

MP backs railcard

Railfuture's campaign for a national railcard has won support from Labour MP Mark Lazarowicz.

Mr Lazarowicz tabled an early day motion backing the idea, saying that the railcard for use across the whole GB rail network would boost off-peak passenger numbers.

The motion put forward by the MP for Edinburgh North and Leith calls for the introduction of a railcard to cover the whole of Great Britain which would offer major discounts to passengers travelling on off-peak train services.

It would be particularly aimed at attracting more leisure passengers on to rail, encouraging them to switch from road to rail for their long-distance journeys.

The card would benefit Scots travelling between Scotland and England and on longer rail routes inside Scotland.

Evidence from other European countries which already have a national railcard shows just how popular they can be.

There has been a good uptake of the cards in these countries (3 million sales is the estimate for Britain) and they also give the rail industry an important additional source of revenue.

Because the card would offer discounts for travel only during off-peak periods, the focus would be on using more of the existing capacity on these services, rather than over-burdening already crowded commuter services.

Mark Lazarowicz said: "I feel strongly that a British Railcard aimed at leisure passengers would be one answer to the enormous problem of congestion on our roads. People need incentives to switch from road to rail, and the cut-price deals which such a card would offer could help make the railways that bit more attractive.

"Britain already has experience of the benefits of railcard schemes in the form of the Senior Railcard and the Young Persons Railcard. I believe these benefits should be made available to the adult population as a whole.

"I will be pressing as many MPs as possible to sign the Motion and I hope that the rail industry pays attention now to the demands which are being expressed on this issue.

The full motion on the Great Britain Railcard says:

"This motion supports the calls for the introduction of a British



The second stage of the National Railcard report – International comparisons was launched on 16 July 2003 at London Waterloo station by Railfuture vice president Ron Cotton. Mr Cotton who invented the Saver ticket and persuaded a reluctant British Rail to introduce them warned that they were now at risk. Mr Cotton is pictured right, with Railfuture chairman Peter Lawrence, centre, and report author Douglas Medrisch, left. The importance of Savers was stressed by Railfuture policy officer Mike Crowhurst in a submission to this year's Strategic Rail Authority's fares review.

Railcard covering the whole of the British rail network and offering rail passengers off-peak discount travel; congratulates Railfuture and The Railway Consultancy for their forward-thinking work on this issue; notes the potential benefits of such a scheme, including a significant increase in rail use by leisure travellers, thereby helping to encourage a switch from road to rail, increased revenues for the rail industry, greater use of existing capacity on off-peak services, and higher levels of social inclusion; furthermore, points to the high uptake of similar schemes on the Continent and the success in the UK of the Network South East Card, Senior Card and Young Persons Railcard in stimulating demand for rail travel; and calls on the SRA and the Association of Train Operating Companies to fully endorse the proposals for such a card and to examine ways of introducing it across the network as soon as possible."

Mark Lazarowicz contact details: 020 7219 8199 Westminster office, 07626 409530 (pager), or 0781 5543826 (mobile).

House of Commons: Tel: 020 7219 8222 Fax: 020 7219 1761

Constituency Office: 86-88 Brunswick St, Edinburgh EH7 5HU

Tel: 0131 557 0577 Fax: 0131 557 5759

Website: www.marklazarowicz.com
Railfuture is hoping to arrange meetings with key groups about taking the national railcard project forward.

Business Plan

Although Railfuture is a voluntary group, we are in the process of drawing up a business plan. The idea is to use the plan as a method of convincing funding organisations of what we are aiming to achieve.

Volunteer Owen Simon is spearheading the process and has already presented a first draft to the national executive.

NE members will be making their input over the next few weeks and then Owen will be invited to make a presentation to the NE meeting in London in November.

At September's NE meeting, President Michael Caton called for an action plan to accompany the Business Plan while David Harby said it was important that it was concise.

David Redgewell called for branches to be more actively involved in the process and for greater consideration of regional devolution.

The NE decided that a meeting involving members of the society be arranged after the plan was presented to the NE in November.

Although the annual general

meeting of the society will not take place until May next year, members and branches should consider whether they want to join the national executive which is the society's ruling body and policy maker.

Nomination forms are available from John Lee, The Birches, Eye Lane, East Rudham, Norfolk PE31 8RH. Tel 01485 528088.

Email: john.lee@rdsadmin.freewire.co.uk

Railfuture is also looking for a membership secretary as Elisabeth Jordan has announced she will standing down from the post after the AGM.

Lottery winners

The winners of the Railfuture lottery for June were: Mrs V F Humphreys, London NW3 £40, Mrs J Uphill, Pinner £25, M Knighton, Bakewell £15, I Mason, Shepton Mallet £10, D Peters, Telford £5, P J Owen, Gresford, Wrexham £5.

July: Derek English, Poole £40, John Foster, Ormskirk £25, Bernard Sheridan, Mexborough £15, Peter Clark, Ayr £10, A J Boulwood, Edgware £5, George Sage, Southport £5.

Electric future

There are reports that Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority is hoping to electrify the line between Bidston and Neston, Cheshire, as a way of boosting its network.

Reasons for anger

The world premiere performance of The Permanent Way will take place at the Theatre Royal, York, in November 2003.

It will be performed at York prior to the play's opening at the Royal National Theatre in London.

The play was written by the acclaimed writer of Amy's View, The Blue Room, Pravda and the Oscar-winning film The Hours.

It retells first-hand accounts of those most intimately involved in the privatisation of the railways. The Theatre Royal says its is a funny, tragic and compelling story.

It adds: "Why aren't people angry? They were robbed."

Performances will be at 19.30 on 13, 14 and 15 November. On 15 November there is also a matinee at 2.30pm.

Box office telephone: 01904 623568 Website: www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk Address: Box Office, Theatre Royal, St Leonard's Place, York YO1 7HD