

# New ways to boost rail

The first-ever national Community Rail Day took place on Saturday 14 May.

Events took place throughout Britain. There were station galas at Blackburn, Wrexham, Barnsley, Huddersfield and Cleethorpes.

A magician entertained rail passengers at Blackburn while there were special promotions on many local lines including Severn Beach, Bristol-Weymouth, Grantham-Skegness, Hull-Scarborough, Esk Valley and the Devon and Cornwall branches.

Independent railways like Wensleydale and Dartmoor held special events with help and advice from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships.

Several train operators offered discounted fares and the Association of Train Operators produced thousands of badges for the children.

The Strategic Rail Authority provided funding to assist with small grants for Community Rail Day events. Plans are being considered for a similar event during May next year.

The SRA's Chris Austin said: "We are delighted by the response to the day."

ACoRP is also involved in promoting station adoption schemes and was launching a toolkit on 23 June.

ACoRP has been working with Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive, Northern Rail, Arriva Trains Wales and the British Transport Police to produce the handy, easy-to-use toolkit guide for community groups and individuals.

Copies are available for £6 including post and packing. A web-based version is available on the ACoRP website [www.acorp.uk.com](http://www.acorp.uk.com)

Meanwhile even hard-nosed South West Trains has woken up to the value of "heritage" travel. It has revamped its five-mile branch from Brockenhurst to Lymington Pier as a heritage line, with two refurbished electric multiple units painted green and a traditional waiting room at Brockenhurst.

Hopefully these rural rail initiatives will keep at bay the Department for Transport wolves who still do not recognise rail's benefits.

The House of Commons transport committee report on rural railways was published on 14 March, giving strong backing for community rail partnerships and the lack of stable, long-term funding.

Committee chairman Gwyneth Dunwoody was however fighting Government plans to replace her.

Aslef's Keith Norman has also reminded the Government to look at "comprehensive development strategies that stimulate communities served by vulnerable rail links". One of the ways Railfuture members can help is to get rail into

**CoastLink**  
Connecting you to Dunwich and Minsmere

**Journey into Lifetimes**

**These two leaflets are part of a series of eight giving advice on how to reach countryside attractions in East Anglia by train and bus. They have been produced by the Widen the Choice rural transport partnership which involves the National Trust, the Countryside Agency and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.**

**If more people use trains to gain access to the wild life reserves and country houses, it will bring new life and provide extra revenue for rural lines.**

**The partnership is unique, but the plan was to try out the ideas in East Anglia and then extend it to the rest of England.**

**The Government has however abolished the Countryside Agency so the hunt is on for some funding to allow this initiative to continue. Now it is hoped Rural Development Agencies may step in to fill the gap.**

CALL 01728 833526 to book a journey

Local Transport Plans by sending councillors and officials briefing papers of what improvements are needed to local train services.

## News in brief

**R**ailfuture trip to Berlin: It is not too late to send for details of this visit being organised by RDS Group Travel to Berlin from September 12 to 18. Travel will be by high-speed trains from London with six nights in the German capital. The group will be led by Jim Walker and hopes to meet members of our German sister organisations and see the latest transport and other developments. Send SAE as soon as possible to Trevor Garrod,

15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ.

Changes to the Disability Discrimination Act will mean that disabled people cannot be unreasonably refused entry to trains, buses trams and taxis – as they can at present. The new conditions take effect from December 2006.

**E**ast Suffolk Travellers' Association has just published an illustrated report on recent developments on the Ipswich-Lowestoft line and what it believes should happen over the next few years. The A4 size booklet is called *The East Suffolk Railway into the 21st Century* and is available at £1.50 (including postage) from Trevor

Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ. Cheques payable to ESTA.

**Q**uote: "What you people have to understand is that the future is about service cuts and fares increases." – Mark Lambirth, Director, Rail Strategy and Resources, Department for Transport, 24 January 2005. Talking to rail officials.

**Q**uote: "British Rail's management trainee scheme was widely regarded as one of the best of its kind. Today's railway is paying the price for ditching the scheme when the industry was privatised." – Andrew Goodman, *Rail Professional* magazine.