

May update



This monthly e-newsletter focuses on community safety issues in support of the industry's efforts to tackle railway crime, personal security and safety, level crossing safety, and fatalities management. Since the newsletter began in March 2005 it has been produced on behalf of the industry by the industry's Community Safety Support Unit (CSSU) and readership now reaches up to 10,000 people - many of them community safety specialists - across 15 countries worldwide.

The CSSU project, funded on a two-year basis as part of RSSB's research and development programme, comes to an end this month. Community safety-related matters will be project-managed by RSSB's National Initiatives team at community.safety@rssb.co.uk. Those wishing to keep in touch with Sue Nelson, who has been producing the newsletter since its inception, can do so at suepnelson@aol.com.

Get ready for readers' poll...

In tandem with the industry's new community safety arrangements at strategic, tactical and delivery level being implemented across the rail network, an on-line readership survey about this newsletter will be conducted in the coming weeks. The survey will be undertaken on behalf of RSSB by pollsters GFK NOP and will look at issues such as what you, the readers like about the newsletter, what you find most useful and what other information you would like to see. The on-line poll is likely to be conducted in the first part of June so keep an eye on your inbox for details.

A date for your diary - March 14, 2007

Delegates who attended the National Community Safety Forum in March have given a resounding thumbs-up for a similar event to be held next year. The date for this has now been provisionally fixed for Wednesday, March 14, 2007 on the basis that schools will be breaking up at the beginning of April in readiness for Easter (next year Easter Sunday falls on April 8) so giving the opportunity for holiday safety messages to be highlighted to practitioners in advance at the forum.

A venue for the event has yet to be arranged.

Feedback from the forum has been hugely positive with 93% of respondents saying they would be interested in attending a similar event next year. A total of 88% who filled in the feedback questionnaire said this year's event met their needs and expectations, with particular praise for the administrative arrangements, communication and the forum exhibition. On the downside, some felt some of the workshop presentations were rushed, while others wanted more time to network and view the exhibition. While the BTP was well represented some said there was a need for more TOC and senior industry representation.

More police forces would benefit from attending too.

The all-day forum organised by the CSSU and RSSB, featured an opening plenary session, eight workshops outlining examples of good practice in the field, an extensive exhibition show-casing examples of campaigns and initiatives across the industry and a wrap-up question and answer session to round off the day.

CSSU two year project

The industry's Community Safety Support Unit (CSSU) facilitated and funded by RSSB, has undertaken more than 70 different workstreams in the two years of its activity.

The unit, which has been manned by Peter

Edwards, a retired chief superintendent from the BTP on a part time basis, and Sue Nelson on full time secondment from Network Rail, has acted as a support to cross-industry partnership activities aimed at mitigating the safety and personal security risks posed by railway crime and other forms of inappropriate community behaviour. As part of this, the work of the CSSU has been central to the thinking behind the industry's new community safety arrangements which came into force with the first meeting of the high level strategic Community Safety Steering Group on April 3. One of the strengths of the CSSU has been its ability to respond flexibly to stakeholder demands by providing a resource dedicated to their needs. This has been demonstrated by the following examples which represent only a small part of the work delivered by the CSSU in the past two years:

- Work on staff assaults through the development of a good practice guide and public awareness campaign
- The drawing up and delivery of the broader industry's education strategy
- Continued development and delivery of the industry's teaching resource website www.trackoff.org in line with education and National Curriculum requirements
- Delivery of two national community safety events in 2005 and 2006
- Development and production of competency assurance guidelines for industry presenters
- Work with the Home Office on joint guidelines between the industry and crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs)
- Dialogue with the Crown Prosecution Service and others to encourage appropriate sentencing for staff assaults

Future arrangements for the management of industry support of community safety activity and issues continue to lie with RSSB. A full evaluation report on the work of the CSSU will be published in due course in the R&D section of the RSSB website, www.rssb.co.uk

👉 Rail chiefs grilled on personal security issues

Top level executives from the rail industry were among those who appeared before the House of Commons Select Committee on Transport to discuss passenger security. The heads of the various rail divisions of the TOC-owning groups, plus ATOC, the Chief Constable of the BTP, and top level representatives from Network Rail, RSSB, and Passenger Focus all appeared before the committee, as did Transport Minister Derek Twigg, to answer questions on how the industry and government is managing the personal safety of passengers at stations. The Committee, chaired by veteran Labour stalwart Gwyneth Dunwoody, called for the hearing following intensive media coverage of personal security issues - particularly in London - following the murder of lawyer Tom ap Rhys Pryce in January after leaving a station late at night on his way home. A full transcript of the Select Committee hearing, which was held on April 19, can be found at www.parliament.uk. Click on "committees", find the Transport Committee under the alphabet code, then the transcript under "uncorrected transcripts."

👉 Violent crime cut

Scotland's railways are safer than ever with violent crime being cut dramatically over the past year, according to figures released by the British Transport Police. Latest figures show that in the year to March 31, 2006, violent assaults on passengers dropped by 34% to 202 offences compared to 306 during the previous 12 months. Offenders were detected in 66% (126) of cases - well above the target set by the force and the train operating companies.

Assaults on railway staff were also cut by 11% with 136 incidents recorded during the year compared with 152 in the year before. Of these, 66% of offences were detected with 90 offenders being caught. Robberies on trains and railway property

saw a drop of 56% from 72 offences in the previous year down to 32 offences the following year. A total of 78% of these offences were detected by the force's officers.

Supt Ronnie Mellis, BTP Scotland's area commander said: "These figures underline the successful work being undertaken jointly by the force and the train operating companies in reducing the opportunities for assaults to take place.

These achievements have been made against a backdrop of increasing passenger numbers with 70 million passenger journeys being made in Scotland last year."

For further information contact David Hodgson, BTP media and marketing manager for Scotland at david.hodgson@btp.pnn.police.uk

👉 Bid to woo more PCSOs

The Home Office wants publicity to help the Government meet its pledge - made by Gordon Brown in his last Budget - to more than double the number of police community support officers in England and Wales to 16,000 by next April. The government department is set to hire a PR agency to support a wider recruitment campaign for PCSOs of which there are currently around 6,300. The rail industry also employs PCSOs through the British Transport Police and in the year since they were first introduced on the network, well over 150 have been recruited with more to follow. For more information contact jeffrey.booth@btp.pnn.police.uk

👉 Operation Shield goes nationwide

Security scanners are to be deployed at major railway stations says Transport Secretary Alistair Darling, following a successful trial of the equipment in London. The portable technology will be used in a number of cities including Cardiff, Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds and Edinburgh. The move comes after the use of metal detectors at several Tube stations in

London led to 100 arrests and the seizure of 68 knives after around 10,000 passengers were checked.

The project - known as Operation Shield - was led by BTP and involved police officers, sniffer dogs and mobile scanners being deployed at stations where robbery was known to be a problem. As well as catching those carrying weapons, officers were able to spot individuals shying away from the detectors and made a number of arrests for other offences such as possession of drugs and stolen goods. The equipment is easily moved from one location to another making it ideal to target locations with an element of surprise.

- Operation Shield is separate to the Department for Transport's high-profile security scanning trial at Paddington Station which was set up as part of the response to the July 7 bombings.

👉 No Messin! venues and dates finalised

Arrangements for Network Rail's summer No Messin! campaign, which offers a range of diversionary activities for young people, are now well under way. Dates and venues for the 10 events at hotspot locations across the country have now been finalised.

They are: Edinburgh, Drummond Community High School, July 6 - 7; Glasgow, Scotstoun Leisure Centre, July 10 - 11; Cardiff, Eastern Leisure Centre, July 25 - 26; Rochdale, Hopwood Hall College, July 31 - August 1; Crawley, Oriel High School, August 3 - 4; Wolverhampton, Aldersley Leisure Village, August 8 - 9; Stockton-on-Tees, Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre, August 14 - 15; East Manchester, Manchester Tennis Centre, August 21 - 22; Wandsworth, Battersea Technology College, August 24 - 25; Enfield, Southbury Leisure Centre, August 31 - September 1. For more information contact ian.chapman2@networkrail.co.uk or go to www.no-messin.com

teupdateupdateupdateupdateupdateupdateupdate

☛ **BTP activity leads to arrests**

Following a pro-active BTP operation two males aged 33 and 17 have been arrested and will be the subject of reports to the Procurator Fiscal in relation to alleged incidents at Kilwinning Station and aboard the Largs to Glasgow train service on April 21. And in an unrelated incident two male youths, aged 15 and 16, have been arrested and will be the subject of reports to the Children's Panel and Procurator Fiscal in relation to alleged vandalism (graffiti) to a train at Thorntonhall Railway station the following day.

☛ **New football youth scheme Kick off soon**

The Football Foundation has teamed up with police to launch a scheme to tackle youth anti-social behaviour. Kickz, which is being funded by the foundation and the Home Office, was developed by the FA Premier League, the FA, and the Football League working with the Metropolitan Police. Projects will eventually open across all Premier League and London Football League clubs and will offer football coaching, cup competitions and leagues, educational resources and will encourage older teenagers to volunteer. The Home Office said it was the first scheme to arise from the £2 million Chancellor Gordon Brown announced in the budget to be given to the Football Foundation to invest in club projects to tackle anti-social behaviour. Ask for details via www.footballfoundation.org.uk

☛ **7 caught at level crossing**

An ongoing campaign to target level crossing abuse in Shropshire netted seven motorists at just one crossing in less than 60 minutes. A covert operation was undertaken at Wem crossing in North Shropshire involving British Transport Police and Network Rail as part of the county-wide campaign. A total of 73 cases of level crossing abuse were reported in Shropshire in 2005. For further details contact helen.goodall@networkrail.co.uk

☛ **Thanks to driver**

A sharp-eyed, quick-witted Midland Mainline driver led to alleged would-be thieves being caught red-handed by police. The driver, who was operating a Nottingham - London St Pancras service, spotted a number of people inside the boundary fence without high visibility clothing and using a crane to remove rails. Officers from the BTP and Leicestershire Police swooped on the scene at Kibworth, south east of Leicester, arrested several people and impounded a lorry carrying 11 5 metre lengths of rail.

☛ **13-year-olds arrested for explosion**

Two 13-year-old youths were arrested following an explosion which blew a six-metre hole in a bridge over a railway line at Runcorn, Cheshire. The explosion was caused when debris was thrown on to overhead power lines causing an electrical flashover which in turn sparked a blast in a gas duct running beneath the bridge. The incident caused significant delays and diversions to train services. The boys were arrested in connection with the incident and a similar offence the previous night. Both were released on bail pending further police inquiries.

☛ **Platform drinking dens**

Hideaway drinking dens have been created by teenagers beneath station platforms. British Transport Police officers and Network Rail staff in the West Country are highlighting the dangers in a bid to crack down on the problem. Empty cans and bottles have been found beneath concrete platforms at Weston Milton and Worle Parkway stations near Weston-super-Mare. PC Clive Davies of BTP said: "Kids are climbing onto the tracks and under the platforms. Once they're in there they can't hear the trains coming and if they poke their heads out when a train goes past they don't stand a chance."

☛ **MPs join crime battle**

Two East Midlands MPs are supporting Network Rail in its fight against railway crime. Liz Blackman, MP for Erewash in

Derbyshire and Dr Nick Palmer, MP for neighbouring Broxtowe in Nottinghamshire have stepped in to urge youngsters to stop gambling with their lives and putting themselves in danger. The move comes after a disturbing increase in the railway crime in the Ilkeston area where young people have been trespassing and hurling missiles at passing trains. One incident involved a group of up to 15 young people who sat on the railway near Bennerly viaduct forcing a Central Trains service to stop. For more information contact ben.herbert@networkrail.co.uk

☛ **Station spring clean 1...**

Passengers using Kings Norton station, Birmingham, are benefiting from a cleaner, safer and more pleasant environment after a month-long spring clean. Network Rail invested £40,000 in cleaning litter and graffiti from station buildings and made the previously dark walking routes lighter with extensive de-vegetation work. A redundant building which was attracting graffiti and vandalism was also removed, making way for much-needed extra parking spaces at the station on the busy Cross City lines commuter route.

☛ **...and spring clean 2**

A child's bike, a television, two fridges and a 30-year-old credit card were among 100 tonnes of rubbish cleared from railway embankments around Tottenham's White Hart Lane station in London. Network Rail has teamed up with Haringey Council to tackle fly-tipping in the area and in a bid to keep the recently cleared landscape litter-free, taller and more secure fencing is to be erected along the line. Leaflets will also be sent to local residents to encourage them to help manage the fly-tipping problem by reporting those responsible.

☛ **150 youths trash train**

British Transport Police are investigating a disturbance on a late night train with 150 youths on board after 17 windows were smashed and fire extinguishers set off. The train, travelling between Warrington Central and Liverpool Lime Street, was full of teenagers on their way home from a youth disco in Warrington.

teupdateupdateupdateupdateupdateupdateupdate

☛ Stay away from worksite plea

Youngsters living near a major railway construction site are being warned to stay away by rail staff and police. The site, near Rugeley, Staffordshire, is part of the Trent Valley Four Tracking scheme to widen the West Coast Main Line, and the BTP and Network Rail have visited local schoolchildren to warn them of the dangers of playing on or near the railway. Network Rail showed youngsters a computer model of the West Coast Main Line from a train driver's point of view to help them better understand the issues. The main message was to tell the children more about the improvement work while making sure they understand safety issues related to living near a railway, especially one where major construction works are being carried out.

☛ Translink in rail danger warning

Translink, Northern Ireland's public transport operator, has reinforced safety messages directed at young people with a new high profile warning to youngsters to stay away from the railway. The company has appealed to parents, teachers and community representatives to remind young people about the dangers of playing and gathering near railway tracks. It has also warned against the misuse and abuse of bus and rail services. Translink's "Dead Cert" rail safety advertising campaign has been aired on local TV and radio stations and its Community Safety Bus has been busy visiting schools and community groups across Northern Ireland. In addition Translink also recently launched "Travel Safe" a new educational safety DVD and learning pack specifically tailored to young people. Click on to www.translink.co.uk for more information.

☛ Australian safety week gears up

The Australasian Railway Association (ASA) is organising a National Train Safety Week in July to raise awareness of level crossing safety issues. The scope of the week will

this year focus on level crossings but it is expected that in future years this could be expanded to cover a range of rail safety issues. A key element of the week will be to enhance the support of the media through a series of nationally co-ordinated 'ride alongs' where journalists will ride in loco cabs around the country to experience a train journey from the drivers' perspective. It is hoped this approach will:

- Generate positive publicity about level crossing safety rather than the current emphasis after accidents occur
- Enable the media to view future events from the rail industry's perspective
- Provide an appropriate industry response to the launch of the ASA's National Level Crossing Behavioural Strategy

The strategy seeks to educate and inform stakeholders and the public about appropriate vehicle driver and pedestrian behaviour at crossings. Each year an average of 37 road users, 13 vehicle occupants and 24 pedestrians are killed on Australia's level crossings of which there are more than 9,400. In addition there are 100 collisions between vehicles and trains every year. For more information contact Steve Davies of the ASA at sdavies@ara.net.au or go to www.ara.net.au

☛ Harsh measures for young offenders

Youth justice practitioners are being forced to use increasingly harsh measures to deal with young offenders, according to a study by the University of Bath. Initial findings from the Doing Youth Justice study, produced by the university's Department of Social and Policy Studies, suggest practitioners feel they have little choice but to use punitive measures. According to researcher Dr Joanna Phoenix information on the welfare needs of young offenders is available to all those who make decisions about young offenders - police, youth offending teams and magistrates - but in practice they have only punitive measures at their disposal. Contact j.b.m.phoenix@bath.co.uk for more details.

☛ 'Sickboy' graffiti vandal in court

A graffiti vandal who tagged Network Rail properties and other buildings in the Bristol area has been given an 18 month community punishment order to undertake 240 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay compensation of £5,1340.42. Charles Stewart Baird, aged 26, who used the tag 'Sickboy' pleaded guilty to four charges of causing criminal damage by graffiti and asked for 23 similar offences to be taken into consideration. Baird was identified following an investigation by Det Con Colin Saysell of the British Transport Police who works closely with other agencies in the Bristol area to tackle the graffiti scourge.

☛ Plea for more community sentences

Pressure group Smart Justice has launched a campaign calling for more widespread use of community sentences for young people. Instead of locking up young offenders the government should invest in tackling the causes of their crimes. The group says there should be more constructive activities for young people with more support to improve parenting. In addition, Smart Justice would like to see more mental health, drug and alcohol treatment in the community, with punishments meted out that encourage young offenders to do compulsory work to pay back the community for their crimes.

This approach aligns with that taken by some rail companies such as Southeastern Railway and Northern Rail who often use restorative justice to deal with offenders against the railway.

Go to www.smartjustice.org for more information.

☛ There's always one....

A pedestrian who tried to cross the railway at a foot crossing in the path of a train demanded compensation after being hit by the train at Bridlington, East Yorkshire. While being treated at the scene by paramedics for bruising the man kept asking "When am I going to get my compensation?" The views of railway staff who were involved in the incident are unknown and probably unprintable...