

The Big Rail Diversity Challenge 2021 – Back with beans and whistles!

September 21, 2021



On 15 September 2021, after 18 months of virtual meetings, a growth in online events and months of home working, 550 delegates from across the UK rail sector rallied at Newark Showground to attend the sixth Big Rail Diversity Challenge.

As industry charity Women in Rail's annual flagship event, The Big Rail Diversity Challenge is the only rail industry event showcasing the diversity the UK railway industry is seeking to achieve, with teams being gender balanced and comprising people from diverse background including (and by no means limited to) race, ethnicity, religion, gender, socio economic background, and any form of disability.

Delegates took part in a plethora of physically and mentally demanding challenges – including Build a Scarecrow, Haka and It's a Knockout! – aiming to show that gender balanced, and diverse teams work better together, are more innovative and creative, and to raise awareness of the business benefits of fostering a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture.

Adeline Ginn MBE, Founder of Women in Rail, said: "The Big Rail Diversity Challenge is an important step in the rail industry agenda. It openly demonstrates that the rail industry is a dynamic, creative and exciting

sector and, by encouraging participants to work together in gender balanced and diverse teams, it outlines rail's commitment to improving diversity within its workforce and to fostering a more inclusive culture. The event is also a great fun and a fantastic way to team build and network with peers and colleagues, regardless of their grade and role."

Amongst the challenge suppliers, rail industry charity Railway Benefit Fund had participants supporting one another through the toughest of times, blindfolded and carrying 'beans' through an inflatable obstacle course as part of their Bring on the Beans challenge, whilst British Transport Police had teams 'Look Beyond the Obvious' whilst uncovering hidden rail stations amongst ice creams, sandcastles and other coastal attractions in a beautiful bespoke drawing, courtesy of one of their artistic colleagues.

After a tiring day of balloon modelling, Broadway routines, and countless inflatables, awards were presented, with special thanks to the event's Headline Sponsor, CPMS – Egis and Key Challenge Sponsor, Morson Group.

The 'Best Team Name Award' went to Thales Ground Transportation Systems for 'A Town called Thales', presented by Morson Group's Support Services Manager, James Room.

'The BTP Look Beyond the Obvious Award', judged and presented by Alison Evans, Superintendent, Disruption, Drones and Trespass Improvements Programme of the British Transport Police, was won by 'VolkerRail – Back on Track' from VolkerRail.

The Railway Benefit Fund's 'Bring on the Beans Award' challenge was presented by Suzy Powell, Fundraising manager for Railway Benefit Fund to 'The Certifiabes' of Network Certification Body.

'The Most Collaborative Teamwork Award' was judged by Women in Rail charity trustee, Rajinder Pryor MBE, Senior Account Manager at Network Rail Telecom, and Chair Adeline Ginn MBE, Legal and Marketing Director and Head of EDI at CPMS – Egis, across two of the event's favourite challenges – It's a Knockout and Walk the Plank. The winner was 'Morgan Sindall Mallards' from Morgan Sindall for displaying outstanding teamwork and motivational support.

And finally, the most coveted trophy of the day 'The Team of the Year Award' for achieving the highest overall score with an impressive 258 out of a possible 260, went to 'From Rags to Riches' from Central Rail Systems Alliance. The 2021 winner's trophy was presented by Headline Sponsor CPMS – Egis' CEO Mat Baine.

On the day, there was also a Charity Tuck Shop and a Hamper Raffle, which were kindly sponsored by Fundraising Sponsors Thales Ground Transportation Systems – which helped raise £1,150.00 for the Women in Rail Charity.

The official images from the event will shortly be added to The Big Rail Diversity Challenge website: www.bigraildiversity.co.uk – and bookings are already open for #BigRail2022! Add Wednesday 22nd June 2022 to your diary and we hope to see you there!

Thank you to all our 2021 attending teams, including:

CPMS-Egis, Morson Group, Thales Ground Transportation Systems AEGIS Engineering Systems Ltd, Alstom, Angel Trains, Arcadis Consulting UK, Arup, CAF, Central Rail Systems Alliance, Costain Skanska JV, Direct Rail Services, East Midlands Railway, GB Railfreight, Heathrow Express, Knorr-Bremse Rail System (UK) Limited, McGinley Support Services (Infrastructure) Ltd, Morgan Sindall, Motion Rail, Mott MacDonald, MTR Elizabeth line, Network Certification Body, Pandrol, Rail Delivery Group, Railway Industry Association, Resourcing Solutions Limited, Risktec Solutions Ltd, SCS Railways, Serco Ltd, Siemens Mobility Limited, Siemens Mobility Ltd, Skanska UK and Partners, Systra, Transpennine Route Upgrade East, Trenitalia c2c Ltd, Unipart Rail, Vextrix, VolkerFitzpatrick and VolkerRail.

2021 Testimonials:

It was so incredible to take part in the Big Rail Diversity Challenge on Wednesday as part of Women in Rail's initiative. This was to show that gender diverse teams raise awareness for Women working across the Rail Industry, and the business benefits attained when companies improve Gender Balance

It was wonderful to meet everyone across the Siemens teams (as well as other organisations) and complete some really fun activities with you all. I would like to extend a massive thank you to Siemens Mobility for this incredible opportunity

Vanessa Stanley MIET, Graduate Engineer, Siemens Mobility via LinkedIn

SYSTRA was delighted to take part in Women in Rail's 6th Big Rail Diversity Challenge yesterday! Not only did our team love taking part in the activities and networking throughout the day, but we were also very proud to support the important message behind the event - "Gender Diversity: Better for People, Better for Business, Better for Rail".

SYSTRA Ltd, via LinkedIn

Congratulations to the energetic 'Morgan Sindall Infrastructure Mallard's' who won the Collaborative Team Award at the Big Rail Diversity Challenge.

Not only was it an enjoyable and entertaining day but a great way to celebrate diversity in the rail industry and support the important message behind the event.

Morgan Sindall Infrastructure, via LinkedIn

I had a great time yesterday with everyone from "Team EDI." It was wonderful to socialise the night before and make new friends. But what I really have had chance to reflect on is how Siemens really are #OneTeam. Everyone took part and after a long day of fun I'd love to say my thank yous for being able to be a part of it.

Well done everyone! #siemens

Kayleigh Glover, eLearning Apprentice, Siemens Mobility via LinkedIn

What an amazing week to be 12!!! Happy Birthday #teammotion we celebrated our day supporting a cause close to our hearts at the Big Rail Diversity Challenge alongside the Railway Benefit Fund Women in Rail & Nimble Media Ltd one word.... Brilliant!!!!

Motion Rail, via LinkedIn

The 2 CPMS - @egis teams had a fabulous time at the @BRailDiversityC yesterday - we did not win but had loads of fun!

BRDC is the only rail industry event attended by a truly diverse cohort in terms of gender and diversity: hopefully a sight of our future rail workforce!

@cpmsgroup, via Twitter

I just wanted to pass on a huge thanks from my colleagues and myself who attended on Wednesday. As you know we had three teams entered. It was the first time attending for about half of numbers, but everyone has said that they had a great time and can't wait for next year's event! I found it stressful organising the three teams, so hats off to you lot for organising the actual event, again everyone commented on how organised and structured the whole day was.

To top it off, one of our teams won overall so we have to try and retain that title next year!

Kirstie Rich, Assistant Project Manager, Central Rail Systems Alliance

I thought the level of professionalism that Nimble Media brought to the event was extraordinary, every single member of your team was a real pleasure to deal with, and there were staff everywhere at all times. The event ran smoothly from start to finish, and both the teams from CPMS-Egis absolutely loved the day, the weather was kind which also helped. Thank you so much for everything Nimble did to make the day truly memorable.

Mat Baine, Chief Executive Officer, CPMS - Egis



Photo credit: Nimble Media