

# Time Travelling Train on the Tamar Valley Line

## Project Detail

The Time Travelling Train on the Tamar Valley Line was conceived as a way of giving students at the University an experiential learning experience through the process of producing and marketing a saleable children's book from scratch and to promote and encourage visitors to the Tamar Valley Line.

Children from a local primary school, one close to the line in Keyham, were also involved through researching the history and stories of the area and line and working in class with the students to put together the story from the facts they had found out.

The children and students made a number of visits to the line, meeting members of the local community.

This process for the children in year 4 at Drake Primary not only allowed them to work and have access to people in higher education and visit the campus at Plymouth thus widening their aspirations for life beyond school. It also gave them the opportunity to travel by train (which many had never done before) to an area which they could visit another day with their families.

The project was backed by a grant for the Designated Community Rail Development Fund. Books are now on sale at Waterstone's, Plymouth and a number of other local retailers.

## Objectives

The primary objective for the DCRP was to raise awareness of the Tamar Valley line amongst the young people of Drake Primary and the wider population and increase patronage.

From the perspective of the University the primary objective was to increase the employability of the students involved.

## End Results

The DCRP objective had been met after only the first visit the children went on and the class teacher commented on how many of the children had already been back out to the area with their families.

The University objective has been met as one of the publishing students involved, Emily Wilson, has just secured a job with publishing house Osborne in London as a direct result of the project.

One of the nicest and most unexpected knock on effects of the project has been on the pupils at Drake Primary.

The class has had a series of teachers over the years that have not stayed for a full school year either due to illness or changing schools and this has been very disruptive for the children.

Belinda Crowhurst the class teacher has cited the book as being the only project that has brought them together as a class, allowing them to bond through working together towards a common goal.

We also decided to produce a Walks Booklet so that people could enjoy the valley first hand after enjoying the stories in the book.

This booklet has been sent out to schools and community groups around the line in Plymouth and many of them have contacted us about doing trips out to discover the area, many of which we have supported by providing a guide and information.

So far we have engaged with nearly 230 young people through such trips.

#### **Quote from the writer**

*I found the experience of being involved in this project to be an extremely valuable and rewarding experience. Although I had never written children's literature before, the opportunity to be mentored by Helen Greathead, a highly experienced and talented writer of this form, allowed me to learn and develop my skills at an extremely rapid rate. The experience of working to a tight deadline and brief gave me a taste of what professional writing practice is like post Higher Education. I am thrilled with the end result, proud of what I achieved and greatly enjoyed working with everyone involved. This was a wonderful opportunity that could potentially open doors for me in the future"*

*Rachel Gippetti, writer of Time Travelling Train*

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