



barges – paper – the Swale – history – heritage – steel

employment – education – leisure – shopping – seaside

# SWALERAIL

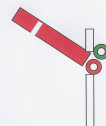
Second Edition

August 2004

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## UP FAST



## AND ROLLING

### QUEENBOROUGH - A START

6 hanging baskets—not much to show just yet. Yet they represent much more!

The baskets, arranged by Queenborough and Rushenden in Bloom, are a small addition to the efforts made by the local community to brighten up the area, and are in keeping with many similar displays nearby. Sponsored by Biffa, Swale Borough Council's refuse and recycling contractor, they have therefore also involved the business sector, and an important local employer. So it really is much more than just 6 hanging baskets!

#### MORE ENHANCEMENTS

Cheyne Middle School students have completed the paintings

"Reflections of Queenborough" for the upstairs windows (four of the eight boarded-up windows

are in the photo), and these will be in situ early September.

In the meantime South Eastern Trains (SET) promise additional platform seating, and later this autumn real-time information, with a platform display screen and train announcements to keep all travellers in the picture.

#### LONG TERM IMPROVEMENTS

Work on resignalling should be complete before the winter and it is hoped that, once contractors have left Queenborough, the long-planned improvements to the station approach, with appropriate landscaping, can get under way. SET advise that station painting is also in the pipeline.

#### OTHER SCHOOL PROJECTS

With the arrival of the new school term Cheyne Middle will be turning their attention to the booking hall. But there



may be projects other local schools could develop to the benefit of both the pupils and local people at this location. **Please don't miss the boat!**

So from just 6 hanging baskets the prospects of very real improvements for Queenborough, as predicted in our first newsletter, will become a reality.

**DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE  
GO BY TRAIN  
DON'T SIT IN THE TRAFFIC  
ON THE A249  
GO BY TRAIN!!**

**Sheppey Show 2004**  
Beachfields Park  
Beach Street, Sheerness  
**SATURDAY 21 AUGUST**  
12 noon - 5pm

Children's entertainment featuring  
J R KING  
CHARLIE THE CLOWN  
MR MYSTERY  
SWANK  
MIKE MARTINS  
'FACE OFF' Face Painters  
BIG FISH BAND  
Punch and Judy  
TRIBUTE SHOW by Ben  
ALL DAY FUN FAIR

5.30pm **SUMMER CARNIVAL**  
6.30pm - 9.30pm Live Music with  
**'THEM AGAIN'**

Approx 9.45pm **GRAND FIREWORK DISPLAY**  
(Fireworks sponsored by Thomas Holland - Sheerness Amusement Park)

For more information contact Chris Heathfield 01795 585616

## SHEPPEY SHOW SAT 21ST AUGUST HAVE A GREAT DAY OUT BY TRAIN

Come and have a really great day out at Sheerness. Stroll around the shops and market, enjoy refreshments at a host of places to eat and drink, relax and take in the beach. Then just soak up the atmosphere of the fabulous Sheppey Show. There's

plenty going on culminating in the carnival, live music and a spectacular firework display. Trains from Sittingbourne every half hour during the day, HOURLY in the evening. Last scheduled services back from Sheerness are at 22.33 and 23.28. Attractive day return fares. For more information, especially if coming from further afield, call Na-

tional Rail Enquiries 08457 48 49 50. For South Eastern Trains website [www.setrains.co.uk](http://www.setrains.co.uk) and for mobility impaired customers wishing to plan a hassle-free train journey call 0845 000 2211 [All passengers are advised to check their train times before travel. Information given here is provided in good faith]

*“Even the wreck of the Richard Montgomery has a role in Sheppey’s Transport Theme!”*

## **SHEPPEY COLLEGE TO TACKLE SHEERNESS STATION— AND THE THEME IS TRANSPORT**

The Good News is that South Eastern Trains (SET) is planning a thorough clean and repainting programme for the station, but appreciate that on-going maintenance and an attack on the litter problem is vital. They are looking at how best they can use their resources to tackle these problems. In the meantime Sheppey Col-

lege has been examining ways of improving décor and more importantly information provision at Sheerness.

### **TIRED OLD MAP**

The tired old map of Sheppey will be completely re-worked and other arts-related concepts will be brought into play.

The common theme has to be transport, and Sheppey College will be looking at this from many angles.

Interchange is a key matter bearing in mind the easy access to buses, taxis and cyclepaths.

### **AIR SEA RAIL AND ROAD**

From the point of view of the island’s heritage, the histori-

cal connection with aviation and the development of the docks will be allied to the rail line itself, nearly 150 years old. The old and the new bridge must clearly be encompassed, and even the wreck of the Richard Montgomery has a role in Sheppey’s transport theme!

### **TOURIST ATTRACTIONS**

But the reasons for visitors coming to the island will not be ignored, and Sheppey’s attractions will be incorporated.

Short term projects will be started this autumn with longer-term issues stretching into next year. The aim is to make the station a vibrant part of the town it serves with an on-going programme of an ever-changing vista.



The utterly unimposing approach to Sheerness station from the town and seafront

## **MEANWHILE, ON THE MAINLAND, SITTINGBOURNE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STEAMS IN**

SCC has been very actively involved in local community projects, and recognises the value they can bring to residents and to students wishing to develop their new skills and knowledge.

They can see that helping out at Kemsley station will indeed be beneficial to students by giving them the opportunity to work on different and challenging tasks. Geoff Rutt at SCC has drawn up a draft scoping document that has attracted keen interest at the college, and provides the basis for discussion with the Partnership and South Eastern Trains on an exciting range of possible projects. It doesn’t stop at Kemsley; indeed SCC have used the title

### **“Kemsley and Beyond”**

These projects could include, for example:

- Ground and gardening maintenance.
- Design and implementation of landscaping.
- Repair and maintenance.
- Décor enhancement schemes.
- Street Art and Community Theatre based on the heritage of the railway.
- Arts-related projects depicting the social, cultural and industrial heritage along the rail corridor.

In all cases students will need to research their schemes thus learning more of the

way in which the area has developed, and the factors that determined such development.

**Adding to this will be Swale Housing’s Youth House scheme at Kemsley, where it is hoped local youngsters will find projects to interest them. Transport is an almost endless source of ideas. And from these ideas so much can be developed, so much can be learned, so much can be achieved. This is a vital part of engaging young people in the positive aspects of growing up responsibly in their community.**

## **SHEERNESS “GATEWAY STATION” PROJECT INTRODUCED BY JANICE PEGGS (ACORP)**

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) has identified 12 stations in the country as being suitable for the **Gateway Stations** project, and Sheerness is one of these. The project manager, Janice Peggs explains,

**“Gateway Stations** is a project offering support to market town initiatives that have identified the need to improve their stations and seek specialist support. This includes finding the right contacts in the rail industry and locating fund-

ing opportunities for projects. *Assistance on the mechanics of delivering practical projects is a key part of the scheme.*

### **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

“Every station should be a gateway—into communities as well as from communities to the wider world. First impressions of a town are often set by the appearance of the station! You don’t need me to tell you that Sheerness station has a long way to go! Happily help is at hand. South Eastern Trains are showing keen interest in improving information provision and I was delighted to see how Sheppey College are

going to be involved in this work as part of their overall programme of enhancements. SwaleRail as part of the Kent Community Rail Partnership is also committed to improving interchange facilities (basic to the Gateway scheme) and I am pleased to note SwaleRail is working closely with the local authority on local transport plans, and with local community groups who have expressed an interest. These are, again, vital elements of Gateway Stations.

“On the back page I will explain some of the key issues that drive the Gateway programme.”

**EVENING PRESENTATION  
KEMSLEY VILLAGE HALL  
THURSDAY 26TH AUGUST 6.30-8.30 P.M.  
EVERYBODY WELCOME!**

The Kent Community Rail Partnership is holding an open evening at Kemsley Village Hall at the end of August. Everyone is welcome.

There will be a number of exhibitors and representatives of interested organisations. It's the ideal opportunity to learn more about the SwaleRail scheme and most importantly to add your input to the project.

SwaleRail is community-led and driven—it's about what YOU want, about what you would like to do, and about the wide range of benefits that people can enjoy from improvements. It isn't just about a railway line—it is about the people the line serves.

We have invited many organisations, for example:

- Neighbourhood Watch
- British Transport Police
- The Amicus Group (Swale Housing Assoc.)
- South Eastern Trains
- Swale Forward (SBC's regeneration team working on developments in your area)
- Kemsley ward councillors
- Volunteer representatives of the SwaleRail project
- Sittingbourne Community College.

We appreciate there are a number of major issues surrounding the station and feel this is an ideal opportunity for local residents to get together, discuss these problems with the right people and with themselves, and look at how a more positive and successful future might be achieved through the Partnership.

**"You CAN make a difference"**



We are working towards resolving security issues at Kemsley, starting with CCTV, preparatory to commencing station improvements that will include real-time information for passengers.

**A MESSAGE FROM THE SWALERAIL DEPUTY CHAIRMAN CLLR MARTIN GOODHEW**

**ACTION!**

Action on the line is what we all want to see and I am pleased to say that Swale-Rail has now steamed out of the sidings and is starting to deliver along the line.

On the front page you will have read about Queenborough, and above you will see we are having an open evening at Kemsley. What do you want to see at Kemsley station? You CAN make a difference! Come along and have your say and become an active member of this Community Rail Partnership.

**A TRUE COMMUNITY SCHEME**

Our working group is made up of volunteers and includes people from Minster as well as from Sheerness, Queenborough and Rushenden. We would like more "mainland" representation and welcome those interested in turning talk into ACTION.

**CCTV**

As Swale Borough Council's Community Safety Executive portfolio holder I want to see the branch as a safe place to travel on. There are funds available to expand the Council's successful CCTV system where demand is justified and if match funding is available. In the case of Kemsley that match funding has come from South Eastern Trains—true partnership working, and a success for the Community Rail Partnership.

**REPORTING INCIDENTS**

In the meantime it is important that the travelling community take safe ownership of the trains and stations and continue to report ALL instances of vandalism and anti social behaviour to British Transport Police 0800 40 50 40. All police operations are intelligence-led and your call really does count. Recorded reports help build up a picture that help BTP decide where to best use its resources.

Following investment by Swale Borough Council in Community Safety a small team of Street Wardens will be launched in October with some police-accredited powers. The Council's anti-social behaviour customer service hotline will be launched any day now to collate reports and pass informa-

tion to the wardens. It should be noted that at no time will this service replace the police and any real time criminal activity on the line should always be reported direct to the police. Use 999 when such a call is warranted. The Swale Anti-Social Behaviour number will be 01795 417575

**OVER 140 YEARS OF THE BRANCH**

Members of the Sheerness and Queenborough Societies are involved in the working group and invite your help in presenting the history of the line and identifying its strengths. How has it contributed to the development of Swale, how much has it responded to growing needs? What are YOUR memories of the branch line? We want to hear about them. Do you have any old photos, interesting stories or experiences relating to the line? We'd like to make our newsletter an open forum so do please write in or contact Peter (see back page).

I welcome more interest and participation from across Sheppey as the rail line serves us ALL, not just those living close to the stations. It serves the mainland too and that is why our next presentation is at Kemsley. So come on board and join in the fun.



The poles have arrived! The real-time info system will be installed on the new pole and the old clock removed (Queenborough)

*"As Swale Borough Council's Community Safety Executive portfolio holder I want to see the branch line as a safe place to travel on"*

**Martin Goodhew**

*Martin Goodhew*

### Kent Community Rail Partnership

The Countryside Agency  
Swale Borough Council  
Kent County Council  
South Eastern Trains  
Network Rail  
The Amicus Group  
Queenborough Town Council  
And many others

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Trinity Road  
Sheerness  
Kent  
ME12 2PG

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Fax: 01795 669097  
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PETER IS NOT ALWAYS OFFICE BASED. THE PHONE NUMBER ABOVE HAS A VOICEMAIL SERVICE WHEN PETER IS UNAVAILABLE, AND YOU ARE WELCOME TO LEAVE A MESSAGE. THE MOBILE IS ONLY SWITCHED ON WHEN PETER IS ABLE TO ANSWER IT.

We are anticipating having our own web pages soon—go to [www.swale.gov.uk](http://www.swale.gov.uk) and look out for SwaleRail

### ON THE TOURIST TRAIL

Looking ahead to 2005 we are anticipating running some guided walks from stations on the branch. These may well include historical and other themed walks round Queenborough. Perhaps too some lighter, gentler evening strolls with the chance to partake refreshments along the way! We are particularly grateful to the Swale Footpaths Group for their willing help and assistance as we attempt to open new horizons for more people, right on the doorstep!

### WOULD YOUR SCHOOL BE INTERESTED?

Local schools have already shown an interest in the utterly diverse possibilities for projects allied to the rail line and the area it serves. Just consider for a moment the efforts of pupils at Cheyne Middle School in researching, designing and painting the pictures for Queenborough station. Yet more schemes can be devised. Various themed educational days out on the line, a young persons tourist guide, exhibitions of transport themed art, the list is endless. Just read on page two about the sort of developments envisaged by Sheppey College and Sittingbourne Community College. Their schemes relate to the work their students are already engaged upon, and will give those students a much wider scope in which to learn and develop their skills. It is the job of the Community Rail Partnership Officer to seek funding for any projects. All we need are the schools and willing pupils to take on and progress schemes that are beneficial to them and ultimately of benefit to the community. Is it worth a chat? Call Peter right away.

### FREE TALKS

We give free talks to clubs, societies, schools, etc. We are hoping these will in due course be illustrated. To date a number of varied groups has enjoyed a presentation explaining what it's all about.

## SHEERNESS COMPANY ADDS IT'S SUPPORT

SHEERNESS GATEWAY (from page 2)

Janice Peggs writes:

"SwaleRail is already addressing many of the initiatives identified by the Gateway Stations project, but the list is not exhaustive and will also need to cover greater social inclusion through community involvement, training opportunities/apprenticeships where construction work is needed, better chances for the engagement of young people especially to help overcome vandalism and graffiti, Social Enterprise projects for local people, and so on.

"The other important issues are understanding the Rail Industry today as a business providing a public service, and the need to achieve long-term sustainability—ensuring that the station becomes an essential hub in all local and regional transport strategies"

"Sheerness is not alone—all stations within the Gateway Project will benefit from the influence the scheme has in consolidating links between local economic development, rural regeneration and transport, and contributing to the modal shift to rail. Watch this space!"

**CHECKMATE**  
**AVON** GROUP

We're delighted to welcome CHECKMATE AVON who have generously offered to support projects to improve Sheerness station. For example there could be attractive signs proclaiming "Welcome to Sheerness on Sea—home of Checkmate Avon" with added graphics depicting local scenes.

MD Paul Auston says his company will be more than happy to work with Sheppey College and other local schools in making these enhancements a reality. He fully appreciates the need to make Sheerness station an attractive gateway to Sheppey, and believes that the local community that includes many of his company's employees can take a greater interest and pride in their town and their island through this scheme. Sheppey businesses, including those in the tourist related industries, can benefit too.

It can start at the railway station. In meeting the aims of the Partnership any projects will

benefit those who work on them and ultimately prove beneficial to rail users (locals and visitors alike) and to Sheppey's economy. And, as with other established partnerships throughout the country, success in its turn leads to greater investment from the rail industry. Everybody wins!

Welcome aboard Checkmate Avon and thanks for joining our now growing band of commercial supporters.

### ABOUT KCRP

The Kent Community Rail Partnership has a steering group overseeing the countywide operation. It is hoped new community rail partnerships will be added as time goes by. The Partnership officer is Peter Chegwidden (contact details in column 1). SwaleRail has a working group comprised of local people who enjoy their involvement. Anyone with something to input is welcome.