



Kent Community Rail Partnership

Autumn 2024

NEWSLETTER



Javelin at Strood
Courtesy of Dominic Noades



Electrostar on Kingsferry Bridge
Courtesy of Dominic Noades



Maritime approaching Maidstone East
Courtesy of Dominic Noades

Hollingbourne Station Heritage Wall



The volunteers at the Station at Hollingbourne CIC and the Signal Box Café have been determined to enhance the community space at the station and deepen the connection to the station's heritage.

Earlier this year they set out to create a "heritage wall" and invited the Mayor of Maidstone, Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Southeastern, Railway Heritage Trust, and the local community to an opening event on 2nd October.

"Such a wonderful example of how a proactive local group can access many funding streams to create a vibrant hub for the local community."
– Railway Heritage Trust

"It is a curation of delightful railway-related pieces, images and artwork that are beautiful reminders of the connection between Hollingbourne and its station."
– Kathy Cox, Signal Box Cafe

Maidstone River Festival

Following an invitation from the Rotary Club of Maidstone, we held a promotional stall at the Maidstone River Festival. We promoted Railcards, Accessible Travel Services, a wide range of walks from the stations on our lines, and gave out colouring sheets, stickers and tote bags.

We were joined by Sarah Moon and Peter Morris from the Kent Dons and North Downs Way teams to promote sustainable tourism by rail throughout the Kent Downs.

Particular thanks go to our volunteer Dominic Noades for his support on the stall.



Rail Rambles for Heritage Open Days



We worked in collaboration with Visit Maidstone to deliver a walk from Wateringbury to Yalding inspired by our Hills and Hoppers Rail Trail.

14 walkers joined us on our tour, starting from the Grade II listed Wateringbury station, ascending to the Hoppers Huts at Downs Farm before heading to Yalding via its Almshouses.

A great car free Days Out By Rail adventure.



The following day saw another rail ramble in conjunction with Visit Maidstone, Explore Kent and the Kent Downs National Landscape team.

A gentle rolling route took 19 participants on a journey from Lenham station, through the historic centre of the village to the chalk cross.

Heading west along the North Downs Way National Trail it was not long before



we soon stopped for selfies with Percy the Pilgrim.

We shared information on the history of pilgrimage, local fauna and flora, ecology and the role of farming in protecting the landscape.

The Signal Box Café at Hollingbourne provided well earned refreshments in a relaxing environment.

A wonderful sustainable Autumn adventure by rail.



Bikes on Trains Experience with Sheppey Community Cycling Club



Seven members of the Sheerness Community Cycling Club joined us for a Bikes on Trains Experience, to discover how easy it is to take your bike on Southeastern trains to explore somewhere new.

The train was busy but we all managed to board for the short hop to Queenborough. Safety checks completed, we set off on a gently paced ride back to Sheerness, utilising quiet roads and National Cycle Network Route 174 alongside The Fleet.

The riders enjoyed the experience and would consider taking their bikes on trains again for Days Out By Rail adventures

Standard bikes can be taken on Southeastern services along all three of our lines at any time of day, peak time restrictions apply elsewhere on the Southeastern network, always check before you travel.

Platforms for Change

Platforms for Change is a nation-wide initiative connecting local Scout Groups with Community Rail and learning to travel safely when using the rail network.

The 4th Milton Regis Cub Pack received travel training from our new Project Officer Vicky Wright, assisted by Linda Brinklow (Chair of Swale Rail Line), and John Ponter (Southeastern Safeguarding team), learning where to buy tickets, important safety rules when on the platform, and that it takes the length of 20 football pitches for a train to brake to a stand still!

The Cubs enjoyed their voyage, watching the scenery go by, passing through Teynham Station and on to Faversham. After a quick Train Quiz led by Linda in the underpass at Faversham, we headed up to Platform 2 for our train home. Lucky timing meant we were able to see in live-action the train carriages join together.

Each Cub was given a goodie bag of treats from Southeastern as they left.

All in all it was a fantastic evening. Thanks go to Linda and John for sharing their knowledge and support, and to all the Scout Leaders for looking after their teams of Cubs.

The 4th Milton Regis Cub Pack are now planning to become Station Adopters for Sittingbourne and we look forward to many more adventures and projects together in the future.



Charing to Hollingbourne Cycle Audit



Vicky and Therese undertook an audit of National Cycle Network Route 17 between Charing and Hollingbourne with Peter Morris, Manager of the North Downs Way with a view to extending our guided walks to guided wheels. Guided wheels can include cycle rides, mobility scooters, wheelchairs and pushchairs. This would be an extension to our collaboration with Visit Maidstone, Explore Kent and Kent Downs National Landscapes. Together we aim to bring more sustainable tourism to the area and extend the typical summer tourist season to all year round.



New Sustrans Project Officer – Vicky Wright

We welcome Vicky Wright as our lead Officer for the Swale Rail Line.

Vicky is an experienced workshop facilitator, running STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education workshops and community events. She has a background as a Natural Scientist, is passionate about the environment, and loves bringing people together and creating a sense of community through achieving shared goals.

Vicky has dived straight in, leading the Platforms for Change event in Gary's absence – an awesome start.



Keep up to date! Visit our website: www.kentcrp.org.uk

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Facebook Kent Community Rail Partnership



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Kent Community Rail Partnership encourages greater use of the Medway Valley, Kent Downs and Swale Rail lines by local people and visitors and aims to improve station environments and facilities on offer. Kent Community Rail Partnership is hosted by Sustrans. Sustrans is a registered charity in England and Wales (326550) and Scotland (SC039263) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England (1797726) at 2 Cathedral Square, Bristol, BS1 5DD