



# Autumn Newsletter

**Inside a celebration of the beautiful gardens and planting at our stations**

September 2015

## Latest news from around the Lines

**Uckfield & East Grinstead Lines** the latest project on the Uckfield Line has been the collaboration with West Kent Extra's youth club. During a week in August a group of young people, youth group workers and a volunteer artist created a fantastic mural in the underpass of Edenbridge Town station. The artwork depicts features of the local area and in case travellers were in any doubt as to which station they had arrived at a multi coloured 'tag'. The response from station users and Southern staff has been wonderfully positive.



**Tonbridge to Redhill Line** the project with the Redhill YMCA is gathering pace. Extra large planters are being built by a community group based in Caterham 'the Men in Sheds'. A Surrey County Councillor has been assisting with sourcing other materials such as compost from the recycling centre. The young people are working on a photographic project which will be used to decorate the underpass. News of the project has spread throughout the local area resulting in enquiries for more community involvement from both Earlswood and Caterham stations.

**Marshlink Line** Bexhill to Bexhill, Artist Louise Kennard has travelled to other Bexhills in Canada and Australia, the results of these travels are an exhibition of artwork and photographs hosted by Bexhill station. The exhibition and a programme of workshops have been funded by the Arts Council for England. Her exhibition will start the first week of October and will run through to the end of December. It will be displayed on the slipways to platforms one and two. The workshop, date TBC, will be held in the main station concourse.



**Arun Valley Line** The Development Officer for the Arun Valley Line has been shortlisted for five Association of Community Rail Partnership Awards for her work on various projects along the line. Including Poetry on the Line, a Mosaic at Arundel, artwork at Crawley and a mural at West Worthing. We have to wait until 1st October to find out what she has won. Good luck Veronica.

**Seaford Brighton Line** There have been a number of walks over the summer from 'Lewes History Tours' in partnership with the South Downs National Park and 'Walks for All' in partnership with Lewes District Council and in support of the East Sussex County Council Older People's Day. The history tours take in some of the little twittens and hidden spaces in Lewes, so that even people who have lived in the town for some time can discover something new and understand their landscape more. We were very lucky to be joined by Mayor of Lewes, Councillor Susan Murray, who said that she was delighted to support 'sustainable access, which allows exploration of our wonderful historic towns within the South Downs National Park'. More events will follow in the spring .





**Station Gardens** before summer comes to its gradual end we thought we would celebrate all the wonderful station gardens big and small, the pots, the hanging baskets, the little corners of colour that make such a difference, all cared for by our wonderful volunteers and of course the station staff.

The original Adopt a Station project was set up in 2005 with the Aldingbourne Trust leading and working with 7 community organisations and 52 volunteers, they are now responsible for 31 of Southern Railway's stations and are still expanding. Their task is to create and maintain attractive floral displays, planters and window boxes come rain or shine. Working to enhance the overall impression of the stations means individuals learn valuable life and work skills like team work, time-keeping, independent travel and work ethics. The end results stand as a great advertisement for the contribution adults with learning disabilities can make to the wider community. Their work can be seen all over the Southern network especially along the Arun Valley and Marshlink Lines.



In Rye the John Ryan garden has turned many heads, while in Appledore and Hamstreet the garden and planters have made a massive improvement to the look of the stations and given passengers a welcome as they arrive. Bexhill have had eight baskets and two troughs brought back to life, while Winchelsea is blooming as ever.

The Lewes station gardens are cared for by Lewes station pots and plants. They take a very professional approach to their project and involve the community by gaining sponsorship for the planters from the towns businesses. Further down the line the garden club at London Road are very innovative , they hold events such as community picnics and even provide a community composter.



Every summer East Grinstead in Bloom swoop into their station and transform it into a showcase worthy of being entered into the national In Bloom competition, this year the Town won a silver gilt prize. Helped along the way by Southern and SCRP who provided hanging baskets, apple trees for the wildflower garden and even gave the lampposts a quick lick of paint.



The gardens at Uckfield station, which include a variety of herbs (snip some rosemary for your Sunday roast) are cared for by the Brighter Uckfield Campaign.

And the list goes on; primary school children, secondary schools, youth clubs, individuals, one off projects, such as tree trimming, the planting of a wildlife garden, local businesses, town councillors are all playing a part in improving their environment for the good of their community and the enjoyment of station users and visitors.





## Go Learn a new partnership project between SCRP and Govia Thameslink.

An exciting new project has been taken on by SCRP to deliver travel workshops to schools in

the GTR area, to help children develop confidence and skills for independent travel on public transport. Angie Lowen, Community Education Officer is leading the project and will be contacting schools in the coming weeks to arrange dates and times for the workshops. Initially we are targeting Year 6 pupils in Primary Schools but hope to expand the project in the future. If you know of a school that would be interested then contact Angie at [angie@sussexcrp.org](mailto:angie@sussexcrp.org) or by phoning her on 07852 221274.



**Department for Transport Volunteers** On 25 September we were joined at East Grinstead station by a group of staff volunteers from the Department for Transport ,the task we set them was to transform the platforms at the station by planting up 10 new planters, and clearing the wildflower garden in preparation for Spring next year. Southern very kindly financed the purchase of a selection of plants and other materials to bring some colour to the station throughout the winter months. The team set about the project like a whirlwind , the weeding was done, the planters were filled and planted, the car-park beds were weeded, even the car-park was litter picked and given a sweep. And then the group were off to a local pub to enjoy a well earnt lunch.

This was a good example of teamwork, not just by the DfT volunteers but Sussex CRP for putting it all in place, Southern management and all their staff who helped it run smoothly, East Grinstead in Bloom for overseeing that the primroses weren't weeded by mistake, one of our Directors, Tim Sparrow, who loaned his trailer to transport the planters from Eridge to East Grinstead. Incidentally, the planters are sections of drainage pipes donated by Network Rail from one of their projects. Re-use and Re-cycle!





**Some new facilities at our stations include:** A new car-park shortly opening at Uckfield station, electric parking points at Crowborough station and new cycle storage at facilities at Lewes station.

## Dates for your diary:

The annual joint lines meeting for Uckfield & East Grinstead and Tonbridge to Redhill & Reigate lines will be held on 12 October 2-4pm at the Eden Centre in Edenbridge. Speakers to include Network Rail, Southern and the Department for Transport, also our new Director from Brighton & Hove Buses, Patrick Warner.

The annual meeting for the Marshlink line will be held on 27 November 11:15am at Rye Town Hall. Speakers to include Amber Rudd MP.

The annual meeting for the Arun Valley line will be held on 10 November 7-9pm at Manor House, New Millennium Chamber, Littlehampton. Speakers to include Southern and South Downs National Park.

## Network Rail Platform Lengthening Programme

Please be aware that during the platform lengthening works along the Uckfield Line there will be periods when no trains will be running. The timeframe for the works is September 2015 until July 2016. The stations will be completed on a staggered basis. Bus replacement services will be provided. For further information please check [www.southernrailway.com/uckfieldline](http://www.southernrailway.com/uckfieldline)

## A message from one of our partners:

Railfuture has a long and proud tradition of supporting and working with the Community Rail movement, at national level through for example regular articles by Chris Austin in our quarterly 'Railwatch' magazine, and at local level through the work of our branches and affiliated rail user groups and members involved in them and in station adoption groups.

In Sussex we are singularly fortunate to have the opportunity to work increasingly closely with the forward-looking and innovative CRP, in which we find kindred spirits who put into local practice our shared belief in using Partnership to bring Communities [and businesses] closer together through Rail. We welcome the CRP's new Business Plan, for the duration of the Southern operation within Govia Thameslink Railway, which in particular looks to support those of us seeking expansion of the railway, as well as its improvement and increased use, in our case through 'the Wealden Line Extension' aka Uckfield-Lewes reinstatement.

As a token of our appreciation for the work, support and ambitions of Sussex CRP our London & South East regional branch has chosen to make a modest donation to the CRP's work through its line partnerships, in each of which we have been grateful to accept the offer for representation.

Yours for a bigger better railway,

**Roger Blake**  
Director, National Board, and Vice-Chair, London & South East regional branch

**railfuture**

