

Climate change

Buskers bring climate change message to commuters

CLIMATE change campaigners took the message of cutting carbon emissions onto the trains recently with a concert for commuters.

Local jazz musicians performed between Swansea and Cardiff in what is thought to be Wales' first onboard gig to help explain the Welsh Government's '11 Actions for 2011' campaign to help reduce Wales' carbon footprint.

Since January, five young Climate Change Champions have been asking the public to commit to three carbon-cutting actions from a list of 11.

In a bid to get more people using public transport for longer trips the Champions enlisted the help of Arriva Trains Wales to provide the perfect stage for buskers to entertain the commuting crowds between Swansea and Cardiff.

Climate Change Champion Tom Bevan, 16, from Cardiff, said: "Using public transport has a range of benefits: as well as reducing your carbon footprint, you don't have the stress of driving.

"On a train or coach you can relax and enjoy a good book or catch up on work. But one of the biggest barriers people face with using public transport is not knowing what options there are.

"TravelineCymru is a website which has all the information you need about all bus and train services throughout Wales and is well worth a visit as it makes planning a journey



Buskers take the climate change message to commuters

really simple.

"A little live music seems to help everyone's day along so we thought it was an excellent way of brightening up the daily commute while encouraging others to think about the benefits of leaving the car at home.

"We're really excited to have been able to

make this happen. It's fantastic to be able to provide a platform for local talented musicians and it's not every day you get away with making so much noise on the train!"

Geraint Morgan, community affairs manager for Arriva Trains Wales, said: "When the Climate Change Champions

approached us with this idea we immediately wanted to get involved. I'm sure our customers enjoyed the musical welcome this morning.

"It's certainly a great way to start the day. The musicians created a great ambience, the passengers we spoke to found the buskers to be very uplifting."

Those who took part in the rush hour gig included 18-year-old saxophone player Tom Duggan from Uplands, Swansea. He said: "This is one of the most unique stages I've ever played on but it's been an absolute honour to brighten the passengers' journeys with some live music.

"From a musician's point of view there is no better way to get your music heard – thousands of people use Arriva trains across South Wales every day. It really is the perfect stage, albeit very intimate."

One of the commuters who was treated to the travelling show was 21-year-old Jessica Donarth from Swansea who works in Cardiff. She said: "It was great fun watching the buskers play on the train this morning.

"I usually catch up on work or listen to my own music when travelling, but hearing a different style of music was a nice change, and they all played really well. It put me in a good mood for the rest of the day."

■ To find out how to pledge yourself and for more information on how to reduce your carbon footprint visit www.walescarbonfootprint.gov.uk

Energy company invests in training

SWALEC is showing its commitment to providing learning opportunities in the workplace. The organisation employs more than 900 people at its Cardiff Gate headquarters and offers a range of development and training opportunities for all staff – all with an emphasis on providing excellent customer service.

SWALEC staff studying with the company work to complete NVQs in subjects including customer service, business administration, team leadership, learning and development.

Latest figures reveal that 7% of staff are currently studying towards a company-led NVQ qualification, while almost 80 have completed an NVQ in the past three years. A further 64 are due to complete the qualification in the near future.

SWALEC head of customer services, Gareth Wood, said: "We have always believed that our staff and their development lie at the heart of our success. Investment in helping existing employees gain more qualifications is essential for future business growth."

Many of the UK's largest companies, including SWALEC and parent company SSE, accept that offering workplace based training and education is vital for businesses to be competitive once the economy moves back into growth.

Mr Wood added: "We have a strong



Astra Jenkins, left

history of workplace learning and investment in staff training as we believe that it's vital to ensuring top quality customer service. In the current economic situation we believe that a positive attitude to learning and continuous skills development is more critical than ever."

Astra Jenkins, 19, from Cwmbran, who works in the central resourcing department, said: "I am so grateful that SWALEC gave all of us this opportunity and I can see us going from strength to strength within the company."



Warm Wales launches new company

WARM Wales has announced the launch of Co-Cymru, a new community interest company within the group. Co-Cymru offers community regeneration services to customers, focusing on employment, training and community friendly procurement. To assist it in this venture it has been joined by Rachel Moxey, an expert in social regeneration.

Rachel was until recently the head of employment and social procurement for the Welsh Government's Regeneration Division. She ran the successful JobMatch programme across the Heads of the Valleys area. Rachel is assisted by Mandy Summers, bringing specialist expertise in the development of employment and training packages for employers.

Warm Wales was set up in 2004 by National Grid and has successfully offered support to individuals, local authorities and housing associations in Wales to reduce their energy bills by introducing renewable energy technology to homes and buildings.

Phil Roberts, CEO of Warm Wales, said: "This exciting new development enables us to offer holistic regeneration solutions to communities in Wales. Warm Wales has always created employment and this development will enable us to give this area of our work real drive." Rachel added: "Regeneration only counts if you are able to put cash in the pockets of local people. By offering them jobs



Rachel Moxey, executive director of Co-Cymru

or opportunities to develop their skills we can do this.

"The Welsh Government has announced its drive to ensure that local people gain employment benefits from all its redevelopment activity. Companies, local authorities and housing associations in Wales will be looking for creative solutions to achieve this and we would be delighted to help."

■ For further information please contact rachel.moxey@co-cymru.org.uk



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