



Kent Community Rail Partnership

Spring 2026

NEWSLETTER



Class 375 approaching Cuxton
Courtesy of Dominic Noades



Class 375 on Kingsferry Bridge
Courtesy of Dominic Noades



Car Train at Kemsing
Courtesy of Dominic Noades

Travelling with Confidence – Heath Farm School



Train Travel Training Trips have been provided for students and tutors from Heath Farm School. Key to overcoming barriers to rail use for the students were demonstrations of how to use the ticket vending machines, finding platform information and confirming this using the matrix displays and announcements. Tutors Remy and Chay were upskilled to allow them to deliver further trips accompanied by Southeastern, which will build the confidence of current and future students to travel independently by rail.

Student Artwork at Lenham and Maidstone East Stations



The Lenham School has installed artwork supplied by their very talented students, into the boards in the shelter on platform 1 of Lenham station. Positive feedback has been received from passengers saying it brightens up the shelter on these wintery days. Thank you Lenham students. Valley Park School regularly change the artwork within their 6 large boards at Maidstone East Station, November saw Poppies, December Christmas art, with more to follow.



Platforms for Change – Creating a Bug Hotel at Teynham Station



On Saturday 21st February, the 4th Milton Regis (St Mary's) Cub Pack gathered at Sittingbourne Station, bringing with them dried sticks and pinecones they had gathered the week before, in special preparation for their making of a bug hotel. As a group they travelled the short train journey to Teynham Station, to build their Bug Hotel. Using the Kent Wildlife Trust instruction guide, Cub Leader Antonia Boorman and the Cubs built up a bug mansion 4 stories high. Along the way, the Cubs came across many creepy crawlies in the surrounding area. A big thank you to all involved.



Forget Me Not Train

On Tuesday 27th January, we gathered at Sheerness station for the start of a very special event. Pioneered by local resident Melissa George and supported by Southeastern and Kent Community Rail Partnership, we had the very first Forget Me Not Train experience along the Swale Rail Line.

The event was for individuals with Dementia and their families, friends and carers. A total of 20 participants joined us in a very cosy carriage.

Everyone was excited to be on the train together, participants received a lovely goodie bag with a Kent Community Rail tote bag, an Explore Kent map of the local area, a pen and some dementia support resources. There was also a beautiful crocheted Forget Me Not keyring kindly made and donated to the event by the "Let's Get Crafting" Knitting group in Sheerness.

As the group began to settle, Claire Holmes, a talented singer and guitar player, took to the stage, or more accurately the aisle of the train, to deliver a wonderful sing-along set of classic songs, from Vera Lynn to the Monkeys. We all enjoyed singing and watching the green and lush scenery of the Isle of Sheppey and Swale estuary whizz by.

A big thank you goes to Southeastern for their support and behind the scenes co-ordination of this event. It was delivered as a collaboration between Melissa George and with Kent Community Rail Partnership's Project Officer Vicky Wright, with assistance from Diane Weaver



Travelling with Confidence – Bromley Mencap and Five Acre Wood



Our Travelling with Confidence programme is designed to build learners' confidence to travel by rail, for either independent or assisted journeys. We have been working with 14 learners from Bromley Mencap and their tutors and 13 students from Five Acre Wood (Snodland) through classroom sessions, station visits and train trips to understand barriers they face to train travel and seeking to overcome these.

The station visits and Try a Train trips bring learning to life, making real the sights, sounds and hustle and bustle of rail travel. Together we have learned how to plan a journey, allowing time to navigate stations, checking departure screens, listening to announcements and reviewing matrix boards for reassurance. Seeking assistance from railway staff is often the best option, especially for boarding trains with a wheelchair.



Heart of Kent Walking Festival – Putting Down Routes, Charing to Hollingbourne

Working with the North Downs Way National Trail 'Putting Down Routes' project, Kent CRP managed a 10 mile guided walk from Charing railway station to The Signal Box Café at Hollingbourne railway station. The Putting Down Routes project is transforming the National Trail into a safer, more inclusive and accessible route where everyone is welcome, bringing sustainable and accessible tourism to the area and extending the typical summer tourist season.

The route was walked in a comfortable temperature averaging around 14°C with a refreshing cooling breeze at times. The 37 walkers began the hilly accent through Charing Village to the gently undulating NDW national trail with its many striking views, which were enjoyed throughout the day. Many points of interest were shared along the way e.g. farming methods, fauna and flora, history, pilgrims, the memorial chalk cross above Lenham and Percival the Pilgrim above Harrietsham.

On arrival at our destination, the community Signal Box Café at Hollingbourne railway station we all enjoyed a warm welcome from Julie Wood, Café manager and her volunteer team. We are grateful to the cafe team for opening for us at a time when it would have normally finished for business that day. "Just to say we really loved this event. Yourself and all the ambassadors were outstanding in your knowledge and engaging with presenting information on the route. Due to going to this event, we are hoping to walk more sections of the North downs via train, but we would also love to attend any more events you organise in the future. We really liked the Signal box cafe and would definitely plan a walk to end or start there!" - Charli & Alex, Walk Participants.



Community Rail Network Fund New Promotional Materials



Railway 200 was an absolute whirlwind of a year, which saw Kent Community Rail Partnership promotional stalls at the Southeastern Ashford Depot open day, onboard Inspiration the Railway 200 exhibition train and at a host of station birthdays and local community events. Over 800 tote bags flew off the table, packed with pens, pencils, stickers and brochures, spreading Kent CRP's name far and wide and showcasing places to visit on Days Out By Rail. We are delighted that our bid to the Community Rail Development Fund was approved by Community Rail Network, allowing us to restock for the coming year.



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

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