

Dec - Jan update



Rail Safety & Standards Board

2006 has seen a few changes to the UPDATE newsletter - a new editor, a readership survey, a newer look, and new readers too! As we all know, change presents us with challenges, and it is also often a sign of progress... Well - I have one more sign of progress to report before we move into 2007. From January, there will be a new project manager working on Community Safety at RSSB who will be responsible for the production and further improvement of this newsletter, along with other activities including the annual industry forum for practitioners (do you have 14th March in your diary?!), and educational websites. Please welcome Kerry Taylor as the new editor for UPDATE. Please continue to provide your stories and feedback so that Kerry can help all our readers as effectively as possible. Kerry is looking forward to building new relationships with you all and exploring ways in which she can help community safety practitioners to reduce public behaviour related risk on the railways.

Wishing you a happy and safe holiday and best wishes for 2007.

Gaynor Anderson

▶ Playing Safe

A recent joint rail safety initiative between Network Rail and Greenock Morton Football Club and targeted at young offenders and youngsters who could be vulnerable to getting involved in rail crime has been an 'unbelievable success', according to Martin Gallagher, Crime Education Manager, Network Rail Scotland. The Chair of the football club had noticed youngsters crossing the line behind the ground and was keen to get involved in the initiative.

Over 500 young people, many of whom queued for an hour before the event took place at a Sports Centre in Greenock, took part in wrestling, boxing, basketball and surfing. The Army assisted with an inflatable assault course and footballers from Morton F.C coached and played with the youngsters. Rail safety competitions, with a subtle educational theme, supported the activities. The youngsters, average age 14yrs, went away with a T-shirt and plenty of rail safety information. The partnership with the football club and the local community is to continue and a bigger event is already being planned for Easter. If you would like more information on this initiative please contact Martin Gallagher on 07920 508288 or e-mail martin.gallagher@net-workrail.co.uk



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► Fare Dodgers Named and Shamed

Central Trains policy of naming and shaming fare dodgers, introduced in March 2005 in the West Midlands area, has now been extended across its network. Last month 142 fare-dodgers were publicly named and shamed on posters at stations. Since the policy started over 2000 fare dodgers have been convicted, receiving an average fine of over £200 as well as a criminal record for the cost of, in average cases, a £3.80 ticket!

► Rail Crime Cut

British Transport Police (BTP) are claiming a 35 percent drop in trouble on rail services in the Pontypridd area in Wales since six community support officers began operating. The team, based at a police station at Pontypridd railway station, have held almost 1000 rail-based day and evening patrols in the last six months.

Watchdog Group Passenger Focus says rail passengers are more worried about their safety at stations in Wales than in the rest of the UK. The community support officers at Pontypridd are part of a network of 21 recruited to work on rail services across Wales. BTP say one of the biggest problems are congregations of youths late at night, many of who have been drinking with no intention of travelling. They tend to cause fear and apprehension to the travelling public. Since the officers have been operating, some 460 people, who had no plans to travel, have been ejected from stations.

► Southern Secures Stations

Southern trains has achieved its 50th Secure Stations accreditation. A further six stations - Shoreham-by-Sea, Chichester, Barnham, South Croydon, Reigate and Hove have been added to the list of 44 that have been awarded secure station status in a scheme which is managed by the Department for Transport in partnership with the BTP.

The awards are made against strict security criteria including:

- good fencing and boundaries
- good CCTV coverage
- good lighting
- good use of corner mirrors and signage
- a reduction in crime rates at the station
- regular station maintenance audits including removal of graffiti within 24 hours



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- availability of staff with conflict management knowledge
- positive results in an independent survey of passengers using the station on how they feel about security at the station.

► **Football Fans - opportunity or threat?**

Every football season, there are over 4 million rail journeys solely for the purpose of attending football matches around Great Britain. While this attracts considerable revenue opportunities for train operators, the behaviour of some football fans has a considerable impact on medium and long haul train services, rail staff and other passengers on trains and at stations. Crowd control and the difficulties of managing the violence and abusive behaviour associated with a small minority, much of it fuelled by alcohol, is a concern. Whilst much effort has gone in to controlling the problem, many front line managers and rail staff believe the risk has grown in recent years and RSSB was commissioned to conduct research to better understand and reduce the associated risks.

To view the research brief go to http://www.rssb.co.uk/pdf/reports/research/T592_rb_final.pdf (opens in new window)

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The recommendations from this research are now being followed up. A Train Operating Companies' Alliance is being formed to develop a consistent approach to managing the risks associated with football fans on the railways. The ideas developed at this Alliance will then be presented to a newly formed Rail-Football Forum, which will be made up of stakeholders from Football, Police and Rail organisations. The Forum's aim is to develop strategies which provide mutual benefits to both the football and rail industry. To find out more and ensure your TOC is represented on the TOC Alliance contact Julie Summerell at julie@virago-consulting.co.uk

► **Stations Access Funding**

First Capital Connect has announced that 37 of its stations are to benefit from a range of accessibility improvements following two successful applications to the Department for Transport's Access for All scheme.

Funding of £300,000 has been secured which will be matched by funding of a further £300,000 from the train operator. Over the coming months, works will take place including the installation of automatic doors, improved lighting, low level ticket counters, anti-trip treads, new and



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additional handrails and new hearing loop systems. All the work is scheduled for completion by April 2007.

► **Scottish Rail Crime Figures Fall**

For the second year in a row, crime rates have fallen across the board on the Scottish railway system. BTP statistics show that the number of recorded incidents dropped from 8830 to 7657, the lowest level for five years. Each of the sixteen categories, from violent and sexual assaults to drug offences and minor disorder, showed a reduction. The statistics cover each of the 12 station areas with a BTP presence.

The most common crimes were line-of-route offences including vandalism and trespassing on the tracks, totalling 2767 incidents. Busiest beats for the police were the Glasgow and Edinburgh areas. BTP say that intelligence-led policing, coupled with increased high visibility on-train patrols, has resulted in an increase in the overall detection rate and a decrease in the number of offences.

► **New Initiative Focuses on Car Owners**

The West Midlands has been named as one of the safest areas in the country for rail users to park their car with the region's public transport body, Centro-PTA awarded the Park Mark Safer Parking Award for car parks at 35 rail stations due to their low crime and high safety standards. However the West Midlands Police have recently reported a 309 per cent rise in thefts of Satellite Navigation equipment. To tackle this problem Centro-PTA working with the BTP have recently launched a poster, banner and postcard information campaign aimed at car owners. In the run up to Christmas 'seasonal' messages are being used to warn car owners of the dangers of leaving SatNav and Ipod valuables in their cars.



The information is being displayed in rail station car parks and is being handed out by BTP and security staff. Small postcards are being placed on the windscreens of cars at all car parks. The Police are advising all car owners to remove all valuables from their cars after parking to remove temptation from opportunist thieves. They say it is not just car park operators, but car owners who need to take responsibility and take steps in the fight against vehicle crime. For more information contact Adrian Shortland at Centro on 0121 214 7102.



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► Thieves Target Copper Cable

The continuing rise in the price of copper which has doubled in the past year is causing a big increase in the theft of copper cable from railways and is leading to significant delays and costing rail companies £millions. BTP point out that there have been almost 1,000 incidents of theft of signalling cable from warehouses or from along rail lines this year. This is a 50 percent increase since last year. Thieves are ripping out the high voltage cabling which controls the communication system, the points and the signalling system. Each time an incident happens it causes big delays for thousands of passengers. Criminals are risking electrocution and going line-side where they are in danger of being killed by passing trains. Recently there have been two fatalities associated with copper theft from railway sub-stations and several people have been severely injured. BTP say West and South Yorkshire is currently experiencing the most incidents of copper cable theft across the UK with 182 cases recorded in West Yorkshire over the past nine months. To date some 140 arrests have been made with offenders charged with theft and with obstructing the railway, which carries a sentence ranging from two years to life in prison. BTP are in close contact with scrap metal dealers to help prevent this type of theft and ensure the market for stolen cable is stamped out.

► Reward Reels in Detonator Thieves

Central Trains offer of a £5000 reward for information leading to the conviction of vandals who stole 20 potentially lethal detonators from a Coventry train depot has led to the arrest of four youths on suspicion of causing criminal damage and the return of the stolen detonators. The youths, two 11yr olds, one 14 yr old and one 15yr old who caused £100,000 worth of damage in the same incident are from Spon End in Coventry and have been released on bail until January 2007 pending further enquiries by BTP. The yellow detonators, each the size of a two-pound coin and with two metal tabs were stolen from the 350 Desiro carriage which was parked at a siding. If set off, shrapnel from the detonators could kill anyone in a 30 metre radius.

► On-Line Rail Survey

BTP is conducting an on-line survey www.documentcapture.co.uk/forms/btp_2006.htm to find out what rail passengers feel its priorities should be. The survey, which went live mid September and will run through to the end of March 2007, is already producing a big response with over 200 questionnaires completed in the first week. BTP say the data provided will be essential to decision making.