

ABFLY GOES WWWORLDWIDE

Abfly launches brand new website!

This April sees the launch of ABFLY's new website. Not having had one before, some considerable work was involved getting it off the ground. For this, much thanks must be given to David Horton and Chris Cardwell who have given up many many hours to work on the project.

For some time, the committee has been anxious for ABFLY to become more accessible to members and potential members and the internet is a very easy, effective and cheap way to do this. Finding the expertise was not quite so easy, but the offer of help from David and Chris was greatly welcomed.

The address you need to go to is www.abfly.org.uk where you will find information on all aspects of ABFLY and the line. There are sections informing visitors what ABFLY is and what our aims are, a route and station guide, timetables, history of the line, the Community Rail Partnership, Abbey Flyer Walks, news,

events, how to contact us, how to join and outside links.

As the site develops, we aim to have even more information available. Newsletter will eventually be online (as well as still being sent to you in paper form), details of any known engineering works affecting the line, and train running information.

The website will be another way of raising the profile of the line, and it is hoped that it will make many more people aware of what we are doing now and our plans for the future.

Do please have a look at the website when you have a moment or two – it's well worth a visit! If you have any comments or suggestions about what you would like to see included on the site, David Horton would be very pleased to hear from you. His contact details can be found with the article below (he is also our new Membership Secretary!). *Ian Hibbert*

SANTA SPECIALS OVERFLOWED...



Santa and his reindeer Sat 18th December 2004

Saturday 18th December 2004 saw the culmination of a lot of time, effort and money being spent on promoting the line throughout December. Silverlink must be congratulated for a very successful campaign and many thanks go to them and ABFLY members for making the day a huge success.

On Saturdays 4th, 11th and 18th December Silverlink allowed 2 for 1 travel along the line all day, and on 18th December ran 'Santa Specials' with a Santa's Grotto, goody bags and a balloon artist for the kids. Five trains in each direction ran as Santa Specials, and many were bursting at the seams! It was such a delight to see the service used by so many, and that they came away from the experience with smiles and having had much fun.

We're hoping that Silverlink will run many more Santa Specials next year, perhaps on more Saturdays, having seen how popular they were last year.

NEW MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

After a couple of appeals, we have been delighted that a new Membership Secretary, David Horton, has come forward from the membership to take over from Tricia Jennings, who has given over 7 years of sterling service! David can be contacted by post at 139 Westfield Avenue, Watford WD24 7HF, by telephone or text message on 07739 023316, or by email at dave_horton@btinternet.com

You are invited to St Stephen's Parish Centre,
close to Bricket Wood Station

WEDNESDAY 11TH MAY 2005
7.45pm start

Alan Bray, Marketing Manager for London Lines will speak on
'Marketing the Line – the Way Forward'

He and Charlie Johnston (Group Station Manager Watford Junction,
Harrow & Wealdstone and all Abbey Line stations)
will also answer questions

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will follow at 9pm when the
accounts will be presented for approval and there will be elections to the
committee. New nominations will be welcome (proposed, seconded & agreed
by the member(s) concerned) and, together with items for any other
appropriate business, should be sent in writing to:
John Webster, 17 Faircross Way, St Albans AL1 4RT
to be received no later than Tuesday 3rd May 2005.

The gathering is for current ABFLY members only, but newcomers may
enrol at the door between 7.15 and 7.40pm for a subscription of £3 for one
or more people living at the same address sharing a newsletter. For a
membership leaflet in advance, please call 07739 023316

Doors open 7.15pm when light refreshments will be served

ENGINEERING WORKS

Please note that on the following dates due to engineering works on the line, there will be a bus replacement service in operation:

Sunday 22 May 2005 All day
Sunday 29 May 2005 All day

Unfortunately, bicycles, large items of luggage and children's buggies cannot be conveyed on the rail replacement buses.

ABBEY LINE GUIDE

You may have noticed a rash of new leaflets appearing with relevance to the Abbey Line.

One such is a new Abbey Line guide, produced by Silverlink, promoting areas all along the Abbey line, aimed to encourage increased use of the line and to attract more visitors, shoppers and tourists to Watford and St Albans. The leaflets are available at the moment at Watford Junction station, but we would like to place them much more widely, for example in Tourist Information Centres, village halls etc, so if you could distribute some, do please get in touch with one of committee who will get hold of supplies for you.

STATION WATCH

Another new initiative on the line is 'Station Watch'. Silverlink, in conjunction with Capes UK Patrol, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Crimestoppers and the British Transport Police have set up the scheme to encourage the public, local residents, passengers and staff to report any nuisance, criminal damage or anti-social behaviour.

Capes UK Security already patrol the stations along the line, on-train and in patrol vehicles. If you, your neighbours or friends ever see anything that you are concerned about happening on or near the railway, *please* report it. That way, we can all help to reduce crime and get a safer Abbey line. There are two contact telephone numbers to use, both in confidence, and without you having to give your name, should you prefer. The Capes Patrol mobile number is 07899 983 185 or the Capes 24 hour Control Room number is 01733 391 113.

Leaflets promoting the scheme are available and a copy has been included with this newsletter. If you require further copies do get in touch with a member of committee.

COMMUNITY RAIL DEVELOPMENT

Another leaflet produced by Silverlink in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council and Network Rail is one regarding Community Rail Development. It explains in terms that are accessible to the general public what Community Rail Development is all about, and specifically with regard to the Abbey line. It's really good to see smart professional literature promoting our line. Copies are available at Watford Junction.

FARE COLLECTION

It has come to the attention of a number of members that Silverlink are frequently not providing an adequate revenue protection facility on the line.

Regularly there is either no conductor on the train, so no fares are collected, allowing people to avoid paying for their journey or causing long queues at Watford Junction to buy tickets. This loss of revenue is seen as a very serious matter by committee. How can we justify the costs of our line, and try to reduce them to secure the long term future of our line, if Silverlink cannot even collect all the fares due to them?

At other times revenue collection is undertaken on the train, but many times, especially on peak trains, there are too many passengers to get through on the short journey for one man to collect.

We are pressing Silverlink hard for some serious solutions to this problem. We need you though, our members who use the line on a regular basis to support us. Please let us know each and every time you see a train on which fares are not collected, and also when there are problems with crowded trains leading to long queues at Watford ticket barriers, so we can present this evidence in our arguments to Silverlink.

10 YEARS YOUNG!

This year marks 10 years since ABFLY was founded to fight the very real threat of the line's closure. This we succeeded in, but we still have much to do. There are planned to be events and promotions during the year to celebrate our 10 years, and to look forward to the next 10 years! Hopefully, we can attract more new members and work towards our new Community Rail Partnership status.

Thank you all for your support over the last 10 years – it is very humbling to see the amount of effort many of you put in to make this line a better railway for all of us.

HELP US!

We are always delighted to receive offers of help from any members. If you have skills to offer, or simply a comment or complaint you want us to pass on to the right people, get in touch. Committee members' contact details can be found in the box below, and there are further details on our website, www.abfly.org.uk – thank you for your support!

CONTACT US @

John Webster (Acting Chairman) john.w.webster@ntlworld.com
or telephone 01727 760566 or fax 01727 750047

John Cadisch (Treasurer) john.cadisch@ntlworld.com

Tim White (Secretary) twhite@manganes.com

Sanjay Kulkarni (Technical matters) srkulkarni1@yahoo.co.uk

David Horton (Membership Secretary) dave_horton@btinternet.com
or telephone or text message David Horton 07739 023316

Ian Hibbert (Newsletter Editor) ianhibbert@hotmail.com
or text message Ian Hibbert 07753 824992 (no voice calls please)