

# Youngsters attend train safety event

MORE than 400 children at 23 primary schools along the Cambrian Railway Line between Machynlleth and Pwllheli have taken part in a project that aims to improve their safety when travelling on trains.

In addition to spreading the rail safety message, the project, run by Arriva Trains Wales, has also left a colourful art legacy at a dozen railway stations along the line.

On 12 July, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Assembly member for Dwyfor Meirionnydd and Plaid Cymru's spokesperson on transport, will officially unveil artwork prepared by primary school children at Pen-y-chain Railway Station, near Pwllheli.

The project had three distinct phases, beginning with a visit to the 23 schools by Arriva Trains Wales' school liaison officer Phil Caldwell who showed the Cambrian Rail Partnership's award-winning DVD 'First Class Safety' and Network Rail's 'Rail Life' presentations.

Phase two saw more than 400 children visit their local railway station platform, trains and crossings where they put into practice everything they had seen in the classroom.

For the third phase, children were asked to complete artwork for their local station, with materials provided by funding from Cambrian Rail Partnership, which is delighted that the project has linked the railway with local communities.

Mr Caldwell said: "The aim of this project was to bring the rail safety message to children along the Cambrian Coast.

"In addition to instilling a safety ethos in the children, it was hoped to also provide them with a sense of ownership, belonging and pride, not only of their local railway station but also the railway's in-

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frastructure in general.

"The 'First Class Safety' DVD provided us with the greatest resource and enabled the children to have a far greater understanding of what was required in order to travel safely and appropriately in and around the railways, particularly their own Cambrian Line.

"The children demonstrated an amazing ability to put classroom learnt skills into practical use.

"The children would often visit their station in order to see what was required, they were witnessed putting into practice all the safety elements they had been taught and were inspirational in their enthusiasm for the task at hand.

"The colourful enhancement of our railway stations, through flowers and artwork, is a wonderful by-product of this process."

Project co-ordinators are now working on projects to deliver the rail safety message to adults with learning difficulties.

One of the primary schools involved in the project was Ysgol Llanystumdwy, where pupils joined with counterparts from Ysgol Abererch to create the artwork for Pen-y-chain Station.

Ysgol Llanystumdwy headteacher Cathryn Davey said the children had thoroughly enjoyed the project.

"The railway safety message is very important but it was nice to link it with a community project where we can help out at the railway station," she added.

"While some of the children designed beach huts for the artwork, the foundation phase created the sea animals and it looks really good."



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