



Kent Community Rail Partnership

# Autumn 2022

# NEWSLETTER



Tonbridge Station 1949  
Courtesy of Kent Photo Archive



Kemsley Station 1927  
Courtesy of Middleton Press



Lenham Station 1958 –  
Courtesy of Middleton Press

## Chairman's Report by Chris Fribbins

The last quarter has been full of national, regional and local incidents that have had direct and indirect on the community lines that we serve. The death of the Queen was the biggest incident and it was pleasing to see the rail industry, and the nation as a whole, show respect and support for those who wanted to travel to show their respects. Southeastern put on additional services and overnight care for their travellers, in respect the rail unions postponed some of their proposed strike actions.

The ongoing rail strike action continues to cause disruption and hardly encourages the much-needed return to rail. We continue to expect all parties to resolve this as soon as possible. This does encourage people to use their cars and it is notable that there are significant road delays due to road traffic accidents and major roadworks on our key routes that would not be a problem on rail.

Timetables for December have now been published and it is good to see a 1/2 hourly service on the Strood to Paddock Wood line, although on limited morning and evening services onward to Tonbridge. The Sittingbourne to Sheerness line sees 1/2 hourly services in the morning and evening peak, but only an hourly service otherwise. The Kent Downs Line sees the full introduction of the Maidstone East service to Charing Cross.

There are congratulations on the persistence of our officers in getting the 'cycle rails' fitted to the footbridges at some station to help cyclists get their bikes over to the other platforms, hopefully this relatively low-cost feature can be introduced on more of our stations.

### Shortlisted for 3 Community Rail Awards

In August, we were notified by Community Rail Network that we had been shortlisted for 3 Community Rail Awards this year. The categories were for:

- Involving Children and Young People and our work with a range of schools and colleges throughout the year.
- Involving Diverse Groups for station improvements at Charing
- Small Project Awards for the Sunflower Mural at Snodland Station with Five Acre Wood School Snodland to raise awareness of hidden disabilities.



### Accreditation 2022-23

Kent CRP are delighted to have had their accreditation status renewed for a further 12 months following the recommendation from Community Rail Network in April. "Accreditation is the formal recognition by the DfT that a CRP operates to a high standard and that its objectives and activities are supported by the Government.



## Diversity House

On Friday 1st July Kent CRP and [Diversity House](#) organised a trip to Rochester to support a group of adults who speak English as a Second Language. The group chosen were those that attended the English classes on a Friday and the IT classes during the week.

The project involved training the group using the National Rail App to identify the various ticket prices depending on the time of day they travelled, the times of the train, which platform they depart from, which carriages are designed for accessible travel needs and the cost savings possible through using one of the vast selection of [rail cards](#). This all took place at Diversity House during the morning.

Following a demonstration from Southeastern of using the ticket machine, booking office and information point at Sittingbourne station we headed to Rochester so that the group could practice speaking English and ordering a meal, before visiting the grounds of Rochester Castle. The groups final challenge was to use the app or travel information screens to identify the next train home to Sittingbourne.



## North Downs Walks

Throughout August and September Kent CRP has been running led walks from different train stations along the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and beyond to encourage the use of the railway to bring tourists sustainably to the Kent Downs, showcasing the trail and the hospitality available in the communities it serves.

This has included 3 separate walks, engaging over 50 participants and volunteers. On August 4<sup>th</sup>, a 4 mile ramble from Halling to Cuxton, August the 17<sup>th</sup> a 6 mile walk from Charing to Harrietsham and on September 30<sup>th</sup> our longest walk, as part of the Heart of Kent Walking Festival a 10 mile walk from Charing to Hollingbourne Station.

A number of additional walks will be taking place over the next few months, so keep an eye on our social media pages if you would like to take part.



## Sheerness Mural

St. Edwards Catholic Primary school in Sheerness, has been working hard with local artists Julie and Anna Bradshaw to produce a mural for Sheerness Station. The pupils wanted to encourage the local community to look after their environment by recycling and travelling more sustainably.



The Mural will be installed on the station fence once the canopy work has been completed in November.

## Rail Safety Pop Up

During August the Kent Community Rail Partnership worked with Southeastern, the British Transport Police (BTP) and the Dawn Patrol (a group of Rotary International members), to highlight rail safety messages at Maidstone West Station.

The team spoke to passengers about rail safety, providing useful tips on how to keep safe and handed out over 150 copies of the BTP 61016 cards that promote the discreet way to report non-emergency incidents on trains and at stations. The Dawn Patrol group also took the opportunity to encourage passengers to give their views on station safety. The results will be shared with Southeastern to provide valuable insight into people's perceptions of safety at railway stations in the local areas.





## Swale Halt Murals

Work has begun on a series of murals at Swale Halt. Artist Graham Upton has worked with Kent Community Rail Partnership to design murals based around the local area along our Swale Rail Line. Students from Sheppey College helped us with designs and ideas to include in our murals.

The murals have been funded by local Councillors Cameron Beart and Steve Davey from Swale Borough Council and John Wright from Kent County Council. The project was also match funded by Community Rail Network.

Over the coming months keep an eye out for the murals as they are being created. Here is the first of the completed murals.



## Have your say on Community Rail

Kent CRP are always looking for new members to join our line groups. If you are interested in finding out more about Community Rail and becoming involved to help make a difference, then please get in touch with us. Our contact details are listed below.

### Dates for the diary

**Sat 15<sup>th</sup> October- Led Walk Wateringbury to Yalding**

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November Led Walk Halling to Cuxton**

**Sat 19<sup>th</sup> November Led walk Harrietsham to Lenham**

## Cycle Rails

Kent Community Rail Partnership has worked with Southeastern to lay cycle rails on 6 of the station bridge steps along the Medway Valley Railway Line (Strood to Tonbridge). These are Halling, Aylesford, Maidstone Barracks, Maidstone West, East Farleigh and Yalding.

Cycle rails allow cyclists to push their cycles along channels up and down stairs removing the need for the cycles to be carried. They have been fitted to promote active travel, end to end journeys via 'cycle, rail, cycle' journeys. On Thurs 21 Sept Kent CRP launched cycle rails at Yalding station with members from the Rail Partnership, Southeastern, Kent County Council and the San Fairy Ann cycle club.

"A major bonus to integration of cycling and rail journeys. "Duncan Edwards – Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum

All other stations on the Medway Valley Line have a step free route to both platforms without the need to carry cycles over a railway bridge, only Wateringbury has not had rails fitted due to the bridge steps not being stable enough.



## Criminal damage and anti-social behaviour

Over recent months, there has been an increase to damage caused to the ticket machines and community boards at our stations. Don't forget that if you see any criminal damage or anti-social behaviour, please report it to a member or staff or the British Transport Police. You can do this discretely by texting 16016.



**Keep up to date! Visit our website: [kentcrp.org.uk](http://kentcrp.org.uk)**

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