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# Inspiration Train comes to town

**Andy Hemsley**

The Inspiration Train proved to be a huge hit with people when it visited Hastings last week as part of a nation-wide tour.

Over two thousand local people visited the train over the four days it was here from March 12 - 15 to mark 200 years of rail history.

Kevin Boorman, from the local community rail group, said: "The feedback we had was just incredible. I was working in the 'partner' coach, along with colleagues from the Southeast Communities Rail Partnership, and also the Kent and East Sussex Railway.

There were other stalls on the station concourse, including Hastings RNLI,

Hastings Diesels, and Macmillan, the latter staffed by Southeastern staff volunteers. Southeastern had clearly put a lot of effort into organising the event.

"Everyone was so positive and enthusiastic about the train, it was really great to be involved with it.

"The train itself comprises converted Mk3 vehicles originally built for the West Coast Main line, and more recently working on the Anglian mainline. It also has a generator car, a former Mk3 Sleeper convert for planned, but never operated, Channel Tunnel sleepers.

"It is extremely rare for vehicles like this to visit

Hastings. The train allows visitors to discover the past, present and future of Britain's railways.

"Designed with the help of the National Railway Museum, the coaches include 'railway firsts', showcasing important inventions in railway history; 'wonderlab on wheels', fantastic hands-on activities allowing visitors to explore the science and engineering behind railways; and 'your railway future', highlighting the various jobs available in the railway industry and encouraging people to consider a career in the industry to help shape the

next 200 years.

"The Thursday and Friday morning sessions were open to students, with those afternoons and all day Saturday and Sunday open to the public.

"There was a VIP event on Friday morning, at which Steve White, the managing director of Southeastern Railway, spoke, as did Hastings and Rye MP Helena Doolimore, and the Hastings Mayor Cllr Becca Horn.

The train left Hastings for South Devon, and other places in the West Country.



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KEVIN BOORMAN