

December 2025

Stakeholder Newsletter



BRITAIN'S RAILWAY STATIONS ARE SO MUCH MORE THAN BRICKS AND MORTAR — THEY ARE PLACES WHERE HISTORY AND EVERYDAY LIFE MEET. FROM MOMENTS OF PERSONAL JOY TO EVENTS THAT SHAPED THE NATION, EACH STATION HAS A STORY TO TELL. (ALICE LOXTON, HISTORIAN)

It is always a privilege to be able to write the introductions to our newsletters. With so much going on, the challenge is normally deciding what not to mention! 2025 has, of course, been Railway 200 year, an anniversary that we have enthusiastically embraced. This edition celebrates the numerous projects and initiatives we have been involved in to mark this incredible milestone.

Much more has been happening, including continuation of Wild Rails, plenty of educational activity, several new art installations, including most recently the unveiling of a fabulous new mural at Birmingham International to support awareness of the White Ribbon campaign.

In early December the Steering Group held our annual Strategy Workshop in the Community Room at Coventry Station. This provided a valuable opportunity to review our purpose and plans and to set a course for 2026. We concluded that our existing priorities were still fit for purpose and acknowledged that we just need to cut our cloth accordingly in terms of the amount of time Julia and Sarah our Community Rail Officers have available to deliver the many projects and initiatives we'd like to do!

Finally, a huge thank you for your support. Without the support and encouragement of you, our stakeholders, there would be no Community Rail Partnership in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull and the rail network of the counties, its users and local communities would be all the poorer for it.

Malcolm Holmes, Chair of Heart of England CRP

NEWS & STORIES FOR THIS ISSUE:

- Railway 200 2025 Round Up
- Education
- Station & Neighbourhood Improvements
- Inclusivity & Community Links
- Sustainability
- Partner Updates



Students from Lapworth Primary experiencing the Exhibition Train

Community Rail Awards 2026

Please Vote for Heart CRP in the Community Rail Awards!

We are honoured to have been shortlisted in the Community Rail Awards 2026 Photo Competition Round, recognising our work with our valued partners the Life Path Trust, our Coventry Station Adopter's group.



Come rain or shine, the Adopter's are always keen to help with a big smile on their faces and we would like to expand that smile even more by scooping the Award.

How to vote - simply click the link below and scroll down to the bottom and select Heart CRP & Life Path Trust (by 30th January 2026). Thanks for your support!

<https://communityrail.org.uk/community-rail-awards-2026-photography-competition/?status=success>



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Railway 200

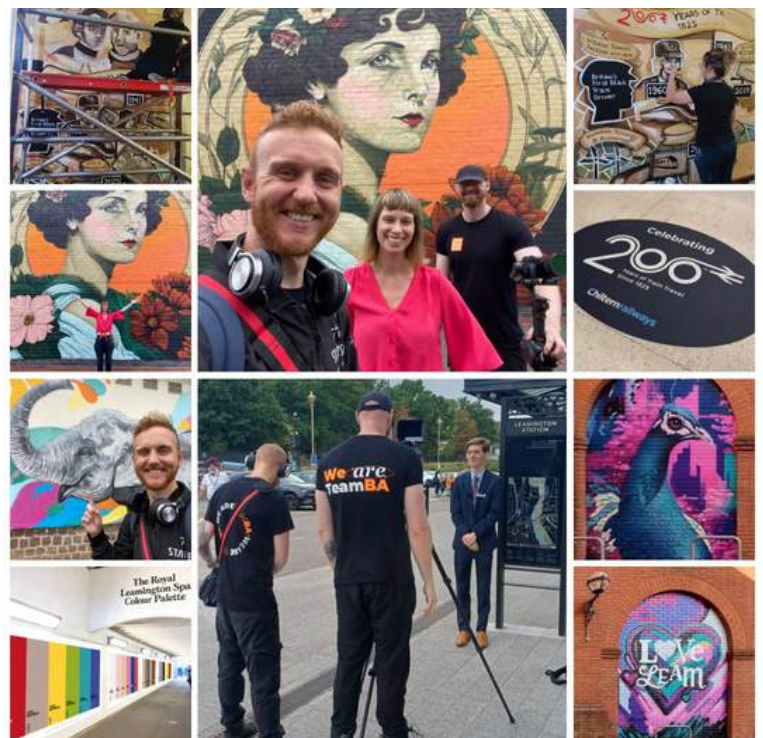


Railway 200 Round Up

As 2025 draws to a close, we take a retrospective look at a fantastic year that has really put railway heritage in the spotlight. The infograph to the left shows what the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership has done to engage with the campaign, and we couldn't be prouder of our efforts.

From assisting with school trips and activity packs, creating content for the partner zone on the Exhibition Train: The Inspiration, facilitating workshops, railway school choirs and co-creating banners and murals - it's been an exciting year! We even have a short video just released from post- production documenting our new murals at Leamington Spa station.

Take a look for yourself at tinyurl.com/HeartCRPVideos



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Railway 200

Railway 200 Mural Evaluation

We want your feedback! There is still time to have your say on the new murals at Leamington. Either scan the QR code to the right or access via tinyurl.com/MURALHaveYourSay till 01/01/26



Below are just a few of the highlights that have made Railway 200 a firm part of our education offering this year.

Heart CRP also feature a few times in Railway 200's own video of 2025 which can be seen [here](#)



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Education



Olton Station Explores Biodiversity Options

The Wild Rails project have joined forces with Olton Primary to try and improve biodiversity at Olton station. With our partners Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, students examined current biodiversity levels already at the station to see how they might improve this with a future project. We were fortunate to have Libby Pollard, West Midlands Train's Environmental and Sustainability Project Manager and the fabulous Olton Station Adopters join us for the session!



We were impressed with the students enthusiasm, but in a really safety conscious way after their rail safety training.

The hope is that the Wild Rails project will continue to strengthen the relationships between Heart CRP, local schools, station adopter groups and the TOCs.



Emily the Engineer STEM Community Engagement

Heart CRP handed out Emily the Engineer STEM activity books at Coventry Station during the summer holidays. Produced by Network Rail, the book is a rail adventure to learn about engineering through maths problems, word searches and colouring exercises. Perfect for entertaining primary students with some STEM fun!



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Education



Feel Good Futures STEM Trip

We partnered with Community Rail Lancashire and Avanti West Coast's Feel Good Futures project to offer a local school the opportunity for a free STEM Engineering Day through Transport for London (TfL). Their inspiring staff curated a fantastic day challenging their science and project management skills through interactive games and students even got the opportunity to interview three TfL Engineer's in a TfL train carriage.

Acton Education Depot where the session took place is a treasure trove of vintage vehicles and memorabilia, so it really was an impressive backdrop for learning for the Year 9 students from Campion Secondary, made even more fitting as it took place during Tomorrow's Engineer Week.

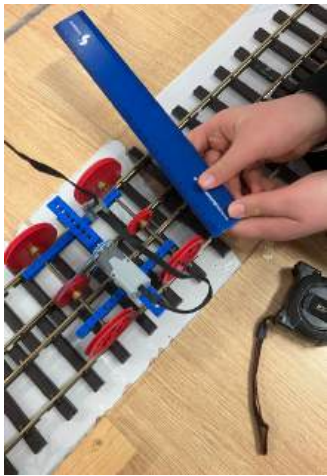
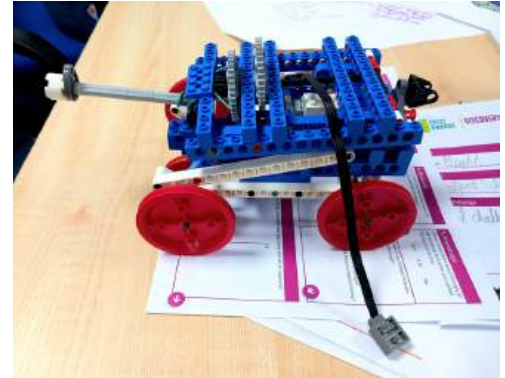


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Education

STEM 5

We have commissioned a further 4 STEM activity days with partners the Smallpiece Trust, funded by Cross Country. These interactive sessions have proved exceptionally popular, helping students see the positives of an engineering career and identifying opportunities in the Rail industry. These were days well spent designing gear or pulley motorised vehicles and their very own environmentally sustainable railway station.



Rail Safety

As part of Heart CRP's continued commitment to rail safety with partners LearnLive to deliver the Rail Safe Friendly programme in the Midlands, we renewed our contract in October 2025.

As the infographic shows, the programme has engaged with 68 schools over the first 2 years of the partnership, which has resulted in 42,829 total views of the content. Schools can work towards Bronze, Silver or Gold level accreditation.

This contract is in addition to Heart CRP personally visiting schools, and giving pre-trip rail safety lessons.



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Station & Neighbourhood Enhancements

White Ribbon Unveils a new Mural at Birmingham International

Working with White Ribbon UK and Avanti West Coast, the Heart of England CRP commissioned Emily Marlowe from Emily Kaye Illustration, to produce a mural for display at Birmingham International that conveyed the White Ribbon message to passengers passing through the station. Using images and messaging designed to encourage men to use their voices and speak up against behaviours that are sometimes glossed over, such as catcalling and sexist remarks, the mural also has a QR code that links directly to the White Ribbon website where more information can be found about the campaign.

The mural was installed in time for White Ribbon Day on the 25th November, with Lynne Elliot, CEO of White Ribbon, along with Emily, and representatives from Avanti West Coast and the Heart of England CRP attending a photo shoot to accompany the [press release](#).



The Heart of England CRP also engaged in activities to help promote the White Ribbon campaign on White Ribbon Day itself - 25th November at Canley station (left) and Marston Green the following week.

There is still time to find out more and sign the pledge from the link whiteribbon.org.uk/promise or scan the QR Code



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Station & Neighbourhood Enhancements

Art Work installed across the Heart CRP network!

It has been a busy few months for art installation and excitingly we have plenty more in the pipeline for 2026!



Above left is the excellent White Ribbon mural at Birmingham International, by a campaign that challenges cultures that lead to harassment and violence against women. Artwork by Emily Kaye Illustrations.



Above right and below left are some of the Wild Rails art work at both Lapworth and Leamington Stations, made during art sessions for the biodiversity project. **Below middle and right** - the Railway 200 Murals at Leamington Spa station. Art work by Katie O'Art.



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Station & Neighbourhood Enhancements



Stations Looking Beautiful Through the Seasons

Since our last newsletter we have moved through a variety of seasons and we felt it only fair to showcase some fantastic images shared by our station adopters reflecting these changes in all their glory (be that of the plants or some great initiatives taking place)



Top: Canley Railway 200 display

Middle left: Henley in Arden, phoenix from the ashes

Middle right: New Canley book share

Bottom left and middle: New bug hotel & the geranium train at Leamington Spa

Bottom right: Flowers in bloom at The Lakes station



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Inclusivity and Community Links

Work with the Life Path Trust

Our work with the Life Path Trust and the Coventry Station Adopters group has continued and we were thrilled to work with them for a special event during Community Rail Week in June. We teamed up with the wonderfully helpful team at Coventry Model Railway Club where they ran a bespoke private session for the Adopters to see all the train layouts in full operation. We were bowled over with their generosity and inclusivity as volunteers opened their doors for a bonus morning session.

We made a short video of our trip which can be found through the link below (3rd video down)

tinyurl.com/HeartCRPVideos

If you would like to find out more about Coventry Model Railway Club see below link
facebook.com/coventrymrc



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Inclusivity and Community Links

Travelling with Confidence Joint Project Working

We are excited to announce that we will be strengthening our relationship with the Life Path Trust and the Coventry Station Adopters group in 2026. We were fortunate to have a Grant approved from the Community Rail Network via The Motability Foundation, to deliver a Travelling with Confidence (TwC) Training programme starting in February 2026. The initiative is aimed at empowering disabled people to travel more confidently using the railways and connected modes of transport.

To get prepared I've been liaising with Avanti accessibility staff to help run a Travel Safe session and been shadowing a similar but much larger TwC programme currently running through Gloucestershire CRP. I was extremely lucky to work with the fantastic Yellow Submarine group from Witney and draw some valuable learning and experience to bring into our own.

So much fun was had travelling by both bus and train to Reading and it was great see individuals learning flourishing in the planning and travelling sessions. A huge thank you to Bee Clark for inviting us.



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Active Travel Roadshows Looking to Help Rail Passengers

Our Warwickshire County Council Active Travel colleagues held a series of sessions at Leamington Station over the Summer which we helped promote and support. They offered rail passengers the opportunity for free bike health checks, security marking, bike accessories (such as lights, bells and reflectors) plus active travel maps and resources.

Heart CRP have the promotion of active travel alongside rail travel, at the heart of our work. The overlap between those who travel actively and those who use the railway presents an exciting opportunity to connect with and highlight the benefits of multimodal travel.



If you would like further information about future active travel events please get in touch at activetravel@warwickshire.gov.uk

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Upcoming Partner Updates, Events & Funding Schemes

Avanti West Coast Launches Funding Scheme

Avanti West Coast unveils latest funding scheme to support community projects and more information can be found here <https://newsdesk.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/news/avanti-west-coast-unveils-latest-funding-scheme-to-support-community-projects>

So, if you have a great idea, or you're already involved in something that you think fits the bill, then please apply. If approved, your innovative change-making project could be coming to life next year. **Deadline for submissions is Friday 9th January 2026.**



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