

Rail-air ticketing

By Trevor Garrod

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The European Commission has launched a consultation exercise on rail-air ticketing, and in September the European Passengers' Federation issued a detailed response.

EPF is convinced that there is a market for integrated ticketing between rail and air, provided that it offers attractive fares, has a reasonable degree of flexibility and ideally includes local public transport to and from the airport and/or high-speed rail station.

We suggest a Europe-wide classification of airports, rather like the "blue flag" beaches, according to how good their public transport links are.

Thus Frankfurt-am-Main, Amsterdam Schiphol, London Gatwick and Paris Roissy Charles de Gaulle would probably score top marks because of their very good inter-city or medium-distance rail links.

Heathrow and Newcastle would probably be in the second category, with rail links into the city centre.

The third category would be an airport with only a slow local train and/or buses. The bottom category would be an airport with no significant public transport links.

The sort of journey on which integrated ticketing would be attractive could be a flight to Barcelona followed by high-speed train, and from there to Madrid, for a business person with appointments in both cities or a foreign visitor flying into Manchester airport and then continuing by train to any number of destinations in the north of England.

The EPF submission also addresses questions such as luggage registration and information sources, as well as what contingency plans are available if connections are missed.

For a full copy, please send a SAE to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ or log on to www.epf.eu

In October, Trevor Jones represented EPF and Railfuture at a conference on rail-air ticketing at Gatwick.

RAILFREIGHT HIT Some railfreight flows, including cars, metals and building materials, have been hit by the credit crunch. Railfuture's freight committee will be keeping watch and doing what it can to ensure the flows return to rail.

Railwatch

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Elections Board elections are held annually. Nomination forms can be obtained from Returning Officer, PO Box 7690, Hinckley LE10 9WJ. You can also download a form from www.railfuture.org.uk

Who's Who: Many other useful contact details can be found on the Railfuture website

LOCAL ACTION

Railfuture has regional groups which are involved in local issues and come together to support Railfuture on national campaigns. Here we give news of local action in the Railfuture regions.

Wales

By Rowland Pittard

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■■ North Wales branch

A well supported meeting to revive the North Wales branch was held in Flint Town Hall on 18 October. John Rogers, chairman of the South Wales branch, addressed the meeting and George Jones gave a talk on the Wrexham and Shropshire Railway Company. Two local Assembly members Eleanor Burnham and Sandy Mewies attended and both contributed to the discussions.



■■ New law for local transport

Railfuture Wales is monitoring how the relevant proposals of the Local Transport Bill will be implemented in Wales.

■■ Cross-border services

Railfuture Wales has submitted evidence to the Welsh Affairs Committee investigation on the Provision of Cross Border Services for Wales (transport section). The evidence included the reduction in the number of English destinations served by through services from Wales, the effects of congestion at Birmingham and Reading, the restrictions of the single line sections between Wrexham and Chester, Hereford and Ledbury and Swindon and Kemble and the lack of a Celtic Connection between Wales and the West Country.

■■ North-south progress

Crew training began in September for the new locomotive hauled service between North Wales and Cardiff which will include a buffet and first class accommodation (both innovations for Arriva Trains Wales). The new service, which will operate from Monday to Friday, starts on 15 December and leaves Holyhead at 05.15 with a return from Cardiff at 16.18.

■■ Improving track and signals

Track and signalling work between Newport and Severn Tunnel Junction is progressing. During November, track relaying took place at weekends in the Newport station area thus reducing the number of platforms in use to two. Construction of the new South Wales integrated signalling centre has started west of Cardiff station on the site of the former rail milk depot.

■■ Improvements "on ice"

According to a report in the *South Wales Echo*, the Rail Regulator has shelved plans to improve the back-up route between London and Cardiff, as part of £2.4billion worth of cutbacks on Network Rail's plans to expand the British rail network. First Great Western said it would work with Network Rail to find other ways of funding the £32million scheme to upgrade a 12-mile, single-track line in Gloucestershire. Among the work that is being funded are improvements to Queen Street station, Cardiff.

Railfuture annual general meeting

Saturday 9 May 2009 at 11.00

Oxford Place Methodist Centre, Oxford Place, Leeds LS1 3AX