

## Press

---

Southampton, UK

25 October 2013

### Rail depot open day raises £thousands for charity

Opening the gates for a behind-the-scenes look at a Siemens train depot in Southampton raised £2,640 for those suffering with motor neurone disease – thanks to the generosity of over 1,700 local residents and enthusiasts who attended the 10 year celebration event on 12 October.

Visitors took advantage of the free activities, demonstrations and experiences on offer including a walk under a train, opportunity to sit in a driver's cab, see a re-railing exercise and watch a train wheelset be removed for maintenance. Siemens employees hosted stalls and organised a special steam train ride on the day to raise money for the local branch of the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association, while South West Trains arranged a free shuttle bus service to and from the depot.

Maria Stott, Chair of the Southampton & Winchester District Group of the MND Association, said: "Our aim, as a group, is to provide care and support to people living with motor neurone disease and of course their families and carers.

"Attending wonderful events, such as the open day, really does help us to achieve our aims. It helps people living with this disease to have the highest quality of life possible by funding specialist equipment and support. Thank you to everyone from Siemens and South West Trains for all the hard work that was put into achieving such a well run event."

The open day celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the depot; the partnership approach taken by Siemens and the South West Trains / Network Rail Alliance; and, the technology and dedicated maintenance team behind the 172-strong fleet of South West

Trains operated Siemens Desiro Class 444 and 450 trains based at Northam.

Steve Walker, South West Trains Fleet Director at Siemens, said: “We really had a fantastic day with perfect weather adding to the atmosphere on site.

“It was great to see so many local people take the time to come and join us, raising money for this hugely worthwhile charity in the process. I’d like to thank everyone who volunteered their time and made an effort to contribute in some way, with particular thanks to the Swanage Railway for loaning us our star attraction – a Drummond M7 steam engine.

“I hope the open day gave those who visited a real insight into what goes on behind the scenes to keep our trains safe, comfortable and reliable for passengers.”

Including the money raised on the day, over £5,600 has been donated to the MND Association, as just last month 19 employees took part in a London to Southampton cycle ride to raise money for the charity. The charity was selected for support by local Siemens staff followed the diagnosis of one of their based colleagues with the progressive disease.

**Ends**

**Contacts for journalists:**

<b>Siemens</b>
Laurie Waugh 07921 242074 <a href="mailto:laurie.waugh@siemens.com">laurie.waugh@siemens.com</a>
<b>South West Trains</b>
Corinne O’Loughlin 07825 375 115 <a href="mailto:Corinne.O'Loughlin@stagecoachgroup.com">Corinne.O'Loughlin@stagecoachgroup.com</a>
<b>MNDA</b>
Emma Johns DD: 01604 611838 Mobile: 07760765142 <a href="mailto:emma.johns@mndassociation.org">emma.johns@mndassociation.org</a>

**Siemens – Rail Systems**

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 700 people and maintains over 350 Siemens passenger trains for First TransPennine Express, South West Trains, Heathrow Express, Greater Anglia Franchise (Abellio), Northern Rail, London Midland and ScotRail. The company will also be supplying Eurostar with its new high speed fleet of trains.

**South West Trains – Network Rail Alliance**

On 30 April 2012, South West Trains and Network Rail formed a joint Alliance to deliver train services from London Waterloo to the south and south west of England, which is one of the busiest rail networks in Europe, operating around 1,700 trains a day. This new joint Alliance is a first for the UK rail industry. South West Trains is part of Stagecoach Group, a leading international public transport group with extensive operations in the UK, United States and Canada. Stagecoach employs around 35,000 people, and operates bus, coach, rail, and tram services.

**About motor neurone disease (MND) and the MND Association**

- The Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association is the only national organisation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland dedicated to the support of people with MND and those who care for them.
- The Association funds and promotes research to understand what causes MND, how to diagnose it and, most importantly, how to effectively treat it so that it no longer devastates lives.
- MND is a rapidly progressive and fatal disease. It can affect any adult at any time and attacks the motor neurones that send messages from the brain to the muscles, leaving people unable to walk, talk or feed themselves.
- The cause of the disease is unknown and there is no known cure. Around 5,000 people in the UK have MND at any one time, with half of people with the disease dying within 14 months of diagnosis.
- It kills five people every day in the UK.

For more information please see [www.mndassociation.org](http://www.mndassociation.org)