



Press Release: May 2019

Jellicoe Express; a great success!

On Tuesday 30th April exactly 100 years after the final journey of the Royal Navy Train, commonly known as the Jellicoe Express, Forsinard train station received a commemorative plaque and hosted a day of celebration.

The Jellicoe express was originally used in the First World War, to transport Navy personnel from London Euston to Thurso, where they travelled on to Scapa Flow naval base in Orkney. Forsinard was the penultimate stop before Thurso and it was where the engines would stop to take on additional water.

The event was marked by a day of activities organised by the Flows to the Future Project with the RSPB, funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The day was kicked off with a morning event just for schools. RSPB Staff and volunteers (merrily dressed in World War I costume!) greeted just under 100 children to the Forsinard Flows Reserve. Children learnt about the Jellicoe Express in a range of activities; they made sphagnum wound dressings, heard stories from Robert Foden, Orkney historian, went on a guided walk - or 'Sphagnum Safari' - and much more!

Before they departed by train, the children of Halkirk, Raey, Melvich and Helmsdale gathered on the platform, to honour the history through singing a hauntingly beautiful song.

Sydney Henderson, Flows to the Future Project Officer said "The children singing on the platform was absolutely beautiful. Hearing young voices singing together on the very platform that, 100 years ago the last Jellicoe Express passed through, was a really special, momentous occasion."

Carolyn Castle, a P6 teacher said “Halkirk Primary School have had a fantastic day out at Forsinard. The children learned lots about life in 1919. Thankyou!” (*written in visitor book, check we can use this quote*)

The afternoon event was well attended by members of the local community and dignitaries including Flag Officer of the Royal Navy, Chris Smith, Lord Lieutenant for Sutherland Dr Maine, and the Lord Lieutenant Ross and Cromarty, Janet Bowen. Everyone gathered on the platform for the unveiling of a commemorative plaque that was designed by Peter Needham for Another Orkney Production and sponsored by HITRANS. Afterwards visitors gathered in the marquee for tea and ‘trench cake’ (old in style not in age!) and to share memories and stories.

Morag Mitchell of Thurso said “It was absolutely excellent and we learnt a great deal about the Jellicoe Express. It was lovely to see so many school children from local schools involves”

[Photos and captions.](#)



NOTES TO EDITORS

The Peatlands Partnership includes Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotlandland Council, RSPB Scotland, Plantlife Scotland, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, The Highland Third Sector Interface, The Flow Country Rivers Trust, The Northern Deer Management Group and The Environmental Research Institute. It is chaired by Professor Stuart Gibb from the Environmental Research Institute.

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