



ABFLY NEWSLETTER

Abfly 10th Anniversary

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It is 10 years last April that Abfly was formed to protect the line from replacement older diesel trains and the loss of the Sunday service. In that time membership has grown and this year the line became one of 6 pilot projects in the Government's Community Rail Development Strategy to establish best practice for rural rail lines.

To celebrate this anniversary, it is planned to organise a special train for Abfly members, possibly to Southend one Sunday, subject to the usual operational clearances. Further details will hopefully

emerge soon.

There have been a number of changes since the last newsletter, not least the re-



placement of the Newsletter editor, Ian Hibbert by Paul Spelzini, and we thank Ian for his previous contribution and wish him well at his new post with Thameslink.

Geraint Hughes of Herts

County Council has also taken up a new post with London Lines, and we wish him well also.

We also welcome Maria Cutler as HCC's community rail officer, who will be a key contact for Abfly in future years. Maria's appointment is for 2 years initially but we sincerely hope this will be extended in due course.

Paul Spelzini, Editor.

P.S. Please display the enclosed CRP poster in windows or a suitable public place.

Special points of interest:

- The Abbey Line is one of 6 pilot community rail projects to establish best practice and reduced costs of operation with increased usage.
- The Abbey Line is one of some 53 community rail partnerships nationwide as part of ACORP.
- The Sunday service is one of 2 in Herts supported by Herts County Council, the other being the Royston-Cambridge local service.

Silverlink Standard Time

Many of you will have seen posters appearing on the branch recently advising passengers of a timetable change. No explanation was given by Silverlink causing consternation, especially as it made connec-

tions worse at Watford Junction for morning commuters. The trains in question were the 0809 ex Watford Junction (changed to 0816) and the 0830 ex St. Albans Abbey (changed to 0837). The reason for the

change was a discrepancy between the local working timetable and the National Rail Timetable. Silverlink have decided to return to the original times from Monday 26th September.

Summer Sunday Service compromised

Dave Horton, our new membership secretary, has recently written to Silverlink on behalf of Abfly when it emerged that the Sunday service has only operated on 2 out of 13 occasions this summer. Considering that the Sunday train service is financially supported by Herts County Council, this may technically constitute a breach of contract as the replacement bus service is not a train.

The reason for this lack of service was "skid pan"

training for drivers using electric trains, located away from the main line. Unfortunately this coincided with the peak summer period for



walkers and others who wished to use the line.

Members have suggested the Romford-Upminster line as an alternative which has no Sunday service. However there are a number of other electrified single track railways in Essex, also part of related franchise groups, which are lightly used or have no Sunday service.

If you use or wish to use the Sunday service and have been inconvenienced, please let the committee know – details on the web or the back of this newsletter.

Change of Editor, Membership and Distribution Arrangements

We hope to introduce stories of community interest with photographs, and if you would like to contribute, please contact the editor, paulspelzini@aol.com or via any member of the committee. Contact details are at the end of this newsletter. Re-

garding distribution, with an expanding membership we are now trying to save money where possible. To this end, we would like to encourage those members who regularly use email to allow for us to send more things out by this method. If you are willing

and have not already done so already, please make your email address known to dave_horton@btinternet.com. Further, he would like to hear from anyone who has still not renewed their membership for 2005, or you may be receiving final reminders.

Bricket Wood Centre

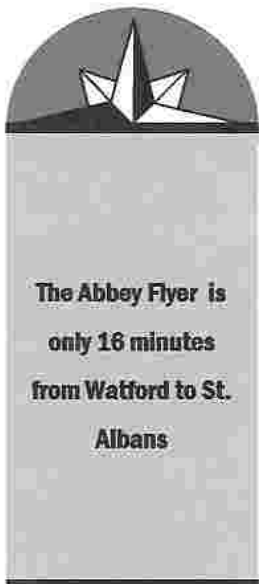
Herts County Council have recently arranged to have a structural survey carried out upon the old Bricket Wood station buildings.

Network Rail have indicated that the building can be let at a nominal rent for community uses. So the race is on for suggestions? The obvious one is of course a small Abfly

office where the public or members can use facilities and contact Abfly direct, although this may require some part time voluntary staffing.

Another interesting suggestion is for a small transport museum of rail and bus services in the county, in time for the centenary of bus services

in August 2012. Abfly was once part of a network of local lines and an exhibition of these would be welcome.



The Abbey Flyer is
only 16 minutes
from Watford to St.
Albans

Station adoption

Station Adoption is one tenet of the community rail partnership scheme, and may involve the formation of 'friends of stations' on the line who adopt a particular station, and carry out minor works and improvements at station sites.

Station adoption can also be more involved, ranging from advertising and cosmetic improvements, through to construction of temporary or permanent station buildings in a particular house style. This may reflect say a supermar-

ket or major sponsor.

Any organisation including schools can participate on a voluntary, formal or informal basis, but please contact Maria Cutler if you wish to



take part beforehand, so that this work can be properly coordinated.

Paul Salveson of ACORP has said that community railways should not be 'cast in stone'. To this end, we understand there are plans to relocate St. Albans Abbey station, and redevelop Watford Junction.

Watford North would tend to suit supermarket or commercial adoption, and there is certainly scope for a future new station in the Sopwell area.

Next Abfly Members Meeting

Don't forget that the next Abfly Member's meeting will be held at the Bricket Wood Parish Centre on Tuesday 18th October 2005 at 7.30pm.

Peter Roberts of ACORP will be attending to speak on Station Adoption and James

Elliott, Station Manager at Watford Junction, will also be in attendance to answer any questions you may have.

We look forward to seeing you there.



The Abbey Flyer only
takes 16 minutes
from Watford to St.
Albans

Bricket Wood Pool Reopens

After 18 months of waiting, the swimming pool at the Bricket Wood Leisure centre is to reopen in September following a £250,000 refit. The high level windows have been replaced with a new lighting and colour scheme in time for the new school year.

The pool is leased from HSBC whose training centre is located nearby in Smug Oak Lane, a short walk from Bricket Wood station.

It is a pity that there is no direct bus link to the Leisure centre, as Bricket Wood is the only station on the Abbey Line with no regular scheduled Sunday bus service.



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ST ALBANS
BRANCH OF



THE
LOCOMOTIVE
CLUB
OF
GREAT BRITAIN

The St. Albans branch of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain meet on the second Thursday of each month at 7.30 pm at the Chiswell Green United Reform Hall, Watford Road, St. Albans.

Their secretary is John Green; telephone 01727-861839, or online at; www.lcgb.net.

Late night service

Elton John's recent concert held at Vicarage Road, Watford saw the laying on of a special late night service for pop fans returning to St. Albans in June, leaving Watford at 23.30.

The committee are monitoring the situation with interest to establish if there is a case for reintroducing a late evening weekday service, particularly with the Silverlink franchise up for renewal next year.

If you go to Watford or St. Albans late evening for leisure and perhaps drink and don't want to drive back,

please let us know if you would use such a late evening service regularly.



Longer term it is likely a user survey will be carried out, probably by Herts County Council/Silverlink and Abfly to establish ac-

tual usage of the line and any improvements that users want to see.

(This panel will be reserved for advertising in future issues primarily intended for future Abfly and CRP events. Should you wish to advertise here, then please contact the Editor).