



All aboard for a journey to be remembered at Siemens Ardwick train depot

~ The 'Whistle Stop Tour' is back ~

Siemens is opening the gates of its state-of-the-art train maintenance facility in Ardwick to members of the National Autistic Society (NAS), as well as other children and families living with autism, on Saturday 22 October as part of the Manchester Science Festival (22 – 30 October 2011).

Back by popular demand, the behind-the-scenes 'Whistle Stop Tour' will celebrate all things science by showcasing the technology and the dedicated maintenance team behind the 51-strong fleet of Siemens Desiro diesel trains. The fleet is operated by First TransPennine Express and travels over 10 million miles per year across the North East and North West of England and up to Scotland.

Lucky visitors will also be able see trains on jacks ready for maintenance activities, try out the exciting on-site train simulator and sit in a real train cab. The winner of the 'The name of our engine' competition will be announced and visitors to the depot can show off their artistic skills with our special guests, Doodleplanet.

Pete Redding, fleet manager for Siemens, says: "This is the third year in a row Siemens has opened Ardwick train maintenance facility to show the innovation that goes into making trains reliable for the travelling public.

"We are always impressed by the exceptional level of interest and knowledge shown by our visitors -I am sure will be learning one or two railway facts from them! I hope the day will be an unforgettable experience."

Mark Lever, chief executive of the National Autistic Society, said: "Autism is a serious, lifelong and disabling condition, which affects over half a million people in the UK. If you include their families and carers, autism touches the lives of over two million people every day. Unfortunately many families affected by autism can find it very difficult to go on days out, so we are delighted that Siemens will be once again hosting this autism-friendly event.

"Trains and railways are often of great interest to many people living with autism, so this is a wonderful opportunity for people to have a rare 'behind the scenes' tour of a real train care depot. I hope everyone who attends has truly fantastic day out!"

The event is restricted to ticket holders only. To register your interest and obtain your FREE ticket, please visit www.siemens.co.uk/msf. Please note children younger than five years of age cannot be accepted on the tours. Like us at www.facebook.com/WhistleStopTour.

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Notes to Editors

About Siemens

Siemens was established in the United Kingdom 168 years ago and now employs around 16,000 people in the UK. Last year's revenues were £4.1 billion. As a leading global engineering and technology services company, Siemens provides innovative solutions to help tackle the world's major challenges, across the key sectors of Infrastructure & Cities, Energy, Industry and Healthcare. Siemens has offices and factories throughout the UK, with its headquarters in Frimley, Surrey.

As part of the Siemens Infrastructure & Cities Sector, Siemens Rail Systems Division provides expertise and technology in the full range of rail vehicles – from heavy rail to metros to trams and light-rail vehicles. In the UK, the Division employs around 650 people and maintains over 350 Siemens passenger trains for First TransPennine Express, South West Trains, Heathrow Express, National Express East Anglia, Northern Rail, London Midland and ScotRail.

About National Autistic Society

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all people with autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Some people with autism are able to live relatively independent lives but others may have accompanying learning disabilities and need a lifetime of specialist support. People with autism may also experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours.

Asperger syndrome is a form of autism. People with Asperger syndrome are often of average or above average intelligence. They have fewer problems with speech but may still have difficulties with understanding and processing language.

The National Autistic Society is the UK's leading charity for people with autistic spectrum disorders and their families. Founded in 1962, it continues to spearhead national and international initiatives and provide a strong voice for all people with autism. The NAS provides a wide range of services to help people with autism and Asperger syndrome live their lives with as much independence as possible.

For more information about autism and for help in your area, call the NAS Autism Helpline on: 0808 800 4104 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday, (free from landlines and most mobiles).

The NAS Autism Services Directory is the UK's most comprehensive directory of services and events for people with autism. Visit www.autism.org.uk/autismdirectory to find autism services and support networks in your area.

The NAS relies on the support of its members and donors to continue its vital work for people with autism. To become a member, make a donation or to find out more about the work of the NAS, visit the NAS website www.autism.org.uk

About Manchester Science Festival

Manchester Science Festival is an annual nine-day, multi-venue festival with the vision of inspiring and engaging people in science (science, technology, engineering and maths). It is Manchester's premier event for public engagement with science, promoting the region's rich heritage of past scientific achievements and endeavours whilst showcasing current innovative science and engineering research and practice. Last year over 80,000 people visited the festival and 80% of events are free.

At venues across Greater Manchester from 22 – 30 October 2011, Manchester Science Festival celebrates its 5th birthday with a packed programme comedy, debates, art/science events and family fun. There are over 150 events for adults, families and teenagers. Highlights on the first weekend of the festival include Polar, an epic pairing of HD footage of the Polar Regions and a live orchestral soundtrack performed by the Manchester Camerata, and Bang Goes the Theory LIVE Experience. The presenters from the BBC One show will test, stretch and explode science with audiences in the Campfield Market Hall near the Museum of Science & Industry.

A strong cultural programme for adult audiences includes Primitive Streak by artist Helen Storey, an experimental space evening with comedienne Helen Keen (Out of this world: a Spacetacular Manchester adventure) and a textile QR code exhibition at Cornerhouse (QR3D). Cutting-edge science and controversial topics will be explored in a series of talks and debates: Fukushima and the future of nuclear energy, Field of genes: DNA testing to find future Olympic champions and The Devil's Garden are not to be missed.

For full listings please visit www.manchestersciencefestival.com.

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