

February update

**PARTNERS IN
COMMUNITY
SAFETY**



This is the monthly newsletter from the industry's Community Safety Support Unit, funded on a two-year trial basis from the RSSB-managed research and development programme.

The CSSU works under the wider community safety banner in support of the industry's efforts to tackle railway crime, level crossing safety, personal security and fatalities management. The unit can also provide support if required to industry partners interacting with the victims of railway accidents.

If you have items for the newsletter please email the CSSU team at suenelsoncssu@aol.com by the 21st of the month to ensure inclusion in the following month's newsletter.

☛ **Book now for community safety forum**

Spaces are filling up fast for the National Community Safety Forum to be held in Birmingham on March 22nd. The event, featuring eight workshops and a themed exhibition focusing on community safety issues, is geared to industry practitioners and external community safety operators. Themes include workforce violence, the use of diversionary tactics, level crossing behaviour, effective use of the criminal justice system and building effective relationships with crime and disorder reduction partnerships, among others. Go to www.rssb.co.uk or www.railwaycrime.org to download a registration form and draft programme or contact kerry.taylor@rssb.co.uk

☛ **Life for station attacker**

Surrey man Jason Searle, aged 32, of Carshalton, has been jailed for life for attempted murder and grievous bodily harm following an attack at Sutton Common station last April. Searle, who was caught three weeks later, attacked his 51-year-old woman victim shortly after 11pm while she was waiting for a train. She was pushed from behind on to the track then violently assaulted, sustaining serious injuries that needed 30 stitches to head wounds.

Searle will serve at least eight years before being eligible for parole. Following the verdict, Det Insp Karl Skrzypiec of British Transport Police said: "This was a savage and unprovoked stranger attack on a vulnerable lone woman with no obvious motive. Society is a safer place with Jason Searle behind bars."

☛ **2 million and rising**

In just six months the industry's education website www.trackoff.org has attracted a staggering two million 'hits' from schools and local communities.

The site, facilitated on behalf of industry partners by RSSB, takes the number one slot out of two million references to railway crime on the Google search engine and is also number one on the MSN, Yahoo and Ask Jeeves search engines.

In addition, more than 100,000 downloads of materials have been made in the six months from August to the end of January - traditionally a period of lower activity, as more offences of railway crime involving young people tend to occur during the spring and summer months. In one month alone (November) the site received 391,446 hits and 20,083 downloads were made.

In total, from August 1st to January 31st there were 2,051,657 hits on the site

and 108,995 downloads of materials.

The Trackoff website has won National Grid for Learning (NGfL) accreditation operated through the Department for Education and Skills. The NGfL remit is to provide the gateway to quality assured internet-based educational resources with a network of selected links to websites offering high quality content and information. Sites with NGfL accreditation are constantly monitored to ensure content quality is maintained and messages are appropriate.

The content of the site aligns to national and Scottish curricula requirements with appropriate lesson plans available to meet classroom needs.

Regular feedback from a wide range of schools and teachers ensures that content is kept in line with education policy and developments.

Such close liaison has led to the creation of materials specifically for use with IT-based interactive whiteboards in the classroom. The use of whiteboard technology has been made a national educational priority by the government, and the development of appropriate materials that can be downloaded from the Trackoff website closely aligns to this policy. This self-help approach means that teachers can reinforce railway safety messages themselves but using industry-developed materials. With more than 20,000 schools in Britain located within a two-mile corridor of the railway the Trackoff website therefore provides a valuable teaching resource to any school that wants it, when they want it.

• The Trackoff website also attracts international interest with recent requests received for materials from schools in the USA, Russia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Egypt, Australia and New Zealand.



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☛ Focus on knife crime

Mobile metal detectors are being brought in by the British Transport Police as part of a new crackdown on knife crime. Under the banner Operation Shield, officers are piloting use of the new kit where knife crime is known to be a problem.

Using hand-held detectors and portable walk-through detection arches, officers are swooping unannounced at key mainline and Underground station locations in the London area from the beginning of this month.

The intelligence-led approach will also seek to reassure passengers that the police are focused on tackling fear of crime, with the operation backed by billboard and leaflet information to be distributed at stations. It is planned the campaign will be rolled out across the national rail system on completion of the current trials with the new equipment.

The move comes in the wake of two killings in January, both linked to criminal activity at railway stations. The first involved the death of a man at Welwyn Garden City station after he was attacked by a group of youths in front of his fiancée. The second involved city lawyer Tom ap Rhys Pryce who was stabbed to death by two youths shortly after a man was robbed at Kensal Green Tube station, the same station used by the lawyer only minutes before.

Two youths have been remanded in custody in relation to the second incident charged with murder and two offences of robbery. For further information about Operation Shield contact the force's crime reduction officer, Det Insp Brian Howat at brian.howat@btp.pnn.police.uk



☛ Music makers on the right TraX

Youngsters from across the north of England have been flocking in their thousands to take part in a pioneering new music project combining a search for the next new musical talent with life saving rail safety messages.

Developed by RSSB for use by industry partners, the national MusicTraX scheme is currently being piloted by the UK's largest train operator Northern via a new website, www.northerntrax.net. Through the venture, supported by global music giant EMI and backed by top recording artists including the Kaiser Chiefs and Lemar, budding musicians are promised an instant audience, sending their material to the NorthernTraX site, while also legally downloading music from other bands.

The project is aimed at helping to reinforce railway safety messages among communities and young people and complements other industry initiatives such as Network Rail's No Messin'! campaign.

Following the NorthernTraX pilot, RSSB will launch the nationally focused MusicTraX campaign that will target local communities, promoting the performing arts and other interactive projects to encourage young people

into exciting activities away from the railway.

NorthernTraX is already proving a winner, with almost 100 tracks submitted and almost 200,000 visits made to the site since it went live in mid-November. The site includes an on-line magazine, album reviews, features, and a photo gallery plus crucially, a platform through which critical rail safety information and messages can be delivered.

One of the key attractions is the chance for young performers to have their music voted for on-line by the public, with the best acts winning a variety of prizes including having their music professionally recorded and engineered.

As part of the pilot scheme Northern has hosted a series of 'Techno Trucks' - mobile recording studios giving young people the chance to record their own music onto CD or MP3 files - right on their doorstep. The Techno Trucks have visited the city centres of Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Manchester, Hull and Newcastle, attracting thousands of young people in the process. For more information contact suenelsoncssu@aol.com or chris.leech@northernrail.org





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☛ New police powers for staff assaults

Recent lobbying by the cross-industry Rail Personal Security Group plus legislative changes to police powers is expected to improve the way the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) deal with people assaulting railway staff.

Before January 1st 2006 police attending a physical assault where there was no serious injury only had power of arrest for common assault if it appeared impractical to serve a summons or where the alleged offender's correct name and address could not be established at the time.

It meant that many offenders were reported for summons rather than being arrested, leading to an increase in the time it took to bring a case to court. This in turn often led to rail staff victims feeling vulnerable and unsupported.

But now the Serious and Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 gives police the power to arrest for any criminal offence making it far more likely that offenders will be arrested at the time.

As a result the BTP has introduced a "positive" arrest policy for all staff assault cases.

This, coupled with the CPS confirming that its guidelines about it being in the public interest to prosecute when "a person serving the public" is assaulted includes public-facing rail staff, gives the rail industry the benefit of a much tougher regime. For more information on how this new approach can work contact peteredwardscssu@aol.com

☛ Near miss youth says sorry to rail staff

A West Yorkshire teenager who by a split second missed being hit by a train travelling at 100mph, has apologised to rail staff for his antics.

Stewart Marsden, then aged 17, was captured on CCTV cameras standing on

the tracks at Fitzwilliam Station near Pontefract last July. The horrified CCTV operator kept the cameras trained on the scene as the frantic Virgin Trains driver slammed on the emergency brake and sounded his horn, powerless to do anything more as his train bore down on the youth. Only at the last second did the boy jump clear.

Since the incident Stewart, who admitted he had been drinking at the time, has been referred by Wakefield district youth offending team to work with the British Transport Police and the rail industry to gain an insight into how distressing it can be for train crew to be faced with such actions.

With the help of Northern Rail and supervised by the police, Stewart has ridden in a train cab through Fitzwilliam to see for himself the train driver's perspective, and has met train crew in their mess room at Leeds Station to be told at first hand their views of such behaviour.

Now Stewart has written to Virgin Trains apologising for his actions. In a letter to all staff he wrote: "I apologise to the driver of the train and all the passengers... I really regret what I did and it won't happen again. When I went on the train I saw how the driver must have felt. All the people on the train must have been terrified when the driver put the brakes on heavy. The police showed me the footage and I was terrified to see how close to death I was."

Stewart, who is now working with the industry to help promote safety messages, told staff: "I am deeply and truly sorry for putting you in that situation and I want you to know that I am really sorry for the trauma I put everyone under. I hope it will be a lesson to other people about the effects of alcohol. Please accept my heartfelt apology."

British Transport Police officer PC Stephen Wareing who has been working with Stewart, said: "I think he has well and

truly learned his lesson. Hopefully his story will help others do the same." For further information contact stephen.wareing@btp.pnn.police.uk or wakefield-yot@wakefield.gov.uk

• Meanwhile, CCTV footage of the incident has been broadcast across the United States to help illustrate a story about a 10 year old Californian girl who was killed while playing on the railway. The station, Univision, broadcasts coast to coast and serves the country's Hispanic population of which there are 43 million. The request for the footage came from the States at 10.30 at night UK time and within three hours the footage had been formatted for use in the US and sent electronically to the TV station in time to meet its broadcast deadline.



☛ Whistle boards stolen

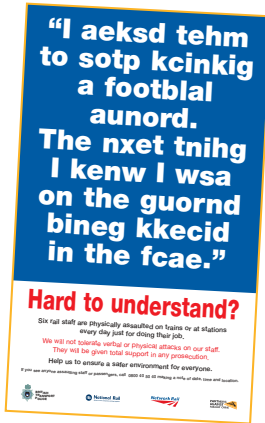
Mystery thieves have been repeatedly stealing whistle boards from the lineside in Lingfield, Surrey. The circular boards featuring a single letter W are installed as a safety requirement for train drivers to alert pedestrians of an oncoming train. The thefts coincide with local residents campaigning to get train operators to lower the sound of modern train horns which they claim keep them awake at night. The boards have been replaced at least 10 times, prompting fears of an accident. There are three foot crossings in the locality, all of which are public rights of way and all of which require whistle boards due to poor sighting for trains.



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☛ **Thumbs up for staff assaults poster campaign**

Research by MORI into the effectiveness of the rail industry's year-long staff assaults poster campaign has concluded it was a success.



Almost half of all rail users - 47% - recognised the posters when shown an example and understood the message that assaults on rail staff are unacceptable. A total of 28% of passengers recalled the posters unprompted, said to be a very good result for such a campaign. In addition, two thirds of those quizzed thought the posters were effective or very effective.

Three train operators - GNER, South West Trains and Virgin Trains - agreed for MORI to interview a broad cross-section of travellers at a range of staffed stations across the country. Passengers ranged in age from 60-plus to teens travelling for a variety of reasons including daily commuting to work, school or college, weekend breaks, days out and visiting friends or family.

The poster campaign was organised by the cross-industry Rail Personal Security Group and launched in November 2004. A series of four posters unveiled at three-monthly intervals was displayed at staffed stations across the network, only made possible by the support of train operators and Network Rail. For more information about the campaign contact alan.davies@rspb.co.uk or carole.lehman@mori.com about the research findings.

☛ **'Happy slapping' training**

Nearly 3,000 12 and 13 year olds from Tyneside are being given training in how to cope if they have to help a victim of 'happy slapping.' Staff from St John Ambulance are teaching the year 8 pupils at the SafetyWorks interactive safety centre in Scotswood, Newcastle.

The training features a mock-up of an incident in which a youngster is found injured at a Metro rail station after an attack. The youngsters learn how to make an emergency situation safe, how to deal with someone who has been hurt, make an emergency call and recognise and treat choking. 'Happy slapping' involves committing violent acts against people which are filmed on a mobile phone camera and then distributed to others.

Other personal safety scenarios featured at the centre include the aftermath of rail trespass, drug use, car crashes and home emergencies. For more information go to www.safetyworks.org.uk or call the centre on 0191 274 3532.

The Northumbria branch of St John Ambulance can be reached on 0191 273 7938.

☛ **Rail death boy named**

A 15-year-old boy who was killed after apparently lying on the track in front of a train in south Wales has been named as Jonathan Mark Reynolds from Bridgend. Jonathan died at Pencoed station after being hit by an Arriva Trains Wales service from Cardiff to Milford Haven. Police are investigating reports that the youngster was being bullied.

☛ **European suicide symposium**

The 11th European symposium on

suicide and suicidal behaviour will be held from September 9th-12th, 2006 in Portoroz, Slovenia. It is the first time the symposium has been held in eastern Europe and will be conducted in English and Russian. For further information go to www.esssbl-slo.org

☛ **Taxi marshal scheme success**

A taxi marshal pilot scheme operating in Trafford Metropolitan Borough during the 2005 festive season has proved to be a huge success. The scheme which ran from Altrincham and Sale taxi ranks ensured the safe and smooth return home of thousands of revellers.

Taxi marshals worked in teams of four covering Friday and Saturday nights helping to address the problem of late night dispersal at the taxi ranks while assisting local people and visitors to the borough with getting home quickly and safely. The marshals dealt with an average of 100 customers a night at the Altrincham rank and a massive 500 customers a night in Sale. The scheme was given the thumbs up by taxi drivers and revellers alike. People queuing expressed their gratitude to the marshals saying "it makes us feel safe" and "what a great idea" as did the taxi drivers who were encouraged to use the rank more.

The scheme, run as part of the Safer Trafford Partnership, is currently being assessed and may return during busy times of the year. To learn more about the scheme and how it might be applied elsewhere contact Helen McFarlane, Head of Community Safety at the Safer Trafford Partnership on 0161 912 3967 or Community Safety Manager Malcolm Walker on 0161 856 8678

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☛ **Community wardens on the rails**

A new team targeting train troublemakers has been launched in Northumberland. British Transport Police and community wardens employed by Northumberland County Council have joined forces to reassure passengers and deter offenders. The wardens are carrying out joint patrols with transport police officers to act as a visible deterrent. They can also make immediate contact with police about incidents on trains, at stations or on line of route, and provide passengers with guidance on personal safety and crime prevention.

Train operator Northern Rail is actively backing the scheme and allowing wardens to travel free on key local services to undertake their patrols. The plan builds on existing arrangements for street wardens to patrol areas around stations which began two years ago.

For further information contact the BTP's North East area Chief Inspector of Operations jane.townsley@btp.pnn.police.uk or the Chief Inspector of Performance and Partnerships terence.nicholson@btp.pnn.police.uk

☛ **Skoda car ad condemned**

Car maker Skoda is being taken to task by rail safety professionals for its latest TV advertising campaign. The advert, shown during the high profile Celebrity Big Brother programme, depicts a person leaping from a bridge onto the roof of a moving train before smashing through a train window. As well as being seen as grossly irresponsible by rail industry community safety practitioners with the potential to lead to copycat actions, the advert flies in the face of the industry's huge efforts to reinforce safety messages. Now RSSB is in dialogue with the car company, the TV channel and the

Advertising Standards Authority in a bid to get the advert withdrawn. Go to www.skoda.co.uk (click on 'Your Skoda,' 'Downloads' and then 'Train') to view the advert, and let Skoda have your views.

☛ **Jewel theft reward**

A walk-on, walk-off thief stole a briefcase containing more than £100,000 of jewellery from a train minutes before it departed from a mainline London station. The owner of the bag, a 60-year-old London businessman, has offered a £10,000 reward for the return of the jewels, which included a 240-year-old brooch and a Victorian necklace. The case was stolen from a first class carriage on the 1600 King's Cross to Aberdeen train waiting to depart from platform 3 on January 12.

The theft serves as a salutary reminder to all passengers to keep a close eye on their bags, especially while on board trains. Theft of passengers' property accounts for 37% of all crime recorded on the rail system, with 65% of thefts happening on trains and 12% on trains at stations. The problem - seen as BTP's equivalent to domestic burglary - is currently part of a national crackdown on rail thieves, codenamed Operation Falcon. Theft of passengers' property covers pickpocketing, luggage theft and theft of personal property. The main spots outside London are Leeds, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly and Edinburgh Waverley.

☛ **ASBO changes welcomed**

Youngsters under 17 can now have anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) lifted after one year. Until now the minimum length for an ASBO was two years, but under new Home Office rules all young people under 17 with ASBOs will undergo a one-year review. Review results could lead to additional support being given to tackle their behaviour, a variation of the terms of the ASBO, or a complete discharge.

The move has been welcomed by the Youth Justice Board which says a year may be sufficient time for youth offending teams and other partner agencies to achieve lasting changes to young people's behaviour.

☛ **French rail police plan**

The French government has outlined plans for a rail police force to reduce violent crime such as an incident on New Year's Day when a gang of youth robbed and assaulted passengers on a train in southern France.

Government officials said the force will consist of 2,540 officers of whom 700 will be newly recruited into the police and gendarmerie. It is planned to have 250 patrols a day on trains in France as a result.

☛ **21 dead in bus crash**

A total of 21 people died near the Russian city of Krasnodar when their bus was struck on a level crossing by a passenger train. Russian Railways said the bus driver, who died in hospital, ignored warning signals. None of the 100 people on the train was hurt.

☛ **Going green**

A green five metre high fence has been installed by Metronet Rail along an embankment to stop vandals throwing stones at London Underground drivers. The 470 metre-long fence between Upney and Beacontree Tube stations is the first on the Underground to be coated green to blend in with a park, in this instance Mayesbrook Park alongside the railway. The new fence will help to improve safety and security and is more than twice the height of other Underground fences which are normally 1.8 metres.

☛ **Keep in touch...**

If you want to be added to this e-newsletter's mailing list send your details to suenelsoncssu@aol.com