

# £50m boost for Metro

By Peter Kenyon

The first stage of the Tyne and Wear Metro reinvigoration has been secured by £50million.

As Christian Wolmar points out in his new history of Britain's railways *Fire and Steam*, since Beeching, spending on roads has been deemed as "investment" while spending on rail has been regarded as "subsidy".

In the light of this national short sightedness, the success of Nexus in securing funding to the tune of £50million for the first phase of modernisation over the next two years is to be welcomed.

The money has been obtained from central Government, private developers, the European Union and Metro's own capital programme.

Developments will include £14.3million for 249 state-of-the-art new ticket machines at all stations as well as barriers at 13 stations.

There will also be £6.9million improvements at Sunderland station, £3.2million for a new station at Simonside on the South Shields line and £5million for the transformation of Haymarket station.

A further £6.3million goes to the overhaul of bridges and tunnels, £3million for improvements to Metro trains and £17.4million for infrastructure and new technology.

## Fare dodging

Recent figures indicate an annual total of 38.7million passengers

using the system. The new ticket machines, which will accept coins, notes and cards, combined with barrier controls, cannot come a moment too soon as a recent week-long crackdown on fare dodgers at the start of the new academic year revealed 734 ticketless passengers in the central Newcastle area. Metro offers an annual and monthly travel card with special rates for students.

## Transforming Haymarket

Haymarket station caters for six million passengers each year, serving the shops in Northumberland Street and two universities.

The new station is a £20million development financed by Closegate in partnership with Nexus.

A four-storey glass and steel building will rise above the station, and will feature shops, a bar restaurant and offices.

£5million of the total cost will go towards the regeneration of the station where work will include refurbished platforms with a new lift, escalators and automatic ticket barriers.

The complete modernisation and development of this essential public transport system will be secured when a further £255.3million is spent on Phase Two of the plan between 2010 and 2018.

Another £280.5million will be needed for Phase Three in subsequent years. More information: <http://www.nexus.org.uk>

# Eurostar survey

By Trevor Garrod

[trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk)

Enclosed with this issue of *Railwatch* is a questionnaire which we hope you will use to record your experience of any Eurostar journey that you make between 1 December and 31 March.

We will analyse the results and publish a report, hopefully in May. Railfuture wants to assess the customer experience of Eurostar now that a further 20 minutes has been cut from the journey time between London, Lille, Paris and Brussels.

Access to and from towns and cities north of London is now easier and rail should be competing even more effectively in the international market.

It is expected that there will be many favourable comments but we also want to hear of problems and receive constructive comments.

Our report will ultimately be sent to Eurostar, the Association of Train Operators, the Department for Transport, politicians at national and European level and international bodies.

# Europe comes to London

The European Passengers' Federation will hold its sixth AGM and conference at the headquarters of Tube Lines, Canary Wharf, London, on Saturday 15 March.

It will be the first event in our country, although the EPF Council has also met twice in London.

We will be welcoming rail campaigners from many other European countries who will be using the new high-speed line to St Pancras and experiencing new developments in London's public transport system. Railfuture was

a founder member of EPF and our individual members will be welcome to attend the AGM which precedes the conference. The theme of the latter will be sustainable urban mobility, reflecting a recent Green paper on this subject issued by the European Commission.

The conference fee of 60 euros (£40) will include lunch. For full details, which should be available by Christmas, please send an SAE to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ or log on to [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu)

LOCAL ACTION

# North East

By Peter Kenyon  
[peterkenyon@yahoo.com](mailto:peterkenyon@yahoo.com)

## White Paper

The branch committee made a submission to the Commons transport committee inquiry into the rail White Paper. It is worth quoting the conclusion in full: "The White Paper provided an opportunity for the Government to shape the railway network in a way that might make a major contribution to meeting these challenges in the decades to come.

"Unfortunately the White Paper ducks these challenges, lacking the ambition, vision, or an investment strategy sufficient to meet current demand, let alone that which may reasonably be forecast to occur in the future. This stands in stark contrast to roads and airports where 'predict and survive' continues to reign supreme, to the detriment of the environment in which we live."

## Service changes

Train operator Northern now expects to introduce six extra trains from Middlesbrough to Nunthorpe by extending the Hexham-Middlesbrough service during the trains' lengthy turn-round times at Middlesbrough. A later departure of the last train south is under consideration. This would accommodate students who have evening commitments at Sunderland University.

The operator seems keen to meet local needs and has confirmed that a Sunday Morpeth-Newcastle-Metro Centre service will be run in December.

Also a new Newcastle-Morpeth evening service is being introduced which will run to Middlesbrough on return. In addition Northern held a 'Meet the Operator' evening at Saltburn in October when a lively, frank and informative discussion took place.

In contrast Arriva, the new holder of the CrossCountry franchise, has already indicated that the number of trains calling at Morpeth will be reduced in 2008. At the same time Northern continues to press forward with the business case for the later opening of the booking office, waiting room and toilet facilities at Morpeth station, which currently close at lunchtime. This is a local example of the effect of the fragmentation of our rail system.

The respective users groups are to be congratulated on their skill and persistence in these matters.

## Future hopes

We are assured that plans for the reinstatement of a platform at Belford, the reopening of the Leamside and Ashington, Blyth and Tyne lines are moving cautiously forward with strong regional political support and active study by Network Rail. Grand Central expects to begin running an interim Sunderland-London service in November, and to operate a full timetable in December. The persistence of this company in the face of constant setbacks also deserves commendation.

# Lincolnshire

## Through trains to Lincoln

British Rail stopped running through trains from London to Lincoln 20 years ago. Now three operators hope to reinstate direct trains. East Midlands franchise operator Stagecoach wants to run a daily service via Nottingham from 2008. East Coast main line franchise operator National Express plans a high-speed service from 2010 via Newark. Renaissance Trains is also in talks with Network Rail to run from Grimsby and Lincoln, using the Joint Line via Sleaford, Spalding, Peterborough, Cambridge to Stratford in London.

Branch contact: Brian Hastings 01724 710528

