

No Messin' in Medway

Network Rails No Messin' campaign came to Strood on August 1st. This was a fun event for young people seeking to alert them to the dangers of trespassing on the railways.

The event was held at the Strood Sports centre and featured a host of activities designed to appeal to young people, including wrestling, kick boxing simulator, motorbikes, judo, karate, trampolining, dance, face art, table tennis and football coaching.

Supporters included Kent Fire and Rescue Service, British Transport Police, KCA Young Peoples Service, Medway Council and Southeastern.

The event proved very popular and as well as offering plenty of ideas for safe, legitimate fun participants were made aware that railways hold potential dangers and need to be treated with respect. Electrocution is an ever present risk as power rails remain live 24 hours a day.

Network Rail has a team of dedicated Railway Crime Education Managers offering railway safety and information and visits to schools, youth clubs and similar groups. The Community Rail Partnership can provide contact details.



Get on the right line

Have you heard of Train Tracker?

This service is available on **0871 200 49 50** and provides live train times for today and train timetables for the next three months.

The facility is useful for those callers requiring train times when they are away from the internet. It uses speech recognition thus letting you say what you want and looks up train times from the National Rail Live Departures and Arrivals Board and the Online Journey Planner and then speaks the information to you.

Hints for using the service include using the full station and county name when speaking and call from a quiet place. More information is available on the National Rail Enquiries website (www.nationalrail.co.uk).

community rail partnership

news

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Wateringbury Station seen from near Bowhill Farm

Ale and music proves a draw

The Medway Valley Line Partnership organised its second Music Train on November 4th taking the rare opportunity on a Sunday to experience a through train ride along the line without changing at Maidstone West.

Around 50 people enjoyed seeing the scenery along the line with musical accompaniment from John Chapman and Keith West. Real Ale from Gadds Ramsgate brewery as well as soft drinks were also available on board.



Many of those who came along rarely if ever travel on the Medway Valley Line so as well as having an enjoyable outing on the day they will perhaps use the line more often in future.

New Timetable From December 9th. Pick up a copy from manned stations or our regular community information points.

Kent Community Rail Partnership

Park in Maidstone?

Driving and parking in Maidstone is becoming more and more difficult and expensive!

Yet shops, restaurants, pubs and the cinema and market complex are close to Maidstone West Station and it takes no more than 20 minutes to get to Maidstone from any other station on the line.

So next time you want to go to Maidstone,

why not take the train?

Who's Who

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For more copies of this newsletter or for a larger text version, please contact Ian or Nigel at the above address.

The rail service on the Medway Valley Line between Paddock Wood to Strood, has been designated as a Community Rail Service, Rail Minister Tom Harris MP has announced.

The designated service allows for a more flexible approach to be adopted by the train operating company (Southeastern) working alongside the local community rail partnership. This enables them to manage the service with greater emphasis on meeting local needs. Together they will continue to look for ways to increase patronage and improve the service.

Transport Minister Tom Harris said: "Designation of the Medway Valley Line service as a Community Rail service is good news. It means that local communities can become more involved in how these services run and ultimately encourage more passengers to use them."

Charles Horton, Managing Director Southeastern said: "This is good news for both

passengers and Southeastern. Community Rail Partnerships have the potential to increase passenger numbers, attract external investment and put the railway at the heart of the community it serves."

Cllr Mike Fitzgerald, Chairman of the Kent Community Rail Partnership said: "The Medway Valley Line Partnership, which has the support of the Local Authorities and Parish Councils along the line, welcomes the designation and sees this as the beginning of a new era. Much has already been achieved leading up to this recognition but there is much more the partnership can now do to meet the aspirations of both the local people and the service providers Southeastern."

Useful websites

Southeastern Railway: www.southeasternrailway.co.uk

National Rail Enquiries: www.nationalrail.co.uk

Kent Community Rail Partnership: www.ruralkent.org.uk

Association of Community Rail Partnerships: www.acorp.uk.com

Traveline Public Transport Information: www.traveline.org.uk

NuVenture Coaches: www.nuventure.co.uk

Arriva Buses Southern Counties: www.arrivabus.co.uk

Medway Valley Countryside Partnership: www.medwayvalley.org

Kent Wildlife Trust: www.kentwildlife.org.uk

Just the ticket

Revenue collection on the line has long been an issue as tickets cannot be purchased at most stations and the conductor is often unable to collect all the fares due.

This has meant the line has not so far been included in the Penalty Fares area.

However, some secondhand "Permit to Travel" machines have now been installed at all unmanned stations and once commissioned it will be a requirement to purchase a "Permit to Travel" ticket from them before boarding any train. Failure to do so could result in a Penalty Fare of £20 becoming payable should Revenue Protection Officers carry out a ticket inspection.



Notices will appear at stations when the scheme is to be introduced to the line. The amount paid prior to boarding will be deducted from the cost of a ticket subsequently purchased on board the train or at a ticket office.

This development will increase the revenue taken on the line and give a truer picture of the number of passengers being carried.

Wet paint

Southeastern's contractors have been busy with their brushes and paint pots transforming many stations along the Medway Valley line to now display the new corporate colours of grey and mauve.

To date, Paddock Wood, Beltring, Watlingbury, Cuxton and Strood have received attention and a number of stations seem to be retaining some individuality after this exercise. Watlingbury has retained its black retro style platform lamps, Beltring has received additional mauve colouring and Cuxton building has benefited from some white highlighting.



Repainted Class 508 unit at Maidstone West

As part of this refurbishment programme new seating is being installed along the line, this already being in place at Paddock Wood, Watlingbury, Cuxton and Strood.

At Strood the island platform shelters have been repaired and the station toilets have been retiled.

As well as stations receiving a lift, the older class 508 three coach trains used on certain journeys are also in course of refurbishment with three of the six units now sporting new Southeastern colours.

Watch out for further improvements along the line as the programme progresses!

Fare increase from January

Fares on the Medway Valley Line increase on Wednesday 2nd January 2008. In 2007 local fares on the line barely increased at all, but this time the increases are in line with the rest of the Southeastern network.

On average, peak period fares on Southeastern are rising by around 7% while off peak fares

are going up by 4.8%. How much has petrol gone up this year?

There is only room to show a handful of local fares here. For more details please go to www.nationalrail.co.uk or ring National Rail Enquiries on **08457 48 49 50**.

MVL Sample Fares	2007	2008
Strood Maidstone West Standard Single	£3.60	£3.80
Strood Maidstone West Standard Return	£4.20	£4.50
Strood Maidstone West Cheap Day Return	£4.00	£4.20
Maidstone West Paddock Wood Standard Single	£3.30	£3.50
Maidstone West Paddock Wood Standard Return	£3.80	£4.00
Maidstone West Paddock Wood Cheap Day Return	£3.50	£3.60

Passenger Focus supports Medway Valley Line Community Rail Partnership – do you?



Tunde Olatunji
Passenger Link Manager
Passenger Focus

My name is Tunde Olatunji and I am the Passenger Focus Manager with direct local responsibility for looking after the interests of rail passengers who use Southeastern and Eurostar services. Passenger Focus is the National rail consumer watchdog. We champion the interests of rail passengers, undertake extensive passenger research and also investigate appeals when passengers are not satisfied with the initial response from their train company.

I have been working to encourage the success of the Medway Community Rail partnerships with its principle officers Nigel Whitburn and Ian Paterson. I was pleased to give a presentation

at a Stakeholder meeting held in Snodland Town Hall in February of this year. In my presentation I outlined what I considered to be crucial to the success of a Community Rail Partnership and it is worth reiterating those points again as follows

- The Community Rail Partnerships helps those who help themselves
- It is about practical initiatives that add up to a better, more sustainable local railway, improved station facilities, better train services and improved integration with other forms of transport
- Finally and perhaps most important is the challenge is to retain and attract new passengers by our local effort

I would encourage you to give all the support you can such as getting involved with initiatives to brighten up your local station and using every opportunity to use your local services. I can be contacted on my email address which is tunde.olatunji@passengerfocus.org.uk or on my mobile **07795347391**



Watlingbury pupils on the right lines

Watlingbury Junior School sits alongside Watlingbury station and has shown an interest in its local railway, having used it for a class excursion to Rochester Castle.

When the old semaphore signals at the station were recently replaced by coloured light ones, the Headmaster arranged for two to be acquired by the school and thanks to Network Rail, they have been reerected in the school grounds.

Earlier this year the school asked if some of the children could receive a talk on the railway, to include safety awareness. In fact the Community Railway Partnership were able to coordinate two talks to year 5 and year 6 which took place on 15th November.

Anne-Marie Batson, Rail Crime Education Manager (Network Rail) spoke about safety on the railway – including vandalism and trespass. Dave Mitchelmore (Watlingbury Station Adoption promoter) spoke about using the railway, the role of the Community Rail Partnership and what the adoption of a railway station involved. Thanks to both of them and also to Noreen Vinall, Head Teacher for assistance in arranging this initiative.

The opportunity was taken to provide the pupils with some safety information and railway literature, including copies of the new Medway Valley Line Timetable and the Community Rail Line Guide.

It is hoped that a close association with the school can be continued in the future in order that local children may all have an awareness of what their local line offers, how to use it safely and of course how it may meet their future travel needs.

