



THE ABBEY FLYER NEWSLETTER

Round up

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The Building Research Establishment and Campaign for Real Ale have joined the CRP steering group recently.

The CRP was represented at the Darlington Community Rail day in September.

A DVD of the line's history has been produced by actors and Berrygrove school, with copies sent to all primary schools in the area.

A lorry damaged the crossing barrier at Watford North causing delays in November.

Passenger counts on the line continued during October and November, and the results will be announced by the CRP. An increase in use by teenagers has been noted.

The 'Rail Ale' trail leaflet has been so successful that a reprint is needed, due to high demand.

Rail use on the branch this year is up 14% unofficially, and continues to grow!

The late night football specials have been well used, and look set to continue.

Vandalism has occurred at Bricket Wood, Garston and How Wood. Please report any damage to James Elliot at Watford Junction, so that repairs can be carried out promptly.

The future of the former Bricket Wood station building is still under consideration. If you have any ideas for this, please contact the CRP.

Abfly were set to meet both potential Franchisees in early January - more details in the next issue.

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 nation-wide 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.

Abfly Treasurer Retires

After approximately 10 years of sterling service to the group, our Treasurer, John Cadisch, has decided to call it a day and will retire after the 31st December 2006.

John's place will be

taken by relative new boy Tim Holman, who has been attending committee meetings since the Autumn and will assume the role of Treasurer from the 1st January.

John leaves the group in good financial health and relatively well placed to fight future campaigns and influence CRP policy.

The Editor

Ghost Trains

No, not the proverbial Parliamentary train, but between 1630 and 1830 on Saturday 28th October, parents and children enjoyed scary activities on board the train, with dressing up, face painting and goody bags, etc.

The turnout was very good with the last 2 coaches decorated to look like a witches brood, and filled with lots of excited children, many of whom had dressed up for the occasion. Here are a few scary photos of the proceedings.



New County Rail and CRP Officers

Breaking news at time of press was that our Community Rail Officer, Maria Cutler, has been appointed to a new full time role, as County rail officer – a role that is very important given that rail use is up 14%, but bus use down about 2-3% in Herts.

This will create a vacancy for a new CRP officer, which will be an important appointment for the future of the branch.

Interviews are due shortly with the successful candidate to be appointed in the New Year.



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

St.Albans Urban Transport Plan

Both myself and our chairman, John Webster, attended the St. Albans Urban Transport Plan consultation evening held at Wheathampstead in late October.

This looked at a number of issues raised in the main Transport Plan, and it was gratifying to see that the branch is now being recognised as an integral part of

county transport policy.

Issues concerned were varied and included items such as safety, cycling, public transport, walking, freight, congestion, parking, etc.

Particular concerns were the lack of cycling through Verulamium Park which would enable thousands of people from west St. Albans to access the Abbey station

by cycle; the bottleneck at the King Harry public house, which is listed, but ultimately may have to be relocated; and the high number of school buses, causing congestion in the mornings.

The final action plan will be published in Spring 2007.

Santa Specials

Saturday 16th December saw the annual Santa Specials which are now in their 3rd or 4th year.

Passengers took advantage of 2 for 1 tickets on the day and young passengers received goody bags, face painting and a visit from Santa Claus himself and his little helpers, including some Elves and Fairies.

The Santa Specials included several coaches on a 321 unit especially decorated for the occasion, and was held a little later this year, between 11am and 2 pm.

A special bus service ran from Watford Junction, with a suitably decorated bus to allow passengers to do their Christmas shopping at the Harlequin Centre and Central Watford.

The next scheduled event will be the Model Railway festival, to be held at the Alban Arena on Saturday and Sunday 20th/21st January, with a vintage bus service from the Abbey station, and other attractions similar to last year's event.



Class 321s win 'Golden Spanner' award

Breaking news is that the Class 321 trains used on the branch have won Modern Railways' 'Golden Spanner' award for electric multiple unit reliability for older BR generation EMUs, coming top out of 27 types of EMU.

The class 313s formerly used on the branch fared

less well, coming a fairly poor 23rd out of 27, following a number of failures.

The 321s came 2nd overall to the impressive new class 357s used by C2C on the Fenchurch Street services, which are the EMU version of the Class 170 diesel unit used by Midland Mainline.



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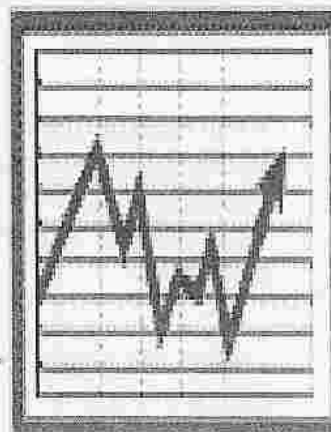
Fares increase and new advance ticket sales

Fares increased by an average of 5% from 1st January 2007 on most ordinary and return fares, although advance fares are generally cheaper, but some through fares and cash fares in London have risen sharply.

The Community Rail Partnership are proposing 'Carnet' style books of 10 tickets for use on the line,

subject to DfT rail approval. The CRP are also planning to look at internet ticket and advance ticket sales in due course, to reduce the need for ticket issue en-train.

Some tickets may become available from local outlets in due course, but there are no plans for ticket machines on stations at present.



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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 no. 01727-861839,
or online at; www.lcgb.net.

Service Changes and Engineering Works

The good news is that in the December timetable change 2006, the only significant changes were to main line Saturday connecting services which now revert to a Monday Friday off peak service pattern.

The Franchise changes next November though could mean a number of changes from December next year.

There will be proposed engineering works on

the branch in January, scheduled for Sunday 28th January 2007 when buses will replace trains all day.

At the present time there are no other planned engineering works, but passengers are advised to check announcements and also the Abfly and CRP and Silverlink/ Network rail websites for further engineering works in due course.

