

Welcome to
Peterborough

Hereward CRP Newsletter

Issue 8

June 2024

CRP INSIGHT

What a busy few weeks' we have had – there's LOTS to report!

None of the work we have done over the past couple of months would have been possible without the support from funders, and all the organisations who have helped.

In the case of our station visits and Try a Train trips, we extend our thanks to CrossCountry Trains for the funding from their Community Engagement Fund and Greater Anglia for providing train passes for some of the trips.

Our thanks also go to the Friends of March Railway Station, March Station Adopters and Ely Station Adopters for accommodating us at various times throughout the past few weeks.

On 16th May, Hereward CRP board members plus guests travelled to Whittlesey for the quarterly management board meeting.

The theme of the day after the formal business was to demonstrate the important link between the work the CRP does and the District Council's Transport Team.



A perfect example of this link is the Whittlesey Heritage Walk, and despite some less than favorable weather, board members did manage to get a taste of the initiative and enjoyed “selfies with the Straw Bear” in the Buttercross!

We love a bit of friendly competition, and, as you'll see from Jade and Adrian's write-up's, Ely station adopters have taken on March station in “The Battle of the Sunflowers!

The competition is hotting up and the stakes are high (or will be, hopefully!).

Watch this space for the latest developments ... !



FOCUS FOR

JULY &

AUGUST

July

*2nd - Ely Tourism / Visit Ely
“Fixing the link” Day*

13th July – Manea Gala

*16th July – Whittlesea Station
Project Board meeting*

*19th July – Hereward CRP /
CRN annual accreditation
meeting*

August

*13th – Hereward CRP
Management Board meeting*



Community Rail week – “More than a Railway”

On 22nd May, Wendy and Joanne accompanied a crew from 20Twenty Productions to Norwich. They went to film inside Greater Anglia’s Customer Contact Centre at Norwich station. This footage will be crucial in the production of the Hereward CRP’s “How to” videos which are currently being edited. Thanks to Alan for providing passes for the crew.

Also on 22nd, Bev and Ben travelled to Sheffield for EMR’s Community Rail Day and headed north to spread word of Hereward CRP – a great day and lots of interest in the walking and cycling opportunities in the Fens.

The next day, Wendy and Joanne travelled to Nottingham for another of EMR’s Community Rail days - lots of great conversations were had about the ease of travel between the Midlands and East Anglia, and connecting with The Hereward Line.



Community Rail Day in Stamford – 18th June

Again, on the subject of Community Rail, we were delighted to head up to “Sunny Stamford” to join Station Adopters along with colleagues from East Midlands Railway, Network Rail, Greater Anglia and CrossCountry Trains, for a Community Rail Day.

We served refreshments throughout the morning and were joined by not only passengers who were travelling from the station, but also lots of members of the local community who had seen the posters and wanted to find out more – Station Adopter David did a great job of “spreading the word” locally and we had a really busy time, with some useful and meaningful discussions.

Our thanks to all of the adopters at Stamford who gave up their time to support.

Rail Safety Week – 24th – 30th June

To conclude the week of Rail Safety events, the Hereward CRP travelled to Peterborough Station to host an event during a busy Saturday morning.

We were joined by Kaye (EMR), Alan (GA) and Ian (LNER) and March station adopters Adrian and Max and we spent a busy three hours handing our Rail Safety Forum’s colouring and activity sheets long with LNER colouring pencils and EMR safety activity books to young people.



For those who are never too old, we also had copies of the “Stay safe with Thomas” reading books and Kaye also bought along EMR’s Mascot Margot to give out to some of the young people we engaged with during the morning.



March station visits

Hereward CRP officers have facilitated group visits to March station, working first of all with The March Station Adopters and then The Friends of March Railway Station to put on visits from The 1st & 2nd March Scout Group. We are so grateful for the support from both groups.

The first visit was from the Beaver colony and 16 young people came along and helped Adrian and Max plant up three new planters out the front of the station.

Each young person also planted up a pot of sunflowers to take home with them and they are keeping a growing journal and will take photos to send into us to show us their growing blooms!

The evening was split into three activities and while one group were planting, Bev took another group around the station car park and talked to them about the various wildlife and habitats and what bugs and birds they might see – they were very knowledgeable!

The third group went with Joanne on a tour of the station and as well as showing them the various safety and accessibility facilities (tactile paving, wheelchair ramps, help points etc.), they then walked and talked through how to use the level crossing safely.

The young people were all full of enthusiasm and their history and knowledge of the railway was amazing!

All of the gardening work they did on the night has ticked off some elements of their gardening badge.





The second visit was from the Cub pack and 24 young people visited the station and were hosted in the Community Rooms by the FOMRS. Bev gave them an overview of the history of the railway and March station and they completed a trail / quiz which the Friends had put together about the station.

They also enjoyed looking around the heritage rooms and, of course, the model railway!



As before, the group was split into two and while one half did the history tour, Joanne took the second group on a station tour, and like the Beavers, they learned about the safety and accessibility features of the station and used the level crossing. Some of the Cubs have family members who work on the railway now and so their knowledge and interest was super!

As part of our ongoing work with FACET (a local charity offering day care and life skills courses for adults with learning disabilities), we have hosted two visits to the station for students to learn about the history and safety. The first visit was jointly attended by two officers from The British Transport Police – along with meeting Jax, the station cat, and seeing the FOMRS model railway, this was the highlight of the visit without a doubt!





Students were allowed to try on uniform and were put in handcuffs, and some were allowed in the “cell” in the back and to sit in the front and sound the sirens – a fabulous visit!

All of the visits we have facilitated have focused on railway safety which we know is so important to young people especially.

Every attendee has taken away a Hereward CRP goodies bag with various activities and maps etc. in, along with Rail Forum’s activity and colouring sheets which were produced especially for Rail Safety Week ’24.

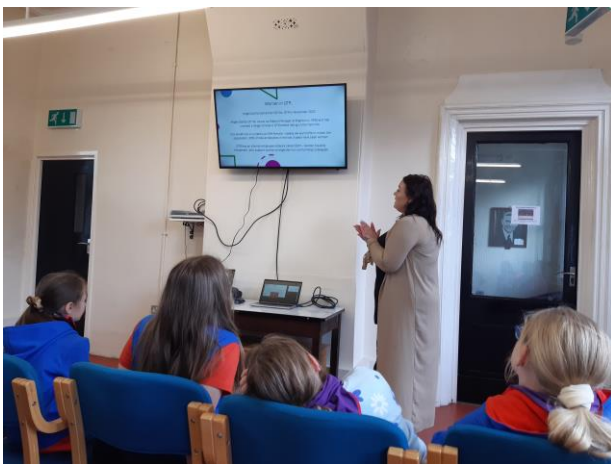
Try a Train trips – Peterborough & Ely

After successfully securing funding from CrossCountry Trains Community Engagement Fund, and with support from Alan at GA (who provided train passes for some of the journeys), we have been able to put on a varied programme of Try a Train trips (with more to come).



Working again with FACET, we have facilitated two visits from March to Peterborough for students to have a day out with friends and gain confidence and life skills. Taking the train there and back and then visiting the city’s museum and cathedral before buying their own lunches in McDonalds (and doughnuts for the journey home!) the students all had a super day out and a great experience. We are thrilled to have been able to support FACET in enabling these students this opportunity.

In the May half term, we hosted a group of Brownies and Guides from 1st Doddington Girl Guide group. They all enjoyed a morning of talks from women in the rail industry as well as a look around the heritage rooms and we were thankful to FOMRS for allowing us to use the community room.



Ladies from Greater Anglia, CrossCountry Trains, East Midlands Railway, GTR and Thameslink all gave presentations and the girls enjoyed hearing from a GA train driver and CrossCountry Train Manager as well as learning about some of the “lesser known” jobs within the industry.



The girls then boarded the train to Ely and on arrival were greeted by Cathy, a tour guide from Visit Ely, who had kindly agreed to escort the girls along to the river and then up Cherry Hill giving them an overview of the fascinating history of the city and the relevance of the “Ely eels”.

We had arranged for them to use The Maltings for their lunch stop and after a quick break, they enjoyed time in the park before returning to the station where Jade and Adele had prepared a station trail for them to do – this was superb and after answering questions about the station and its features and finding giant red hares, they were all given GA rucksacks to take away before their journey back to March – a fabulous day out, and the sun shone too, which was an unexpected bonus!



Since this visit, we have engaged further with the Doddington Guide group and their Rainbows and Brownies are now all in possession of the Rail Forum activity and colouring sheets and they will be completing these in their sessions and entering the competition - let's hope we see a winner from the Hereward Line!

Further Try a Train trips are planned for September when we shall be hosting a group of older people from a local care provider and also another Guide Group (this time from Manea) on a trip to Ely.

Hopefully each attendee has left feeling more confident to travel having learned that the railways are accessible and safe for everybody to use.



HEREWARD LINE ADOPTERS

Ely - Ely Plant Spotter's Jade

Our station is looking really green and starting to bloom now with all the sunshine we have been treated to.



Adele has been busy planting some new plants in our new railings planter and adding to our bike display on platform 1.



We have such a nice selection of plants this year which Janet has been adding to the tubs, and which is adding colour and variety!



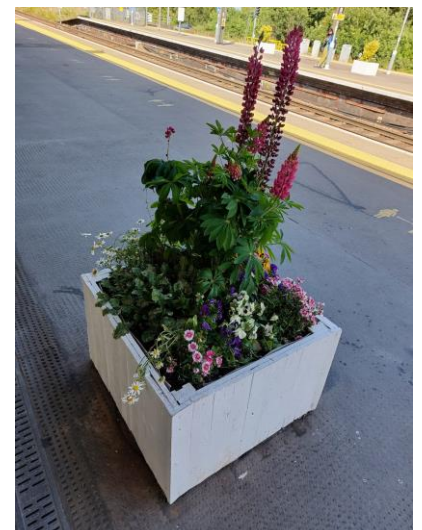
We must take this time to introduce two new members to the Ely Plant Spotters gang - please welcome Nigel and Janet!

Nigel is a regular train spotter at Ely and a friendly face and always stops to have a chat and water the plants for us, and Janet, his wife, comes down weekly for some plant maintenance, deadheading and grows lots of things from home to add to our planters. Nigel and Janet used to have an allotment and come with great plant knowledge that we all benefit so much from. Welcome to the team!

Adele and Amanda have also been busy painting the planters giving them a much-needed revamp and they are looking very smart again, they really make the plants stand out being white.

Finally, very exciting news we are having a sunflower competition this summer with another station..... March!

Let the battle commence, I think it's time we pulled out the miracle grow!





Manea



The new wooden tub planters which we installed earlier in the summer are now coming into full bloom and look lovely! They are positioned along platform 1 and add a real splash of colour.

Allyson continues to tend to them daily, dead heading and watering when needed. The mix of wet weather and then warmer sunshine we have had has definitely helped the planters to flourish!

March – FOMRS & March Station GA Adopters

March Station Adopters – update

Work has continued apace at the front of the station, with much weeding and removal of overgrown areas. The wildflower area over in the back corner is looking really nice and species including clover, buttercups, mallow, and comfrey are all doing their bit in attracting wildlife.

On the platforms, we were delighted to receive a hugely generous donation of filled hanging baskets from a regular visitor to the station. As you can see, they add a real dash of colour and brighten the platforms up no end. Regular watering and dead heading will keep us occupied in our spare time!





Finally, we are headlong into our Sunflower Challenge against Ely Station Adopters, and Angela from the ticket office did a great job of nurturing our little beauties!

As you can see, they are doing well, growing daily - bring it on!



Friends of March Railway Station - updates

Model Railway Exhibition – 18th May 2024

The FORMS Group held their annual Model Railway Exhibition at the Station on Saturday 18th May, where visitors got to visit the old station buildings along the disused platforms. There were around six other layouts on display, along with the Community Model Railway running on the day, which is built to replicate the original seven platforms that once ran through March Station.



Various stall holders offering model trains were also in attendance, together with stalls from the Bramley Line and B17 Steam Locomotive Trust, a tombola and refreshments were laid on by the Group's volunteers.

Copies of the newly published book 'Beware The Slides of March' were also available for visitors to buy – a must have for all enthusiasts of the history and heritage of the station in the 1980's.

Donations received from March Masonic Lodges



The Friends of March Station also welcomed representatives from both the March Master Masons and the Stonecross Lodge along to the Model Railway Exhibition where the Chairman, Rob Abel, Vice Chairman and Mayor of March, Gary Christy were presented with a cheque for £470.00 kindly donated by the two lodges to use towards the ongoing works taking place at the station to restore and preserve the heritage of the disused buildings.



FOMRS Group Visit to Whitemoor Yard

A group of volunteers from Friends of March Railway Station took a well deserved day away from the hard work and weeding going on down at the station to enjoy an informative and interesting visit to learn about what goes on behind those large metal gates on Hundred Road during a visit to Whitemoor Yard. The yard is now owned by Network Rail but operated by GBR Railfreight. The 'Friends' were treated to a tour of the yard, got to hear about how the site is now being used as the largest reclamation site of rails and ballast in the country, and were treated to a glimpse of what goes on inside the GBRf Control Tower. They also got a close look at the original Water Tower that still stands in the yard, and is one of the very few original buildings that remains on the site from the days when Whitemoor was, at one point, the biggest marshalling yard in the world.



80th

Anniversary of The Soham Rail Disaster

The FOMRS group marked the 80th Anniversary of the Soham Rail Disaster on Saturday 1st June, by holding an Open Day on the Community Model Railway layout and running models of the locomotives named to honour the Train Driver,

Benjamin Gimbert and the Fireman, James Nightall.

Two Class 47's and two Class 66's were run on the layout by our Vice Chairman, Gary Christy, ably assisted by our youngest volunteer Ruben. The Soham rail disaster occurred on 2nd June 1944, during the Second World War, when a fire developed on the leading wagon of a heavy ammunition train.

The wagon contained a quantity of high explosive bombs. The train crew had detached the wagon from the rest of the train and were drawing it away when the cargo exploded. The fireman of the train, James Nightall and the signalman at Soham signal box were both killed, and several other people injured. The driver, Benjamin Gimbert, and fireman, James Nightall, were both awarded the George Cross for preventing further damage which would have occurred if the rest of the train had exploded.



Heritage Open Days

The FOMRS group are currently hard at work organising two Open Days for Saturday 7th September and Saturday 14th September as part of the Heritage Open Days.

Heritage Open Days is England's largest community led festival of history and culture, involving thousands of local volunteers and organisations.

Every year, in September, it brings people together to celebrate their heritage, community and history.

Stories are told, traditions explored, and histories brought to life.

It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences – and it's all FREE.

Further details to follow in the next newsletter but mark the dates in your diary and come along to the events for a chance to visit the parts of the station that are not normally accessible to the general public. Loads of attractions are planned – craft fayre, tombola, stalls, and attractions.

Visit our Friends of March Railway Station Facebook page for more information.

Heritage Open Days
 Saturday 7th & 14th September 2024
 10am – 3pm

- > Craft Stalls
- > Tombola
- > Refreshments
- > Community Model Railway
- > Visit the FOMRS Museum, Library & Heritage Room

FOMRS
 FRIENDS OF MARCH RAILWAY STATION

heritage open days

FREE ADMISSION*

March Railway Station
 Station Road, March, Cambs PE15 8SJ

*Please note that full parking charges apply in the Station Car Park



Work Continues down at the station



The FOMRS volunteers have been hard at work now that the sun has decided to shine. The entire length of the track bed between the old Platforms 1 & 2 has been hand-weeded and the sleepers and rails are starting to be re-laid to bring it back to how it used to look when they were the main running lines through the station.

The last couple of weekends clearing the brambles and weeds in the corner down by the access ramp have unearthed some of the original wooden sleepers that once supported the avoiding line which passed behind the wall and into Whitemoor Yard.

The volunteers are excited to have found this original piece of history that has laid buried beneath the weeds for almost 40 years. They have plans to make a feature of this area by relaying some track to replicate how it would once have looked during the Station's heyday, improving the view for visitors and commuters on the approach to Platform 2.



Our regular little visitor

We now regularly get a visitor to the station every time the volunteers go to do some work – Saturday's, evenings ...

Never does a day go by when we are not checked up on by our adopted 'Station Cat'.

Jax is a friendly little creature and often passes by when he fancies a change of scenery from his proper home! He even helps himself to a tour of the rooms and supervises all the work taking place to make sure it's up to standard.



Whittlesea - Geoff



Rail walks

Geoff has researched 2 new rail walks from Whittlesea Station. One is a circular route from Whittlesea Station which basically follows the Whittlesey Heritage Trail. The Distance is approx. 2.7 miles. The second walk is more challenging from Whittlesea Station to March Station and is just over 11 miles. A third walk could be considered from Whittlesea Station to Peterborough station via the Green Wheel footpath which would be 7 miles.

Hopefully these walks will eventually be added to the Railwalk.co.uk website



Sunday Service

People in Whittlesey have been very pleased with the Sunday service, but of course would like it extended. This is especially valuable as the Whittlesey bus service no longer runs on a Sunday. On recent Sunday visits to the station, Geoff has counted around 15 passengers getting off the GA train from Peterborough. People are finding the additional summer timetable train very useful (0928 to Peterborough and 0958 to March, Ely Ipswich). Could GA maintain this service through the winter as well? Also, an extra evening train on Sundays would be very useful as it would mean people could go out for the whole day. GA could consider this – many people are travelling on Sunday evening.

New Planters



We have been filling and refilling our new fence planters on platforms 1 and 2. We now have a total of 12 fence planters, 6 on each platform. We are very grateful to fellow adopter, Andrew Hill and his wife for growing and planting a selection of very colourful plants:



Meet the Managers

The meeting, which was due to take place on Friday 28th June, has unfortunately been cancelled due to the election. People in Whittlesey were extremely disappointed about the cancellation and there were many comments on social media. It is hoped that the meeting will be rearranged after the election so that people can ask questions and find out when the frequency of the train service really is going to improve, and when the much-needed upgrades to the station and level crossing are going to take place.

People in Whittlesey are desperate to see and be able to use a frequent and reliable service to Peterborough and Cambridge.

Peterborough

Following the recent installation of two new planters on platforms 6 & 7, these have now been “branded” and are



looking lovely – the bee and bug friendly plants have filled out beautifully and as well as tending to these whenever we pass through, March station adopters Adrian, Mel & Max have kindly agreed to pop over occasionally and check on them and top up the water etc.

More posters and Hereward CRP branding is in the pipeline as work continues with LNER.

We are also in discussion with LNER about how we can raise the awareness of the CRP within the company and to LNER staff.





RAIL INDUSTRY ROUNDUP



Alan Neville – Community & Customer Engagement Manager

Dear readers,

We are in the middle of the year, and the weather has improved at long last, brightening our lives – and our gardens, tubs, and planting schemes!

I am filled with pride when I travel along the Hereward line and look at your work. This transforms everyone’s journey experiences as our passengers travel through the stations and enter and exit them on their travels.

On Tuesday 18th June I got the chance to meet the Stamford adopters when I joined up with the team at that station to talk to customers. Of course I referred to this in the weekly brief. They have an invitation to visit our stations at some point. That would be a great thing for all of us, and I know you would look forward to meeting them in the future and sharing ideas, issues, and solutions.

This event was just one in a very busy summer of activities, which this year particularly involves young people. So many Beavers, Cubs, Brownies, and Guides have had the chance to talk to you, and to Hereward leaders, and I have no doubt at all that the results of these positive interactions will be felt for a long time – as they learn to respect the railway and absorb the important safety messages. The message about rail as the optimal means of travel will spread as well.

Well, done everyone for this amazing work.
Have a great summer!
Alan



David Jones – Stakeholder Liaison Manager

On 29 May our West Midlands & North-West Stakeholder Liaison Manager, Jody Ball, and Cambridge Senior Conductor, Lesley Elding, spoke to a group of young females from Doddington Guides and Brownies at March station about their personal career paths into the Rail industry. The event formed part of a programme of educational ‘Try a Train trip’ events for local groups of young people being arranged by Hereward Community Rail Partnership this summer, with funding from our CrossCountry Community Engagement Fund.

Leaders of local Guides and Brownies groups had expressed interest in young females learning more about Women in Rail, so we agreed to join forces with other train operators serving the Fenlands region by arranging for two of our female CrossCountry colleagues to speak about their own journeys into railway careers. Several of the Guides and Brownies expressed an interest in a career in Rail and they found Jody’s and Lesley’s talks interesting and helpful. There was particular interest in the contents of Lesley’s Senior Conductor’s ‘kit bag’, as part of a lively Q & A session after the Women in Rail themed talks.



EMR have enjoyed a lot of partnership working recently.

It was a pleasure to present to the Guides at March station all about careers and the different opportunities we have available in the rail industry.

We held our first Community Day at Stamford Station with lots of partners talking about rail, tourism and of course the CRP - it was great to meet so many people and lovely to run an event in conjunction with the CRP and very active Station Adoption group at the station.



More recently we have been promoting Rail Safety Week 2024, and on Saturday had a fabulous event at Peterborough Station, with the CRP and our colleagues at LNER. This formed part of a roadshow for EMR and we visited Nottingham, Loughborough, and Sleaford earlier in the week.

Looking ahead I am looking forward to promoting further tourism on the line, particularly a visit to Ely - a place I am really looking forward to learning more about and we the summer holidays ahead so all in all a perfect time to discuss Rail Safety and Tourism.



[HerewardCRP.org](https://www.HerewardCRP.org)

 [#herewardline](https://www.instagram.com/herewardline)

 [Hereward Community Rail Partnership](https://www.facebook.com/HerewardCommunityRailPartnership)

