



Business news

Virgin Trains is first train operator to introduce digital Season Tickets



We've become the first UK train operator to offer our customers digital Season Tickets – moving one step closer to getting rid of orange tickets altogether. The introduction of digital Season Tickets will help us achieve our target of fulfilling 50% of tickets in digital format by April 2019.

Available to purchase from our website, it removes the need to buy Season Tickets at the station and allows customers to select the format they prefer – on their mobile device, in their Apple Wallet or print-at-home.

This is the latest ticketing initiative we've rolled out, following the launch of digital tickets across our route and Apple Wallet for some ticket types. Earlier this year we became the first transport company in the world to sell tickets through Amazon Alexa.

Virgin Trains extends flexible Friday travel into autumn

Customers travelling on a Friday will see afternoon peak restrictions from London Euston removed until October 26th, eight weeks after the summer promotion was initially due to finish.

Since July, our summer offer has enabled thousands of people to cut the cost of a spontaneous weekend getaway by more than £100, with visitors travelling to explore our great cities, including Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow.

While the cheapest tickets are always available in advance, our promotion enables people who decide to travel on the spur of the moment to secure a cheaper off-peak ticket any time after 9.30am on a Friday, instead of waiting until the

normal start of the off-peak period at 7pm. For a customer turning up at Euston Station at 4pm and travelling on the next train to Manchester, this sees the cost of a walk-up fare drop by £125.55.

WWII veterans launch Virgin Trains' RAF train in North Wales



Two Royal Air Force veterans who served in the Second World War have launched a specially-named train. The historic train name – 'Royal Air Force Centenary 1918-2018' – celebrates the 100th anniversary of the RAF and commemorates its historic links with the railway in North Wales.

The nameplate, which carries the station crest of the RAF Valley station, was unveiled on Virgin Trains' Super Voyager by veterans Mary Roberts and Wing Commander John Wynne, both of whom served in WW2. It features the crest of the RAF Valley station, located yards from our North Wales route and home to No 4 Flying Training School, responsible for training the UK's next generation of world-

class fighter pilots.

This is the first Voyager in our fleet to carry a different name to the 'famous Voyagers' names that were used when the fleet was first introduced in 2001. The Class 221 train will serve the North Wales route and other destinations including Edinburgh, Birmingham and Shropshire.

Virgin Trains becomes first company in the world to use RCS-based 'Chat' messaging service with customers

We've partnered with Vodafone and OpenMarket to roll out the latest Rich Communications Services (RCS) 'Chat' service for our passengers.

RCS is a new mobile industry communications standard, which transforms the way we can communicate with our customers – enabling us to send photos, videos, audio and messages containing easy-to-select buttons to customers. Initially the technology will be used to provide onward journey information to London Euston-bound passengers, providing the latest updates for London Underground services.

This investment puts us at the global cutting edge of communications technology, helping us to deliver seamless journeys for our customers.

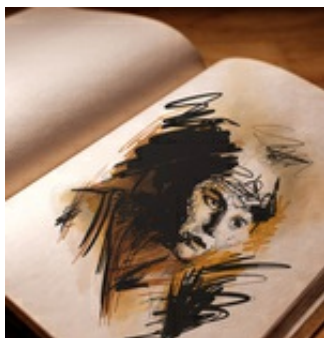
Virgin Trains Customers set to benefit from new transport partnership in the West Midlands



In partnership with West Midlands Rail Executive and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), we have signed a new deal pledging to work together to improve rail journeys in the region.

The focus of the partnership will be around greater use of sustainable transport to and from Virgin Trains stations at Coventry, Birmingham International, Rugby, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford. This will include the roll out of secure cycling schemes, improved signage and passenger information, and closer working with local football clubs and the British Transport Police to keep passengers moving safely and comfortably on match-days.

Mid Cheshire CRP: Marvellous Days Out on the Mid Cheshire and Calder Valley Lines



The Marvellous Days Out Marketing Campaign encompasses two distinct strands - Meander the Mid Cheshire Line (MCL) and Discover Amazing Women By Rail (DAWBR).

Both initiatives are about encouraging people to take the train, explore local lines, have fun and spend their money locally, either because of the iconic artwork or interest in the hidden histories of amazing women.

Both projects have involved working with rail, tourism, community rail, media, council partners and of course volunteers. Further information at www.marvellousdaysout.org.uk and www.amazingwomenbyrail.org.uk.

North Cheshire CRP: Marking 170th anniversary of Chester railway station

On 1st August, North Cheshire CRP celebrated the 170th anniversary of Chester railway station. In the first event of this kind at the station, the celebration provided a great opportunity to engage with our community and raise the profile of Community Rail. The event featured stalls, displays of historic photos, a guided station walk and a delicious cake from our partners at Virgin Trains.

Autumn brings a new season of interesting events in Community Rail. In September, Ellesmere Port station will open its doors to the public as part of the Heritage Open Days project. For more information follow us on twitter <https://twitter.com/NorthCheshireCR>

Our first Community Rail Conference!



We held our first annual Community Rail Conference in Crewe on the 20th September. The event brought together Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs), local businesses and organisations that have connections with the local community and our Virgin Trains team, to discuss how we work in partnership for the local communities we serve. Through a series of discussions and keynote speeches, attendees were invited to consider ways we can continue to strengthen relationships and build new initiatives with CRPs and organisations on the West Coast route.