

January 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.

☛ **Red runner jailed**

A man who drove a vehicle across a North Lincolnshire level crossing into the path of a freight train was jailed for nine months by Grimsby Crown Court. Glen Taylor was found guilty of endangering the safety of the railway and failing to provide a breath specimen after driving three times over the legal limit. Taylor was also banned from driving for 18 months.

☛ **Getting tough on staff assaults**

Intensive lobbying by the cross-industry Rail Personal Security Group (RPSG) has led to the Crown Prosecution Service confirming its guidelines for dealing with offenders who assault rail staff in the course of their duties.

And as a result, the British Transport Police has issued force guidance that encourages officers to seek prosecution for staff assaults rather than using a simple caution. This now means there is a far greater likelihood of offenders being prosecuted for attacking rail staff than ever before.

Attacks on rail staff will now be treated as assault on "a person serving the public" so adding an additional aggravating factor when decisions are made about would-be prosecutions and cautions.

This brings public-facing rail staff in line with other groups such as police officers, prison officers and nurses where it is deemed to be in the public interest to prosecute those who attack them in the course of their duties.

The Code for Crown Prosecutors states that the public interest must be considered in each case where there is enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. It goes on to list some common public interest factors which would favour a prosecution, not least that 'the offence was committed against a person serving the public.' It is this guidance under which public facing railway staff fall.

James Burt, chair of the RPSG and Customer Service Director of South West Trains says: "This is a real issue for staff who are the victims of violence and we are obviously anxious that they feel

they are getting the right level of support when offenders are detected. It is reassuring to know that the BTP shares the view of the RPSG that attacks on rail staff should be treated as assault on a person serving the public and the force approach is very helpful."

The move has also been welcomed by the rail union, RMT. Union official Phil Dee says: "It's good to see that the police are now taking the issue of assaults against rail staff more seriously."

The RPSG will be monitoring the level of prosecutions relating to attacks on rail staff as part of its campaign against staff assaults.

For more information on the RPSG work in this area contact Peter Edwards of the CSSU at peteredwardscssu@aol.com

☛ **12 years for rail robber**

A drug addict who robbed rail passengers travelling in near-empty carriages has been jailed for 12 years. Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court heard that in one attack Lamont Williams, 23, of Hackney, London nearly cut off the victim's nose when he slashed it with a Stanley knife. Williams pleaded guilty to five charges of robbery, two of attempted robbery, wounding with intent, possession of a firearm, possession of ammunition, and possession of an offensive weapon. The court heard Williams had launched a sustained campaign of violence and intimidation in east London during a two-month period, including carrying out five attacks in one day. He was finally caught after beating a commuter around the head at Bethnal Green in front of two police community support officers.

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☛ National Community Safety Forum

A reminder - the rail industry's National Community Safety Forum is being held on Wednesday, March 22nd at Aston Villa FC conference centre, Birmingham. The forum is being organised by the Rail Safety and Standards Board and the CSSU and will showcase examples of good practice in the community safety arena through a series of workshops.

The programme is currently being drawn together but is likely to include sessions on the rail industry's newly-emerging approach to community safety; tackling workplace violence; how to work better with crime and disorder reduction partnerships; good practice guidelines on presenting messages to young people and local communities, and more effective use of the criminal justice system, among others.

It is planned the forum will also feature an exhibition and break-out area to further encourage the sharing of experience and ideas.

The forum, which is being operated on a not-for-profit basis, is open to all rail industry and external community safety practitioners and decision-makers, with spaces being filled on a first-come-first-served basis.

To register your interest contact kerry.taylor@rssb.co.uk

☛ Mosquito system buzzes loitering youngsters

Train operator Arriva Trains Wales is pioneering a trial system designed to disperse young people loitering at railway stations. The Mosquito Security System uses ultra-sonic sound waves that annoy teenagers and young people

up to the age of 25 and cause them to move away from areas where the system is in use. The system is completely harmless, even with long term use and doesn't affect people over 25 as older people lose their ability to hear at higher frequencies.

The innovative new approach has been installed at Treorchy station on the Cardiff Valleys network and is set to be trialled at three more stations to help properly evaluate the system.

Field trials have shown that the longer someone is exposed to the sound the more annoying it becomes, with teenagers being acutely aware of the Mosquito and moving away from the affected area within a couple of minutes. The trials also suggest that after several uses, the groups of children or teenagers tend not to loiter in the areas covered by the Mosquito, even when it is not turned on. The effective range is between 15 and 20 metres and the closer a person gets to the unit the more effective it is. So far Arriva Trains Wales have received positive comments about the effectiveness of the system from station staff and hope it will become a key tool in their armoury to tackle anti-social behaviour.

For more information contact catherine.tryon@arrivatw.co.uk

☛ Merseyrail notch up more secure stations

Train operator Merseyrail has added a staggering 21 of its stations to the Department for Transport's Secure Stations Scheme. It now means that 40 per cent of Merseyrail stations - double the company's stated objective - are now part of the scheme, which seeks to provide an incentive to station

operators to improve security and provide reassurance to passengers and staff.

Merseyrail now has two "secure" lines of route, the Ormskirk line and the Kirby line. Plans for 2006 include adding stations on the Southport and Hooton lines to the scheme.

Mike Carroll of Merseyrail said: "This is a remarkable achievement and clearly demonstrates what we can do as an industry working in partnership. It is a tribute to the efforts of Merseytravel, Merseyrail, the British Transport Police and security contractor Carlisle Security Services who have all worked together to achieve a common goal far beyond our original aim."

For more information contact: mcarroll@merseyrail.org

☛ Vandals close landmark river walkway

The pedestrian walkway on Newcastle's landmark High Level Bridge - built to carry rail and road traffic over the River Tyne - has been closed because of vandalism. Newcastle and Gateshead councils, together with Network Rail, have ordered the walkway closure because of repeated acts of arson and vandalism. The 150-year-old Grade I listed bridge is currently undergoing an extensive £10 million restoration programme on the vehicle section which is due for completion in 2007. Councillors say the significant safety risk to pedestrians and rail services which are continuing to use the bridge has led to the walkway closure. Recent incidents include vandals tearing down protective plastic sheeting and using lighter fuel to try and start fires.



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☛ Vandals in Metro clean-up

Young rail vandals are to carry out unpaid work for Tyne and Wear Metro operator Nexus as punishment for their actions. The scheme is being piloted by the Gateshead youth offending team who will work with Nexus to ensure young offenders give back to the community they have damaged. Two 16-year-old youths have already spent two hours at Metro depot in Gosforth washing a fleet of vans. The youths had been convicted of criminal damage on the Metro system, including graffiti. Nexus is now hoping the scheme can be rolled out across the Metro network.

☛ Rail line clean-up

A stretch of railway line in the West Midlands known as "bomb alley" is to be part of a partnership clean-up drive. The Chase line, between Ryecroft Junction and Bloxwich, near Walsall, is notorious for vandalism, missile-throwing and fly-tipping. Missiles are regularly thrown at moving trains, while tons of rubbish dumped on the trackside pose major hazards and can lead to train delays.



Now Network Rail, Walsall Council and the British Transport Police are

joining forces in a major campaign to shift an estimated 500 tons of rubbish, including sofas, mattresses, shopping trolleys and even garden furniture that has been dumped on the steep embankment close to the track. Work to clear the rubbish from the two-mile stretch of line is set to begin this month and last about eight weeks with contractors working at nights and weekends.

☛ Teenager played with signals

A 16-year-old West Midlands youth who tampered with railway signals has been sentenced to three months in custody. The youth, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was caught climbing a signal gantry on the West Coast Main Line at Great Bridgeford near Stafford. Signals were found to have been pulled into a maintenance position which could only have been achieved by breaking a lock and physically pulling them up, magistrates sitting at Stafford Youth Court were told. A total of 26 trains were delayed for up to three-and-a-half hours by the youth's actions who said he had climbed the gantry because he didn't think trains ran on Sundays.

Magistrates told the youth his actions had the potential to cause "multiple deaths." The youth was given six month detention and treatment order for endangering safety of the railway and a concurrent four month sentence for tampering with the signals.

He will spend three months in custody and the remainder of his sentence on a supervision order.

☛ Graffiti vandals on £100,000 rolling stock spree

Youths in the Bristol area who caused £100,000 damage to rolling stock are risking their lives, the British Transport Police has warned. Now officers are to embark on a high profile operation to catch the culprits. Many of the damaged trains will have to be taken out of service to be repainted, with some being returned to manufacturers for repairs. Supt Chris Phillips said: "These people are risking their lives. This is not something casual but serious criminal damage." He added that the amount of paint needed to cover the side of a train was enough for parents or friends to have their suspicions raised. And he warned that the rail industry will seek to recover damages from those convicted through the courts.

☛ Marshals on the rails

US sky marshals used to providing security on aircraft joined law enforcement agents on other forms of transport over Christmas. The Visible Intermodal Protection and Response - Viper - teams were deployed to railways, subways and ferries, but Washington officials stressed there was no new intelligence suggesting terrorists were targeting transport networks. A spokesman said: "This is a very good approach to test our tools and quickly deploy resources in the event of a situation or threat."

☛ Keep in touch...

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