

# WINNERS

## ACoRP Community Rail Awards 2015



**We celebrated and rewarded excellence in our industry and here are the very worthy winners**

*Awards Presented at the Riviera International Centre, Torquay  
Thursday 1st October 2015*



Winners Booklet sponsored by: Great Western Railway



Key Supporters:



# WINNERS

## ACoRP COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2015

The Community Rail Awards celebrate all that is great in the Community Rail world and this booklet highlights the very best projects and volunteer contributions in 2014/2015 as judged by our independent panels of experts.

You can read about the innovation, partnership and sometimes huge complexity of these projects whilst also highlighting the dedication and hard work of volunteers and staff within our sector.

We congratulate ALL this year's very worthy winners!

**Neil Buxton**  
General Manager  
ACoRP



## Messages from Sponsors

### **Network Rail**

Britain's railways matter to people and we are pleased to continue to work in collaboration with you all to make the very best of all parts of the Network. Network Rail is delighted to continue its support for the Community Rail Awards, celebrating all that is great in community railways and the people they serve.

### **Angel Trains**

Angel Trains are pleased to support the 2015 ACoRP Awards. We have a strong commitment to building the future of rail and recognises the importance of local people and communities in doing this. Community Rail Partnerships are a vital element of the success of the overall rail industry in Britain and Angel Trains is proud to support them.

### **Abellio**

As Overall Winner in 2013 and now as the new operator of ScotRail (Overall Winner in 2014), Abellio is delighted to sponsor the Community Rail Awards. This annual event is an opportunity not only to celebrate the achievements of Community Rail across the country, but also to encourage the exchange of best practice. We look forward to another year of working with the individuals and organisations who are so important to sustaining the bond between the rail industry and the local communities that it serves.

### **GWR**

With all the famous Devon and Cornwall Branches; the highly scenic 'Heart of Wessex' line, the urban Severn Beach route, a share of the 'Three Rivers' lines and the rolling Wiltshire hills. GWR has always been a huge supporter of Community Rail, it connects us closely to what our customers and supporters really want from their local railway and the resultant record breaking growth in passenger numbers underlines all the hard work that goes on. We are delighted to see the Community Rail Awards return to our patch and to be a proud sponsor of the awards again this year. We wish everyone the best of luck.

### **Cross Country**

CrossCountry is delighted to be supporting the 2015 ACoRP Awards. Our inter-city and regional services connect to many CRPs across Britain, bringing the railways and the communities they serve closer together. By helping to recognise and promote their achievements the community rail movement will continue to flourish.

### **Arriva UK Trains**

Arriva UK Trains is proud to be a sponsor of the ACoRP Community Rail Awards. Our rail businesses work closely with CRPs in their areas, helping them bring the railways and the communities they serve closer and to grow together. We are delighted to help celebrate their achievements and to recognise community rail's contribution to growing Britain's railways.



### **Department for Transport**

As the core funder of local and rural services in England, the Department for Transport is a keen supporter of community rail. We recognise that one of the most positive ways of sharing best practice and celebrating success is through the annual ACoRP Community Rail Awards. We are therefore delighted to be associated with these awards.

### **Govia**

As the UK's busiest rail franchise, we are delighted to once again be supporting the Community Rail Awards. We believe it is important to recognise and reward success, whilst seeking to improve these crucial community services for future generations.

### **Virgin Trains**

Virgin Trains is proud to sponsor the 2015 Community Rail Awards. Our high-speed Pendolino and Voyager trains serve several mainline stations that act as gateways to Community Railways. We look forward to working with supporters of these vital economic lifelines; to grow inbound traffic and enhance the range of journey opportunities available to the people of the communities they serve.

### **Merseyrail**

Merseyrail is among the highest performing rail operators in the UK and is committed to serving the communities in which we operate. We are delighted to be associated with these awards that celebrate the value of individuals in society who otherwise may not be recognised.

### **Grand Central Railway**

At Grand Central, we understand and appreciate the fantastic contribution made by dedicated and committed volunteers. Recognising their work to improve local communities and make a difference is so important and we are very pleased to sponsor ACoRP's Community Rail Awards in 2015. We wish very best of luck to all the nominees.

### **Railway Heritage Trust**

The Railway Heritage Trust is pleased to continue its sponsorship of the Community Rail Awards through the 'Most Enhanced Station Buildings' Award. Our work around Great Britain has shown how old station buildings that are no longer directly relevant to the needs of the railway can be altered for business, entertainment or community use. We are delighted to sponsor this award to recognise the work done by the various groups that have found new uses for disused and underutilised stations on the Network.

### **Rail Media**

Rail Media specialises in good news stories about railways from every part of the industry. ACoRP is a fund of such stories and we are delighted to be supporting the Community Rail Awards, recognising the many people who make a dynamic and selfless contribution to the railway. Rail Media strives to push the value of good communications which the 'Best Marketing Campaign' award highlights

### **First TransPennine Express**

We are delighted to support the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) and their annual awards. The Community Rail Awards highlight the excellent work carried out across the country to further improve the local railway, which is becoming ever more important as more people choose to travel by rail.

### **Community Rail Lancashire**

Community Rail Lancashire is once again delighted to sponsor the Small Projects Award. It is true to say that a lot can often be done with a little and CRPs are generally very good at coming up with low value high impact schemes often with some help from the small grants fund looked after by ACoRP. This award has attracted some very exciting projects in the past and with an ever tightening financial position facing many CRPs doing a lot with a little will become ever more important. We look forward to high quality entries, to exciting and innovative projects and for the winners to share those good ideas with the rest of the community rail world.

### **Northern Rail**

Northern Rail is again delighted to sponsor ACoRP in what is the eleventh annual Community Rail Awards. We remain very proud to support 18 community rail partnerships across our network and each year they work tirelessly alongside the volunteer groups to connect local communities with the railway. Thanks to the continued efforts of ACoRP, the value of this work is increasingly recognised across the industry and this is a night to celebrate the very best achievements from across the country. We wish all the entrants the best of luck.

### **Abellio Greater Anglia**

Abellio Greater Anglia is passionate about the benefits that community railways bring for communities and their railways. We have more than doubled the financial support we provide, as the train operator, to our Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) - illustrating the commitment of our parent company, Abellio, to the community rail approach. Already we have seen the benefits, raising the profile of the CRPs across our region in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire and helping to improve train services and station facilities for customers and communities alike. In addition, we have increased our extensive network of wonderful station adopters, who help us make our stations proud gateways to the communities they serve. We know just what a difference they can make and celebrate their achievements at our annual Station Adopters Awards and reception. We are therefore delighted to sponsor the "Essence of Community Rail Image" Photography Competition at the 2015 Community Rail Awards, which will celebrate and highlight the best efforts of CRPs and volunteers on community rail lines across the national rail network.

### **Stagecoach Group**

Stagecoach is proud to sponsor this year's Community Rail Awards. These awards are a well deserved endorsement of the dedication and commitment of our Community Rail Partnerships and our valued station volunteers to create a better train service for our passengers. The Community Rail Partnerships and our army of station adopters do a fantastic job in helping us attract more people onto the rail network and at the same time deliver some very worthwhile practical improvements to station facilities. We wish the very best of luck to this year's nominees.

### **Eversholt Rail Group**

Eversholt Rail Group is delighted once again to be a sponsor of the ACoRP Community Rail Awards. We recognise and applaud both the phenomenal growth in passenger demand and the wider-ranging benefits to local economies and quality of life that Community Rail schemes and initiatives continue to deliver. Eversholt Rail Group greatly values its excellent working relationship with the ACoRP team, which is fundamental to ensuring that we understand stakeholders' needs and provide cost-effective rolling stock solutions optimised to meet them.

### **Rail Delivery Group**

Britain has a railway to be proud of and community rail is playing an important part in this success. As the organisation which brings together the industry's leaders to drive improvements to services and a better value for money railway, we are delighted to support the Community Rail Awards. These awards are a great way of highlighting best practice to help ensure the community rail success story continues to go from strength to strength.

### **Hitachi Rail Europe**

Hitachi Rail Europe is proud to support the 2015 Community Rail Awards, highlighting the importance of local railways across the country. As a train manufacturer with our train factory opening shortly in County Durham, we hope that our products will touch upon many rail communities in the future. For now, we wish all nominees the best of success in their projects.

# Involving Young People

## Sponsored by Network Rail

### First:

**Petty Pool College – The Petty Pool Trust and MidCheshire CRP for 'Petty Pool Students Gardening project at Delamere Station'**

**Stations are key gateways in and out of communities. Evidence shows that at unstaffed stations gardening, artwork and keeping the station clean and tidy can reduce fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Passengers really appreciate a well-kept station!**

At Delamere station Mid Cheshire CRP have worked over the years with the local primary school and the Forestry Commission and have planted out plants donated by Cheshire West & Chester Council. In 2012 Petty Pool College (for students with learning difficulties approached the CRP, having helped the Forestry Commission with the station planting and asked if they could take on the station gardens to provide their students with a real life work situation. The CRP were delighted and over the past 3 years the relationship has developed with the students doing more and more on the station.

2015 has seen the students extending the garden areas and digging over a new section of garden on the embankment (supported by funding from the DCRDF fund). They have also taken on emptying the litter bins when they are down there.

Petty Pool College offers a wide range of Entry Level courses to students from across Cheshire and Halton. Most of the students are aged between 16 and 25 years of age. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some come straight from school, others from different colleges, day services or home. Everyone at Petty Pool takes part in Life Skills sessions for half a day per week. They have use of the Independent Living Lodge and develop many skills out in the local community for example at Delamere Station. Petty Pool believes that the development of life skills is as vital to their students success as any other of the accredited courses, helping students to get 'one step closer' to living independently.

The students have been planting up bedding plants that they have grown on from plug as part of their City & Guilds Horticulture qualification. Planting up an area, weeding a planted area and watering plants are all key elements of their course and their work at the station gives them the opportunity to practice their course work in the community in a real life situation.

Petty Pool students also undertake a Community Action unit, which revolves around making a difference in their own community, which looking after the station definitely does. The group benefit from looking after the station, not only in helping them to achieve their qualifications



but it also gives them a sense of pride in their local community. The students enjoy their time at the station – it boosts their confidence – they get positive feedback from passengers while working there and they know that their efforts make a difference that everyone can see.

Passengers benefit from seeing the tidy, cared for station gardens and planters, the students benefit from getting involved – seeing how the plants they grow make a difference in a real place. They are not practicing in an artificial situation rather they are full Station Friends of Delamere, helping to care for the station – keeping it tidy and blooming.

Working at the station gives meaning and context to their lessons and builds their confidence helping prepare them for life after college. The partnership between the College and the Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership is win, win win and benefits everyone.





## Second:

### North Staffordshire CRP, REACH Pupil Referral Unit and East Midlands Trains

for North Staffordshire Line Promotion

Young people attending REACH Pupil Referral Unit, Stoke, are excluded or are at danger of exclusion from their home schools. Our aim was to involve this demanding group and inspire their creativity to promote the North Staffordshire Line for travel to work, leisure and all around the UK. Their commitment achieved eye-catching designs for DR-size posters for display in public centres and stations. As well as learning from the artistic challenge, the students made the launch a success through an interview with the local education correspondent. The project has also helped REACH students make the shortlist in the TES awards.



## Third:

### Community Rail Lancashire, Padiham Green Primary School, Northern Rail, Citizens' Rail & all Partners

for 'The Distance Between' – Padiham to Aachen five memorable days!

'The Distance Between' is a project that developed 'on the hoof' into an amazing educational and community based experience.

A class of primary school children from a former Lancashire mill town were asked to get involved in the opening of Burnley station, which they did in great style. As a result the class took part in a cultural exchange taking them to Aachen and Heerlen. Many of the children had never been out of Lancashire before. They spent time working with a class of German school children producing artwork now displayed at stations in Lancashire, Aachen and Heerlen.



# Community Art Schemes

(Permanent)

*Sponsored by First TransPennine Express*

**First:**

**Transition Belper**

for Belper Station Mosaic and Art Gallery

On Wednesday 10 June 2015 school children were joined by local stakeholders, funding organisations and rail industry representatives to unveil the fantastic Station Mosaic and 26 vibrant paintings now forming a permanent display at Belper Station. This was the culmination of a year long project developed by Transition Belper working with four local schools and hundreds of members of the local community. The project has received a large amount of local media interest, including social media and been visited by Penny Mordaunt MP and Marcus Jones MP who have visited the town as part of Belper's success at the Great British High Street Awards 2014.

The 26 colourful and vibrant scenes, produced by local schoolchildren depict local places of interest including Strutt's North Mill, Belper River Gardens, Belper town centre, local parks and play areas. A selection of the paintings inspired the design for the impressive Mosaic located on Platform 1 at Belper.

Christine Gray, a local artist and member of Transition Belper worked with children from Herbert Strutt Primary School, Mulberry Bush Nursery (now Leaps and Bounds Nursery), St. Johns C of E Primary School and Turnditch C of E Primary School to produce the paintings. The children's paintings were scanned and printed onto large panels which now adorn the railings at Belper Railway Station.

The Station Mosaic wonderfully illustrates Belper's heritage by featuring Strutt's North Mill, and the River Derwent set within the beautiful landscape of the Derwent Valley. It comprises thousands of small ceramic tiles and was produced at the Belper Goes Green ECO Festival 2014 by hundreds of festival go-er's. The lovely artwork has been a real community project inspired by



local children and produced by local people, facilitated by local artist Christine Gray. Once completed Christine painstakingly grouted the mosaic onto a specially built frame that had been built by staff from East Midlands Trains.

Transition Belper co-ordinated the production of the artwork and station mosaic assisted with great support from the Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership and East Midlands Trains.

Funding towards this project has been received from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP), Belper Town Council, Department for Transport, East Midlands Trains and Network Rail. The art project cost a total of £3,150 which was funded by the Designated Community Rail Development Fund, East Midlands Trains, Belper Town Council and volunteer in-kind match funding (including donated materials).

*David George, Chair of Transition Belper said "This is true community art crafted by the children and people of Belper to welcome rail travellers to our town and tell visitors how proud we are to live in such a wonderful place. Congratulations and thanks to everyone involved."*



## Second:

**Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership, Marlborough Science Academy, Groundwork Hertfordshire & Campbell Engineering,**  
for The St Albans Abbey Station Gateway

The Abbey Line CRP engaged students from Marlborough Science Academy to design art panels for a new gateway to improve the entrance to St Albans Abbey Station. The aim of this project was to work with young people, harnessing their artistic ideas to help transform an unattractive gateway. This challenging project required art and technology students to work together to a brief and deadline. Creative designs depicting the history of the city and railway were transformed from drawings to the metal ornamentation of the gates. Students developed skills in research, design processes, team working and presentation skills from this project.



## Third:

**Christine Wilcox-Baker and Friends of Handforth Station (FoHS)**  
for 'Art in a Box'



Christine Wilcox-Baker and Friends of Handforth Station, Cheshire (FoHS) are nominated for 'Art in a Box' and the sculpture 'Reflect'. 'Art in a Box' is a new permanent public exhibition space next to Handforth Station ticket office. It has been created by upcycling two redundant bicycle lockers. Supported by ACoRP, Community Rail Partnership, Northern Rail, Network Rail, ISS and the local councils, this new space brings art to passengers and the wider community. It is a space for exhibitions by professional artists, local artists from schools, special needs groups, further education and the wider community. 'Reflect', the first exhibition, commemorates WW1.

# Community Art Schemes

(Renewable and smaller projects)

*Sponsored by Stagecoach*

## First:

**Furness & Lakes Lines CRP, Kendal College and Lancaster & Morecambe College for Student Art on the Furness and Lakes Lines, Cumbria**

The culmination of the Student Art projects on the Furness and Lakes Lines took place in the late spring of 2015 with the completion of a mural for Cark station by children from Flookburgh C of E Junior School. This was the 108<sup>th</sup> art panel produced by young people for stations in the southern half of Cumbria. The ages of the pupils and students involved ranged from 10 to the mid-20s but the majority were around 17-18 years old.

All the art has been sponsored by local businesses or organisations, including a few panels that were sponsored by the Train Operating Companies and the CRPs. All the art panels are removable for replacement or repair. The art, using a variety of mediums, has been photo-laminated onto aluminium panels for ease of maintenance and avoidance of damage by the weather. All the printing was done by a local company based at Beetham in South Lakeland. This idea has been picked up by Southern Railway after discussion at the DfT's Community Rail Day in May 2015.

The initial works of art were "unveiled" at Oxenholme station (Virgin Trains) and Carnforth station (TransPennine Express) in 2011. The local MP, Tim Farron, unveiled the 12 panels at Oxenholme and the travel writer Michael Williams did so at Carnforth where another 12 larger panels were fixed to a long, blank wall.



Following the success of the first 24 Art panels, additional art panels were sponsored and exhibited every year up to and including 2015 when the final ones were installed. Stations on the Lakes Line have now been declared to be "full" and there's not much space left on Furness Line stations either. Here, any additional art panels will have to be carefully considered and will again depend on sponsorship, the availability of students/pupils and space. The Train Operating Company responsible for the station where the art is to be exhibited also exercised "quality control" to ensure that only well executed and printed art is approved.





Many of the student artists have now gone off to university and other colleges to further their studies and some have gained additional commissions as a result of their work being exhibited. Three lads from Furness College in Barrow, who had specialised in graffiti art, produced one very colourful panel for Barrow station and then went on to produce work for their sponsor. For many of the students, this was the first time that they had

worked to a real commission and to have their work seen in public.

For the CRPs, the result of the community art programme has been to brighten up the stations and celebrate the local area's beauty through the works of art produced by local, talented young people. It has been appreciated by the passengers, local residents and tourists.

## Second:

### Southern Railway for Students get creative at Purley station

Youth engagement adds huge value to community rail. In this instance, many people have benefitted from a project to brighten up Purley station's subway. The aim was to engage the local youth community and the outcome was a wonderful piece of artwork. This project was a great success with multiple benefits of employee engagement, youth engagement and of course Purley passengers, who make 3 million journeys through the station each year, have benefitted from an enhanced station.



## Third:

### Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for the 'Minibeast Trail'

Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership launched the "Minibeast Trail" on the Riviera Line in July 2014 to encourage families to try the train and brighten up station platforms by installing Minibeasts on station planters. Local artist Melissa Muldoon made the Minibeasts from recycled plastic with 11 parents and 36 children from Gatehouse Primary School in Dawlish and Teignmouth Surestart Dad's group. 5,000 leaflets were produced to promote the Trail and encourage children to enter a competition to name the Minibeasts. The Trail was launched at Gatehouse School who then organised, with DCRP, their own train trip and Minibeast naming competition.



# Best Station Garden and Large Floral Displays

*Sponsored by Northern Rail*

## First:

**Grange in Bloom volunteers, TransPennine Express and Lakes & Furness Lines CRP**  
for Grange-Over-Sands station garden

The charming Edwardian resort of Grange-over-Sands is set between the Lake District fells and Morecambe Bay, and offers one of the mildest climates in the North of England. The advent of the Furness Railway transformed the small fishing village of Grange-over-Sands into a popular resort with one of the most idyllic backdrops in the UK.

At the heart of this thriving village stands Grange-Over-Sands railway station that brings in thousands of visitors every year and helps to support an ever increasing all year round tourism trade. The station is located on the Furness Line from Barrow-in-Furness to Lancaster and is operated by First TransPennine Express.

The volunteers of Grange in Bloom are made up of a mixture of senior residents from Grange-Over-Sands, dedicated to their community and willing to take every opportunity to enhance and promote the resort as one of the most idyllic villages in the country.

A dedicated team working with a budget of small donations by local businesses and First TransPennine Express, has transformed and enhanced this railway station, that sits at the heart of their community, in just 12 months.

A new Flying Geese sculpture has recently been installed signifying the completion of the garden restoration works,



the lady Mayor of Grange-Over-Sands Tricia Thomas said "The completion of these works shows a real community spirit and a recognition that our little railway station very much sits within the heart of our little community."

Jim Trotman, Community Rail Partnership Officer for the Furness and Lakes Line said "The new sculpture in the gardens at Grange station is yet another example of the community in Grange supporting and developing local art. In addition to the Prom Art exhibition that takes place on Summer Sundays and the existing student art at the station, the community has now added a stunning sculpture to Grange's many attractions."





**Second:**  
**The Friends of Sowerby Bridge**  
**Railway Station**  
 for 'The Bronte Garden'

The Bronte garden is named after Branwell Bronte, a former Assistant Clerk in Charge at Sowerby Bridge Railway Station. It occupies an area of previously derelict land at the entrance to the station car park and has been planted with flowers and shrubs mentioned in the novels, paintings and poems of the Bronte family. It has been developed with funding from the Neighbourhood First Community Development Fund, ACoRP and through the fundraising efforts of the Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station. This wonderful garden haven has been uniquely and imaginatively created by the group's volunteers and it forms part of the group's overall aim which is 'to enhance the station for rail users and local people'



**Third:**  
**The Orrell Park Regeneration Group**  
 for Orrell Park Station Gardens

The Orrell Park Regeneration group formed in 1988 and have worked very hard to improve the community spirit within the area. They have worked together with the city council, schools, local police, community support officers and Merseyrail. They have cleaned up the environment in and around the station.

They adopted Orrell Park railway station in 2006 and have planted and developed a fantastic display of wild and traditional plants and flowers throughout the station. They have also set up a wild life corner and visit the station weekly to clean up and meet other rail users and residents.





# Most Enhanced Station Buildings

## *Sponsored by Railway Heritage Trust*

**First:**  
**Merseyrail, Mid Cheshire CRP and the Friends of Ellesmere Port Station**  
for Ellesmere Port station restoration

Ellesmere Port Station was opened in 1863 as part of the branch line constructed by the Birkenhead, Lancashire & Cheshire Junction Railway which joined the Chester to Warrington line at Helsby. The building is constructed in sandstone with Jacobean-style gables, tall chimneys and slated roofs. The structure was modified at some date in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and certain elements from a shelter on the opposite platform appear to have been reused to create an entrance lobby. Additionally, the chimney stacks, which matched those on the adjacent former station hotel, were reconstructed in red engineering brick.

The station is in a particularly challenging regeneration area and had been subjected to regular vandalism over the years.

Merseyrail obtained NSIP funding and successfully combined this with contributions from Merseytravel, Cheshire West & Chester Council and the Railway Heritage Trust to develop a proposal which has seen the station interior refurbished to bring community use to redundant rooms, windows improved and ramps provided to make the building accessible for all.

A shelter on the Helsby platform was replaced and the waiting area on the Liverpool platform has been enclosed to provide an improved environment.

During the works the contractor discovered that there had been some significant degradation in the stonework, partly due to inappropriate pointing over the years. Working in conjunction with Network Rail, Merseyrail instructed the contractor to remove and rebuild the chimneys, which further enhanced the impact of the refurbishment.

One of the main objectives of the scheme was to bring useful life back to a redundant historic building in order to ensure that it is maintained and serving a use to the local community.

Following completion of the scheme we have been pleased to welcome members from the British Legion, the Cheshire Normandy Veterans Association and the Friends of Ellesmere Port Station who will use the building on a regular basis.

Merseyrail have since received the following note from the groups:

“On behalf of Cheshire West & Chester Council, Ellesmere Port Royal British Legion, the Normandy Veterans, and last but not least the friends of the station, may we take this opportunity to say a massive thanks to you and your team

in relation to the Improvement works within the Station Building at Ellesmere Port, the work undertaken is absolutely amazing and along with the incorporated public team these works and future use will make a massive improvement for our customers/staff and all the groups who plan to utilise the rooms. Once again many thanks for your Help and support.”





**Second:**  
**Southern, Network Rail and the  
Hassocks rail group**  
for the Development of  
Hassocks station

Over the last few years, a community station has been transformed through strong partnerships and an eagerness to make it a great environment for local passengers and for visitors to the town. A long term vision has come together to provide a coherent set of upgraded facilities for those who use Hassocks station, culminating in 2015 with a purpose-built, community-run cycle hire hub to complement a new station building, new lifts and an abundance of locally tended flowers.



**Third:**  
**Graham Whaite and Liz Gaffney**  
for The Restoration of Dalmally Railway Station

Dalmally Railway Station was uninhabited for 35 years. Graham Whaite and Liz Gaffney have been restoring the station building and the yard for several years.

Liz moved her working textile Studio to the premises in 2003 and they now live in the station building.. They have also opened a community art gallery, 'The Posting Room'. Through the ScotRail Station Adoption scheme they have developed the planting in the station and made it a place people visit and are made welcome.





# Small Projects Award - under £500

*Sponsored by Community Rail Lancashire*

## First:

**Georgeta Busuioc & Sue Robinson**

for Harwich Station Garden Transformation 'Wilderness to Wondrousness'

Harwich station garden had an amazing 'make over' in five weeks during the summer of 2014. The garden has continued to blossom and grow over the past year. Essex & South Suffolk CRP (ESSCRP) was approached by two local people Sue and Georgeta who were interested in becoming station adopters at Harwich. Their aim was to clear the weeds and rubbish from the garden, plant it up and improve the appearance of the station to make it much more welcoming for train travellers and locals alike. They also wanted to plant up the tubs already at the station.

The plan was to clear the garden and decide what would be the best plants and shrubs for the ground to keep the ongoing garden maintenance to a minimum and plants that were hardy enough to survive with minimal watering.

Sue and Georgeta set about this task and enrolled local people as volunteers to help out, including the adopter from nearby Dovercourt station, local residents, volunteers from Friends of the Earth.

They had a clear vision for what they wanted to achieve and used their own and others' ideas to create the wonderful garden we have today.



The work started with clearing the garden which was a mammoth task as there was a lot of rubble, ironwork and rubbish; it was cleared methodically and the volunteers took the rubbish themselves to the local tip. Once the garden was cleared a membrane was put down to keep the weeds at bay and bark was put on the membrane.





As the funding was limited the adopters were creative and placed an article in the Harwich and Manningtree Standard asking people to donate plants for the station garden. There was an amazing response and the majority of the plants were donated by the public and volunteers.

Some people said it was an impossible task as the area hadn't been touched for many years. However, Sue and Georgeta were so determined that this would work that their 'can do' approach motivated themselves and all the volunteers. It worked because the local community was involved, it was a great partnership that included the local residents association. As the garden was transformed so quickly everyone could see the results immediately this was a real bonus and motivated everyone to keep going.

The garden has been transformed and is now a lovely place to pass by and look at and all of this was achieved for well under £500.

The garden has remained low maintenance, the adopters continue to work together to keep it looking great and there continues to be volunteers who are willing to help out at any time.

## Second: Kent Community Rail Partnership for 'Champion Action Day'

Kent Community Rail Partnership organised an exciting 'Champion' Action Day' to provide training for Travel Champions. This attracted parish councillors, school teachers and local volunteers who took part in a range of workshops, 'fix a puncture', travel plans, rail safety, funding, bike clubs followed by a train visit to Snodland Station Community Garden which has been adopted by Holmesdale Technology College and the students gave a talk about the success of their project. Travel Champions were then inspired to set up their own Station Adoptions and these are currently progressing at Sheerness on Sea Station and Strood.



## Third: Friends of Heaton Chapel Station, Transport for Greater Manchester & Northern Rail for the 'Victorian Station Clock'

In Victorian times, there was a large black-faced clock with white Roman numerals on platform 2. Friends of Heaton Chapel Station funded a reproduction three foot wide quartz clock. It is now prominently suspended in the booking hall, high above the stairs going down to platform 2.

The clock face displays 'FRIENDS OF HEATON CHAPEL STATION STOCKPORT 1851' and 'WELCOME TO THE FOUR HEATONS STOCKPORT' is printed on the clock rear.

Alex Hynes, Northern Rail MD unveiled the clock on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014.



# Innovation in Community Rail

(Not covered in any other category)

*Sponsored by Network Rail*

**First:**

**Helmsdale Station CIC**

for the Restoration of Helmsdale Station

Helmsdale village on the Far North Line, 70 miles north of Inverness, was originally established as an east coast fishing port in the nineteenth century when crofters, displaced by the Highland Clearances, were encouraged to seek alternative livelihoods. Since the decline of the fishing industry, the community relies increasingly on tourism. The Helmsdale Station Community Interest Company (HSCIC) was established to oversee the rescue of the redundant and derelict station building and to use it both to contribute to this tourism economy and to promote community benefit through station adoption and community partnership principles.

'Station adoption and community rail partnership operations require local volunteers' is the received wisdom. In a small, economically hard pressed community, volunteers may not be available. What then? The Helmsdale Station Project pioneers a fivefold approach to bringing a redundant station building back into the life of the community. After 1) successfully negotiating a 50 year peppercorn rent lease, gaining grant funding and delivering significant building restoration, the innovative features of the Helmsdale Station Project are 2) establishing that volunteers, with a wider than usual range of expertise, can be recruited nationwide; 3) showing that a fully integrated station building restoration can be achieved, combining renovating a building for community use with reinstating passenger benefits (a waiting room / visitor information point) and with restoring original platform features; 4) demonstrating that a redundant station building can be the nucleus around which a local partnership benefitting both the railway and the community crystallises; and 5) providing income generated by the business for maintaining and improving the station, promoting rail travel on the Far North Line, and providing donations to assist other local community charitable causes.

Further details of some of the features of this innovative approach

1. Renovating a listed building redundant for 20 years Helmsdale Station House is a category B listed building, unused for more than 20 years which was on the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland. It is historically significant being of nineteenth century concrete construction and believed to be the only railway building in the UK constructed using Charles Drake's Patent Concrete Construction Apparatus. The restoration required replacement of rotten suspended wooden floors, installation of a radon sump (Helmsdale is a radon



hotspot), addition of internal insulation to all outer walls and the roof, inclusion of heritage roof light fire escapes, addition of a ground floor wet room to enable disabled access, decorating, fitting out and furnishing.

2. Recruiting a wider than usual range of volunteer skills engineers, physicists, seamstresses, carpenters, a conservation architect, lawyer, electrician, environmentalist and accountant are some of the areas of expertise of volunteers who have assisted with the project. Three working weeks have been staged. Free accommodation in Station House + day time food is provided in return for half time voluntary work. The sparse population of East Sutherland means local volunteers are hard to find, but there is interest in volunteer 'semi-working holidays' with free accommodation provided.

3. Establishing holiday accommodation in the old Stationmaster's house (reduced rates for those cleaning the waiting room and tending the station grounds) The accommodation is intended to bring additional tourists to East Sutherland. Some visitors come because of the photographic facilities. An additional discount is given to those arriving by transport other than private car – the reasoning being that such people will buy more goods and support more services locally, so making a greater contribution to the local economy.



## Second:

**Merseyrail Electrics Ltd, Cheshire West & Chester Council & Friends of Ellesmere Port Station**

for 'Together we can make a difference at this station'

Innovation is about new ways of working and that is what has happened at Ellesmere Port Station. Partners have come together and worked imaginatively, creatively and practically to make things happen. The vision underpinning this joint working has been – together we can make a difference at this station.

Bureaucracy has been overcome, funding has been found, barriers have been swept aside in an on-going project that has seen the station transformed from dead beat, dead end station to thriving hub with artwork, new waiting room, toilet & community space, colourful gardens, Bike & Go, regular bus services and taxi office.



## Joint Third:

**Kiera Cheung**

for The Redland Coffee Trike

The Severnside Community Rail Partnership encourages social enterprise at local stations. In 2014, the Partnership welcomed Kiera Cheung and her "Coffee Trike" – a custom built, self-contained coffee stall – to Redland station on the Severn Beach Line. This innovative project, which we think is the first of its kind in the UK and certainly on the First Great Western patch, brings a different approach to catering.



## Joint Third:

**Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe CRP & Friends of Bentham Station**

for 'An Innovative Local Approach to CCTV'

Whilst it is not a new idea to install a CCTV system on a railway station, the Partnership and the Friends Group have found an innovative and successful way of adding a stand-alone CCTV system to the rural station at Bentham, with the support of all interested parties. The value-for-money system was easy to install and is designed to provide additional security for passengers, visitors and volunteers, help protect the many enhancements made around the station, prevent vandalism and aid the detection of anti-social behaviour. It is providing very positive results after only three months' operation.



# Best Marketing Campaign

*Sponsored by Rail Media*

**First:**

**Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership**  
for 'Great Scenic Railways' campaign

**Times have changed. With the constant march of technology, we now communicate in ways that didn't exist even a decade ago – and competition for our attention has never been more fierce.**

This spring, the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership was determined to reflect this new reality with a marketing campaign that was innovative, eye-catching and that spanned both digital and traditional media. Its aim? To promote the Partnership's newly revamped Great Scenic Railways website, and to attract brand new audiences to travel on Devon and Cornwall's scenic branch lines.

The campaign, which ran for five weeks (7th May to 10th June 2015), had three main components: the website, a launch promotion linked to the BBC's Poldark series, and a programme of supporting marketing, both online and offline and measurement was placed at the heart of the campaign.

**The website:** GreatScenicRailways.com is the Partnership's main website, aimed at a tourist and local day tripper market. Last updated in 2008, the site's design was extremely tired, and was failing to live up to the expectations of modern consumers. Using funding from the Designated Community Rail Development Fund and from First Great Western, the Partnership worked with leading Falmouth-based creative agency Gendall to revamp the site. It is now:

- "Responsive", resizing to fit the screens of different devices. This is vital given that tablet and smartphone users now account for more than half of the traffic to the site.
- Much more visual, with a strong emphasis on photography. Users no longer have to rely on us telling them how scenic the lines and destination are – they can see it for themselves.
- Offers lots more content. The site includes two extra lines (the Avocet Line and the Riviera Line), has dedicated pages for the key stations on all eight branch lines, and incorporates two previously external satellite sites (RailAleTrail.com and TrailsFromTheTrack.com).
- Much easier to update. The use of the popular Wordpress content management system means that all



members of our team can now edit and add content to the site with ease.

**Visit Poldark country by train:** A "Visit Poldark country by train" promotion was also used as part of Community Rail in the City, its centrepiece was a themed stand at London Paddington, complete with lobster pots, barrels, and our very own Ross and Demelza, recruited via an events agency. We worked with Visit Cornwall to develop a leaflet explaining how to visit Poldark filming locations by train. A thousand were handed out on the day, with a further 18,000 distributed in station racks. To increase its reach, we also turned the leaflet's contents into a mini-website within the Great Scenic Railways site.

The response from customers was unprecedented. People flocked to the stand, posing for photos and requesting extra leaflets to give to their friends. Our

own live Twitter reporting from the event was backed up by tweets from Visit Cornwall and others, reaching a potential audience of 230,000 people.

The promotion also helped us to achieve a big digital breakthrough with First Great Western. For the first time ever, our campaign was featured as the main message on FGW's homepage for two full days, and as a supporting message for a further fortnight. An innovative campaign to promote the Poldark mini-website on FGW's on board WiFi is also due to go live in the coming days.

**Supporting marketing (online and offline):** Alongside the Poldark angle, we also ran further digital and offline strands of the campaign. On social media, we did innovative paid-for advertising on Facebook and Twitter.





This reached more than 72,000 people, and really struck a chord. One ad attracted more than 450 "Likes", and 160 of our audience chose to share our posts with their own followers. Offline, we produced station posters, adverts in the local press and in Countryfile magazine, and even children's stickers. All artwork was designed in house, taking advantage of new photography commissioned as part of the website revamp.

**Results and next steps:** The campaign attracted more than 10,000 people to the website in just five weeks. This represents a 40% increase on the same period in 2014. Users also now stay longer on the site, and explore more

pages. We also recruited more than 60 new followers on Twitter, and 130 on Facebook. The latter signified a 75% jump in our follower base within just a week, achieved with a Facebook advertising outlay of only £150.

Just as importantly, we learned a huge amount. From the value of user testing to identify and resolve problems, to the cost effectiveness and reach of social media advertising, we will take many lessons forward into our future marketing. Next steps include plans for search engine optimisation and aerial videos of our most scenic lines using drones – all as part of the ongoing promotion of our branch lines.

## Second: North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership, Alsager Station volunteers and TOC partners for 'Make Tracks for Alsager'

With under 12,000 residents, Alsager provides a great transport resource; direct, regular services to London, Crewe, Derby and Stoke, affording rail connections UK-wide from a fully accessible and welcoming, community-supported station with good facilities. Through 'Make Tracks for Alsager', a dedicated campaign, developed by North Staffordshire CRP with station



volunteers and TOC partners, and sponsored by Cheshire East Council, we used a variety of media – information leaflet to all households, poster, web campaign and press release - to promote these benefits to the local population. The project delivered increased origin footfall of 728 in April over March, up 15%.

## Third: Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership & Hertfordshire Countryside Management Service for 'Launch of the Abbey Line Trail'

To promote the Line for Off-Peak leisure activities, the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership teamed up with Hertfordshire Countryside Management Service to create the Abbey Line Trail. The campaign for the launch of this nine mile waymarked walking route started with early promotions using posters, flyers, leaflets and promotional displays at public events. Closer to the launch date the campaign gained momentum with posters on trains and at stations. Articles in magazines, newsletters and press releases encouraged tweets and coverage on multiple websites. A launch event with walks led from two stations resulted in widespread coverage and ongoing interest.



# Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

## Sponsored by Grand Central Railway

**First:**  
**Sonia Cameron, Mallaig, Morar and Arisaig ScotRail Station Adopter**

How do you define what Sonia Cameron is? Truly she is an outstanding volunteer contributor! She is someone of whom people in the community say "I wish I had her energy!" or "How does she do what she does?" As she divides her time and enthusiasm between one railway project and another.



Sonia looks after Mallaig, Morar and Arisaig railway stations as a ScotRail Station Adopter, improving them year on year by adding features such as double headed barrel train planters (recycled 1 ton whisky casks) and 16 hanging baskets with an automated watering system at Mallaig.

Every year Sonia produces a hand prepared leaflet 'Off the Rails' a visit to Mallaig, for the benefit of the visitors to the area (60,000) and she takes no recompense for doing this. The leaflet will be distributed on trains this year, to passengers travelling from Fort William to Mallaig.

A columnist for 'Westword', the local community newspaper, Sonia hand writes 2 pages of material on a monthly basis, runs competitions (sending out prizes at her own cost) and has often been asked to review books and DVDs as a result of her column.

She is also volunteer caretaker/key holder for the Hi-Trans regional office at Arisaig station where she helps arrange

and host many transport/ rail conferences, events and meetings, ensuring that delegates depart with 'Mallaig Goody Bags' filled with salmon, mugs, pens and a dvd of the local area and all thanks to the generosity of local businesses



There have been some special moments and achievements for Sonia as an adopter. For example she used to make sure she was on the station whenever the Royal Scotsman would come through because she wanted to see it. Gradually the crew started speaking to her including the chef and she eventually ended up supplying vegetables and salad from home to the Royal Scotsman kitchen (they like to take on board local produce wherever they are). Then from that the manager noticed that Sonia was forever talking and asked her to act as a hostess so when the Royal Scotsman comes to Mallaig any less able people on board or anybody who doesn't want to get off and paddle at Morar beach, stay on the train up to Mallaig and Sonia dons her kilt, puts her hair up and gives them a geological talk on the way in and a historical talk on the way out.

She also helps out washing tea towels for the Jacobite steam train and helps the regular ScotRail service train crew by sending back lost property to passengers (again at her own expense).

Sonia can be seen greeting/hosting TV and film crews, rail enthusiast politicians, rail industry officials etc, making their transitional journey easy for them. She hosts book launches, local school children on educational visits and we must mention that she also arranges a Piper to greet visiting charter trains.

Sonia (who has 2 hip implants) is an unstoppable force with a heart of gold, who can't stop doing a kind deed to make railway travel on the West Highland Line a memorable experience!





## Second:

### Bob Painton - Swaythling Station Adopter

Bob Painton, lead Swaythling Station Volunteer for 8 years, has shown considerable enthusiasm and care for the station and its place in the history of the area. Last year he decided to undertake a project commemorating World War One in Swaythling and the role that the local Remount Depot played in the conflict.

With considerable management and effort he has worked weekly with excluded and behaviourally challenged children from Cantell Secondary School and other volunteer groups, to undertake garden maintenance, litter picking and most of all, design, production and display of horse themed World War One artwork at Swaythling Station.



## Third:

### Mike Fitzgerald Kent CRP Volunteer

Mike has grown the Kent Community Rail Partnership from inception over eleven years, chair first of the steering group and chair of the Designated Medway Valley Line demonstrating energy, determination and humour. He encourages those around him and is a respected leader in the charity sector. His drive has led to a decade of success, gaining financial and resource support from partners; working with schools, parishes and community groups. Mike managed the Partnership through a difficult period of change (staff & hosting) and pulled out all the stops to ensure sustainability and a bright future.



# Outstanding Teamwork Award

*Sponsored by Network Rail*

## First:

### The Cambrian Implementation Group

for 'Additional Service Campaign - Cambrian Railway Lines'

In 2012, Cllr Mansel Williams, Chair of the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee (SARLC) sent a letter to the Welsh Government Minister for Science, Economy and Transport Edwina Hart, asking her directly whether there were any plans to carry forward the desire for more frequent services on the Cambrian Railway Lines. This was then firmly a 'two-hourly' service between Aberystwyth and Birmingham International. There was a growing sense of frustration as with each passing year, there was no sign of any additional services despite the aspiration for more being mentioned in the National Transport Plan, at numerous debates at both Welsh Government and rail meetings at Westminster.

The Minister's response to Cllr Williams' letter, provided a surprising, but most welcome opportunity. She invited a delegation down to the Welsh Government to discuss the issue personally with her but even more surprising was the outcome of that discussion. If the group could prove the need for more services, the Minister promised to do something about it.

And, so began a process of providing the proof needed. The SARLC, with administrative support from Welshpool Town Council prepared a plan, involving a survey, a website, a marketing campaign, recruitment of volunteers across the region, arranging presentations, collection points for surveys, and the pooling of resources of multiple rail user groups. In October 2013, the survey was unleashed, and over a two week period, the initial work paid off with over 6,500 respondents, incorporating existing rail users, and non-rail users.

The results clearly showed a huge demand for additional trains, and what's more, the responses showed why people wanted them – existing trains' running patterns were not ideal for job seekers or commuters; trains got in too early in the morning or left too late at night. People wanted better access to healthcare and education, improved convenience for shopping trips to more populated towns, and better connections between the Cambrian Coast line and the Cambrian main line, not to mention improved connections at Shrewsbury and Birmingham to the rest of the UK and the World.

As a result of these surveys the Minister sanctioned the formation of the Cambrian Implementation Group – which would talk directly with the rail



industry on her behalf. The objective was to come up with a solution to the needs of the 6,500+ respondents, working in partnership with Arriva Trains Wales, Network Rail, and the Welsh Governments' Rail Unit as required.

This was the first time that such an opportunity had presented itself – where a rail user group was given the remit of tasking the industry with such an important project on behalf of the Minister.

Over weeks and months of meetings, discussions, drafting timetables, sampling diagrams, reconfiguring rolling stock movements, checking line configurations and lots of tea, gradually all the various partners were working together as one team. The result of this was that in May 2015, 9 additional services were launched on the Cambrian Lines – 4 additional return journeys between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury, and one additional service to create a full two-hourly pattern on the

Cambrian Coast line. To date, loadings on these new services are excellent, and connections between the Cambrian Coast and Aberystwyth take up to an hour less to be made.

This small victory is a shining example of working in partnership with a common goal to improve and enhance the services offered by our rail resource. A small user group, who invested in a stamp has been at the spearhead of achieving in 2 years what many failed to do in 10. And what's more, this is an example, proof, that user groups, rail partnerships, keen volunteers, not to mention people power CAN work together with train operating companies, Network Rail, and Governments to make things happen.





## Second: Network Rail, Island Line CRP, South West Trains, Southern Vectis and all partners for 'The Island Line – Sandown Blockade Project'

At Sandown, poor weather in 2014 led to a landslide and subsidence including nearby lineside properties. The risk that future weather could close the line long term meant something sustainable had to be done. A 10 week blockade was planned to make a lasting repair at Sandown to the value of £2M.

This involved the installation of two high level steel retaining walls, one at the base of the bank that has been inserted four metres into the ground and a second at the top of the bank, nine metres deep. Some 4,000 tonnes of new granular fill material was brought in to re-grade the slope and to help avoid a build-up of water behind the retaining walls, weep holes and drainage was dug. During the blockade, Network Rail took the opportunity to carry out routine maintenance and repairs.

Consultations, co-ordinated through an island stakeholder group were carried out to identify dates/times that would cause least disruption. Considerable effort went into identifying the measures needed to mitigate the inconvenience to passengers and the impact on the Island. A bus replacement

strategy was developed, with dedicated bus links provided to Ryde and Sandown Academys plus the Isle of Wight Steam Railway at Havenstreet. The base rail replacement bus service linked up with all other transport including the ferry/hovercraft service to the mainland. Thanks to the work of the project team and the commitment of our contractors Geoffrey Osborne and Raymond Brown, the repairs were plain sailing allowing services to return to normal earlier than expected.

Multiple partners were involved: Network Rail, Island Line CRP, South West Trains, Geoffrey Osborne, Raymond Brown, Southern Vectis, Wightlink, Hovertravel, Isle of Wight Council, Ryde and Sandown Academys, Isle of Wight Bus and Rail Users Group, Isle of Wight Strategic Infrastructure Group, Isle of Wight Steam Railway.



## Third: All multi-national partners for the EU Citizens' Rail partnership project

The EU Citizens' Rail project has displayed outstanding teamwork across national borders. The British, French, Dutch and German representatives of eight partner organisations have developed the rapport and can-do attitude to go way beyond the original scope of the project.

When they began working together in May 2012, they committed to delivering specific outputs as part of their funding from the EU Interreg IVB NWE programme, but on top of fulfilling these, the project has taken on whole new dimensions thanks to the positivity, rapport and collaboration within the group of partners. This has included innovative ideas that have broken new ground not just within the project, but within community rail as a whole. The project directly benefited lines in Lancashire and Devon and just a couple of examples are:

- Burnley Manchester Road's soaring blue "fin" was a French idea, contributing to a 12% increase in passengers.
- A high tech development was the promotion of Devon and Cornwall's scenic branch lines on First Great Western's on

board WiFi. This ground-breaking idea was suggested by a two-day international student workshop, known as the Citizens' Rail masterclass.

Representatives from each partner organisation have met as a group every three months for the last three years, in addition to regular email contact and Skype sessions. The joint meetings and site visits, hosted by a different partner each time, have enabled the group to see each other's stations, lines and local circumstances first hand. Time is set aside for in depth collaboration and workshops, as well as evening meals to allow the group to bond and to continue their discussions in an informal context. Equally importantly, thanks to this team, community rail now has strong roots abroad.



# Passengers Matter

Sponsored by Abellio

## First:

### The Cambrian Railways Partnership, Arriva Trains Wales, Aber Media Productions for 'A Helping Hand' project

During outreach visits to schools and colleges where the Cambrian Railways' Partnership's film "First Class Safety" was used as a teaching and information aid, it became apparent that people with additional or special needs were facing regular difficulty in understanding how to request assistance when travelling, and indeed, were broadly unaware of the wide range of assistance available to them to make journeys by rail an attractive option. Following a number of discussions between the Cambrian Railways Partnership, and the Schools Liaison Officer of Arriva Trains Wales it was decided that the best way to explain and to demonstrate the range of assistance available in a quick and easy to digest format would be to produce a further short information film, applicable to those passengers that would be seeking assistance to travel, and also to their supporters/carers/parents/guardians.

Working closely with, and taking advice from colleagues at Derwen College (one of the UK's leading special needs colleges), a plan was put together to illustrate on film real life case studies of students making short journeys locally on the Cambrian Line, as well as showing a longer journey from one of the UK's busiest railway stations, London Euston.

This project required advice, co-operation and practical support from a number of UK wide organisations:  
 Arriva Trains Wales, British Transport Police, Coleg Ceredigion – Aberystwyth, Derwen College - Gobowen, Network Rail, Virgin Trains and ACoRP. In addition, those individuals taking part would need to provide their own permissions, time and efforts, along with their supporters/carers in order to organise a practical shooting schedule.

The project began with the core team, made up of Arriva Trains Wales' schools liaison officer and the Cambrian Railways Partnership officer planning and making some sample journeys from the point of view of someone with a disability, and it became immediately apparent that whilst the range of assistance available was/is incredibly good, the actual process of seeking out and organising that assistance was not as straightforward as we had anticipated. This experience helped steer the film in the right direction in terms of demonstrating the need to

provide this step by step process starting with:

- The basics of planning the journey
- Origin and destination points (including any connections to be made),
- Demonstrating how to find and use the facility online and by phone of organising travel assistance,
- Showing the different methods available to purchase tickets.

Our intention was always to also feature the Welsh Government backed 'orange wallet scheme' (other similar schemes are available elsewhere throughout parts of the UK), the importance of which became immediately apparent when one of the film's 'stars' became tongue tied during filming one particular sequence - the orange wallet came into its own and the individual in question was able to board the train at an unstaffed station and purchase a ticket on-board thanks to this incredibly simple yet innovative product.

Filming with our student stars took us to London Euston, Shrewsbury, Aberystwyth, Borth and Gobowen stations where the different types of assistance and ticket

purchasing were demonstrated clearly on camera. Whilst the finished product is a Cambrian Railways Partnership production, it was deemed important to show other stations outside our area and the intention (as in our first film) is to make the film available free of charge to people across the UK, wherever they may live and whatever journeys they might choose to make.

"A Helping Hand" has been shot and edited to enable it to be viewed alone in one sitting, or in segments whilst being presented to a classroom or group of people, and it will be made available free of charge to any organisation who wishes to use it. We believe this

is an excellent example of how a local community rail partnership can have a real and significant positive impact nationally. We also hope that train operating companies will see the benefit in showing the film to their staff so that they too can get a real-world indication of the importance of considering the needs of passengers with reduced mobility or those with additional needs so that they can better appreciate the importance of inclusivity for all on our rail networks.





## Second:

### North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership, East Midlands Trains and Kath Keeling

for 'A Spotter Tea' community café, Kidsgrove station

Rapidly growing footfall at Kidsgrove station (up 564% in a decade) equals lots of passengers requiring a cuppa and snack for their rail journey. On board catering? Not available on any service, not even direct to London. Solution? 'A Spotter Tea' community cafe, set up at bargain cost in the Booking Hall and run by Kidsgrove resident Kath Keeling, epitome of customer-service, who has become the passengers' friend. Thanks to the enterprise of North Staffordshire CRP, huge support from East Midlands Trains and funding from ACoRP for running costs, 'A Spotter Tea' is a quintessential improvement to Kidsgrove's passenger experience.



## Third:

### Southern for 'This is Me' campaign

Aimed at encouraging staff to think further about every passenger's individual requirements, whilst promoting assisted travel to a wider audience, the 'This is Me' campaign was rolled out to Southern staff and passengers. Existing passengers took part in the video as well as the online and poster campaign highlighting their positive experiences of the service, as well as demonstrating where things did not always go to plan. The campaign has been positively received, including excellent feedback from Southern trainees and trainers, and improved assisted travel feedback.



# WW1 Commemoration Projects – Special Award

*Sponsored by Great Western Railway*

## First:

**Sally Buttifant, Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership Officer,  
and Matt Baker, Theatre In The Quarter**  
for 'Over by Christmas' multiple performance project

Over By Christmas (OBC) was first conceived in October 2013 when the Mid Cheshire Community Rail partnership officer received emails telling her to contact Matt Baker from Theatre In The Quarter because he wanted to do a WW1 commemoration at a station - this was a real opportunity for Mid Cheshire CRP to be involved with WW1 Commemorations at local railway stations – excellent!

The project mushroomed, with more & more stations being added in to the timetable until 47 live performances at 25 railway stations (including 7 stations on the Mid Cheshire Line and 15 more at other town and village stations across Cheshire) were undertaken between 6th September 2014 and 28th September 2014. It was incredible!

Over By Christmas involved all ages from 8 to 80 from a range of backgrounds from across Cheshire and beyond - there were over 400 Volunteers and supporters from event marshals to those singing and acting in the events.

1250 school children were also involved, attending OBC performances at stations and workshops run by Theatre In The Quarter.

The logistics alone for this project have been extremely complex. Performers arrived by train where possible and the performance began as they stepped off the train, timetabled to the minute between trains. Each platform performance space was unique so there was no rehearsing beforehand. Performers did not know exactly what to expect – it was turn up and perform – competing with trains, station announcements and busy platforms, while keeping thoroughfares clear & moving and managing rail health and safety. H&S at stations is key to keeping stations safe and functioning and most importantly to keep passengers, staff and performers safe – each station location had a suite of 10 H&S documents.

Two short films were made to promote OBC – one to introduce the project and let people know what would be happening and one created at the end of the run to





capture the spirit and impact of OBC. The links for both films are below:

[vimeo.com/98747152](https://vimeo.com/98747152) & [vimeo.com/106758145](https://vimeo.com/106758145)

#### Achievements:

Over By Christmas has been an excellent example of creative partnership working – Theatre In The Quarter worked with Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership and together they worked with Network Rail, Arriva Trains Wales, Merseyrail, Virgin Trains, Northern Rail, East Lancashire Heritage Railway, station friends groups, rail user groups from across Cheshire, other community rail partnerships, local residents, schools, Homegrown Dance Theatre, Cheshire West, Cheshire East and Halton Councils to make the project happen. Add in three community choirs from across Cheshire (Chester, Holmes Chapel & Poynton), 1250 school children and the audiences - we reached 20,000+ people - OBC has been a totally unique project.

OBC put a positive spotlight on railway stations in the North West & St Pancras – reminding people of the role they played and still play with people leaving to go off to war - OBC brought positive press – there were newspaper articles, TV coverage and radio opportunities. The finale was four performances at St Pancras International giving Cheshire coverage in the UK capital and a mention on the Chris Evans Breakfast Show!

The project also reached out to the rail industry staff through being performed on the rail network. The work with the train operators reminded everyone of the key role that the rail network and rail men and women played in WW1 and subsequent wars.

This was an opportunity for 20,000 people to be part of a moving WW1 Commemoration at their station. At local railway stations - all ages watched - from babies to one chap of 102. People (even grown men!) were moved to tears. People saw OBC once then came again to further performances at different stations. It was poignant & moving because it brought the memories of those who went off to war and left their communities to the very places where lives were changed and journeys began and ended 100 years ago - and still are today – railway stations.

Highlighting the centenary of WW1 in a poignant, simple, colourful, short performance which encapsulated so many emotions – joy, fear, confusion, anger, optimism, sadness, respect.

A reminder that stations are key gateways in and out of communities – OBC brought home to everyone who saw it that it was ordinary people like them leaving their local station. People today identified with those 100 years ago and reached out through the railway station – some of the stations where OBC was performed are the stations used 100 years ago.





# WW1 Commemoration Projects – Special Award

*Sponsored by Great Western Railway*

OBC was very accessible to audiences because it was performed in the main by volunteers – ordinary people rather than professional actors. It involved songs from WW1 which everyone knew and could join in with (even the children who have been studying such songs in school) and the story of the early optimism of the first few months was played out through key moments from history and through the songs of the time. Audiences loved the eight year old paper boys with their WW1 headlines highlighting key historical moments. And they identified with the different characters – the nurses, King George V, Kitchener, Vesta Tilly, the mother saying farewell as well as the sweetheart going off to war. Because the performance was very visual, colourful and simple all ages could understand it, join in and appreciate it.

OBC also seems to have had a lasting impact on people – over six months later people still remember last September – whether as an audience member, in a support role or performer - and are still talking positively

and enthusiastically about seeing OBC and being part of it. The performers, some of whom do not use trains regularly, still talk about the experience of art and performance at stations and on trains!





## Second: Shirley Rogers, Romsey Station for Romsey Remembers WW1

Shirley Rogers, leader of Romsey Station Volunteers group for 8 years, shows considerable enthusiasm and care for the station and its place in the history of town. In 2014, the anniversary of the outbreak of World War One she installed an exhibition commemorating the conflict and, with considerable effort maintains a display stand in the Platform 2 waiting room, refreshing its contents each month with contemporary accounts of what happened a hundred years ago, whilst detailing the effects on the town's people. In turn this has encouraged Shirley to undertake other fascinating and related commemoration projects to honour Romsey's heritage.



## Third: Dave Hatfield, First TransPennine Express & HMP Hull for Hull Paragon Station World War One Memorial

In 2014, First TransPennine Express (FTPE) partnered with HMP Hull to erect a special station memorial to remember the fallen. As there was no standing memorial to the fallen from Hull, the decision was taken to adorn the main entrance walls of Hull Paragon Station with 20 memorial plaques.

The special plaques were handmade by local prisoners in their workshop and gave them the chance to give something back to the community.

The plaques took over nine months of painstaking work, attention to detail and partnership working but the final

results were outstanding. They were unveiled during a special ceremony on Sunday 9 November 2014 after the Service of Remembrance at the Hull Cenotaph opposite Hull Paragon Station. Led by FTPE, the event was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Hull, the Lord Mayor, standard bearers from the Royal British Legion, current serving Armed Forces personnel and members of the public. Poppy wreaths were laid in front of the plaques and remain there today as mark of respect.

The plaques have been warmly received by the people of Hull and remain a point of interest for those tracing their family ancestry.



# Overall Winner Award: 'Outstanding Delivery of the Community Rail Strategy'

*Sponsored by Rail Executive - Passenger Services*

**Awarded to: Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership**

For highlighting, so well, the value of a community for partnership. By bringing together communities working in partnership they have helped to deliver a lasting legacy for their local area.

Through their partnership working with Petty Pool College they have helped to keep Delamere Station

tidy & blooming whilst helping the young people develop life skills & confidence for life after college. At Ellesmere Port their hard work and perseverance has helped to transform the station, bringing life back to a redundant historic building turning it into a much valued community asset. And as far as WW1 Commemoration projects goes the scale of the project 'Over by Christmas' was simply breathtaking.





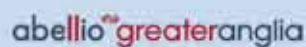


**Photo competition 'The Essence of Community Rail'**  
*Sponsored by Abellio Greater Anglia*

This category was voted for on the night by all guests and winners will be displayed on our website after 6<sup>th</sup> October [www.acorp.uk.com](http://www.acorp.uk.com)

# We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the sponsors of the Community Rail Awards 2015

## Without them this project and event could not exist



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