

# railwatch

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## She came by train and conquered

Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg has probably done more than anyone to highlight the advantages of trains.

Now TIME magazine has featured her on its front page and called her one of the world's most influential teens.

TIME has the world's largest circulation for a weekly news magazine and its print edition has a readership of 26 million, 20 million of whom are based in the United States.

Greta began her school strike for climate change in August last year, but she decided to stop taking flights at the age of 12, when she realised the environmental damage air travel caused.

She travelled to the World Economic Forum in Davos by train in January, while the global elite travelled there in 1,500 private jets.

The 16-year-old told them they should be panicking: "Our house is on fire."

Her protest sparked the international Fridays for Future movement which sees school pupils take direct action to confront politicians and business leaders.

Classmates at her school refused to join her, but using Instagram and Twitter she won support. Many adults in Scandinavia though have been flight-shamed into booking holidays by rail, rather than air.

Nearly 10 million people watched Greta's speech to the United Nations climate change summit in December. In April, Greta came to London to address Parliament.

British Prime Minister Theresa May accused the protesters of wasting teachers' time but 12,000 scientists

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# Great Greta!

FROM PAGE 1

signed a letter in support of the youth protests and German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the protesters were welcome.

Greta answered Mrs May: “We will go back to school the moment you start listening to science and give us a future. Is that really too much to ask?”

The Euronews website also investigated Mrs May’s 39 Brexit-related trips in Europe, mainly to Brussels. Her plane, an Airbus A330, burns five tonnes of fuel an hour. Brussels is of course served by Eurostar.

American president Donald Trump meanwhile uses a jumbo jet to go off to play golf most weekends and to rallies to deny climate change.

In March Greta was nominated for the Nobel peace prize.

Norwegian MP Freddy André Øvstegård said: “If we do nothing to halt climate change it will be the cause of wars, conflict and refugees. Greta Thunberg has launched a mass movement, a major contribution to peace.”

After Greta addressed the British Parliament in April, MPs backed Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn’s call to declare a climate emergency.

Green party MP Caroline Lucas warned: “Politicians who fail to respond will be judged by history far less kindly than those striking or taking to the streets.”

Greta however is realistic. She said: “I am not going to be this interesting for long. This attention is soon going to fade out. I just hope that the attention sticks to the movement.”

Campaigning for better rail services is just one way to help prevent climate change.

British travellers can reach most European cities by direct flights but not by direct trains. Rail has the infrastructure to offer similar direct links but politicians and the industry do not have the will to run the trains.

At the moment, Eurostar has direct links to just a handful of major European cities, and plans by Deutsche Bahn to launch direct trains to London seem to have disappeared.

Five European political parties have however joined forces



Greta on the front page of the July 2019 edition of WIRED

to call for “A New Green Deal for Europe” with massive investment in railways to limit road transport. One idea is a green foundation to invest in railways so that the biggest cities in Europe can be linked by high speed trains.

Going by train produces 27 times less carbon dioxide than driving a car the same distance.

Many cities around the world

are waking up to the massive problems of pollution that road-based policies have created.

The British government, after losing three cases at the High Court for not doing enough to tackle air pollution, has ordered 36 councils to bring levels of nitrogen dioxide within legal limits “in the shortest possible time”.

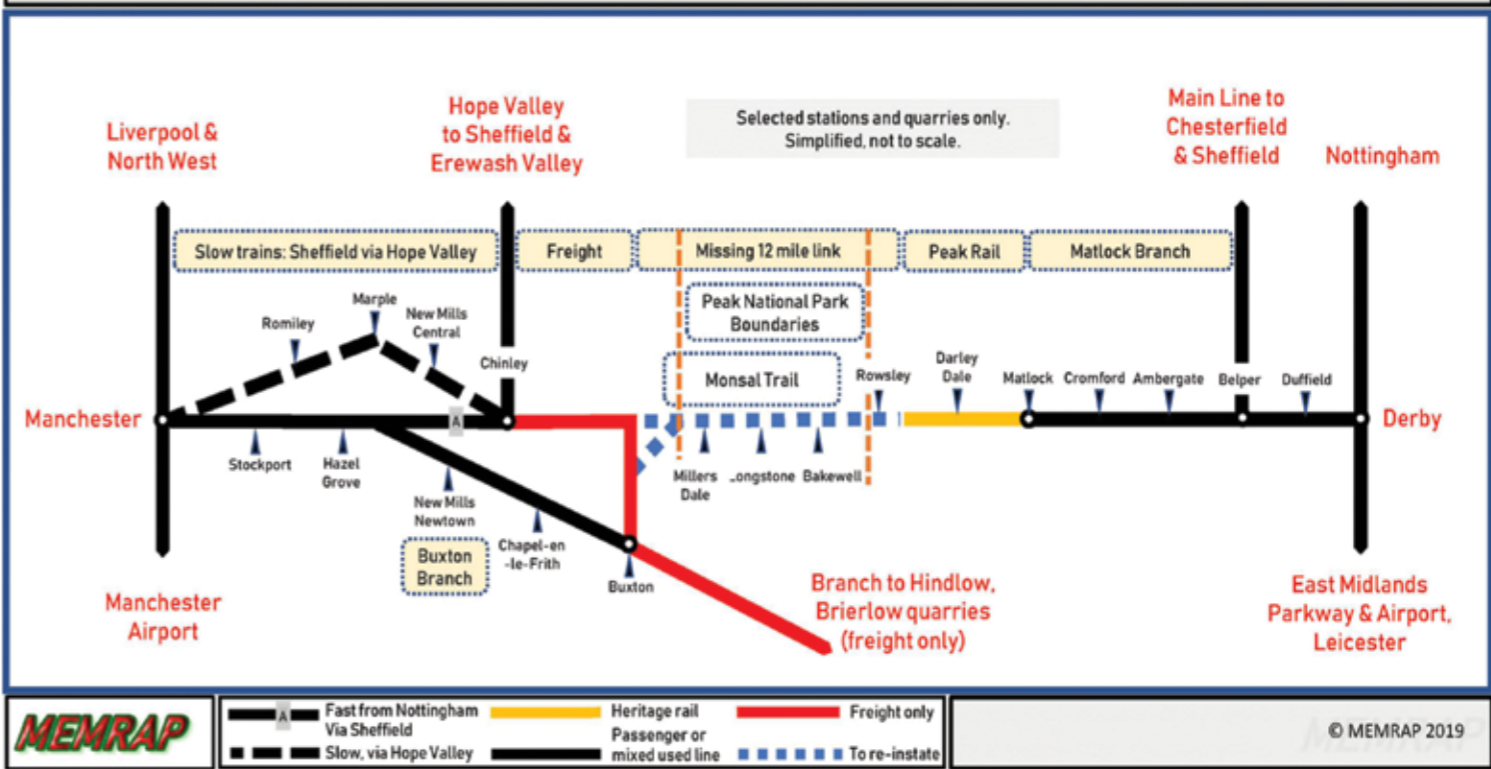
Katie Nield, a lawyer with ClientEarth which challenged the Government in court, said she was disappointed with the councils’ approach to air pollution.

“Some councils are being more ambitious, for example in Birmingham they are putting their necks on the line to make those decisions.

“But others are backtracking on previous commitments and delaying finalising proposals.”

The Welsh Government, however, has been brave in abandoning the 14-mile £1.4 billion M4 “relief” road project. Railfuture must now develop rail options to present to the official commission seeking M4 alternatives.

## The Peaks and Dales Rail Link Schematic



DALES LINK: The missing 12 miles shown in diagrammatic form with the Monsal Trail and the Peak Rail heritage operation

# Dales link wins new friends

By Stephen Chaytow and Anthony Kay

A reinvigorated campaign to bring back passenger trains to the Midland Railway’s former route from Matlock to Buxton and Chinley is winning friends and arguments.

Campaigners, supported by Railfuture resources, have attended a series of events to present the case for reopening. Now Transport for the North has asked for a strategic outline business case to be drawn up so the idea can be considered fully.

Mott McDonald estimates that compiling a business case will cost £100,000, so the immediate task will be identifying a source of funds.

The local enterprise partnership and Derbyshire County Council will almost certainly need to be involved.

But the LEP for Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire has indicated that it will be difficult to help in the short term.

It may be possible to involve the LEP later, in the capital phase of the project.

Derbyshire County Council has financial problems so the campaigners are inviting Railfuture members to come forward with ideas of how to raise the cash. One approach could be to encourage rail

contractors to lend their support. The campaigners have however cleared one hurdle.

They were pleased with the positive response that emerged in May, after they went to a Midlands Development Conference at the Ricoh Stadium in Coventry which was attended by transport opinion formers, including Midlands Connect director Maria Machancoses.

Copies of *Railwatch* 159, which contained a short report on the reopening scheme, were made available to the delegates.

One of the problems of reopening which Transport for the North, Midlands Connect and Transport for the East Midlands will have to face is how to accommodate the popular Monsal Trail, which currently uses part of the rail route.

The case for reopening has been enlivened by the formation of the Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership, which is planning a June meeting with Peak Rail, the heritage railway that runs

trains between Matlock and Rowsley. The purpose of the meeting with Peak Rail is to seek alignment of MEMRAP’s public service reinstatement with Peak Rail’s pre-existing consortium, which is focused on community, heritage and freight. The Mott MacDonald team includes the development director of East Lancashire Railway, so it is hoped that the interests of Peak Rail will be carefully taken into consideration.

Achieving a compromise on mixing community and heritage rail services may well be a tough challenge for this particular line, but solutions have been found elsewhere in Britain where National Rail services are being integrated with heritage trains. Campaigners are also hopeful that Tarmac and Derbyshire Dales MP Patrick McLoughlin, who is a former transport secretary, will be supportive.

Earlier in the year, MEMRAP campaigners explained their plans to the Tarmac Group, which has lime and cement interests in Derbyshire.

MEMRAP co-founders Robin

Greenwood and Stephen Chaytow also attended a Transport for the North event in March.

Joined by Peter Wakefield, head of Railfuture’s freight group, they presented their vision for *The Peaks and Dales Rail Link*.

MEMRAP highlighted an emissions study from the University of Derby, funded by the European Union, which shows how carbon dioxide emissions could be reduced by re-routing freight trains on to the reopened route, together with a modal shift of passengers from road to rail.

By re-routing just 38 loaded freight trains over a reopened Matlock-Buxton line (away from the Hope Valley Manchester-Sheffield route), 150,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide could be saved.

In addition, if the equivalent of 100 annual commuters between Leicester and Manchester switched from road to rail, a similar amount of carbon dioxide could be saved.

The emissions report and MEMRAP’s presentation to Transport for the North can be accessed via the MEMRAP link on the Friends of Derwent Valley Line home page at [www.fdv1.org.uk](http://www.fdv1.org.uk)

MEMRAP’s new rail user group page is at [www.railusergroups.net/MEMRAP/index.htm](http://www.railusergroups.net/MEMRAP/index.htm)



Monsal Trail

Picture: LLOYD BUTLER



Railfuture chair Chris Page

emissions will justify the capital spend. The alternatives to full electrification – battery and even hydrogen – have a place on lightly used routes where electrification is not financially justified. See our analysis of the electric alternatives at [www.railfuture.org.uk/article1825](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1825).

**Our message**

Railfuture’s communications group needs more volunteers to help make potential members aware of our position on these key issues through our branches and social media. Please let me know if you can help.

## Chair’s column: Electrification is the key to real capacity gains

By Chris Page  
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People who are considering joining Railfuture are likely to have an interest in rail so will want to know our position on the key issues for the rail industry. We put franchising, climate change and electrification at the top.

**Franchising**

Dick Fearn, one of the members of the Williams Review panel, found two common themes in talking to members of the rail industry – a lack of strategic direction and leadership, and a decision-making process which is asphyxiating.

The Rail Delivery Group is suggesting a new organisation to manage the industry, but some strategic decisions are political, so a new organisation would have to refer them to the Department for Transport anyway. The DfT should acknowledge its role and get the expertise that it needs to act as an intelligent client.

Strategic decisions that are technical should be made by Network Rail acting as a system integrator.

Urban services should be devolved to local authorities – for example, Transport for London, Transport for

the North – and operated as concessions. If these services need public financial support, then the case can be better made locally on local economic and social inclusion benefits.

Inter-city services should continue to be let as franchises, but the franchise competition must take more account of the wider benefits and the previous record of the bidders. Competing services by different operators, as proposed by RDG, will only work where there is spare capacity.

**Climate change**

Climate change is perhaps the biggest threat to the future of our planet. To reduce climate change we must use more sustainable forms of transport, and travel less. Rail offers the most sustainable form of transport other than walking or cycling, but is already over capacity at times when people want to travel.

However, old diesel trains are not much better than cars for sustainability, particularly at times when they are not fully utilised, and the shift to electric cars will rapidly reduce emissions from road transport.

Modal shift from car and lorries to electric trains will make a practical difference. This requires investment in

more tracks and longer trains to provide the extra capacity needed, and investment in electrification to reduce rail’s carbon footprint and keep pace with improvements in road’s environmental credentials.

**Electrification**

Electric trains are cheaper to operate than diesel. The purchase costs are lower and they are more energy-efficient, more reliable, and cost less to maintain.

They produce less pollution than all the alternative forms of traction, and offer the possibility of zero emissions if electricity is generated sustainably.

Electrification is the only way to provide the additional capacity needed to accommodate rail travel growth without increasing operating costs and therefore requiring government subsidy.

A rolling programme of incremental electrification projects is essential for Network Rail to build the electrification skills and experience needed to reduce the capital cost to viable levels. This should focus on intensively used or high speed routes where the journey time savings, increased reliability, lower operating costs and reduced

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### ■ ■ Job switch was a promotion for rail

A lifelong interest in railways resulted in Martin Halliday switching from running the Marina Theatre in Lowestoft to getting involved in community rail. Martin was guest speaker at Railfuture East Anglia's AGM in Bury St Edmunds. He has helped develop promotional material for the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership, including new posters, arranging special events and books of walks between stations. Work is currently under way at Lowestoft station to restore the former parcels office. The area is being transformed into a new community space for markets and art exhibitions. Around £100,000 from a variety of sources has helped pay for new doors and windows and a complete refurbishment of the interior. The new space is due to open this summer.

### ■ ■ Sizewell potential for lasting legacy to rail

Railfuture East Anglia continues to contribute to the Sizewell C consultation progress, providing an updated response to the third stage of the process. Our position is that the construction of Sizewell C nuclear power station should maximise the potential offered by the East Suffolk rail line for the movement of employees and materials. Investment in improved capacity should aim to do more than the bare minimum and achieve, when combined with other funding sources, the full dualling of the line between Woodbridge and Saxmundham. Sizewell C should leave a lasting legacy of improved rail services. Even if the rail-led option is more expensive than the road-led one, it is a tiny part of the total project cost. Our response was copied to Network Rail which is in contact with Suffolk County Council officials.

### ■ ■ Lack of ambition in county rail study

Network Rail's newly published *Cambridgeshire Corridor Study* lacks ambition and fails to appreciate the potential for rail to support Cambridgeshire's growth. It concludes that "no additional services are required for the high peak hour between Cambridge and Ipswich to meet 2033 demand". Newmarket has a similar population to Ely but a fraction of the passenger numbers because of its sparse rail service. A half-hourly service from Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds to Cambridge would see passenger numbers soar. The railway towards Newmarket and Chippenham Junction had "redundancy" stripped out when it was singled in the 1980s, leaving only a mile-long passing loop at Dullingham. The current proposal is for just 3.5 miles of extra track, in 2043. Any future timetable will not work without restoration of double track all the way to Newmarket. Double track is needed now, not in 25 years time. Even if such upgrades were delayed for a short time, they will be absolutely essential for East West Rail. The EWR consortium has just published its *Eastern Section Prospectus* which shows that a direct rail link between Ipswich, Norwich and Oxford would unlock £17.5 billion for the region's economy. The consortium "will work together to ensure that the Eastern Section is 'Central Section ready'. The enhanced operation of services between Ipswich and Cambridge and Norwich and Cambridge will be crucial to the successful operation of Central Section services west of Cambridge."

[www.eastwestrail.org.uk/eastern-section-prospectus/](http://www.eastwestrail.org.uk/eastern-section-prospectus/)

### ■ ■ Clearing the way to Ed Sheeran concerts

Railfuture East Anglia has welcomed the Network Rail decision to keep lines open for the Ed Sheeran concerts in Ipswich during August bank holiday weekend, and Greater Anglia's plan for extra trains.

[www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia)  
Twitter: @RailfutureEA

## New hope for Ollerton reopening

An MP believes that extending the Robin Hood line to the Sherwood Forest area could be a reality in five years.

Sherwood MP Mark Spencer said it will help young people looking for work if passenger trains went as far as Ollerton and Edwinstowe.

The Robin Hood line runs from Nottingham to Worksop via Mansfield, but there have long been ambitions for it to serve the Sherwood Forest area.

A £25 million plan involves using a test railway track with a connection near Shirebrook.

Mr Spencer said: "If you compare the town of Hucknall and the village of Calverton, they are very similar to Ollerton and Clipstone, but the fundamental difference is the infrastructure.

"Today, you can get on the tram at Hucknall and go into the centre of



Picture: RAILWATCH

**HUCKNALL: Served by tram and train**

Nottingham." A spokesman for the Department for Transport said: "The next operator of the new East Midlands franchise will be required to submit a business case to the Secretary of State for the possible extension of the Robin Hood line from Shirebrook to Ollerton."

### East Midlands

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### ■ ■ Positive attitude for new franchise

Following the news that Abellio would be taking over the East Midlands franchise, Railfuture East Midlands is encouraged by the fact that Abellio's stakeholder engagement adviser Edward Funnell took the trouble to attend our Inter-City Kitty campaign launch event last year, and we are optimistic we will enjoy constructive dialogue on more than the Derby-Crewe services with the new franchisee. We also look forward to the delivery of the new trains and other service improvements promised by Abellio.

### ■ ■ The benefits of community rail

The guest speaker at the Railfuture East Midlands AGM on 23 March at Mansfield Central Library was Paul Webster, operations manager at the Association of Community Rail Partnerships. ACoRP also supports station adoption groups. Indeed, the Friends of Radcliffe Station, coordinated by Railfuture East Midlands committee member Phil Thomas, received an award earlier this year for their work over the past 15 months in transforming the station into a really attractive location. Paul Webster's talk ranged widely over the variety of ways that partnerships and adoption groups bring benefits not just to rail travellers, but to whole communities. We have a couple of partnerships in our area, but the potential is far greater, something for the branch to consider also in the context of the commitment to supporting community rail in the new East Midlands franchise. If anyone would like to adopt their local station or have a CRP on their local line, the first point of call should be ACoRP.

### ■ ■ Stop more trains at Narborough

Friends of Narborough Station note that passenger numbers from the station have doubled since 2007, and have put forward proposals to CrossCountry Trains to relieve the resulting overcrowding. Rather than increasing the number of trains, which would exacerbate delays at the village's level crossing, the Friends have compiled

a list of through trains that they believe should stop at the station. They believe that any problems resulting from increased travel times can be solved.

### ■ ■ Electrification

Railfuture East Midlands welcomed the announcement that electrification of the Midland main line would proceed as far as Market Harborough, partly because the power supply point is planned for Braybrooke, just short of Harborough. We continue to press for reinstatement of the electrification programme for the entire Midland main line and we support the call from Midlands Connect for the wires to go up at least to Nottingham and Toton, so that half the MML services could be fully electric and HS2-compatible services could run from Leicester to Leeds.

### ■ ■ Leicester-Burton fly-through

The Campaign to Reopen the Ivanhoe Line have produced a "fly through" video of the line (search: Youtube reopen Ivanho), illustrating the potential of the line to serve many towns and large villages as well as providing access to the National Forest.

### ■ ■ Fond memories of Jim Wade

People from civic and community organisations in Corby, along with family and friends, gathered at Corby station on Saturday 27 April for the unveiling of a bench in memory of Jim Wade, a loyal member of Railfuture, who died last year. Jim was a leading figure in the successful campaign to reopen the line to Corby and he is fondly remembered by all who knew him. The bench is a lasting memorial to a remarkable and popular man.

### ■ ■ Freestyle railway discussion

Our next "free-form railway conversation" where we can discuss railway matters without the constraints of an agenda will be held at the Canalhouse near Nottingham station on 13 August, from 12.00 noon. All members are welcome.

[www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Midlands+Branch](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Midlands+Branch)  
Twitter: @RailfutureEMids

## The joys (and pitfalls) of family travel by rail



**SCOTLAND: Jurgen with Anne. 'When we were on holiday in Scotland recently the tram route from Edinburgh airport gave us a very comfortable and convenient ride into the city centre from the park & ride station at Ingliston'**

By Anne Harrild

mother of two lively children

As a *Railwatch* reader, you are certain to support rail travel. But you probably have friends with children who are wary of giving up what they perceive as the convenience of the family car for anything so potentially fraught as travelling by train.

Fortunately, taking small children on the train is usually a pleasant experience, and in any case it is worth reminding your friends that at some time they may have to take their children by train because the family car is not available.

Do assure your friends from me that long journeys have been no problem all the time the children have been with me, though I do find that it is sensible to make sure that they each have an iPad for the trip.

It is prudent to reserve seats for the journey if you can. The only time I came unstuck on a train journey was travelling home from London with my son on a crowded train with no seats available. That is when emergency rations come in useful, unless you are one of the few brave people who manage to squeeze through to the buffet car. We normally take our own refreshments with us, partly because we are not on the train

long enough to have to think seriously about food and drink, and partly because I perceive the food available on trains and from catering outlets at stations to be overpriced.

### Toilets

This is probably the point at which I should mention toilets. These are a must for a journey of any length, and it is a concern when they are not available, especially when there seems to be a deliberate policy to have fewer toilets on new trains. Clearly the people who specify these things have never been in the position of looking after a smelly baby whose nappy needs changing immediately – regardless of what facilities may or may not be available! That said, I am impressed by the standard of station toilets, which I have always found to be clean and well kept.

Fares are a vexed question, their variety and different prices soon giving rise to confusion, especially if you are not a frequent passenger. There are so many things to consider in the fares "system" that it is possible to miss essential information. It is also easy to miss a cheap offer, or inadvertently use a ticket on a train for which it is not valid.



**ENGLAND: As well as being a magnificent space, the bustle and the sheer extent of York station makes it an exciting place for children to experience**

◆◆◆◆ The new Cambodia-Thailand rail link at Poipot/Arayaprathet was inaugurated in April



Pictures: ANNE HARRILD

**WALES: The narrow gauge has its own very special charm. Castle Caereinion station obviously cannot compete with York for size but the Welshpool & Llanfair Railway does give passengers the chance of opening the carriage window and photographing the other train – and enjoying a cake**

Less obviously, and while I can see that the practice is probably convenient for train companies, I have a suspicion that only regular passengers and railway enthusiasts keep track of when the cheapest Advance tickets are released for journeys on a particular date. This should not be the object of the exercise.

### A journey in detail

Looking at a recent journey as an example, I took the children from Crewe to Birkenhead for an evening event. I bought the tickets just before we travelled, since we would not have gone if there had been heavy rain. The tickets cost £32.80 for the three of us and although there was a queue in the booking office, we still had plenty of time to get down to the right platform. This was the first time we had used the new style, scannable tickets, (example inset above). The children enjoyed scanning them but it did take a couple of goes for them to work.

On the platform, the monitors clearly displayed the train information, and staff were on hand to help with enquiries. The train was quite busy with people going to Liverpool for a night out, and also people travelling to Liverpool John Lennon Airport to catch flights, but we found a group of three seats all right.

There were no delays and we departed on time, stopping at five stations before we arrived at Liverpool Lime Street, again on time. This gave us plenty of time to go down to the Merseyrail platforms and find the right one. This time our scannable tickets were manually checked for Merseyrail, but again the monitors gave clear information regarding train times and platform numbers. The frequent service on Merseyrail made the journey back from Birkenhead Hamilton Square very easy. We reached Lime Street in plenty of time to catch the train back to Crewe. Again the train was on time, but with fewer people travelling on it later in the evening.

### More exotic railways

I was very wary of taking the children on the London Underground, but in fact it was no problem. My daughter Helena in particular absolutely loved it, especially the tunnels. Taking the children on a heritage railway can definitely be recommended as a fun experience for all concerned, especially when the railway offers carriages with open platforms like those on the Welshpool & Llanfair Railway. I think that the smaller size of narrow gauge railways helps to make them friendlier for small children, while a great attraction for me is the station cafe at Llanfair – and its ladies serving proper cakes!

# Rail is a winner in the environmental stakes . . . but it can do even better

With all the current concern about climate change and pollution, there is a great opportunity for rail to take top prize for the environment.

We know it makes sense, but can we make the case for rail even more sustainable?

It is clear that campaigning for railway development needs determination, focus and stamina. It also needs to be informed.

We are gradually moving the perception of Railfuture from a bunch of earnest dreamers to an organisation people are increasingly turning to for advice on railway development issues, including reopening proposals, improved services and a better offer to the passenger and the freight customer.

There is actually nothing wrong with being a dreamer. This can be a strength, not a weakness, providing we can engage and communicate rational arguments.

The issue is how to put our arguments and whether stakeholders, politicians and industry players will listen. Our reputation is important.

I say this because we are yet again at a time of great uncertainty, politically and also in a railway context, given populist government, or would-be government policies designed to divert our attention.

Setting up the Williams review is in this category, following the series of timetable fiascos in 2018 which could have been fixed.

A no-holds-barred, root-and-branch review is a much better idea politically, if not for the rail industry and its customers.

This has the massive bonus of buying time, over a year in this case. This is even better when people are appointed, with some exceptions, who do not know much about the rail industry.

Fresh thinking – forget about all the crazy ideas already inflicted on the rail industry and hapless passengers. Amnesia or corporate amnesia, is now an advantage, particularly with politicians.

Just about everybody is jumping on the bandwagon, pursuing their own self interest.

Cries of “putting the passenger at the heart of the operation”, ring out from the trade unions and politicians alike. The insincerity is deafening and as hollow as the Channel Tunnel.

If there were substance in this we should be celebrating. There clearly is not. If demands like



**NO LONGER A FANTASY:** The first trials of electrified motorways for road haulage are taking place in Sweden and in Germany. Nils-Gunnar Vågstedt, who is responsible for Scania's research into electrification, said: “The potential fuel savings through electrification are considerable and the technology can become a cornerstone for fossil-free road transport services.”



this are to be anything other than populist fluff, there need to be properly thought-out proposals to deliver on such slogans.

The age of the sound bite or tweet reduces us all to the level of the dumbest as we see daily in the United States, which is actually now in the process of attempting to close down its entire Amtrak long-distance passenger operation.

The irony is complete when you know that this is the year when Amtrak actually covered its operational costs, which include track access.

Nobody is suggesting closing the British system down Serpell-style. Some people and foreign governments are making far too much money out of the current system to allow this.

A key, but unlikely, outcome of the Williams review should be

to transfer this money stream largesse to the passenger and freight customer and into more investment in environmentally friendly system capacity.

Our railways do well, much better in fact, particularly when wider benefits such as the economy, social inclusion and environmental issues are properly quantified and included.

There are traps here of course, in that a little-used railway contributes much lower levels of these wider benefits, so the fact that passenger journeys in Britain by rail have doubled in the last 15 years is very pertinent. Actually it is more than pertinent: if properly recognised, it should be game changing. Our view in Railfuture is that these arguments are gaining traction in that the wider benefits increase quite dramatically, if not

exponentially, as more people use the railways, especially in the case of modal shift.

Railfuture argues therefore that we need to invest in our rail system with a view to doubling its capacity. This may be too bold for some, but for others it is a relatively cheap way of addressing these wider issues.

Crossrail in London won political backing because it offered a big increase in capacity, not simply because it offered major improvements to many journeys.

Climate change and environment issues have resurfaced as if we as Railfuture campaigners were not aware of them. We are.

Careful here though, before we lose our ability to campaign by informed engagement. The first question is just how good rail is when compared with other modes. The answer is generally good but rail can do much better.

Rail does not seem to grasp the opportunity of producing an energy-efficient, emission-free rail system.

Just look at the electrification and bimode fiasco in Britain, a legacy burden for many years.

Putting rail in pole position and keeping it there is a key issue for Railfuture. The current rail industry structure is not addressing this.

Railfuture campaigns for a bigger, better railway in Britain, and the railways must address, and indeed capitalise on, the “sudden” awareness amongst politicians, if not the rest of us who knew all along.

We must present evidence of how and why railways can address environmental concerns. To do this we need to be informed. Where we are well-informed is that electrification is a major part of the argument. Electrification provides more capacity, hence more of these benefits, and it allows rail to keep up with

the massive investment that is going into motor vehicle and aerospace research. Hopefully the lessons have been learnt regarding electrification in Britain. The Railway Industry Association is confident that electrification costs can be cut by between a third and a half. That is justification for an incremental electrification programme.

A rolling programme of electrification requires dedicated geographically based teams moving steadily outwards from our urban areas, as is taking place in Scotland.

A key priority should be a Golden Spike ceremony (or golden electrification mast ceremony) half way through Standedge Tunnel, between Manchester and Leeds.

How does HS2 fit into this thinking? As originally conceived as a point-to-point high speed operation, unfortunately not very well.

If HS2 develops as now generally accepted, and as Railfuture has consistently campaigned for, into a properly integrated electrified boost to system resilience and capacity, it fares a lot better.

Network Rail acknowledges, for instance, that HS2 is the most cost-effective way of providing a third pair of tracks on the core West Coast main line from London to Tamworth (where HS2 joins the West Coast main line).

HS2 is significantly cheaper and far less disruptive than attempting to widen the existing West Coast route.

HS2 does not however come out so well further north, particularly with the north-east leg as our branches know. More campaigning work needed here.

Making the case for electrification is Railfuture's key battle ground in response to the environmental challenge. We are not Luddites yearning for a past world. We want to campaign effectively and positively to ensure rail can play a significant role in providing a sustainable transport system for the future for our children and grandchildren. The time window for doing this is uncomfortably short.

The efforts by the road and aerospace industries to establish better environmental credentials are creditable, albeit done for commercial reasons. The efforts of the rail industry in this regard, with an altogether different short-term horizon, are however lamentable. Is anybody



**LABOUR INTENSIVE:** Great Western electrification under way at Bristol Parkway in October 2018

talking about a BR-style research department with the brightest engineers from all sectors, including rail, in the context of the Williams Review? I fear not.

We have our work cut out. People actually generally like railways, hence our frustration that there is such poor performance. Our role is to ensure stakeholders and politicians have the tools to make reasoned arguments, particularly in making the case for electrification, more capacity and new lines.

With an increasing focus on devolution, the target audience is much bigger, so Railfuture's branch structure is well equipped to do this. Who would have thought North

Somerset Council would have been successful in gaining funds to provide a new link from Portishead and Pill into Bristol?

The campaign aim was to make a strong business and environmental case and to present it effectively in dialogue with government.

Ashington should be not far behind, and nor should the Borders extension to Carlisle.

All our branches have their priorities for electrification, capacity schemes and reopenings. Please join in with them and make Railfuture's voice increasingly credible to a wider audience.

□ Ian Brown CBE FCILT is Railfuture policy director

## More info

Search the Railfuture website for articles on:

UN and Climate Change report briefing – Article 1809

Williams Review – 1820

Electric alternatives – 1825

Money for Portishead – 1826

Check the Railway Industry Association for its Electrification Cost Challenge report

The RSSB for its Options for Traction Energy Decarbonisation report

## Even air transport wants to go electric by 2040

**The air transport industry is rapidly trying to come to terms with its high levels of pollution. But the growth in air travel is more than outpacing progress towards more fuel-efficient planes.**

**The economics of air travel will continue to dictate a move to more efficient planes and the aerospace industry is investing in research in a big way. Within Britain, Railfuture's response is to campaign for a railway that meets air competition, as it increasingly does – for example – on London to Glasgow and Edinburgh journeys. The new Eurostar service to Amsterdam has demonstrated that if the right rail product is there people will use it – in droves: You can read the article about Eurostar to Amsterdam by searching the Railfuture website for Article 1818.**



**20 YEAR PLAN:** easyJet has announced that it sees the development of electric planes for commercial use within 20 years



**Some people predict that the British road network will be completely electric within 20 years. The rail network will not. I hear the cry regarding particulates from the tyres of road vehicles, but even this will be addressed.**

**The rail industry is doing almost nothing to bolster rail as the choice in environmental terms, while the automotive industry is investing billions of pounds to improve road's reputation.**

**Road vehicles now at Tier 4 emissions standards are improving faster than rail. It is claimed that Tier 4 compliant diesel engines significantly reduce emissions of particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen to near zero levels.**

## Home truths

According to our local paper, the Government has given its backing to the creation of three "garden towns" and up to 18,500 new homes in Essex to the west of Braintree and the north of Uttlesford. There is no mention of any railway infrastructure to serve these new homes.

Another article in the same newspaper mentions that a bid has been placed by Essex County Council to secure £229 million to upgrade the A12 trunk road. Again, no mention of any improvements to the Greater Anglia rail line which runs practically parallel to the A12.

Is it not time that the powers that be recognised that moving goods and people by rail is much better for the environment than by road and that improving roads only encourages more vehicles to use them, resulting in congestion becoming just as bad in a few years' time.

Roger A Smith, Station Road, Witham, Essex CM8 2FP

## Impressive Parkway

As a resident of the city of Worcester I was delighted to read two letters in *Railwatch* 159 referring to Worcestershire Parkway.

We residents are looking forward to the opening as not only will it provide improved connectivity to Cheltenham and Gloucester south-westwards but also to Birmingham and Nottingham, plus allowing thousands of residents of the new homes constructed on the east side of the city to access train services by travelling to a station without the need to brave the same distance on congested roads into the city centre.

Comments have been made about the lack of a second platform but these overlook the challenges and cost of putting just the one platform at the top of a very high steep Victorian embankment.

To create the single platform required considerable enlargement of the embankment and substantial shoring up of that embankment to meet 21st century standards at a significant cost.

If funds had been available for a second platform, local feeling is that this would be better spent building a bridge from the planned car park, on the land acquired by Wychavon District Council opposite Pershore station, across the track to its current single platform. Quotes to date from contractors of



Picture: GREATER ANGLIA

**PARTY TO CELEBRATE STATION'S 175 YEARS:** (left to right) Network Rail's Kate Snowden, Greater Anglia engineering director Martin Beable, station adopter Robert Fletcher, Alex Burghart MP, Cllr Paul Jeater (at the back), Lord Petre, Cllr Sheila Murphy, Andy Savage of the Railway Heritage Trust, Bishop of Chelmsford Stephen Cottrell and Steve Wills

## Station is 'a taste of the kingdom of heaven'

**Train operator Greater Anglia staged a party in May to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Ingatestone station.**

**One of the guests, the Bishop of Chelmsford, described the station as a taste of the kingdom of heaven.**

**"Even though I only travel from Ingatestone station to London once or twice a week, the staff at the station know me by name," said the Right Reverend Stephen Cottrell. "They are unfailingly courteous, helpful, diplomatic and friendly.**

**"I can think of few other places where the customer service is of such a high standard. Who would have thought it? You get a taste of the kingdom of heaven at the ticket office of a railway station." Another guest, Lord John Petre, the 18th baron, the lord lieutenant of Essex, lives at nearby Ingatestone Hall. The station opened in 1844, after Lord William Petre, the 11th baron, allowed**

**the Eastern Counties Railway to run through his land. However he insisted that the station was built in a style to mirror his Tudor home.**

**The current Lord Petre said: "We locals greatly value our railway station and the succession of friendly and helpful staff who, over many years, have run it – a tradition that Steve Wills and his team continue excellently to maintain.**

**"I feel particularly honoured to be included in the celebrations as, by all accounts, relations between my great-great-grandfather, who provided the land on which the station stands, and the Great Eastern Railway company were not of the warmest."**

**Presentations were made to two of the station team, Steve Wills and Dave Moody, with musical entertainment provided by Anglo European School students, many of whom use the station on their journeys to and from school.**

£3 million for this footbridge give the impression that it will consist of rare earth minerals.

The new parkway station, with over 500 car parking spaces, will more than double the total number of parking spaces at all stations in Worcestershire and has built-in foundations for a tier above ground level if demand increases as your correspondents suggest will happen.

Connectivity between modes of travel are essential and the city centre Foregate Street station

has bus stops and a bus lane immediately outside its entrance, with the central bus station five minutes walk away. The city and the county councils recognise the need to improve our Grade 1-listed Shrub Hill station and have a master plan for the station and its surrounding area, but it will require significant investment and drive to come to fruition.

We are fortunate to have a county council in Worcestershire which recognises the contribution rail makes to the economy and which has

already delivered, as part of its rail investment strategy, a completely new build Bromsgrove station, Parkway nearing completion and has now in March started the rebuild of Kidderminster station, all three stations with bus and taxi connectivity immediately at the station as well as car parking.

I am in no way an employee of the county council or any company involved in these projects. I am just a proud Worcester man.

Colin Major  
colin.major@talktalk.net

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Twitter: @railwatch

## Electric trains

All too often we hear of the South getting preferential treatment when it comes to railway development. So I was interested to read (*Railwatch* 159) that there are now five electrified links between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Of course, north of the border, Scotland has its own Parliament fighting for its interests. The very fact that there are no electric trains running between Manchester and Sheffield, Manchester and Leeds and Leeds or Sheffield shows that the North of England loses out through not having a single voice of its own. For Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds have a population in excess of Edinburgh, with Leeds only 40,000 behind Glasgow.

So really we do need some kind of devolved Northern Powerhouse to fight for a better deal for the North's railways.

Tim Mickleburgh, Boulevard Avenue, Grimsby DN31 2JP  
timmickleburgh2015@gmail.com

## Climate alarm

I am getting used to ever-increasing climate alarmism but the letter from Arnold Pacey (*Railwatch* 159) takes the biscuit. The idea that the minuscule mass of coal burned on heritage railways will make any measurable difference to the climate is laughable.

Rex Hora, Erleigh Court Gardens, Earley, Reading RG6 1EJ  
rorw2003@gmail.com

## Reopening potential

I have a great interest in rail development as a way to counter climate change. This requires a long-term electrification plan and not on/off policies of UK governments which lose skills and raise costs. Just compare UK and German practice.

I also have a great interest in the use of rail transport in urban areas to reduce the use of cars.

In Japan, a rail service can operate efficiently over different lines run by different companies but with drivers and guards changing at appropriate stations, as is done with most Tokyo underground lines and is proposed for additional trains to Haneda Airport Tokyo.

This means super companies like Thameslink: Great Northern, Southern are not needed. Why is this not considered?

I can also identify two new potential rail routes across London and several across



Picture: MERSEYTRAVEL

**CROSS-BORDER PROGRESS (left to right):** Network Rail project manager Karla Telford, Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry, the MP for Liverpool Riverside Dame Louise Ellman, Welsh Government Minister for Economy and Transport Ken Skates, the Metro Mayor of Liverpool City Region Steve Rotherham, Network Rail scheme sponsor Adeola Dada and Cllr Louise Gittins, the deputy leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council

## North Wales breakthrough after 40 years

**A new Chester-Liverpool Lime Street train service started in May over the reopened Halton Curve, the culmination of a 30-year campaign by the North Cheshire Rail Users Group.**

**The hourly service at Chester, Helsby, Frodsham, Runcorn, Liverpool South Parkway and Liverpool Lime Street was made possible by the reinstatement of the 2.5 kilometre curve near Frodsham at a cost of £14.5 million.**

**The service will improve journeys to Liverpool John Lennon Airport thanks to a bus link from Liverpool South Parkway.**

**There will also be new direct services from Wrexham General to Liverpool Lime street.**

**The curve has allowed the first direct rail service to run from North Wales into Liverpool for over 40 years. In future, there**

**will be more services into Wales, with some running to Cardiff via Shrewsbury and to Llandudno. It is expected the new service will remove the need for 170,000 road journeys helping reduce demand on key routes such as the M56 and A55.**

**James Price, chief executive for Transport for Wales, said: "I would like to pay tribute to all those individuals and groups who have lobbied tirelessly for services along the Halton Curve as well as our partners in Network Rail, Welsh Government and the Department for Transport."**

**Reopening the Halton Curve was one of the proposals in Railfuture Wales' On Track for The 21st Century - A Development Plan for the Railways of Wales and the Borders.**

**You can read the plan by searching for "display1368" on the Railfuture website.**

Glasgow. In Edinburgh there are opportunities to serve Leith and many council estates, using former Caledonian Railway routes which have not been built on.

James Whitworth, Old School, Burravoe, Yell, Shetlands ZE2 9BA

## Bus-rail links

I agree with Philip Bisatt (*Railwatch* 159) that the UK needs a coordinated approach to rail and bus services.

The good rail system in Exeter is let down by the lack of bus connections. The main bus station is miles away which

provides a very negative aspect of public transport.

A few buses go past the two main Exeter stations but facilities are poor in bad weather.

Exeter has a population of 100,000 but Plymouth, which is three times the size of Exeter, offers poor public transport coordination with the bus station miles from the rail station and a lack of suburban rail stations.

Railfuture should compare cities of similar size and assess their public transport offerings.

Worcester will soon have three stations but no suburbs are

served by rail. The same applies to nearby Gloucester, which has one city station and few stations in the county as a whole. The Forest of Dean area has not one national rail station.

Hereford, Shrewsbury and Chester each have only one station, while there are only four stations in the entire county of Hereford.

The results of the Beeching cuts are endless.

J Evered, Goyland Close, Howey, Llandrindod Wells LD1 5RB

More letters: Page 18

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■ ■ £32m cash found for MetroWest

On 8 April Transport Secretary Chris Grayling confirmed that the Government would close the £32 million gap in funding for MetroWest Phase 1. The scheme, which includes reopening of the Bristol-Portishead line to passengers, has been delayed by a substantial increase in cost estimates. Although the alarming price tag of over £145 million quoted two years ago had been revised to £116 million, following a decision to scale back the initial Portishead service to hourly, a significant shortfall in the necessary finance remained. Mr Grayling's announcement means that North Somerset Council, which is jointly promoting the project with the West of England Combined Authority, can proceed with its application for a development consent order which is required before construction works can begin. His decision vindicates the pragmatic approach of the two authorities and rail campaigners who are determined to see that the scheme moves forward without further delay. Earlier, David Carter, the director of infrastructure for the West of England Combined Authority, said he was working with Network Rail to consider whether MetroWest 1 should be extended to Westbury, and MetroWest 2 to Gloucester, partly as a way of saving money on creating new turnback facilities.

■ ■ Better north-south rail links needed

At the Railfuture Severnside AGM in Dilton Marsh on 6 April, Graham Ellis gave a presentation entitled *Rail Developments across wider Wiltshire*. Referring to Great Western Railway's December 2019 timetable, he contrasted the transformation of east-west services linking the South West and London with the minimal improvement to north-south services through the county. The remarkably successful TransWilts route, (Salisbury-Westbury-Trowbridge-Chippenham-Swindon) which connects all the areas of Wiltshire proposed for major housing growth, would be "rewarded" with the loss of one train each way. He believes the London-centric attitude of central government to be a major factor in the specification of train timings and frequencies. The service level commitment document for next December's GWR timetable made almost no mention of connections. Graham said that smaller Wiltshire stations such as Dilton Marsh and Pewsey had acquired "curious and perverse services with oddball trains" which were the legacy of meeting service level commitments at the lowest cost. He estimated that 9,000 people lived within the catchment of Dilton Marsh station, yet currently it had no Monday to Friday southbound train between 07.04 and 10.12, the latter involving a long wait at Warminster for onward travel. A far better approach would be to analyse potential usage and plan services which encouraged more through journeys, for example, hourly between Swindon and Southampton, although he admitted this would require more infrastructure on the Melksham line. A two-hourly frequency on this route was feasible already and this was something Railfuture and TravelWatch SouthWest should press for. An hourly Exeter-Paddington semi-fast service, which Railfuture has called for in GW franchise consultations, would enable better connections at Westbury for Pewsey passengers and serve the proposed Devizes Parkway station.

■ ■ Rail service link to heritage line

On 17 April West Somerset Railway announced that a trial GWR seasonal service between Taunton and Bishops Lydeard would begin in June. This follows a successful bid by the heritage railway company to GWR's customer and communities improvement fund. The shuttle service will be marketed as the Exmoor Gateway. The dates and times of operation were not known at the time of writing (early May) but the award has been welcomed by both rail companies, Minehead Rail Link Group and Rebecca Pow, MP for Taunton Deane. MRLG has offered to help promote the experimental service by distributing flyers and timetables to local businesses and on GWR local trains in the Bristol-Exeter corridor. Railfuture Severnside chair John Hassall supported the new service in his May election campaign for the new Somerset West & Taunton Council. He now holds the Cotford St Luke & Oake seat for the Liberal Democrats.

[www.railfuture.org.uk/Severnside Branch](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Severnside Branch)  
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■ ■ Portsmouth AGM

Guest speakers at our well-attended AGM in Portsmouth on 6 April were Portsmouth South MP Stephen Morgan and Railfuture director Ian Brown. Opening the proceedings, Mr Morgan assured us that that he is a regular and enthusiastic rail user and does not own a car. His main gripes were the slow journey time by train from Portsmouth to London and the rather dowdy appearance of stations in Portsmouth. However, he is determined to make improvements through his membership of the All Party Parliamentary Group covering the South Western franchise area. The MP listened with interest throughout Ian Brown's presentation, which focused on the Williams Review and what needs to be done to restore public confidence in Britain's railways. He also stayed for the question and answer session, taking copious notes about local issues ranging from substitute bus services to the need for better connectivity with Exeter and the South West.

The hot topic for debate at the AGM was the deterioration in CrossCountry services to the South. Overcrowding on the four- and five-car Voyager units seems to be getting worse, and there was a suggestion that this could be alleviated by using some of the IC125 trains displaced from Great Western. Members recalled the many direct services that used to run from the Midlands and North, arguing that Portsmouth should once again be a CrossCountry destination.

■ ■ Extra seats and options

Additional "congestion busting" trains on the South Western Railway network from the May timetable change are very welcome, as are the new journey opportunities offered by weekend trains via Salisbury to Weymouth and from Salisbury to Reading. On main line services, an internal refresh of the class 444 units has enabled additional seating to be provided in second class, good news for passengers used to standing in peak hours. With refurbishment of the class 442 Wessex Electrics currently stalled, we await



**NON-CAR OWNER: Portsmouth South MP Stephen Morgan**

their appearance on the network and wonder if Portsmouth line users in particular will regard them as an improvement over the much-maligned class 450 suburban stock. SWR managers must be as frustrated as we all are by the continued lack of a decision from the Department for Transport on the company's "preferred option" for securing the future of the Island Line. It is a miracle our 80-year-old electric units still rattle along in the salt-laden air between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin.

■ ■ The Swanage connection

South Western Railway is providing a summer-Saturday service to Corfe Castle (over the heritage Swanage Railway) again this year. It is extending its Waterloo-Salisbury-Weymouth diesel service to Corfe Castle. This year the train will also shuttle between Corfe and Poole, giving a useful connection on to the Swanage branch from the Southampton direction. Sadly, the Swanage Railway is still experiencing delays in bringing heritage diesel units back into service for the next stage of its "Project Wareham", the restoration of services running out on to the main line. However, UK Railtours will be running Sunday specials from London Waterloo to Swanage calling at Woking and Basingstoke on successive Sundays from 28 July at "inexpensive" fares. The train will be formed of the distinctive London Transport red-liveried 4TC set, topped and tailed by class 73 locomotives.

[www.railfuture.org.uk/Wessex+Branch](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Wessex+Branch)  
[Twitter @RailfutureWessx](https://twitter.com/RailfutureWessx)



**SUNDAY SPECIAL: UK Railtours plan to use the class 4TC to Swanage**

# Hope for local stops on EC main line

A long-running campaign to reintroduce local trains on the East Coast main line from just south of the Scottish border to Morpeth has been given a boost.

Funding has been secured by the South East Northumberland Rail User Group for a feasibility study into running trains between Berwick-upon-Tweed and Morpeth, which is 18 miles from Newcastle upon Tyne.

The group wants to see the existing Newcastle to Morpeth service extended to Berwick, with an hourly local service each way calling at Pegswood, Widdrington, Acklington, Alnmouth and Chathill, plus the eventual reopening of former stations, including Belford and Beal.

The first step is to clarify if there is enough capacity on the line, which is currently used by inter-city trains.

The study will look at what infrastructure changes might be needed, and will include an appraisal of likely demand and possible costs for the proposed stations.

The funding for the study is being provided jointly by Northern Railway and Northumberland County Council, with a small contribution from SENRUG.

At the time of going to press, Railfuture was considering an application from SENRUG for a grant from the Railfuture Fighting Fund to support SENRUG's financial contribution to the feasibility study.

Councillor Richard Wearmouth, cabinet member for economy at Northumberland County Council, said: "The council supports the aspiration to see a rail service developed through the north of the county. This has the potential to help revitalise communities and better exploit our tourism and leisure sectors. "I know this project is strongly backed by county councillor colleagues in Berwick, Bamburgh, Alnwick and Warkworth.

"We are grateful to SENRUG for putting this proposal forward and have been happy to contribute financially to make sure we gather the information needed to identify if this idea can be developed further."

International transport consultancy SYSTRA will manage the study. Project manager James Jackson said: "We are delighted to have won the contract for this study and look forward to working closely with SENRUG and the



**PICTURE POSER: Could local trains soon be running over Berwick's Royal Border Bridge? This photo montage shows a Northern train superimposed on the bridge. At present, there is no local rail service over the bridge**

other stakeholders over the next couple of months. We will bring our significant experience of feasibility studies and new service appraisal to the project and will build on our experience of a similar project looking at local services between Berwick and Edinburgh". Dennis Fancett, chair of SENRUG, said the group had started its "North of Morpeth" campaign in 2016.

"Some people think we are a single campaign group as we are perhaps best known for our efforts in restoring the rail link to Ashington," he said.

"We have also worked tirelessly to secure improved train services at Morpeth and are additionally focusing very hard on Cramlington. This campaign however is designed to help those living north of Morpeth, as well as overcoming the six-hour gap in the timetable that any Morpeth resident wishing to travel north to Berwick currently faces.

"Some of the capacity on the East Coast main line should be reserved for local services for local people.

"While this study is just a first step in what could be a very long road towards a service starting, it will provide critical initial information, allowing the authorities to evaluate the next step, and feed in to the next franchise renewal."

SENRUG's funding application received support from 10 parish councils and community or station adoption groups along the line as well as from Ann-Marie Trevelyan, MP for



**TODAY'S REALITY: One of the current two Northern services per day to Chathill, as it passes Alnmouth**



**AZUMA: The new Hitachi-built train, left, alongside its BR-built predecessor at London King's Cross. The Azumas will provide inter-city services on the East Coast main line from August**

Berwick. SENRUG's Dennis Fancett added: "We are grateful for Ms Trevelyan's support and interest and of course to each person or group that took the trouble to write to us. We hope that, by continuing to work

together as a community, we can finally reach the position where north Northumberland has a fit-for-purpose local rail service. We urge those who support our objectives to add their voice to ours by joining SENRUG."

## Some fantastic successes

Railfuture president Christian Wolmar reassured the AGM audience that it had been a good year for Railfuture.

There had been some fantastic successes such as the go-ahead for the reopening to Portishead.

He said there should be a symbolic pat on the back for all those people who campaign tirelessly for years with little sign of reward.

Suddenly things happen after it seems they have meandered along for ages without any progress.

He also had some words of praise for Railwatch: "What a good magazine it is. An excellent production."

"It is very important for an organisation like Railfuture to have such a magazine. You cannot do everything online."

"Publishing Railwatch is well worth doing and it is also a tangible benefit of being a member of Railfuture."

But he said the rail industry itself is in a mess.

"It is a bit like Manchester United, with a lot of good players but it does not quite jell. Everything is in a state of flux."

"We are soon going to see big changes, probably with franchises becoming management contracts."

"There will be even more big changes if we get a Labour government."

Christian warned: "If Boris Johnson becomes leader of the Conservative party, he will have scrapping High Speed Two in his manifesto. HS2 is undoubtedly now in danger."

Christian, who has been sceptical about HS2, added: "If they said they would stop at Old Oak Common HS2 might be salvaged."

"But if HS2 is scrapped, we must fight for that money to be spent on rail, especially in the north of England."

He predicted that the Government-sponsored rail review currently being

carried out by Keith Williams will not recommend renationalisation of the railway.

"The review is not going to go against what Chris Grayling wants," he said.

"Mr Grayling will remain Transport Secretary while Theresa May remains Prime Minister." Christian admitted he was slightly taken in by Crossrail.

He said: "I was going to their offices a year ago and was told everything was going OK."

But he reassured Railfuture members that Crossrail will have a tremendous positive impact.

"It is not just a Tube line. It has 200-metre long stations, is air conditioned and is very impressive."

"But the problems with Crossrail will make it more difficult to make the case for HS2 and Crossrail 2."

"Once it opens, however, there will be enormous pressure for us to have more of the same."

He said that in the North, there

is enormous resentment against this rail investment in London.

"Now that Crossrail looks like costing an extra £2 billion, it is seen as another slap in the face."

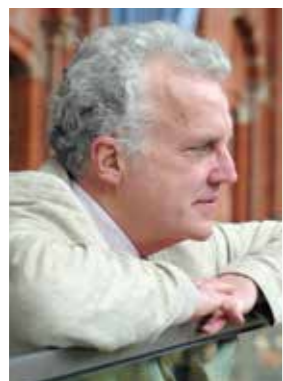
"But overall, it is an exciting time for the railways."

He said: "There is always something to write about in my RAIL magazine column. In a way, it would be good if it was slightly less exciting and uncertain."

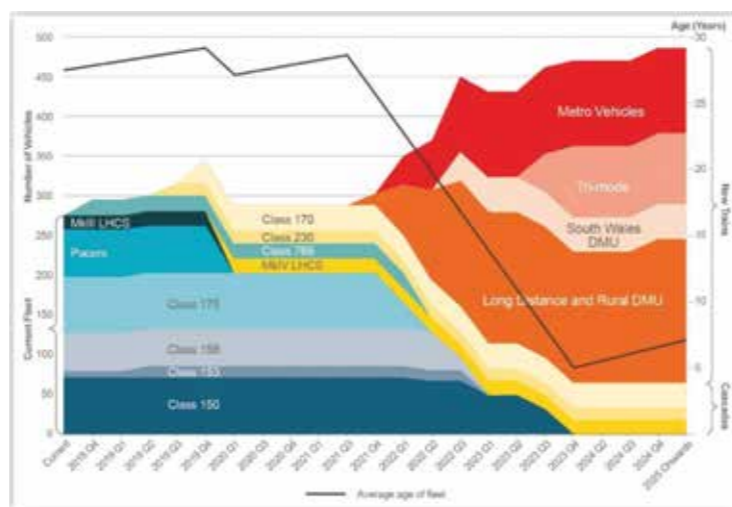
In his concluding remarks, Christian lamented that everything done on the railway is always so very expensive.

"But there are a lot of opportunities for us to press for developments on the railways so good luck for the next year," he said.

Christian reminded the Cardiff audience that Network Rail chief executive Andrew Haines is a railwayman through and through – and is Welsh.



Christian Wolmar



The average age of the rail fleet will drop from 25 years to seven years by 2023, thanks to new trains for Transport for Wales

## Goodbye to Pacers

"Lovely" Pacers, which have provided many of the train services in South Wales, are on their way out.

The entire fleet will be replaced by 2024, with half the new trains being assembled in Newport.

That was the confident message for the future from guest speaker Colin Lea, commercial and customer experience director, Transport for Wales Rail.

Currently Wales has some very crowded trains because the last franchise was based on "no growth". In fact there has been substantial growth.

The new plans should lead to the average age of trains dropping to seven years by 2023.

Not all the extra trains will be new. Turbostars will be transferred from East Anglia.

New trimode trains, built by Stadler, will allow a through service across Cardiff, as

part of the early stages of implementing plans for a South Wales Metro, "a massive project".

Mr Lea said that having trains with batteries should make it possible to operate largely electric trains, but without rebuilding 55 bridges to provide extra clearance for overhead line equipment.

This approach may also have implications for electrification projects throughout the rest of the United Kingdom.

He said the investment in rail was to stimulate economic regeneration. This was essential because in Valleys communities like Penrhwiwceiber there is shocking 50% child poverty.

The average train fare in Wales is £4.50 and Transport for Wales is determined to keep fares as low as possible, but the railway is already dependent on "heavy subsidies".

## Railfuture must be more pro-active in promoting rail-based alternatives to combat problems of climate change

A motion calling for Railfuture to be more proactive on climate change was proposed by Ian McDonald and passed unanimously:

"Railfuture should be even more pro-active in promoting rail-based alternatives for transport over more polluting modes, such as motorway and major by-pass construction and airport expansion."

"This should involve campaigning for even greater investment in the railways, including further substantial electrification and line

reopenings, and for higher quality rail freight provision, inter-city passenger and international rail services to reduce the demand for destructive road-based solutions and short haul flights.

"More frequent use of the media is needed to get our persuasive message across. More direct approaches should be made to politicians at all levels, seeking their support. Meaningful policies and actions in pursuit of these objectives should be demanded as soon as possible, and we should work more closely with other

organisations which share our objectives and ethos, and who campaign positively for rail. "The planet really cannot wait much longer for effective policies to slow and reverse the damage, with the UK playing its part in this role. Railfuture should be able to show that it is playing its part too, at this time of vastly increased public awareness of the dire problems we face."

Commenting on the proposal Railfuture policy director Ian Brown said that rail is a solution to climate change and pollution but it does not win business cases.

Railfuture delivers because we can talk to the industry. We cannot afford to be just a protest organisation. "Currently business cases do not mention climate change so we need to quantify environmental benefits," he said. "We need to double the capacity of the network and if we do, we get big benefits which can be quantified."

Freight group head Peter Wakefield said: "Millions of new homes are being built. All new houses should be near a rail station and train operators should

have an input into the planning of new homes." Railfuture member Julian Langston called for walking and cycling to be given more recognition by Railfuture. "We should be more concerned with making it easier to carry bikes on trains," he said. A second motion from Nigel Perkins with amendments from the board was also passed unanimously, calling for a review of Railfuture's processes for recruitment, selection, and dismissal of members of Railfuture groups.

## Poverty of expectation

Professor Mark Barry told Railfuture's Cardiff AGM that he had been promoting the idea of a properly integrated public transport system for South Wales for years.

Now, nine years after he wrote his first report into the scheme, the Metro is happening.

In fact though, "we have been having this conversation for 80 years".

He added: "By 1910, South Wales had a comprehensive rail network. It was all there but we smashed it all up to create a road network. For the past 50 years, transport provision has been all about cars."

"About 80% of people commute by car, compared to only 4% by rail."

He said: "We need some fiscal disincentives to cars. We do not want the same number of electric cars as we have diesel and petrol cars now. We need better public transport."

But currently a big new hospital is being built near Newport, completely remote from public transport.

There are more than 10,000 new houses being approved for construction in north Cardiff.

The climate change emergency means that we should be building houses next to rail lines, so there is proper access to good public transport.

But people making decisions about new houses are not considering public transport.

Mr Barry, who is professor of practice in connectivity at Cardiff University, said that rail infrastructure is still the responsibility of the Department for Transport in London and that there is massive historic under-investment. One of the benefits of the Valleys geography is that



Professor Mark Barry

most people lived close to the rail network that was initially provided to transport coal.

Now it can be used more intensively for passengers.

He reminded the audience that the appalling child poverty statistics in the Valleys are also repeated in some parts of Cardiff itself.

Once the Metro ideas are implemented, however, people will be shocked by the improvement that can be achieved by 2023.

But then people will ask: "Is that enough? Surely we can do so much more."

He said the new light rail-metro vehicle is the pivotal vehicle for the future.

South Wales is not the only place trying to tackle the problems of cars. Public transport is being developed and promoted along with cycling in Barcelona, for example.

Once a good public transport system is created, there will be opportunities for travel into the Valleys. The industrial archaeology attractions of the Valleys could also be used to stimulate tourism.

## Election results

The results of the election for members of the Railfuture board were announced at the AGM. The results were as follows:

ELECTED

Allison Cosgrove 324

Roger Blake 301

Chris Hyomes 292

William Whiting 289

Graham Ellis 277

NOT ELECTED

Trevor Garrod 139

[martin.smith@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:martin.smith@railfuture.org.uk)

### City and county planning for Oxford

The guest speaker at Railfuture Thames Valley's AGM in Oxford on 23 April was Oxford city councillor Alex Hollingsworth, the executive member for planning and transport. He explained that planning comes first in his brief, because the city council is the planning authority, while the county council is responsible for transport. However, he and county councillor Yvonne Constance, the county council cabinet member for transport, agree on many things, and there is close cooperation between city and county. The city was closely involved with the planning application for rebuilding the Oxford-Bicester line, and Network Rail was surprised that they had to take into account so many planning issues affecting local residents. Cllr Hollingsworth said it was difficult to talk to Network Rail which seemed to operate a closed shop. Chiltern Railways and Great Western Railway were more willing to have open discussions with the council. The three main outstanding issues are rebuilding Oxford station, electrification and the Botley Road bridge. Two thirds of journeys in central Oxford are by sustainable means: bus, cycle and walking, but the majority of journeys in the suburbs and surrounding villages are by car.

Only 5% of commuters into Oxford arrive by train. Cllr Hollingsworth would like to see more cross-town bus services avoiding the city centre. In the subsequent discussion, Cllr Hollingsworth was asked for his views on trams for Oxford. He thought that it was worth consideration, and he dismissed such fanciful ideas as monorails, cable cars or tunnels beneath Oxford High Street. He agrees with Railfuture's view that housing development should be concentrated around public transport hubs. There can be a trade-off between city/district council development planning and rail infrastructure. Planning provision for the Grenoble Road development in the South Oxfordshire local plan strengthens the case for reopening the Cowley line, and plans for an additional 700 houses at Hanborough strengthens the case for upgrading its station.

### Didcot-Oxford 175th anniversary

Railfuture Thames Valley will have a stand at the main event of the 175th Anniversary celebrations on Saturday 15 June, where we hope to recruit new members. The main celebrations will be held in Grandpont recreation ground, close to the site of the 1844 Oxford station. There will also be events at Radley, Culham and Appleford, and at the Great Western Railway Centre at Didcot. The booking office at Culham, the original station survivor, will be open to the public on the Saturday and Sunday.

### Vivarail trains on Bedford-Bletchley

The first three Vivarail class 230 diesel-electric units are now working on the Bletchley-Bedford Marston Vale line. Three-car trains being built for the Wrexham-Bidston line are diesel/battery hybrids, with four diesel engines under the middle car and two batteries under each driving/motor car. The latest development is a fast-charging system with 3rd and 4th rail pickups. A battery bank at the station can charge itself slowly from the grid and dump all the necessary power back on to the train in about seven minutes for a full recharge, enough for a range of 60 miles. Apart from the Marston Vale line, what other services in our area would be suitable for D-Train operation? The Thames Valley branches, perhaps, or a Hanborough-Cowley shuttle?

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### Batteries for the Metro

The surprisingly lengthy process of obtaining 42 new trains for the Tyne & Wear Metro was explained by Neil Blagburn of NEXUS to the Railway Division of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers in Newcastle in May. The present average failure rate of trains is once every 6,000 kilometres but the new fleet is expected to provide more resilience. The new trains will all have on-board energy storage to permit up to 45 minutes' running on battery if the overhead power fails. At a later stage, they could be fitted with battery power to take trains 16 kilometres beyond electrified territory, an important consideration as Nexus planners want to add extra lines and services. One target is the Leamside line. Trains could branch off south from Pelaw to Washington New Town, on to South Hylton, continuing via Sunderland, Seaburn and Boldon. A major element in the replacement process concerns the South Gosforth depot which is almost 100 years old and needs complete replacement, but on the same site. So a satellite depot is proposed for Howdon-on-Tyne, which will be able to cope with 10 Metro trains, including the new 60-metre-long units. Driver training will also take place at Howdon.

Nexus has had seven expressions of interest for the franchise to run the Metro, of which five have pre-qualified. Three will be chosen for the best and final offer stage, scheduled for June and July. After vetting by the Department for Transport, a contract will be awarded in December. At least two years will then elapse before a new train appears, though mock-up versions will go on display on Tyneside, to give the public a chance to see and comment on them. Whoever wins the contract will have to sign a 35-year maintenance agreement. So, even on the most optimistic time-scale, it will be four years before a new fleet takes over from the existing trains, two of which have been earmarked for preservation as heritage units. Seven others are likely to find new roles, some as novelty restaurants.

### Better connections to North East

Morpeth benefits from an additional weekday northbound CrossCountry service in the new timetable. A Penzance-Edinburgh service calls there at 18.49, with a 20.09 arrival at Edinburgh. With the exception of a three-hour gap between 08.56 and 11.51 (plus some weekend anomalies) an inter-city service now calls at Morpeth in each direction every two hours, an objective for which the South East Northumberland Rail User Group has long campaigned. On a more local level, most Morpeth-Newcastle services are now extended to Carlisle – another example of successful campaigning – and SENRUG is grateful to Northern for listening to complaints that arose when such trains were found to miss each other by a maddening one minute at Newcastle. To capitalise on the through service to Carlisle, SENRUG is asking for the

Newcastle-Morpeth route to be added to North East Round Robin and Hadrian's Wall Country Line Ranger tickets. Granting this is, apparently, difficult as it requires Northern to obtain agreement from other operators.

### Start on Horden (for Peterlee)

Work started in May on the new £10.55 million station for Horden, near Peterlee. The first stage is a 139-space car park and bus stops. Work will then start on the station, which will have two 100-metre platforms connected by an accessible footbridge. The station is expected to open next spring, with hourly services to Middlesbrough and Newcastle which are expected to attract 70,000 passengers a year.



Picture: NETWORK RAIL

**HORDEN CEREMONY: (from left) Ray Browning, Anna Weeks, Jonjo Ward, sponsor for Network Rail, Durham County councillors Simon Henig (with the spade) and Carl Marshall with Stuart Timmiss of the county council**

### Newcastle-Stockton quick link

The North East of England has some of the earliest railways in Britain, if not the world. The most famous stretch, as illustrated by Railfuture's 2019 summer conference, links Darlington with Stockton, 11 miles to its east. Each of these towns is about the same distance from Newcastle upon Tyne, the regional capital – 36 miles. Trains from Newcastle run quite frequently to Darlington, and take between 28 and 33 minutes. For Stockton, however, despite its having nearly twice the resident population, the usual time by train, via Sunderland and Hartlepool, varies from 62 to 70 minutes. The journey length is 42 miles, rather than 36. The freight-only line, via Ferryhill and Stillington, is more direct and shorter. Freight trains are timed to do the journey from Newcastle to Stockton in 53 minutes, much faster than the roundabout passenger service. This is the kind of statistic that should be borne in mind when politicians and local councillors boast about a "Northern Powerhouse", and when Transport for the North waxes lyrical about how much it intends to do to improve rail links in general. Meanwhile, Railfuture North East has produced a brochure illustrating in cartographic detail which rail links can and should be restored and/or improved. Copies will be available at the Darlington conference and at various other public events.

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# British Steel is critical for rail freight

The financial crisis at British Steel's Scunthorpe plant could have big implications for rail freight and the entire rail industry.

British Steel produces a wide range of products for the rail industry, including the rail itself and steel sleepers.

It manufactures electrical conductor rails, as well as switch points and crossovers.

The company has supplied noise-suppression rail, called SilentTrack, to the Rhine line in Germany and with increasing concern about noise from railways, the company has exported SilentTrack to France, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Italy, Norway, China, Switzerland and Singapore.

In March, British Steel won a contract to supply rails for track renewal projects in Catalonia, Spain, and is reported to have landed another rail contract for SNCF, the French national rail network.

Large amounts of British Steel's products are also delivered by rail.

It was reported in late May that Network Rail had increased its British Steel orders, with the aim of helping keep the company afloat.

British Steel, which went into insolvency earlier in May, supplies 100,000 tonnes of steel to Network Rail each year – 95% of Britain's rail track.

A Network Rail spokesperson said: "We will continue to do whatever we can to support British Steel.

"We are confident that we remain able to carry out critical work on the railway in the coming months and beyond. Longer term we have plans in place so that we can continue to deliver the reliable railway millions of people depend on every day."

The Railway Industry Association said: "RIA stands by British Steel in these difficult times."

But switching to European suppliers could massively increase costs for Network Rail.

Durham-based logistics firm Hargreaves Services manages the transport of raw materials to Scunthorpe from the Immingham bulk terminal on the Humber, loads it into the furnaces and moves finished product into British Steel's warehouses. It warned that 170 jobs could be at risk. One rail campaigner said: "If the



Picture: BRITISH STEEL

Government made a firm commitment to HS2 and to the reinstatement of the 'cancelled' main line electrification schemes, it would have a beneficial impact. The steel products required for such infrastructure schemes include base plates, overhead line masts and signal posts which are made in Scunthorpe."

### Rubbish decision

Work started in May on building Covanta's waste incinerator near Stewartby, Bedfordshire. Sadly lorries will be bringing rubbish to the Rookery South plant from a 60-mile radius.

Even though the £450 million new incinerator is close to the Bedford-Bletchley rail line, planners ignored appeals from rail campaigners to ensure that it should be rail-connected.

The incinerator will be in operation by 2022 and is expected to run 24 hours a day, converting more than 500,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste each year into electricity.

It will create 60,000 tonnes of ash and metal waste a year, which will be recycled or used for aggregates.

Campaign group Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator is still fighting to stop the facility, with its case due at the Court of Appeal in July.

The campaign's Nicola Ryan-Raine said she was worried about how the tonnes of waste ash would be taken away from the site.

Rail freight transport generates around six times less carbon

dioxide than road haulage, which is one reason why the National Infrastructure Commission has recommended that the Government supports freight by rail.

### Investment

Maggie Simpson, director general of the Rail Freight Group, said: "We are pleased that the commission has set out a pathway for government support in decarbonisation of rail freight.

"With battery and hydrogen technologies in their infancy on the rail network, and the extent of electrification still limited, the industry cannot be expected to deliver the necessary investment without the backing of Government.

"This recommendation gives a way forward to provide the certainty that the rail freight sector needs, and a framework to oversee delivery."

The commission's report has three main conclusions, namely that surface freight can and must be decarbonised by 2050, that there must be better land use planning for freight, and that government and the industry must work together to create a "new status for freight", raising awareness of freight within Government departments.

### Ireland

There is good news on the rail freight front from Ireland.

The Dublin-based company International Warehousing and Transport has announced it is increasing rail services from Dublin to Ballina in the west of

Ireland by 30%. The nine trains a week in each direction are operated in conjunction with Iarnród Éireann.

The original container link was mainly to serve the soft drinks factory near Ballina but new business has been won from medical, retail and brewing industries in the area.

The increase in rail traffic is partly because of the increasing costs of road haulage and lorry congestion at Dublin port.

The lower carbon footprint of rail transport is also encouraging customers to switch traffic from the roads.

### Scotland

Plans are being drawn up to boost the amount of rail freight on Scotland's railways, following a 0.5% increase last year.

The aim is to increase speeds and improve reliability.

There are over 600 freight trains running on Great Britain's network every day, with around 50 in Scotland.

Alex Hynes, ScotRail Alliance managing director, said: "We are committed to making rail freight as fast and reliable as it can be, and are investing in our infrastructure to make switching from road to rail as easy as possible for customers."

Christopher Snelling of the Freight Transport Association said: "Rail freight brings many benefits and its use should be incentivised, not discouraged by punitive taxation."

■ ■ Storm Gareth blocks line

The service from Llandudno to Blaenau Ffestiniog remains suspended because of extensive damage to the track by Storm Gareth in March. Although it has always rained a lot in North Wales, the rail industry must brace itself to cope with the effect of climate change because otherwise line closures could well become annual events.

Network Rail and Natural Resources Wales will need to future-proof this line rather than merely repairing it every time. Rail replacement bus services are in operation and these are abstracting passengers from the local bus services, which are now threatened with service reductions or complete withdrawal.

The services between Llandudno and Llandudno Junction worked by the Blaenau Ffestiniog branch train have also been withdrawn and passengers advised to use local bus services, which is not popular with travellers to and from Llandudno. The closure follows long periods of bus substitution in the winter because of a shortage of trains. This has adversely affected tourism. It is planned that the Llandudno Junction to Llanrwst section will reopen first in time for the National Eisteddfod in August.

■ ■ Future Development

Railfuture submitted evidence to the inquiry into *The Future Development of Transport for Wales*, carried out by the Welsh Assembly's economy, infrastructure and skills committee. This followed a series of workshops last year attended by Railfuture members.

Railfuture is mentioned in the report which was published in May and calls for improved governance by the Welsh Government of the activities of Transport for Wales. This indicates that the expansion of TfW activities should be put on hold to enable a period of consolidation.

■ ■ TfW explained

The workings of Transport for Wales were explained by its corporate service director Geoff Ogden at a lecture in Cardiff in May. He explained the proposed programme for introducing new services and improving stations and how they fit into the Welsh Government's economic action plan. He also explained how TfW used transport modelling to analyse the benefits from different types of transport.

■ ■ 60% increase in passengers

Passenger numbers at Welsh stations have increased by 60% since 2004. Cardiff Central station is the busiest, accounting for 25% of all passengers in Wales, according to statistics issued by the Welsh Government. [www.railfuturewales.org.uk](http://www.railfuturewales.org.uk) [Twitter @RailfutureWales](#)



Picture: @LIZZYBANKS

■ ■ LNER ticket backs Tour de Yorkshire

Sheffield cyclist Lizzy Banks, pictured above, beat international competition to win the LNER-sponsored Queen of the Mountain title on day one of May's Tour de Yorkshire. The overall winner of the Queen of the Mountain title was Spanish rider Margarita Garcia.

■ ■ Azumas launch on Yorkshire Day

New Hitachi-built Azuma trains will be introduced on the East Coast main line to coincide with Yorkshire Day, 1 August. LNER has announced. Some Azumas worked London-Leeds trains in May but technical problems delayed a faster roll-out elsewhere. New direct London-Harrogate services are expected to begin in December, following successful lobbying by the Harrogate Line Supporters Group. Harrogate is already enjoying extra Northern services from Leeds with the introduction of the May timetable. Plans to increase services to four trains per hour are on hold pending construction of platform 0 at Leeds.

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■ ■ Risky crossings blamed for hold-ups

The promised two trains per hour service on the Chester-Manchester line has still to materialise, 18 months late. The Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association has heard reports that Network Rail will not allow Northern to run additional passenger trains on the line because of the "increased risk at level crossings". MCRUA is trying to clarify whether the claim has any validity. Northern's contract with the Department for Transport includes a commitment to two trains an hour on the Mid Cheshire Line, and hourly trains on Sundays, starting in December 2017. MCRUA has raised the issue with local MPs Esther McVey and Mike Amesbury at face-to-face meetings and encouraged members who live along the Mid Cheshire Line to contact their MPs to demand that the promised train service is delivered.

■ ■ Fare increases challenged

MCRUA have contacted train operator Northern after noting a big increase in through fares to the Metrolink tram system. The through fares to "Metrolink City" changing at Altrincham on to Metrolink were previously similar to the fares to Manchester via Stockport. Now anytime fares to Metrolink Zones 1 to 4 (the equivalent of Metrolink City) are £3 more than the fare via Stockport.

■ ■ Steam returns to Blackpool

Members of Blackpool and Fylde Rail Users Association were pleased to see a steam engine at Blackpool North for the first time for several years on Saturday 13 April with a charter organised by the Railway Touring Company, which originated in London. The train, with 45690 Leander, also

■ ■ Support for Skipton-Colne

A Facebook poll has found that 90% of respondents support the plan to reopen the rail line from Skipton to Colne which is being promoted by the Skipton and East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership. SELRAP was also entered into The Great British Transport Competition organised by the Taxpayers Alliance. SELRAP came first for rail projects and second overall.

■ ■ Farewell to Reg French

A stalwart member of the Selby and District Rail Users Group, Reginald French, died peacefully in May after a long illness. Railfuture Yorkshire's Nina Smith said Reg was respected by the rail industry. He had an infectious smile and was a warm, approachable, intelligent, committed man who did his very best for his community. She added: "He will be greatly missed."

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North West

travelled to Blackburn, Hellifield, Carnforth and Preston before returning to London. It is remarkable to think that Blackpool used to attract 30 or 40 excursion trains every weekend, starting at Easter and running through to the end of the Illuminations. Now you are lucky to see two or three a year. How times have changed.

■ ■ Mayor backs plan for Leigh station

The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, wants to see a new rail station introduced in Leigh. He told a recent Mayor's Question Time session that before any more development is permitted in Leigh, better public transport infrastructure is needed and that opening a new station at Kenyon Junction is the best short-term option. Mr Burnham said he was ready to make this a reality if it was wanted. He added: "This area needs to be reconnected to the railway network."

■ ■ Flex trains miss May timetable

The class 769 Flex trains (with auxiliary diesel engines fitted to former Thameslink trains), which Northern has been planning to introduce for nearly a year, failed to enter service in May. Northern and Porterbrook have hinted that the trains may be ready for the December timetable change. It is thought one of the potential routes for the trains could be the current Wigan-Alderley Edge route, which was introduced as a through route (via Bolton, Manchester and Stockport) last year. Most of the route is now electrified.

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# Integrated rail-air ticketing

By Dennis Fancett  
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Among other activities, Railfuture's European Passenger Group compares how the rail industry works in Britain with what happens in Europe, with a view to seeing what we can learn from our European neighbours about how to improve services.

In many areas, Britain appears to be ahead of the rest of Europe. Even though competition is far more advanced in the UK than our European neighbours, this does not mean our rail industry is less integrated.

An example is Delay Repay, where compensation for the entire journey can be claimed even if it involved two or more operators but only one operator's train was late, although recent lobbying by the European Passengers Federation, to which Railfuture is affiliated, may result in a significant leap forward for passenger rights being enshrined into EU legislation.

One area where our European colleagues are clearly ahead is in combined rail-air ticketing. By this, I do not just mean your airline selling you a train ticket to the airport. We are talking about airlines considering cities and towns that people want to travel to and where it is not practical to serve that city by direct flights, offering a combined air-rail ticket from an airport they do serve.

The advantages of this may not be obvious to those living in London, which has good flight connections to most European capitals and a reasonable selection of European regional cities.

But for those living outside London, while regional airports might have direct flights to some European capitals, the chances of a direct flight from your local airport to a particular regional airport on the continent are slim.

Germany however offers an add-on rail ticket from any German airport to each of its 5,600 rail stations via Deutsche Bahn. Several European airlines go further by promoting routes to selected regional cities which they either do not serve at all or to which they have a limited service, by including a train leg from an airport they do serve.

Consider the journey from Newcastle to Lyon, which I needed to make recently. There is a direct flight from London Heathrow to Lyon. So one option is to fly from Newcastle via Heathrow. This however

◆◆◆◆ Please remember Railfuture in your will: [www.railfuture.org.uk/legacies](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/legacies)



Picture: LYON-SAINT EXUPERY AIRPORT

**GOOD PUBLICITY: A Stadler tram train with a passenger jet and two TGV trains which serve Lyon-Saint Exupery airport**

## Lyon sets a European example

**Tram trains connect Lyon-Saint Exupery airport with the city centre station of Lyon Part-Dieu 14 miles away.**

**The Rhonexpress tram trains leave the airport every 15 minutes, seven days a week from 04.25 to midnight, and also link into Lyon's metro network. The £100 million train project was completed in 2010 and involved building a five-mile link to the city's existing T3 tram line.**

**France's first high speed line opened in 1981, linking Paris to Lyon. By 1994, the Paris-Marseilles high speed line connected directly to Lyon airport.**

**Plans are also under way to link the airport with the TER (regional rail) network by next year and to create a freight depot at the airport linked to other hubs on France's high speed freight network.**

**Another proposal to build a 170-mile long high speed line from Lyon airport to Turin has also been approved and was expected to be completed in 2023, but the Italian government is now divided and is threatening to cancel the £8 billion project. However, more than 30,000 people took to the streets of Turin in November in support of building the new line.**

gives a six-hour stop-over, as well as a terminal change at Heathrow, making the journey take all day. That is longer than flying to New York.

A second option offered on websites such as ebookers is to fly via Amsterdam Schiphol. This is going from one extreme to the other with just 40 minutes between arrival and departure.

It is offered as a connection, but Schengen rules require the passenger to go through immigration formalities at Schiphol. Experienced travellers might think that is cutting things a bit too fine.

The third option looks favourite. It is with Air France via Paris Charles de Gaulle. Closer inspection reveals that the Paris-Lyon section is not a flight, but a direct high-speed train from the airport station to Lyon.

Further examination reveals that there are two airport codes for Lyon which has only one airport! LYS is Saint Exupery Airport whereas XYD is

Part-Dieu Gare SNCF. The "flight" brings you right to the city centre! The Air France journey from Newcastle to Strasbourg is another example of where your second hop will be by train, direct from Aeroport Charles de Gaulle station.

Such train add-ons are not limited merely to domestic hops. Returning from a recent European Passengers Federation meeting, I sat next to someone on the plane who was travelling from Zurich to Ghent. He travelled by air to Amsterdam Schiphol and then by train from the Netherlands to the Belgian city of Ghent, on a single integrated ticket sold by KLM.

While passing the time in the departures lounge at Zurich airport, I had already noticed airport departure screens showing the gate number for some outgoing flights as "Bahnhof". In fact, they were not flights. Passengers are directed to the airport station for travel to various cities, including Budapest in Hungary. European

airlines seem more willing to think out of the box about how to get customers to where they really need to go, and their lateral thinking is not confined to train add-ons either.

My daughter recently spent a year working in Al Qatif in Saudi Arabia. KLM offers direct "flights" from nearby Al Khobar to Amsterdam but passengers check in at a town centre minicab office with the first leg a short taxi ride across the border bridge to Bahrain airport!

What potential is there in Britain for train-air integration? Liverpool, York, Hull and Leeds via Manchester Airport seem obvious, while airlines serving Gatwick could offer Brighton and Guildford destinations. Stansted could provide air-rail tickets to Cambridge and with Crossrail, Canary Wharf via Heathrow becomes a possibility.

Readers may however spot drawbacks. Liverpool has its own airport so why serve Liverpool via Manchester? Canary Wharf is already served by London City airport, so why promote a routing via Heathrow? Lyon and Strasbourg have airports of their own too.

It is because regional airports cannot offer direct flights everywhere but by exploiting rail connections they can compete with larger airports.

There are already enlightened policies in Britain. Train operator TransPennine Express offers "airport advance" tickets from Manchester Airport – competitively priced advance tickets allowing you to catch the next train if the flight is delayed. That is a good start, but integrated train-plane-train tickets could be offered more widely.

Railfuture's European Passenger Group is already lobbying train operators, and we need to convince airlines and train companies of the commercial advantage of joint tickets.

European air-rail ticket initiatives seem to come from the airlines rather than the rail industry. You can buy a ticket including a train journey from an airline, but to my knowledge you cannot buy a ticket including a flight from a train company. Rail and air can play complementary roles in European travel but the two modes need to be integrated and seamless.

■ *Dennis Fancett is a member of Railfuture's European Passenger Group which is a sub-committee of the Passenger Services Group*

## Strategic reopenings

I was interested to read in *Railwatch* 159 that "Rail reopenings boost the economy". It is true that expanding our rail network will bring huge social and environmental benefits and I am pleased the clamour for reopenings is increasing. It is relevant now that Parliament has declared a climate emergency which largely results from carbon dioxide emissions from road transport and aviation. One consequence is poor air quality, particularly in urban areas.

The Government should create a network development fund as soon as possible to break the perpetual bottleneck for reopenings and new lines. For years, reopenings and new lines have been delayed which then causes increased costs.

The Campaign for Better Transport has identified at least 30 rail lines that should be reopened, but its list omits quite a few others which I reckon should also be top priority, including Lewes-Uckfield, Guildford-Horsham, Horsham-Shoreham, Bedford-Northampton and March-Spalding.

These lines are strategic links which would have a wide impact beyond their destinations and are in areas of rapid housing growth.

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## Toton's HS2 role

With the future of HS2 being questioned, perhaps it should



Picture: GREATER ANGLIA

**CLASS 90 at Liverpool Street: (front row, left to right) Greater Anglia managing director Jamie Burles, Witham MP Priti Patel, Ipswich MP Sandy Martin (in red tie), Network Rail Anglia route managing director Meliha Duymaz and Jo Churchill, MP for Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket**

be terminated at Toton South Junction, allowing trains from Nottingham and Sheffield to use the new line. Leeds and Newcastle could continue to be served from King's Cross.

The new HS2 station at Birmingham should have at least two through platforms to allow trains to proceed to New Street.  
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## Eurostar journey

I enjoyed reading the article in *Railwatch* 159 about Eurostar to

Amsterdam as I have recently made this journey, albeit using Thalys both ways between Brussels and Amsterdam.

We purchased through tickets from Oxford on the Eurostar website, but the train allocation between Oxford and London was not ideal and another time I would investigate buying these separately.

We certainly found the journey relatively painless. I would suggest anyone planning to use the Eurostar service looks at the advice on [www.seat61.com](http://www.seat61.com) about choice of seat, changing train in Brussels, etc.

The train from Amsterdam back to Brussels was delayed near Antwerp. Thalys got in touch with Eurostar and the train back to London was held for 10 minutes to give everyone time to transfer. A big "thank you" to Eurostar for that.

As was mentioned in the article, the staff at St Pancras International are very helpful but the waiting area seems to get very crowded. Is there any room for expansion if there are more services through the Channel Tunnel?

If travellers are spending any time in the Netherlands, I would recommend buying an OVchip card at Amsterdam or Rotterdam station. This can be used for all Dutch public transport, and if there is any credit left at the end of your journey the

ticket office will credit you the balance. Hopefully agreement can be reached with the Dutch government soon for passport checks to be undertaken in the Netherlands, though the British government seems to have other pressing international issues at the moment.

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## Eurostar potential

Further to the London-Amsterdam rail/air comparison in the April issue. To me, the advantages of using rail outbound are also that the minimum check-in is much shorter than for air (including as it does two boring hours of endlessly glancing at departure boards) and that you go to the city centre, not to a remote airport followed by a transfer to another form of transport.

However the current time-wasting inconvenience of the change on the return could lead to an imbalance in take-up: I have friends who use rail out but air back. So if only to avoid empty seats one way, it needs sorting!

Some of my friends will use Eurostar only to connect with TGV journeys beyond Paris if all that is required is a change at Lille or which (Marseilles direct) avoids the inconvenience of a Paris change. I think we should push Eurostar to do public

# New trains on way as 'Norwich in 90' service launched

The fastest ever train service between Norwich and London started in May – cutting the journey time to just 90 minutes.

The event was "the start of the transformation of rail services" in East Anglia, with four extra services between Norwich, Ipswich and London.

The fastest journey time between London and Ipswich is now 55 minutes.

Businesses and politicians in East Anglia have been calling for faster journey times between Norfolk, Suffolk and London for 10 years.

They backed an East Anglian Rail Prospectus and also joined the Great Eastern Main Line Taskforce.

Chris Starkie, chief executive of New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, said: "This is a great milestone following a long period of negotiations and campaigning. It is a huge step forward in improving

customer experience and cutting journey times.

"Norfolk and Suffolk is one of the fastest growing regions in the country and it needs high quality rail infrastructure to support growth and to help businesses compete in global markets.

"The LEP strongly believes investing and transforming our railways is essential today and also in decades to come ensuring we remain competitive and attractive as a business location."

Further improvements are expected with the delivery of a fleet of new trains.

Greater Anglia managing director Jamie Burles said: "We are replacing all of our existing trains with brand new state-of-the-art modern trains."

Priti Patel, MP for Witham, said: "Having established the Great Eastern Main Line Taskforce in 2013 and worked

closely with rail user groups, local businesses, and MPs, I am delighted to see these new services getting underway.

"The new 'Norwich in 90' and 'Ipswich in 60' services are another major achievement for the taskforce and featured in our original rail investment prospectus to the Government for the Greater Anglia franchise.

"These new services build on the Great Eastern main line's other recent successes, including the launch of Delay Repay 15, passenger refunds for late running services over 15 minutes, and the securing of more than £1 billion funding for new Greater Anglia trains due to come into service within a matter of weeks."

Meliha Duymaz, Network Rail Anglia's route managing director, said: "Delivering these faster services for passengers into the new timetable has been a real joint effort, and along with Greater Anglia, we know that Norwich in 90 will provide better journeys for the people who live and work in the region as well as supporting the local economy.

"Recent performance on the route has been some of the best in years, and together we're working on various initiatives to make journeys better for everyone."

The new services shave 12 minutes off the fastest journey between Norwich and London. The new trains should allow more journey times to be cut.

surveys before introducing new stopping patterns and SNCF to press for an increase in Lille's use.

John Davis, Fairmead Avenue, Harpenden AL5 5UD  
davis.john@mypostoffice.co.uk

## East West speed

Born in Bedford, I was pleased to see in *Railwatch* 159 that East West Rail is progressing, even to the extent that options for the line to Cambridge are being considered. I hope that none of the options involving a Bedford South station are chosen. It would make any journey from Bedford unnecessarily difficult.

The idea of the route being operated by diesels is also depressing. The route needs to be upgraded and electrified to allow for through trains from Plymouth and Swansea to Great Yarmouth and Ipswich. With the present rate of progress, will any of that happen in my lifetime?

That's why Greta Thunberg has a valid reason to protest. It takes so long for rail improvements to happen. We need swift action to expand the rail network – yes to combat climate change but also to provide a real alternative to car journeys.

P J Odell, Kimberley 8300 South Africa

## Ferry appeal

Journey times by sea are unlikely ever to be attractive compared to air, but this method

of travel does emit less carbon emissions per passenger kilometre than air. During the past 30 years many ferry companies have done their best to discourage or even ban foot passengers from using their ferries, such as DFDS from Dover to Dunkerque.

Too many ferry terminals also have no bus links to the nearest rail station. As the United Nations panel of scientists continues to remind us that we need to reduce our carbon footprint drastically in the next 15 years, now is a good time to encourage a reversal of this trend.

There are some good examples of integrated rail/sea/rail links and through ticketing from the UK to Ireland and the Netherlands.

There are also some bad ones, such as the lack of buses to connect Portsmouth city centre and Newport (Isle of Wight) with the Wightlink Portsmouth-Fishbourne ferry.

Although legislation might be required, Railfuture might wish to make a start by campaigning for all ferry companies serving the UK to:

1. Always accept foot passengers.
  2. Provide suitable bus connections and through ticketing to/from all sailings to the nearest rail station and/or town.
- Nigel Perkins, Towergate, Brighton  
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## railwatch

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# Roll on with rail electrification

**By Stephen Waring**  
Four rail user groups along the Calder Valley line, supported by Railfuture's North West and Yorkshire branches, launched the Electric Railway Charter last year, as a way of promoting a sustainable railway and good growth.

With the fight against the climate emergency at its heart, the charter calls for a rolling programme of railway electrification as recommended by the Northern Electrification Task Force in its March 2015 report *Northern Sparks*. Commissioned by then Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin and chaired by Harrogate and Knaresborough MP Andrew Jones (now a transport minister), the task force brought together MPs, local authorities, the Department for Transport and Network Rail.

In the report's foreword Mr Jones wrote: "We have worked on the premise that all the lines of the North would be electrified, it is only a question of when."

Inspiring words! The task force recommended 12 routes across northern England for an initial five-year plan. Top-ranked was the strategic Calder Valley Line – Leeds to Manchester and Preston via the routes through Bradford, Brighouse and Hebden Bridge.

Electrification via Huddersfield – the TransPennine Route Upgrade – was assumed. Then in July 2017 Transport Secretary Chris Grayling cancelled other planned electrification projects.

With the scope of the TransPennine upgrade still to be confirmed, campaigners in Rochdale, Calderdale (around Halifax) and Bradford were angry. What about the Northern Sparks programme?

Frustrated by lack of progress, we drew up the charter, and are building support. Calderdale Council launched a petition for electrification of our line.

A rolling programme will maintain skills, learning lessons as teams move from project to project.

Gapped electrification schemes are short-sighted. Diesel bimodes are overweight, making them inherently inefficient, more complex than pure electrics, and more expensive to buy and maintain. Costs of electrification are paid back through operational savings in the long term – and



**BLETCHLEY FLYER:** Vivarail's class 230 with, left to right, Stephen Sleight, Marston Vale community rail partnership officer; Sam Jessup, Sam Jessup Design; Steve Mortimer, MRCRP chairman; Jodie Colclough, Central Bedfordshire Council; Alisha Miller, 230 Artist; Vicky Cropper, London Northwestern head of stakeholder and community; Phil Warner, Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users Association; Melanie MacLeod, Bedford Borough Council and Alice Gillman, Vivarail

## Viva! A solution to the diesel train shortage

The Bedford-Bletchley Marston Vale Line is the first route in the country to benefit from Vivarail's "new" diesel train. The class 230s were formerly all-electric London Underground District Line trains but have had diesel generators fitted. Their interiors have been redesigned in consultation with the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership. Features include an accessible toilet, dedicated space for cycles, buggies and pushchairs, information panels on local attractions, and USB charging points at every seat. Each unit also has a piece of unique themed artwork designed by artist Alisha Miller, including one featuring local brickyard chimneys. The D Trains are quiet, green and



through global benefits as rail plays its full part in creating a non-polluting, zero-carbon transport system. Alternative fuels such as hydrogen may have their place if genuinely sustainable. But strategic routes must be fully electric. The first recommendation in an Institute of Mechanical Engineers report on prospects for hydrogen trains was that the government should rethink cancellation of electrification and start a rolling programme. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has given us a carbon deadline. As electricity

decarbonises, so will electric railways. Let us be inspired by teenage activist Greta Thunberg and roll out real sustainable transport. More info and links at: <https://electriccharter.wordpress.com/> [www.calderdale.gov.uk/electricvalley](http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/electricvalley) ■ The charter's four founding rail user groups are Support the Oldham-Rochdale-Manchester line, Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group, Halifax & District Rail Action Group and Bradford Rail Users Group. ■ Better project planning, using best practice and implementing

a rolling programme could cut electrification costs by up to 50%, says the Railway Industry Association in its *Electrification Coast Challenge* report. ■ The RSSB (the Rail Safety and Standards Board) has investigated alternatives to electrification. Railfuture's analysis of alternatives at [www.railfuture.org.uk/article1825](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1825) ■ The House of Commons transport committee, headed by MP Lilian Greenwood, is currently carrying out an inquiry called *Trains fit for the Future* which will examine claims for alternative fuels.

[www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)



**GLASGOW CROSS:** Two steam engines cross a little-used railway bridge on day 6 of the Great Britain XII tour (Edinburgh-Stranraer). Railfuture believes this existing link could be developed quickly and cheaply to form a crucial part of a Glasgow Crossrail, linking the separate rail networks north and south of the river Clyde. But a recent Glasgow City Connectivity Commission report has perversely resisted the Glasgow Cross route and is suggesting a £5 billion tunnelling alternative linking lines through Central and Queen Street stations. Some

rail campaigners have criticised the tunnelling option as a "beguiling fantasy". The commission, chaired by Professor David Begg, advocates investing £10 billion over 20 years to improve Glasgow's transport systems by extending the metro, including a link to the airport. Instead of Glasgow Cross it suggests excavating a tunnel between Shieldhall and Cowlands, a challenging and expensive undertaking. But it argues that rail can provide an answer for "left behind" areas, whose only options are infrequent buses

■ ■ Rail Action Group, East of Scotland  
Spring was heralded by the appearance of Network Rail staff at Reston and East Linton. At the latest meeting of the Scottish Parliament's Rail Cross Party Group, Transport Minister Michael Matheson confirmed that the two stations would finally open, although it could be as late as 2024, eight years after the original opening date. A spokesperson for RAGES said: "I will believe it when I see it." RAGES is committed to do everything possible to ensure that Reston and East Linton appear on the railway map as soon as possible.

■ ■ Beattock station action group  
450 people attended a drop-in session at Moffat as part of the Scottish transport appraisal process. The town should be a place for families to live rather than just a large retirement village, and a station at Beattock was seen as the best way to achieve this.

■ ■ Edinburgh second tram line approved  
Completing Edinburgh's first tram line from the current city centre terminus at York Place to Newhaven has been approved by the city council. There is talk of also completing the north tram loop from Roseburn to Newhaven, mostly on old rail trackbed, and a further line going up the Bridges. Running trams on to the

South Suburban rail line around Murrayfield has also been suggested. In addition Network Rail has finished consulting on a masterplan for Waverley station, proposing an extensive passenger circulation level above the tracks. Several constraints exist to redevelopment. Waverley is listed, as is the main station building. This building also has within it supporting structures for the busy North Bridge. ■ ■ Levenmouth rail campaign  
The railway is still a major option in the appraisal process but Transport Scotland insists on a "robust" business case before supporting it, apparently hinting that more buses would be just as good. The same argument has been used for 20 years and the extra buses have failed to make any difference to Levenmouth's connectivity. Publication of the business case assessment is eagerly awaited. ■ ■ StARLink (St Andrews Rail Link)  
The first part of STAG 1, the 'Case for Change' of the St Andrews Sustainable Transport study, including surveys for residents and potential visitors and consultations with major stakeholders, is nearly complete. The first results should be available in weeks. Parts of the road network around town ground to a halt

during the school holidays as good weather encouraged people to head to St Andrews for the day, nearly all by car. How much easier it would have been if a train was available!  
**Contacts:**  
Rail Action Group, East of Scotland (RAGES): [www.rages.org.uk/](http://www.rages.org.uk/)  
Beattock Station Action Group: [www.beattockstationactiongroup.org.uk/](http://www.beattockstationactiongroup.org.uk/)  
St Andrews Rail Link campaign (StARLink): [www.starlink-campaign.org.uk/](http://www.starlink-campaign.org.uk/) [facebook.com/StARLinkCampaign](https://facebook.com/StARLinkCampaign)  
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Capital Rail Action Group (CRAG): [www.capitalrail.org.uk/](http://www.capitalrail.org.uk/)  
Newburgh Train Station campaign: <http://newburghtrainstation.org.uk/>  
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Thornhill Station Action Group: [chrisandmimi@supanet.com](mailto:chrisandmimi@supanet.com)  
Bonnybridge Railway Campaign: <http://bonnybridgerailway.scot> [www.facebook.com/bonnybridgerailway](https://facebook.com/bonnybridgerailway)

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■ ■ New station for flat-pack fans

The Lea Valley’s new Meridian Water station opened in June but with only a skeleton peak-hours service. Passengers will have to wait until 9 September for a proper all-day/every-day half-hourly service to start. Meridian Water is a replacement for Angel Road station which has now closed. Railfuture can claim some credit for the new station after our Fighting Fund funded the 2012 report *Lea Valley Rail – better access to jobs and homes*, which backed the case for more capacity and connectivity in the Lea Valley. The first fruits of that were apparent three years ago with the opening of the new Lea Bridge station. The new stations at Meridian Water and Lea Bridge are served by trains from Stratford to Bishops Cleeve and are a big step towards Railfuture’s aim of a bigger, better railway in the Lea Valley. IKEA, a short walk from Meridian Water, is one of the most popular destinations in the Lea Valley. You can download the *Lea Valley Rail* report from the Railfuture website by searching for DL505.

■ ■ Access funds – lucky for some

The campaign continues to get more stations made accessible by bidding for funding from the Government’s *Access for All* programme, which provided good news in April for 73 stations throughout the country. Campaigners were surprised by some of the decisions. Crowborough was chosen, while East Grinstead which has four times the number of passengers, lost out. Other notable omissions were Barking, where a major station redevelopment is planned, and Dorking Deepdene, the North Downs line station. Deepdene is expected to benefit next year from an extra Gatwick-Reading service, which may in future be extended to Oxford, using tri-mode ex-Thameslink trains. Railfuture is leading a small working group to develop a Dorking Transport Hub. A further £20 million is up for grabs in what the DfT calls its *Access for All Mid-Tier Programme* which is expected to be launched soon. One possible candidate is Reedham, Surrey, which needs its former step-free street-to-platform 1 (London bound) access restored.

■ ■ Passengers to gain from £15m fund

Govia Thameslink Railway has launched a passenger benefit fund with a £15 million “penalty fine” which Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said should be invested in the GTR network as compensation for last year’s disruption. Railfuture is pleased to see that ideas we presented to former rail minister Paul Maynard two years ago are being taken forward by GTR’s passenger benefit fund. Railfuture will continue to suggest suitable ways to ensure that each GTR-managed station receives attention.

■ ■ Monthly update from Railfuture

London and South East branch members, and others, can subscribe free to our monthly two-page e-newsletter *inter-railse*. It usefully fills the gap between issues of the quarterly eight-page *railse*, sent to branch members with each *Railwatch*. Both newsletters can be viewed or downloaded from the branch website. <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/London+and+South+East>  
**Twitter: @RailfutureLSE**

**Railwatch welcomes articles and pictures from rail users and rail user groups**

**Send your material to: The Editor, 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU**

**Email: [editor@railwatch.org.uk](mailto:editor@railwatch.org.uk)**

Please use email if possible but include your postal address. Postal and email addresses may be published unless writers ask for them to be excluded.



Picture: NETWORK RAIL

**OPENING DAY: Transport Secretary Chris Grayling, centre, flanked by deputy mayor of London for transport Heidi Alexander, left and Meliha Duymaz, right, Network Rail’s route managing director for Anglia, and other guests at the opening of Meridian Water station on 3 June. Meridian Water is at the heart of a £6 billion development of the area being led by Enfield Council which will see 10,000 new homes and the creation of thousands of jobs. Martin Moran of Greater Anglia (with the red lanyard) said that the station will provide the area with better rail options, especially after September.**

gerard.duddridge@railfuture.org.uk

■ ■ Okehampton summer service

This summer sees the return of the Exeter-Okehampton Sunday rail service. The first train from Exeter leaves St. Davids station at 09.04, with the last return train from Okehampton at 17.56. The service runs until 8 September and consists of four return workings. Also running on summer Sundays, with the support of the Devon Cornwall Rail Partnership, are some bus services from Okehampton station through to Gunnislake on the Tamar Valley line to Plymouth.

■ ■ St Ives branch

Two new car parks have been built at St Erth station as part of the park-and-ride rail service to St Ives. To cater for the increased number of passengers using St Erth station, the bay platform used by St Ives trains has been widened and the track realigned. The service on the branch is being altered to give Carbis Bay a half-hourly, rather than hourly, service throughout the day. Lelant Saltings platform will remain open and served by two trains a day each way. There will be more frequent stops at Lelant.

■ ■ Moretonhampstead

There is increasing concern about climate change and the need to reduce car usage. As a result, some long-closed railway lines, such as that to Moretonhampstead, may be considered viable for the future. Consequently Railfuture has commented on proposals for 40 houses on the former station site, saying that space should be left for a single track line and platform which in the meantime could be used as an open green space. We also suggested that the

**Twitter: @railfuture**

historic goods shed is retained and found new use within any development, as has been the case at Horrabridge.

■ ■ Dawlish sea wall

Work began in June on a £30 million scheme to protect the railway at Dawlish from storm damage. It involves raising the five-metre sea wall to 7.5 metres, near Kennaway Tunnel and with a wave return design, in an attempt to avoid a repeat of the line blockage during storms in 2014. Network Rail says the sea level is expected to rise by 0.8m over the next 100 years.

■ ■ Plymouth-Penzance boost

Great Western has announced a doubling of the service between Plymouth and Penzance from May this year. The new trains will provide a half-hourly service for most of the day. GWR managing director Mark Hopwood said: “These new, routine half-hourly services will have a significant impact for those who travel in Devon and Cornwall and the communities we serve, and they will pave the way for mainline improvements between London and Devon and Cornwall to come later in the year.” The increase in services follows a £30 million signalling upgrade carried out by Network Rail between Plymouth and Penzance. The modernisation included 21 additional signals along the Cornish main line as well as upgrades to seven level crossings.

■ ■ Bodmin connections plan

A cash award of £54,000 for a feasibility study into providing a second station on the heritage Bodmin and Wenford railway has been granted by Great Western Railway, with the aim of improving connections with the main line at Bodmin Parkway.

[www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)

# £32m go-ahead for Portishead reopening

By Dave Chillistone

In *Railwatch* 159, there was an article entitled: Why are we still waiting for Portishead railway?

At the time of publication there was a £32 million shortfall in the funding jigsaw which could be filled only by central government.

Good news! Two weeks after *Railwatch* was published, reports came through that the Government had agreed to provide the “missing” £31.9 million.

This is very good news, not only for the long-overdue reinstatement of the “no brainer” Portishead railway, but also for other, similar railway reopenings elsewhere.

It seems that the Government has at last realised that unbridled growth in many areas of the country requires an imaginative approach to solving the transport infrastructure, congestion and pollution problems that result. In summary, over-reliance on roads, and their fostering of single-occupancy vehicles, has to stop.

Should we expect the Government to provide the total funding for railway reinstatement schemes? No. Local authorities, area authorities, local enterprise partnerships and developers all have a part to play in establishing the needs, strong business cases, and of course identifying funding.

The article in *Railwatch* 159 set out a proposed funding model, based upon locally identified needs, business



Picture: BRISTOL LIVE

**Transport Secretary Chris Grayling, Nigel Ashton (the pre-election leader of North Somerset Council) and Tim Bowles (Metro Mayor for the West of England Combined Authority) discussing plans for reinstating the Portishead railway. This meeting took place on the old twin-track permanent way near Quays Avenue, looking towards Portishead town centre, roughly where the entrance to Portishead station will be**

cases, outline designs and funding plans, which would then trigger a release of central government funding for the rail infrastructure aspects.

Not exactly this model, but in effect a variant of the proposed model, has now been exercised for the Portishead reinstatement.

Does this now mean work on Portishead reopening can begin immediately? Unfortunately not.

A development consent order is required. The Planning Inspectorate process may well take 18 months before contracts can be placed. The

DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate also has to be approved by North Somerset Council (the sponsor) and, of course, there was an upheaval in the political landscape at the local elections on 2 May.

It is hoped that the previous wide political acceptance that the Portishead railway must be reinstated will transition into the new political order in North Somerset, such that the development order application will be given the go-ahead.

The West of England Combined Authority and the involved councils still want and need the railway reinstatement to

go ahead, for the projected profitability is the seed-corn for other much-needed railway improvements in the wider Bristol area.

The funding jigsaw is complex. Approximately £84 million has been allocated to the project by the West of England Combined Authority, North Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, Bath & NE Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council and it is the subject of inter-council agreements.

The Government, having promised the “missing” £31.9 million, is surely most unlikely to withdraw it. It is against this complex funding backdrop that tens of thousands of people expect their politicians to ensure the funding jigsaw remains secure, to press on with the reinstatement, and thus start to reduce pollution and the carbon footprint within the wider Bristol area.

By the time this article is published, North Somerset Council may well have met before the end of June to discuss and approve the DCO application.

Does all this mean the reinstatement of the Bristol-Portishead railway is a “done deal”?

The populations of Portishead, Pill, Portbury and the Gordano villages can only hope so. Time will tell and further updates on the progress of the Portishead reinstatement will appear in future issues of *Railwatch*.

■ *Dave Chillistone is a committee member of Portishead Railway Group*

## European Passenger Group

By Ian Brown

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Railfuture’s European Passenger Group has established direct links with Eurostar and an effective liaison with the European Passenger Federation.

The “Go and Compare” campaign has been quite popular with members and indeed non-members using the Railfuture website. We want to encourage as many people as possible to view Railfuture as a source of informed material.

Many cities in Europe and in the US have been covered and now the attention has turned on to comparing how rail compares with other modes. We intend to look at how mobility impaired passengers are catered for by rail and other modes, looking for value for money ways to campaign for a fully accessible railway in Britain.

Eurostar has had a difficult time this year with some high profile breakdowns and well-publicised queues in Paris for customs checks.

◆◆◆◆ Railfuture rail users conference at Bristol Parkway 21 September 2019

## Infrastructure Group

By Roger Blake

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**Railfuture’s Infrastructure and Networks Group concentrates on network capacity and connectivity, line and station reopenings, route modernisation, electrification, high speed rail, route protection and safeguarding, light rail and metro development.**

**You can find out more on the Railfuture website pages *Missing Links and New Stations*.**

**Our main activities are identifying and ensuring responses to consultations and calls for evidence, publicising Railfuture policies on national rail infrastructure and networks.**

**We also aim to support Railfuture branches and user groups with campaigns such as Ashington Blyth and Tyne, Bristol MetroWest, TransPennine and Wisbech reopening, as well as evaluating bids for help from Railfuture’s Fighting Fund, such as Scotland’s StARLink campaign.**

## Access for All – but not yet

By Paul Abell

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The Department for Transport announced on 4 April which 73 stations were to benefit from the £300 million of Access for All funding previously announced.

The improvements should be completed by March 2024. A word of caution here: 46 stations were additions to the programme, but 27 of the 73 stations were actually carried over from the earlier control period.

Least busy of the 46 winners this year is Tenby, with 123,000 passengers, leaving Chinley with 120,000 passengers hoping to be added to the list if work at any of the 46 stations cannot be carried out.

As long as the present five-year cycle of Network Rail control periods governs project planning of railway infrastructure, campaigners for better access are going to be frustrated for the next couple of years, but it is worth remembering that there are signs that the cycle may be made more flexible.



**LINK TO SHEFFIELD:** Gainsborough residents welcome Northern's first weekday train at the start of the summer timetable

# After 26 years, the railway is back!

By David Harby

david.harby@railfuture.org.uk

The town crier of Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, along with many of its residents, turned out to welcome a humble two-car Pacer train in May.

It was a momentous occasion – the first weekday train to serve Gainsborough Central station for 26 years.

For all that time, residents have had to make do with three Saturday-only trains between Sheffield and Cleethorpes.

Monday-Friday trains were not for them. With the start of the summer timetable and after a long battle by rail campaigners, there are now 13 trains every day, from Monday to Saturday. The new weekday service links Gainsborough to Sheffield, via Retford and Worksop,

and is expected to boost the economy of the town, allowing people to get to jobs, schools and colleges while allowing visitors to sample the shops in Gainsborough.

The big advantage at Gainsborough is that Marshall's Yard shopping centre is immediately adjacent to Central station. At the same time, Gainsborough residents will be able to get to Sheffield's giant Meadowhall shopping centre. Trains depart Gainsborough Central hourly, calling at all stations between Retford and Sheffield.

This is a tremendous leap forward for Gainsborough, yet for years the prospect of major change had seemed remote, despite campaigners using every opportunity to ask

for improvements. However, Northern's introduction of a new hourly all-stations Sheffield-Retford service enabled the Lincoln-Sheffield-Leeds service to be speeded up by removing stops at less-used stations.

Campaigners noticed that the layover time at Retford was sufficient for the service to be extended to Gainsborough Central and that this had some operational advantages. So the campaign for the extension started in earnest.

Campaigners including Railfuture came together to convince Northern that the extension was possible and would have financial benefits. Key to this was extensive lobbying and drawing together of support by the North Nottinghamshire and

Lincolnshire Community Rail Partnership and especially its chairman, Barry Coward.

The result was a partnership between the CRP, West Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire County Council and train operator Northern.

Now the partners will need to market the service, build up passenger numbers and be ready with a good business case for an extension beyond Gainsborough when the current franchise ends.

The new Lincoln-Sheffield-Leeds service is now a genuine inter-urban service. Journey times have improved by around nine minutes, with more potential journey time reductions to come when new class 195 trains arrive and some timetable issues have been resolved.

This success demonstrates an important lesson for campaigners. Be flexible, look for opportunities you might not expect to arise and if they do arise, be ready to exploit them.

One of those moments came in 2014 when it was announced that the town's 20,000 population would double in 20 years.

## Every passenger matters to Railfuture

Railfuture's Annual National Conference is launched in September, replacing our previously organised summer and autumn conferences.

In future, we will be holding one larger conference each year in an accessible location covering national, rather than local, issues.

Entitled *Every Passenger Matters*, the conference will concentrate on inclusion and accessibility for passengers using the rail network.

It will take place on Saturday 21 September 2019 from 10.00 to 16.30 at St Michael's Centre, North Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8P. The venue is a few minutes' walk from Bristol Parkway station. CrossCountry Trains have very kindly sponsored the venue. Speakers will

include Mark Hopwood, Great Western Railway managing director, Lorna Brown-Owens who is Network Rail's access and inclusion manager, CrossCountry Trains communications manager Richard Gibson, Mark Cleland of the British Transport Police and Jon Harris, the integrated transport and accessibility manager for West Midlands Trains.

There will be a workshop session during the day and lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Online bookings can be made by visiting [www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences) using your credit/debit card or PayPal account using PayPal's payment service. Book before 31 July 2019 for £20 per person, thereafter £25.

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