drivers get the right information about the courses and can access any funding available.

When Dan Finnegan chose a career in taxi driving, he contacted Merseylearn and was guided through the training process at Seaforth Taxi's Training Academy.

Dan said: *"Before starting work as a taxi driver, I completed the qualification which was part of the licensing conditions at Sefton. This was delivered in the Seaforth Taxi's Academy in a classroom environment using question and answer sessions. This gave me a good grounding on which to start taxiing, including the important laws, legislation and rules which drivers need to know."*

Once Dan started work as a private hire driver, he was able to complete the training and achieved a nationally recognised vocational qualification designed specifically for taxi and private hire drivers known as the taxi NVQ.

Dan said: *"It was great that funding is available to enable taxi drivers like me to achieve this qualification and become more effective in the job we are doing. It is essential we have the skills to be able to give the customers the best service possible as we need to be able to cope with a diverse range of customers. I also gained specialised knowledge when dealing with customers who have disabilities. As a self-employed taxi driver it is essential I'm up to date with the legislation that affects my job."*

*At the end of the day all passenger transport employees need to have the skills and attitude to deliver a great service to the public, so I would not hesitate in completing further training if it's beneficial to my job."*

The work Merseylearn is doing in supporting skills in the sector is helping the people of Merseyside access a taxi service in which drivers are professional in their attitude and trained to a consistent standard. This provides a pathway for people to get new jobs, helps build new skills and careers and supports businesses, as well as driving forward Merseytravel's vision and values in a direct and positive way.



## Sarah Vickers

### Media and Communications Assistant

Sarah currently works as a Media and Communications Assistant with Merseytravel which involves managing Merseytravel's social media accounts including those for the attractions and monitoring any mentions of Merseytravel on social media. She also manages the new Merseytravel website, changing content, adding new

pages as well as integrating 3rd party plug-ins and sister websites.

*"I previously worked in the Corporate Partnerships team on a temporary contract as a Graduate European Officer.*

*As a member of Unison, I spoke to my Union Learner Representatives. They encouraged me to take up opportunities to develop my skills with Merseylearn. As my contract with Merseytravel was coming to an end and I was applying for jobs within Merseytravel and externally, I wanted to refresh my ICT skills and have an ICT qualification to demonstrate my competency. I set up a meeting with Norman Hunter, the Merseylearn ICT tutor, who helped me to identify areas where I could improve my skills.*

*Working with Norman we identified the ECDL Extra qualification as being the right level and suitable for my needs, and I could practice my existing skills on applications such as Word and PowerPoint and develop new skills using Excel.*

*I started working towards my ECDL at the beginning of March, and by July I took the Excel module test, which I passed. While doing my ECDL, I was successful in getting another job in Merseytravel, for which my new skills were certainly coming in handy, although as I settled in, my workload increased so it took longer to complete the other modules. However, by October I had taken all tests for the modules and passed my ECDL.*

*I found that the ECDL was an interesting course as I was able to refresh some of my existing skills while learning new ones. An added advantage within Merseytravel was that it was free and I was able to do the learning and testing within work time, in a really flexible way which reduced any impacts on doing my job.*

*I also attended a Springboard course, which was highly recommended by some of my colleagues, and after talking to them, I decided to start the course in September. I thoroughly enjoyed the Springboard course as I was able to meet people from across the organisation who I usually would not have had the opportunity to meet. Springboard increased my confidence in the workplace and taught me how best to use my skills and qualities at home and at work. I am sure that Springboard will help to progress my career in Merseytravel.*

*Merseylearn offers a range of learning opportunities and there is something to suit all employees. I found that everyone in the learning team was really helpful and easy to talk to. I think it is great that they will also provide you with help and guidance on choosing a course if they do not offer the course themselves. In the current climate, it is the perfect time to make sure you gain new skills and keep your existing qualifications up to date, you can do this easily and quickly with Merseylearn who will help you to learn alongside your job."*



## Jim Scully Merseyrail

62 year old Jim Scully has worked with Merseyrail for over 10 years firstly as a guard and currently as an on-board cleaner. He is a man of many talents, including a natural comedian who recently made his first stand up appearance at the 'Stand up for Anita' charity comedy night organised by Merseyrail. Also an ex-marathon runner and a master of mental arithmetic, Jim is a man always ready to take up new challenges!

However, until recently "new technology" had simply passed him by.

*"I always thought the word "computers" started with a "k"! I couldn't really see the relevance and was terrified by the thought of even switching a computer on. I started to realise that perhaps I was missing out. I have a daughter living in Australia who I wanted to contact and I knew the computer could perhaps make that possible."*

Jim had a conversation with Merseyrail Union Learner Rep (ULR) , Charlie Whelan, who encouraged him to take a first step towards computer literacy. Charlie was in the mess room at Moorfields Station, talking to everyone about the free learning opportunities available through Merseylearn which included basic ICT.

Jim decided to give it a go, and Charlie referred him to the Merseylearn team.

Charlie commented: *"Merseyrail has a referral system in place with Merseylearn. As a ULR we can signpost staff directly for functional skills in Literacy, Numeracy and Information Technology."*

Jim added: *"A few days later I got a phone call from Merseylearn tutor, Julie Mooney, and we arranged to meet at the learning centre in Merseytravel's headquarters at Mann Island."*

Jim continued: *"I was full of trepidation, not knowing what to expect. My starting point was nil in terms of understanding computers and I didn't want to embarrass myself. Julie immediately put me at ease and made it clear that the programme would be designed for me and I could work at my own pace."*

Julie enrolled Jim onto the UK Online, Online Basics course to help build up his computer skills. The online course suited Jim, offering a flexible learning approach backed up with weekly individual tutorials with Julie.

Julia said: *"Jim's skills and confidence quickly soared - we used the online elements as a learning tool, then looked at practical approaches to build up his experience, such as registering and using email. We explored why Jim wanted to use ICT and produced a plan to give him the best possible experience."*



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