

railwatch

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

No 133

£2




October 2012

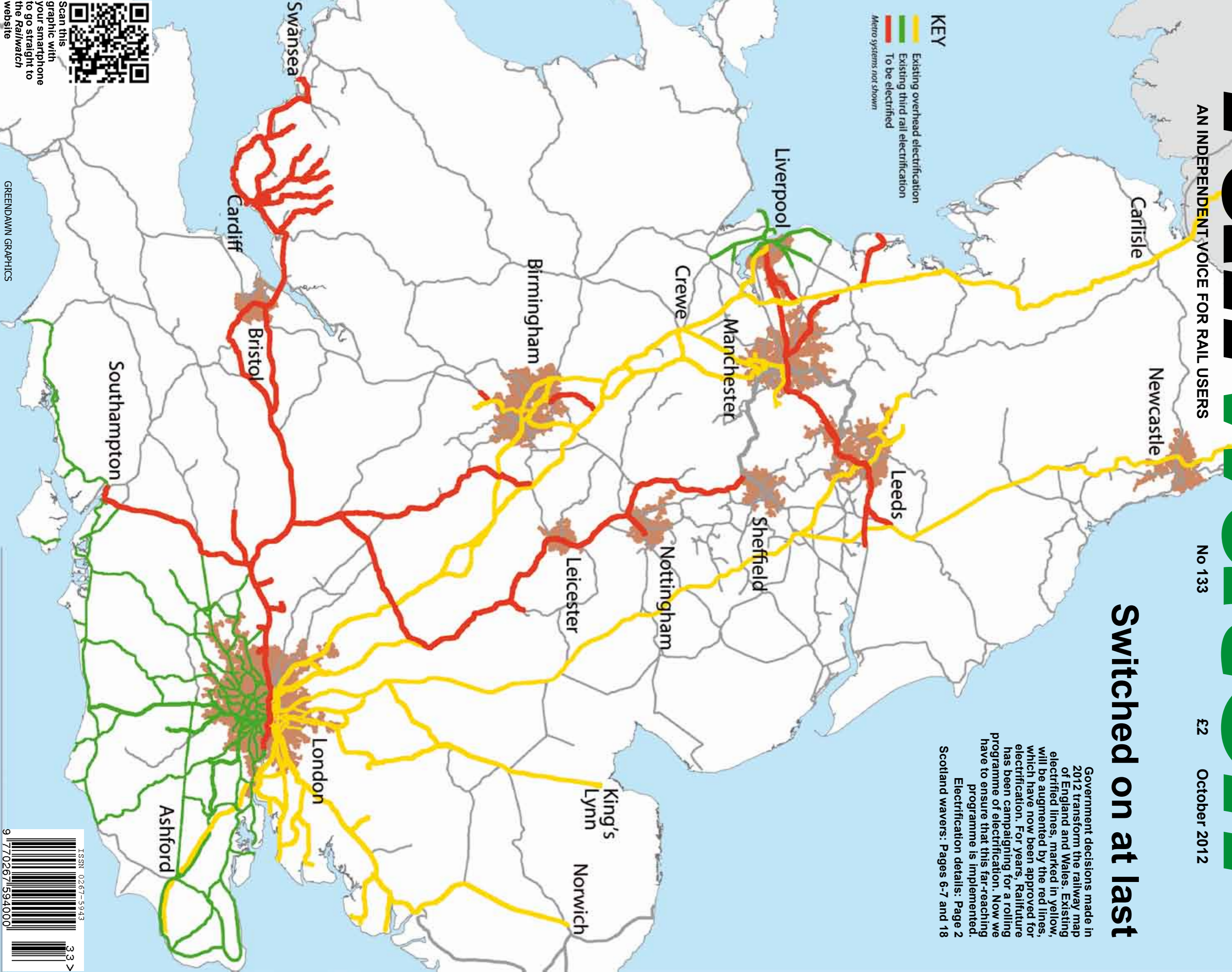
Switched on at last

Government decisions made in 2012 transform the railway map of England and Wales. Existing electrified lines, marked in yellow, will be augmented by the red lines, which have now been approved for electrification. For years, Railfuture has been campaigning for a rolling programme of electrification. Now we have to ensure that this far-reaching programme is implemented.

Electrification details: Page 2
Scotland wavers: Pages 6-7 and 18

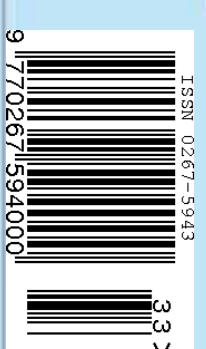
KEY

-  Existing overhead electrification
 -  Existing third rail electrification
 -  To be electrified
- Metro systems not shown



Scan this graphic with your smartphone to go straight to the Railwatch website

GREENDAWN GRAPHICS



Sad farewell to Alan

It was with great shock that we received the news of the sudden death of Alan Crowhurst in a car crash in July.

Alan was the Railway Development Society's administrative officer from 1995 to 1999.

A civil engineer with an interest in both railways and canals, he ran his own consultancy dealing with such matters as embankment stabilisation and scouring around bridge piers.

A leading Freemason, he was largely responsible for organising RDS's 20th anniversary celebrations at the Old Sessions House, Clerkenwell, London.

Railfuture has lost a loyal friend and colleague and we offer our sincere condolences to his family. Alan's wife June was also badly injured in the crash.

□ The world of railways has also lost two other outstanding characters who each owned railway locomotives.

Tom Clift, a former managing director of open access operator Grand Central, died in September from a heart attack. He was a speaker at Railfuture's 2009 conference in Northallerton and had worked in the railway industry since 1972. He owned a former BR class 26 diesel.

□ A special train ran on the Nene Valley Railway as a memorial to the Reverend Richard Paten who died from cancer in August, aged 80. Mr Paten is warmly remembered as the man behind the Nene Valley Railway and Railworld in Peterborough, where Railfuture holds many meetings. Among his many accolades Mr Paten was made a Freeman of Peterborough in 2008.

Mr Paten fulfilled a long-held dream when he purchased a scrap standard Class 5 loco 73050 from British Rail.

It was renamed City of Peterborough and is still used on the Nene Valley Railway.

Mr Paten was a fervent proponent of railways as part of a sustainable future, both in the UK and the rest of the world.

PAGE ONE MAP

The Government delighted rail campaigners in July with its good news on electrification.

The £9.4 billion rail package includes the creation of an electric "spine", the electrification of the Midland main line and the extension of the already announced Great Western electrification scheme to Swansea, plus electrification of the Welsh valleys network.

The spine will be created by electrifying the lines from Nuneaton and Bedford to Oxford, Reading, Basingstoke and Southampton.

A new electrified £500 million rail link between the Great Western main line and Heathrow will allow direct services to the airport for passengers from the West Country, the Thames Valley and Wales.

The lines between Micklefield and Selby in Yorkshire and between Walsall and Rugeley in the West Midlands are also to be electrified.

Transport Secretary Justine Greening, since shuffled to international development, said: "We all know that diesel is massively expensive. Electric trains are greener, cheaper and lighter."

They cause less damage to the track and so maintenance costs go down too.

Deputy prime minister Nick Clegg said: "As someone who cares deeply about the environment, the opportunity to dramatically expand rail, a greener form of transport than aviation or road, is very exciting indeed."

The Department for Transport said that completion of the Welsh schemes would mean that two-thirds of people in Wales would be served by an electrified train service from their local station.

Some of the electrification schemes had been approved by the last Labour government but frozen by the Coalition government.

Yorkshire rail campaigner Paul Salveson commented: "It's a poor reflection on Labour that it has taken a Tory-led government to take the railway bull by the horns and go for very major investment in rail."

"It is true that the process was started by Lord Adonis in the last years – months even – of the previous Labour government but a pity it had taken them so long to get round to it."

He added: "Here Up North, the announcement reflects the political power of the Northern city regions and the weakness of the shires."

"What is left out is significant. On the east coast, neither Hull, Scarborough nor Middlesbrough – all integral parts of the current TransPennine network – get electrification."

"Barrow and Windermere remain diesel operated with the likelihood that the important and growing Barrow route will have its services terminated at Lancaster rather than Manchester Airport."

"Electrification of the Midland main line north to Sheffield is clearly welcome but surely the sensible thing would be to wire a few miles further north to Moorthorpe (South Kirkby Junction) to join up with the already electrified East Coast route into Wakefield and Leeds."

□ **Each of the 92 electric trains the Government is ordering from Hitachi will be fitted with at least one diesel engine, it was announced in September, providing "self-rescue capability and hotel power for the electric trains". It will mean they can also serve destinations off the electric network.**



This was the strange scene near Tower Bridge in London in mid-summer. What looked like a monument to the passing of the car age was in fact a stunt by car manufacturer Skoda to launch its new model, the Citigo. Reminiscent of Stonehenge, the sculpture, made from battered cars, was tagged Citihenge. It was later taken on a tour of Britain, including a spell at the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Help to run Railfuture

If you would like to take a more prominent role in running Railfuture, there are elections to the national board of directors every year.

In 2013, there will be three seats up for grabs.

No specific experience is required but a bit of spare time, and the ability to see the bigger picture, to translate ideas into action, and to work with others in making Railfuture the independent voice of railway development in Britain, would be a great help.

The board is keen to increase the diversity of both the board and the membership and so is keen to welcome women, ethnic minorities and younger people.

Railfuture is run by a board of 10 directors whose task is to ensure that the finances and internal workings of the organisation are in good order, organise national conferences and responses to official consultations, and decide what national campaigns should be organised.

Board meetings are held at various locations four times a year. Being a director is a statutory duty and a contribution to travel expenses may be claimed. With so many positive announcements

from the Government on electrification, rolling stock, infrastructure and reopenings, it is an exciting time to be involved with Railfuture, which has achieved many of its goals but still faces numerous challenges.

If you would like to become a director (or would like to back someone else), you need to get two members to countersign the nomination form which can be downloaded from the Railfuture website.

A form can be obtained by post from Returning Officer, PO Box 7690, Hinckley LE10 OYE.

If elected, a director serves a three-year term, and can stand for re-election. Nomination forms must be returned by January 2013.

One of the issues for the future is whether Railfuture adopts electronic voting, which would enable more members to participate in Railfuture affairs.

There are also opportunities for volunteers to serve on Railfuture's national specialist committees and regional branch committees.

If you would like more information, please contact Railfuture chairman David Berman at chairman@railfuture.org.uk



Railfuture stalwart John Barfield was made a Freeman of the City of London in July. John, who for years edited Rail Development News, the precursor to Railwatch, said: "I am pleased that the City has been a staunch supporter of Crossrail which is now under construction."

LOCAL ACTION

Yorkshire

By Chris Hyomes

chris.hyomes@railfuture.org.uk

■ ■ Electrification will boost national economic recovery

Railfuture Yorkshire welcomed news that Midland main line electrification is to go ahead at last. The £322 million approval for the remainder of the Northern Hub scheme was cause for a double celebration for rail campaigners in Yorkshire, Manchester and the East Midlands. The announcement included approval for extension of electrification from Micklefield to Selby, with a turnback provided at Micklefield for local trains, and the connection to the East Coast main line, enabling the plan for an "electric horseshoe" (Leeds to London by two routes) to be achieved. In a statement, Railfuture Yorkshire chairman Chris Hyomes said: "We are very pleased the Government has recognised the benefit of good, modern electric rail services in helping to boost the much-needed economic recovery. But electrification needs to go further – to Leeds and Doncaster – to ensure we make the best use of the new electric spine and to achieve the most efficient operation of the expected new electric trains." The Government has also ring-fenced the £240 million enhancement of the East Coast main line. The Peterborough bottleneck is at last to be tackled, as well as welcome track improvements at Doncaster. But Railfuture is worried that there was no mention of the work needed to upgrade the overhead line equipment to make it more robust, or of improving capacity on the two-track section between Grantham and Doncaster where more cross-overs or more bi-directional running/capacity are necessary.

■ ■ Skipton-Colne project needs £250,000 study

The Skipton East Lancs Railway Action Partnership has prepared a remit for the GRIP3 study that is pivotal to progressing the reinstatement of the Skipton-Colne rail line. Funding of £250,000 is needed. www.selrap.org.uk

■ ■ John Prescott backs Minsters reopening campaign

Lord Prescott has backed calls to reopen the 34-mile Beverley-York rail line which closed in 1965. The Minsters' Rail Campaign claims reopening the line would cost £200 million. George McManus, chairman of the campaign, said the current aim is to obtain a detailed feasibility study. Lord Prescott has signed the campaign's petition. More details: www.minstersrail.net

■ ■ Cheap rail fares for students in South Yorkshire

Students in South Yorkshire can now get cheaper travel on the train, as well as bus and tram, with Travel South Yorkshire's 16-18 Student Pass. The free pass, issued by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, allows students at college or sixth-form to travel at half fare on Northern Rail train services in the county.

■ ■ Wensleydale in £250,000 appeal for terminus

The Wensleydale Railway launched a major appeal in August to raise £250,000. The aim is to build a passenger terminus at Northallerton to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the reopening of passenger services which falls on 4 July 2013. The terminus planned for next year will be a temporary structure, though it may have to last some years. The railway is also working on plans to extend west, first to Castle Bolton and then to Aysgarth. Current projects include the building of a repair and maintenance shed at Leeming Bar to enable paid and volunteer staff to work under cover for the first time and to provide security for visiting locomotives. The railway is also aiming to design and install a new signalling system for the passing loop at Constable Burton, upgrade facilities at Leeming Bar and Redmire, upgrade electricity supplies, provide water towers to serve steam locomotive operations as well as improve track and rolling stock. To contribute please write for information to WR Appeal, Leeming Bar Station, Leases Road, Leeming Bar, Northallerton DL7 9AR, or go to www.wensleydalerrailway.com

railwatch

ISSN 0267-5943 www.railwatch.org.uk

is edited by Robert Stevens, John Stanford and Ray King
4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU Tel 020 8985 8548
editor@railwatch.org.uk

john.stanford@railwatch.org.uk robert.stevens@railwatch.org.uk
Printed by Print-Out, High Street, Histon, Cambridge CB4 4JD
Tel 01223 232709

Railfuture members receive Railwatch free

Non-members can subscribe by sending £8 (cheque payable to Railfuture) to: Alan Cocker, 11 Franklin Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9DX
Copy deadlines: For the next issue, to be published in December, copy must be emailed to editor@railwatch.org.uk by 29 October. Paper copy can be sent to 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU but must be submitted earlier.

Advertising: Full page: £190. Half page: £95. Quarter page: £45. Small ads: 30p per word. Free to members.

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Media enquiries Bruce Williamson, 29 Granby Hill, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4LT. Tel: 0117 9272954 Mobile: 07759 557389
Email: media@railfuture.org.uk

Membership £21 per year. Family: £21 plus £2 for each extra person. Pensioners, students and unemployed: £14. User groups, community and parish councils: Please apply for rates.

If you would like to join Railfuture, please contact David Harby, 6 Carral Close, Lincoln LN5 9BD
Email: membership@railfuture.org.uk

Renewals and other membership queries: Lloyd Butler, 24 Chedworth Place, Tattlingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND. Email: renewals@railfuture.org.uk

Elections Board elections held annually. Nomination forms can be obtained from: Returning Officer, PO Box 7690, Hinckley LE10 9WJ. You can also download a form from www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Elections

Who's Who: Many other useful contact details can be found on the Railfuture website www.railfuture.org.uk

Railfuture annual draw

If you wish to take part in the Railfuture annual draw, please send in your counterfoils and cheques by 1 November. Any received after the closing date will be regarded as donations to Railfuture. If there is anyone who would like additional tickets please send an SAE to PO Box 7690, Hinckley LE10 9WJ.

www.railfuture.org.uk

◆◆◆◆ You can buy our book Britain's Growing Railway online at www.railfuture.org.uk

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Olympic triumph shows how much more rail can do

By Ian Brown
ian.brown@railfuture.org.uk

The rail industry did a fantastic job in providing a successful "public transport" Olympic and Paralympic games.

The events demonstrated that significant additional capacity can be provided with existing and limited new resources and that the industry can co-ordinate to provide an integrated service.

Legacy was an important component in justifying the games so let us attempt to apply such principles to the post-Olympic railway.

Principle one: Leadership

The Olympic authorities firmly took on the leadership role and clearly spelled out what overall outputs they required from the train operators. The operators responded well with good plans to meet the demand that the Olympic authorities specified.

The Olympic authorities behaved like an effective strategic rail authority, unlike the real but shortlived SRA, which was scrapped in 2006 because it had failed to provide proper direction for the industry.

There was a clear demarcation between the requirements of the Olympic authorities and the response by the industry.

This is unlike the present franchise system which concentrates on the operators' responses rather than the community's overall requirement and need for rail transport.

Principle two: Investment in capacity

Network Rail's now evolving rail utilisation strategy process is a key component here but, unlike the games, the process starts with a massive handicap. Network Rail, as provider of the infrastructure, tries to interpret what demand it needs to respond to by looking at what the train operators are doing and what they want to do. It also tries to take some account of the wishes of a wide range of "stake-



IAN BROWN

holders", including of course Railfuture.

This process would not have worked very well for the games because too much was required too quickly.

Other than the Olympic authorities, the only strong clients are probably the integrated transport authorities of our provincial cities and of course Transport for London.

The ITAs and TfL are able to understand their growing transport requirements and reconcile them with plans for wider economic growth of the regions concerned and make clear, well-thought-out demands on the rail industry.

Do I hear cries of: "What about HLOS?" – the high level output statement.

Well yes, but HLOS is handed down from too high a level of government.

Principle three: Consistency

The games were provided for the whole country and required access from the whole country.

Under the present system of rail-franchising, however, even local needs are not met on any fair and equitable basis.

Compare the dismal Sunday train service to London with that of Stratford-upon-Avon (population 25,000) or (albeit much larger) Hull. Tourist-orientated Lincoln, with a population of 105,000, has no through trains



WINNING WAYS: Hull Trains have given free first class railcards to Luke Campbell, who took Gold in the Bantamweight boxing at the London 2012 Olympics, and his fiancée. With Luke in the picture are (left to right) First Hull Trains staff Michelle Walker, Christabel Dickson (back) and Tracey Parkinson. FHT is an open access operator and provides a direct service to London which the franchise system does not deliver

to London at all on Sundays. Even during the week, there is only one East Midlands Trains through service and one East Coast through service to London.

Stratford-upon-Avon, with a population of 25,000, has two direct services to London before Sunday lunchtime, run by Chiltern Railways.

Hull has two direct services to London before Sunday lunchtime, run by First Hull Trains.

Principle four: Once committed, the Olympic plan was fixed and the Olympics could not be postponed for a year or two

The principle of remaining committed to service levels or plans has not as yet been adopted by the rail industry.

We have seen politicians repeatedly announce schemes or announce them in instalments. The Northern Hub and North West electrification are cases in point.

A much more worrying recent tendency is to announce big bold schemes such as Scottish central belt electrification and the inter-city express programme and then cut back on them before the ink is dry.

Recent announcements such as the North-South freight spine have much to commend them if seen in a long-term strategic network capacity context.

Let us hope that the stop-start

tendency will not hamper their implementation.

So let us look at two specific initiatives, long franchises and open access, and consider them mindful of the slogan "Be careful what you wish for."

Long-term franchises

The train operators have lobbied hard for long-term franchises, arguing that this allows time for them to get a return on investment which provides for growth. It sounds like a reasonable argu-

ment, but it is not borne out by the evidence when you consider the current debacle over the West Coast franchise.

The flaw in that process is to ask the providers of the rail service, of all people, to look into their crystal balls and try to estimate long-term growth and demand.

Even the Treasury, well-stocked with brilliant economists, is incapable of doing that with any kind of certainty. Long franchises are not any kind of answer in

the current format unless you allow the client to take a strategic approach.

Open access

Looking again at the West Coast, open access potentially provided a far more comprehensive range of innovative services than the marginal crumbs offered by train operators trying to win franchises.

But high hopes for open access were dashed by a stronger reliance on the franchise process for delivering improvements.

The current method of franchising, led by the Department for Transport, clashes ideologically with the "right to roam" or "open access" espoused by both the European Union and the Office of Rail Regulation.

The people of Hull, deprived by the franchise process of a through service to London, might see the benefits of open access, while those in Manchester who already have a good service to London probably see that being safeguarded by a robust franchising process is best.

But if a strategic approach were taken we should have a more balanced combination of open access and franchising.

The Regulator could assess the capacity available and then share it out.

The ORR could allow 10% of West Coast capacity to be available to open access operators, while the remaining 90% could be allocated to the franchise.

The Government should be the long-distance client, specifying the core requirement.

Regional clients like the integrated transport authorities and passenger transport executives should specify what local services need to run.

Where does this leave us post Olympics? It leaves us knowing that rail has much more potential, but that change is needed in a big way if rail is to stand up to the road lobby with shovel-ready schemes to create jobs and capacity.

Meanwhile we plumb the depths of ever-increasing complexity to hedge against many risks that we should not need to be taking in the first place.

■ Ian Brown CBE FCILT retired as managing director of London Rail TfL in 2010 and was awarded a CBE for services to railways in the 2011 new year's honours list. He has recently joined the boards of Crossrail Ltd and Abellio UK Ltd. Views expressed are his own.

LOCAL ACTION

North West

By Arthur Thomson arthur.thomson@railfuture.org.uk

Flowers and pictures keep the passengers growing

The number of people using Bentham station rose by 25% last year to just over 25,000, and other stations on the Leeds-Morecambe line also showed increases. The Lancaster & Skipton Rail User Group is calling for a more frequent service to boost usage even more. Bentham station is looking more and more colourful, thanks to the Friends of Bentham Station, and Bloomin' Bentham. Volunteer gardeners are developing a new shrub and flower bed under the footbridge and the station has been brightened up by the re-installation of local artist Gill Barron's colourful paintings. There was a formal unveiling of the paintings on Friday 14 September.

Steam helps bring the crowds back to rebuilt station



Picture: IAN WHITELEY

It might look like a time past with a steam train in view but this was the scene at Frodsham in July this year, write Cedric Green and Janet Briggs of North Cheshire Rail Users Group. The newly refurbished station buildings, lovingly brought back to pristine condition, look magnificent and are now a great asset to the town instead of the liability they had become. Throngs of local people enjoyed the sight of A4 steam locomotive *Union of South Africa* hauling an excursion to the Welsh Coast. The station house at Frodsham, abandoned and boarded up for 20 years, has finally come to life again. After nearly six months of feverish work starting in January, the scaffolding and hoardings came down to reveal a building restored to its Victorian splendour with clean brickwork and stonework, as well as replica windows and doors. It has been wonderful to watch the transformation which the whole community has welcomed.

Network Rail involved NCRUG from the beginning and it has been a wonderful experience to share the passion of those involved in the restoration. The garden on the north side was restored two years ago by students from Helsby High School who spent six months on the project as part of their Duke of Edinburgh bronze award. Victorian-style rope edgings round the gardens provide an excellent effect and help keep cars clear of the flowers. Following NCRUG's co-operation on this project, Network Rail is now examining the possibility of repairing and restoring cast iron fencing on both platforms. www.ncrug.org.uk

MEP Rebecca backs Skipton-Colne rail reopening

The Skipton East Lancs Railway Action Partnership has announced another patron to join the existing 14 patrons. Liberal Democrat MEP Rebecca Taylor, who comes from Todmorden, is backing SELRAP's campaign to reopen the railway between Skipton and Colne. Four other MEP patrons support SELRAP, which wants to rebuild the strategic route between west and east coast ports with links to Europe. www.selrap.org.uk



JAVELINS AT LONDON ST PANCRAS: One of the many rail links which provided good service to the Olympic Park at Stratford



Picture: HEARING DOGS FOR DEAF PEOPLE

LISTENING HARD: Chiltern Railways staged a charity event at Marylebone station in September for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Chiltern, which operates direct trains to Birmingham as well as Stratford-upon-Avon, has shown a willingness to respond to passengers' demands and offer more than the service requirements in its franchise



Wales

By Rowland Pittard
rowland.pittard@railfuturewales.org.uk

More electrification needed

Railfuture welcomed the confirmation that electrification will be extended to Swansea. Railfuture Wales proposed the electrification of the full Cardiff Valleys network in 2009 and this has now been confirmed. This will enable the replacement of the present fleet of Pacers and class 150 units used on the network. Railfuture has reminded the Government of the need to electrify the relief lines between Severn Tunnel and Cardiff, certain freight yards in South Wales and the Newport to Park Junction curve to enable future freight and passenger developments.

Railfuture suggests ways to beef up Welsh train service

Railfuture submitted a response to Arriva Trains Wales' timetable consultation and made a number of positive suggestions. Some of these will depend on Welsh Government funding.

Better connections needed at Cardiff and Bristol

Railfuture submitted a response to Arriva CrossCountry's timetable consultation. We welcomed the continuation of additional stops at Chepstow and Lydney. We expressed concern about connections from West of Cardiff into services at Cardiff and Bristol Parkway. The suggestion that the Swansea to North East of England and Scotland cross-border services should be reinstated was reiterated.

Rail is the key to a healthy transport system

Railfuture Wales' response to the Active Travel Bill proposed by the Welsh Government emphasised that we actively promote the use of, and improvements to, rail travel throughout Wales. We seek to move more people and freight from road and air to rail, by campaigning for cheap, convenient rail services for everyone, better links for buses, bikes and pedestrians and creation of urban tram, light rail and metro systems. The use of public transport has environmental, health and social inclusion benefits. This is enhanced by integrated transport and the opportunity to walk or cycle to railway and bus stations and to bus stops. These points were expanded in our answers to the questions posed under the seven headings in the consultation document. We also emphasised that Railfuture has produced a Development Plan for the Railways of Wales, a new edition of which is due out shortly.

Cardiff area resignalling will boost local economy

Work has begun on Wales' largest congestion-busting scheme which has the potential to provide hundreds of extra rush-hour seats each day on rail services on the Cardiff and Valleys network. Expected to be completed by 2015, this £220 million scheme, with funding of £17 million from the Welsh Government, will replace over 300 signals, 12 miles of track, 59 sets of points and build seven additional platforms across the Cardiff and Valleys rail network. It will support the growth of the local economy. The work will be delivered in five stages, starting with the Vale of Glamorgan line. Signal boxes at Aberthaw and Cowbridge Road, Bridgend will close in January and Barry later in the year.

The Future of Rail in Wales conference

A Cardiff conference on 1 October was the start of a process to call for evidence for the role of rail in Wales now and in the future. One session focused on franchise models and Railfuture Wales has already presented the Welsh Government with proposals for a not-for-dividend franchise. Railfuture Wales was represented at the conference.

Doubts over future of Wales-Ireland ferry service
Stena's Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire ferry was withdrawn in September and it is not known if it will run next summer. Railfuture will do all it can to help the ferry to continue.

www.railfuturewales.org.uk



Scotland wavers on its brave rail plans

By Graham Morrison

graham.morrison@railfuture.org.uk

One of the great attractions for people attending this year's rail reopenings conference in Stirling was the chance to travel on the Alloa line which reopened four years ago.

Looking to the future, Geoff Cook from Network Rail explained how the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Project would transform rail travel in the central belt for the two-thirds of Scotland's population who live in the area it covers.

EGIP is a multi-million pound programme of making a complete and coherent network in central Scotland.

It includes 200 miles of electrification, new track linking existing routes and a link with the new Edinburgh tram route to the airport at a new station known as Edinburgh Gateway.

Transport Scotland is funding the work and is in the lead, working closely with Network Rail and ScotRail.

There was consultation in 2011 with 298 local councillors, 61 community councils, and 90 MPs and MSPs.

An application under the Transport and Works Act will be lodged next year.

In a lively question and answer session, Geoff indicated that Cumbernauld could well see electric services in 2014, as no new rolling stock would be required.

But just three weeks after the conference, the Scottish Government announced a cut of £350 million in the £1 billion funding for the project.

The Government's action suddenly called into question the title of our conference: How Scotland took the railway forward.

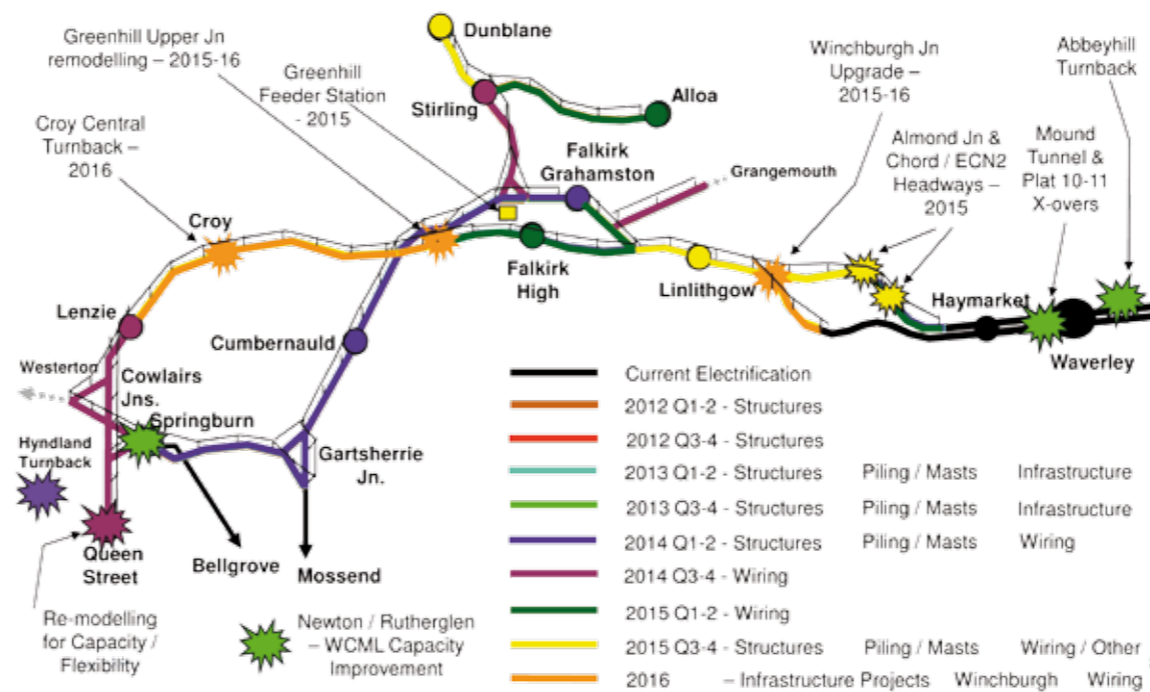
See page 18 for more details on the reaction to the cuts.

More EGIP information can be found at: www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/11743.aspx

Airdrie-Bathgate

Ann Glen gave a very personal perspective of the reopening of the Airdrie-Bathgate line. She moved to Airdrie in 1974, was struck by the number of disused railways and became involved in their conversion to walkways and cycleways.

Ann presented a set of photographs documenting the rebuilding of the line. Despite her involvement in the reopening, initially there had been some scepticism of her "amateur" attempt to document the project. In the end, however, Network Rail agreed to fund the



The original plan, but then the

production of her book about the construction.

She acknowledged that Airdrie station was cut off from the town centre and ideally could play a more significant part in the community, showing the regeneration benefits of rail.

"Councils need to give more thought to pedestrian and cycle access to the railway station," she said. "This is my next challenge!" See page 12 for details of Ann's book.

Current Scottish campaigning

Ken Sutherland gave the conference a brief overview of rail campaigning in Scotland and factors which had helped to give it momentum.

Unlike many other issues, the desire for a better rail system transcends party political boundaries. Campaigners and rail managers should capitalise on this.

Most reopenings had exceeded modelling forecasts. Originally it was claimed that demand for Prestwick Airport station would be negligible, but now 30% of all air arrivals continue their journey by train.

A regional injustice put right

Bill Jamieson and David Spaven told the story of Borders Rail. The campaign to save the Edinburgh to Carlisle Waverley route via Galashiels had been too little, too late and it closed in 1972.

However this became the most populous area in Britain without rail services, and the Scottish Borders Council is now the only mainland council in Scotland with no rail stations. As early as 1975 British Rail offered to reopen

the route as far as Galashiels, but the Borders Council was not prepared to subsidise it. Thereafter route protection was abandoned. The Campaign for Borders Rail was launched in 1999 and is still campaigning strongly.

It is hoped that the short extension from Tweedbank to Melrose could still be achieved, but that would almost certainly need a review of the service pattern. www.campaignforbordersrail.org/

Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine

Jackie McGuire gave a presentation of the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine project from an unusual perspective - that of a lawyer. At the time, she worked for Clackmannanshire Council, the smallest council area in Scotland.

The reopening of this line enabled the transfer of coal trains away from the Forth Bridge, thereby helping its passenger services.

Jackie explained the complex legal and parliamentary processes that have to be gone through for such a project.

The other partners in the project were unable to act as the scheme's legal promoter, so Clackmannanshire led on this complex project, which involved the assembly of documents including memoranda of need, environmental statements including mitigation measures and the business case, and all the follow-through including public consultation and parliamentary processes.

<http://transportforScotland.gov.uk/projects/SAK-railway-project>
[◆◆◆◆ Railfuture is planning a Rail Action email newsletter between issues of Railwatch](http://www.railway-technol-</p></div>
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London and South East

By Roger Blake

roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk

'Bridge the gap' campaign makes tracks for East Sussex

The biggest single line reopening campaign in our branch area, extending the Uckfield branch line south to reconnect with the rest of the Sussex coast network at Lewes, is our initial 10-year target. We launched our campaign leaflet at the annual Uckfield Festival in July. This sets out our programme of action to move forward from Network Rail's 2008 Reinstatement Study, towards inclusion in the next High Level Output Specification for infrastructure investment during Control Period 6 from 2019-24, and inclusion in the Invitation To Tender for the next-but-one, long Thameslink franchise from 2020. We want an official opening in 2022. East Sussex County Council published the results of the March-April public consultation on their Uckfield traffic improvements options



in July. The largest single block of support was for more car parking, for the station as well as the town centre. The consultation also drew a very significant response to a question which was not asked: support for reopening the railway to Lewes! Thanks to all Railfuture local members who may have helped in that. The strength of that response has pushed the county council to take seriously the option we advocated, building their preferred southern relief road on a bridge with sufficient clearance for the railway as well as the River Uck. Railfuture campaigners are now at the table with the Uckfield town centre steering group, and the county council's new focus group, influencing decision makers towards plans for an integrated town centre transport hub, with a new station car park. See www.tinyurl.com/c893136

Lea Bridge station set to be re-born

Lea Bridge station in east London is expected to reopen in 2014, nearly 30 years after it was closed in 1985. The station, which lies between Stratford and Tottenham Hale, will benefit from planning gain funds from Stratford City developer Westfield and help realise an ambition of the Railfuture-affiliated Chingford Line Users Association. There will be two trains an hour to start with (hourly on Sundays). This could be improved later if there are sufficient funds for the next aim to ensure that there is also a quarter-hourly service to Angel Road where there is now an extensive shopping centre that attracts road traffic from miles around. Railfuture's Fighting Fund has allowed Railfuture and CLUA to commission JR Consulting to report on Waltham Forest's case for securing Lea Bridge station reopening, increased Lea Valley line capacity, and reinstating the Hall Farm Curve which will allow Stratford-Chingford trains to run again. CLUA chairman Peter Woodrow can provide a copy of the report and two Powerpoint presentations. Contact him by email at peter.woodrow@railfuture.org.uk

You cannot count on the Office of Rail Regulation

Official station usage data for 2010/11, collated by the Office of Rail Regulation, still shows very wide discrepancies with observations of the Railfuture-affiliated Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users Group. ORR says Cambridge Heath station has 223,850 users, while the user group calculates it is 684,571 based on the reliable evidence of its own counts. ORR says London Fields station has 371,390 annual passengers while the user group is pretty certain it is 757,791! Maybe the ORR should look again at how it does its sums, particularly now that so many people use Oyster cards. Distortions of this magnitude threaten prospects for station and service improvements.

www.railfuture.org.uk/branches/
for more London & South East campaign news



Beating Beeching

Railfuture must capitalise on the 50th anniversary of the Beeching Report, a landmark occasion, to enhance its campaigning, recruitment and profile.

The rail community and the media, have already positioned themselves on what will be the rail platform of 2013, on which Railfuture must also secure a place, to enable among other things engagement with the media to our mutual benefit at a crucial point in railway history. Recalling Beeching, the blackest chapter in railway history, is vital, for it represents a springboard to record the achievements of RDS and Railfuture, so contributions from veteran Railfuture members who campaigned against Beeching, possibly wearing Railway Development Association or Railway Invigoration Society hats, would be priceless.

The brutality of Beeching, taking a blanket closure-only stance, rather than considering alternative cost-cutting options, must be highlighted, for this is what really fired the starting pistol for rail campaigning. In 1963 the three Rs for the railways were removal, retrenchment and rationalisation. For 2013 renaissance, regeneration and recovery constitute the three Rs.

We must remember that the year 1963 signalled the end for many lines and stations, victims of the Beeching axe, which heralded a pattern of decline and isolation for countless communities.

It is worth comparing them with the relatively few places which successfully fought closure proposals, and then reflecting on those communities that have been restored to the rail network as a result of RDS and Railfuture campaigning.

Thus Beeching is recognised and recorded, but not dwelt upon in any nostalgic context,

for he cannot be ignored, and from a spartan railway a sprouting one has emerged.

There still remains much more for Railfuture to do after highlighting its achievements, which hopefully will aid membership recruitment for rail campaigning needs a louder voice to reflect the mood of the nation seeking development, expansion and electrification of the rail network, with affordable fares.

This message needs repeating to politicians and industry stakeholders, who have not sufficiently grasped rising public support for rail, despite passenger volumes now matching levels last recorded in the 1920s.

Railfuture thus has the task of conveying the need for horizons to be lifted and blinkers removed among the movers and shakers, who should be under no illusion that after decades of neglect, it is still a matter of playing catch-up which can be addressed only through investment.

With the Olympics still attracting media attention, an analogy with sport is valid.

The issue of selling off school playing fields can be likened to the disposal of railway land, leading to either scuppered route reopening prospects, or imposed operational limitations and increased reinstatement costs.

By occupying a place on the Beeching 50th anniversary platform, Railfuture will raise its profile.

This process can be developed by creating a local radio station-local rail network link.

Scope for action there, and so too with the print media through encouraging local and regional newspapers to run features on Beeching, including RDS and Railfuture successes.

Recalling Beeching is like setting off on a journey in a sombre mood with the list of station closures resembling a war memorial, but now the

monument no longer stands in isolation, because next to it there is a shining roll of honour listing new and reopened stations reflecting that the railways have emerged from a long dark tunnel.

Last, but by no means least, our own excellent *Railwatch* should mark the Beeching 50th anniversary with a special issue, supplemented by the newsletters of all the Railfuture branches.

The 50th anniversary of the Beeching Report is a platform for rail to show that it has a future, and for Railfuture to match its name it must have a prominent place on this stage, the platform not only for 2013, but into the future.

Andrew Oldfield, Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield Rail Users Association, Long Lane, Worrall, Sheffield S35 0AF

Credit the Greens

Thanks for your front page news in *Railwatch* 132 sharing the extremely welcome information that the Beccles loop is at last to be completed after years of campaigning.

I was disappointed however that your article did not highlight the crucial role played over the past few years by Beccles Green Party Councillor, Graham Elliot. Without the unstinting work of Councillor Elliott, I doubt that we would be celebrating just yet.

*Dr Rupert Read, Merton Road, Norwich NR2 3TT
rupertread@googlemail.com*

Watch out for U-turn

I felt the need to write to you to urge the Railfuture organisation to keep a really close watch on our politicians and civil servants.

The new rolling programme of electrification is unbelievably splendid but, as it is almost too good to be true – in fact I fear it IS too good to be true, should we not be on our guard?

Quite apart from the tight financial times we are in, politicians and civil servants can never be trusted, and excuses can so quickly be summoned by them out of an apparently clear sky – as evidence I would indicate Scotland, where the Government there has suddenly switched part of its Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme funding to road building.

It would be good if we could extract some kind of assurance from Edinburgh that yes, it is intended to proceed with the

lines to Alloa and Dunblane, but they need time to spread out the expenditure load.

So far I don't believe that they have explained why the reduction in the EGIP programme has been made.

The endless time lag in the United Kingdom between anything being announced and work on the ground actually starting does, of course, give ample opportunity to the said officials to change things around.

Obviously the Westminsterites will take little notice of us, but at least it may make any renegeing on their plans slightly less easy to do.

*John Gilbert, Pixiefield, Cradley, Herefordshire WR13 5ND
john@ejgilbert10.plus.com*

King's Cross blues

I have passed through King's Cross station twice in the past month. The remodelled terminus and the new western entrance are magnificent and a credit to the railway system.

The same cannot be said for the Underground. I wanted to get to the Victoria Line and had to walk a long way westwards down a slope before reaching the ticket barrier.

I then had to turn back on myself along another long passage before reaching the escalators to the deeper levels, which are in their original position before the alterations, and which in the past were relative easily reached from the main platforms down a flight of steps, now closed off.

Thinking that I was stupid, senile or just plain unobservant, I mentioned this to my son who uses the station frequently, and he confirmed that he had not found any other way from the platforms to the escalators. The ambience underground is however greatly improved.

I am all in favour of taking exercise, but it must be very frustrating for those who have to use the station day by day. If there is an easier access I should like to know and perhaps it could be better signed.

*J E A Knowles, College Street, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1NL
jknowles@waitrose.com*

Horse-drawn railway

The map on page 11 of *Railwatch* 132 showing the railways of the Cotswolds is a bit misleading.

I wondered what the line running north-south to Stratford-upon-

Avon was. I then realised that it was the Stratford to Moreton in Marsh tramway. As this was always only horse drawn and closed in 1904 it might be an exaggeration to call it a closed line.

The section from Moreton to Shipston on Stour was later run as a steam-operated railway, but this closed in 1929 (passengers) and 1960 (goods).

*Peter Fleming, Lovers Walk, Dunstable LU5 4BG
peterffleming@yahoo.co.uk*

Public pledge

I would like to reply to Malcolm Clark's letter in *Railwatch* 132. Has he forgotten Tony Blair's ringing commitment to a "publicly owned and publicly controlled" railway?

Hints that Labour would re-nationalise the railways only served to depress the Railtrack share price, so that British Rail's assets were sold off at much less than their real value.

However, once in power, the Blair/Brown governments between 1997 and 2010 were happy with privatisation, and even rejected any suggestions that failed franchises such as South Eastern and East Coast main line should be retained in government ownership.

Nationalisation was a dirty word for New Labour, and when Railtrack was dissolved, it was converted into a quasi-private company, although heavily subsidised by the Government.

It should have been re-nationalised outright, and placed on an equal basis with the Highways Agency, with all major infrastructure projects such as new lines, reopenings and electrification, funded directly by the Treasury, rather than added to Network Rail's colossal debt burden.

Christian Wolmar has argued that there is a case for re-nationalisation, and has welcomed the report *Rebuilding Rail* published by Transport for Quality of Life.

Even if new franchises are

Send your letters to:

The Editors, 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU
Email: editor@railwatch.org.uk
Railwatch also welcomes articles and pictures. Please use email if possible. Last copy date is 29 October



Picture: JOHN HENDERSON

Flyover will help keep the trains on time

It is still a work in progress but Hitchin flyover is beginning to take shape over the East Coast main line.

At the moment London-Cambridge trains have to cross over the main line on the level.

In June the main span of the flyover will be in place and by next June, the work will be complete and Cambridge trains will be able to take the new non-conflicting route over the main line. The flyover is expected to be brought into full use for the December 2013 timetable.

In the meantime, the focus of work switches to putting in a new track layout at Cambridge Junction, just north of Hitchin. Over Christmas and New Year, a track-laying train will spend two weeks installing track around the junction. It is not yet clear whether "passive provision" has been made for the Cadwell chord which

would allow East West Rail trains to use the new layout.

Railfuture hopes that the Bedford-Sandy line can be rebuilt with a new triangular junction to both north and south on the East Coast main line. Then eastbound trains from Oxford and Milton Keynes could use the Cadwell chord allowing southbound trains on the ECML to gain access to the Royston line for Cambridge.

Work is also under way on stations between Hitchin and Sandy. Sandy, Biggleswade and Arlesey platforms are being extended to allow for 12-coach trains to be introduced as part of the Thameslink project.

Various options are being considered by Railfuture and others for the Bedford-Cambridge section of East West rail.

More info on the Hitchin flyover: www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/6397.asp

locked into 15-year terms, any future Labour government should take back full control of Network Rail, and progressively take back passenger services.

Local services in the regions and major conurbations could be operated by local government owned bodies.

Freight operators which have prospered since privatisation could remain as private companies, but should be guaranteed access to the system without unfair restrictions or exorbitant access charges.

As for HS1 and St Pancras station, they were built with cross-party support, and the revival of the Crossrail project is

due as much to Ken Livingstone as to any initiative from the Labour Government.
Martin Smith, 57 Bath Street, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1EA

Bus and rail needed

I agree with M J Leppard in *Railwatch* 132 that Railfuture should promote collaboration between buses and trains. In many parts of the country the scheduled bus is the only form of public transport available, and thus an essential service if you don't have a car.

Nevertheless I would agree with Chris Austin in the previous *Railwatch* that the Government should stick with

further fuel duty increases, and was thus disappointed when the Chancellor caved in to the motorist lobby yet again.

Let us not forget that the biggest gainers from cheaper petrol are those travelling the most miles in their gas guzzling cars.

Yes we should be aware of bus company needs, but support selective measures on fuel costs which affect buses directly rather than simply backing lower prices at the pumps.

*Tim Mickleburgh, Boulevard Avenue, Grimsby DN31 2JP
timmickleburgh2011@yahoo.co.uk*

More letters: Page 18

Does Beeching still haunt our dreams?

£20bn for 6,000 miles of railway

Fifty years ago, Dr Richard Beeching, chairman of the newly formed British Railways Board, was working on plans for radical changes to the rail network.

Next March will be the fiftieth anniversary of his infamous *Reshaping* report of March 1963, which set out plans to close a third of the network. It was an earthquake whose aftershocks are still felt to this day and which helped shape today's railway, its capability and its public image.

British Transport Commission closures

As early as 1949 the Railway Executive had set up a branch line committee to recommend line closures, but by 1952 there was already strong pressure from the British Transport Commission both to speed up the process and to adopt a more radical approach, with the whole network being "streamlined."

Branch line closures (and the elimination of some main line cross-country routes, like the Midland & Great Northern line in 1959) meant that closures were a familiar, and seemingly inevitable process by the time Dr Beeching became British Railways chairman in 1961. The railway he took over had a poor public image, partly because closures created the impression that the railway was declining fast.

Motoring, however, offered the freedom of the open road, while lorries provided a flexibility and cost that rail could not match.

Beeching

Beeching was a successful industrialist with a clear mind who was the first to analyse the railway's strengths and weaknesses, and to attempt to define what Britain required from its railway.

But his Secretary of State Ernest Marples had been a road construction contractor with a different agenda.

Marples, and his minister John Hay wanted the railway drastically pruned to reach a "profitable core".

They argued that money spent on the railway should be spent on the motorway construction programme.

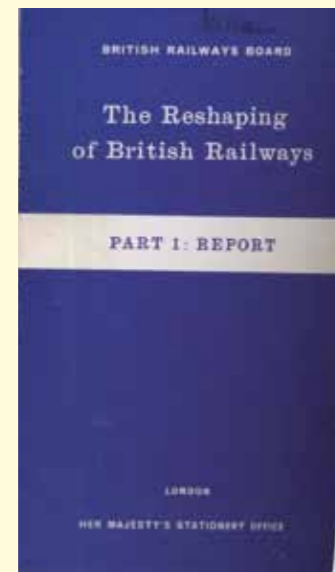
The disinvestment in the rail network helped to fund the



By Chris Austin
christopher.austin@raifuture.org.uk

expansion of the road system, at no cost to road users but at huge future cost to rail users and the public transport system as a whole.

In 1965, Beeching published his second report, *The Development of Railway Trunk Routes*. This was based on some quite optimistic rail growth forecasts, but its real impact was in the elimination of much of the



capacity which today's railway so desperately needs.

The Great Central was a high profile casualty, as was the Midland main line to Manchester, while part of the Great Western route from London to Birmingham was singled.

It could be argued that the capacity provided by HS2 would not have been required had some of these routes survived. In 1974, the Government even gave BR a grant to reduce unwanted capacity!

The profitable core

By the late 1960s, it was evident to BR that closures were not producing the savings expected. Nevertheless, the civil servants continued in pursuit of the Holy Grail of the "profitable core" of the railway. This was amply demonstrated by the Serpell Report of 1983, where

none of the closure options produced a profitable passenger railway.

Despite improving rail performance and the success of InterCity and bulk freight, governments still saw rail expenditure as "subsidy" and road expenditure as "investment".

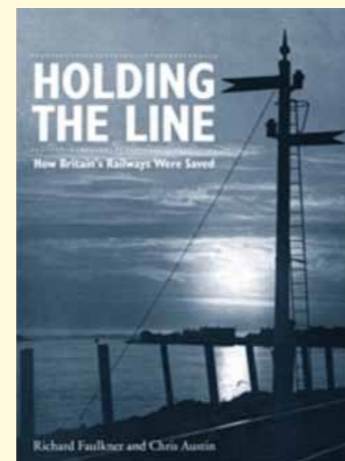
When he was Secretary of State for the Environment in 1976, Labour's Anthony Crosland added another reason for cutting back rail expenditure. He claimed rail subsidies were "regressive" because they favoured the better-off.

This piece of specious nonsense is still trotted out by politicians today, for example by Transport Secretary Philip Hammond in a speech to a transport conference in 2010!

Indeed, there are still people who have a blind faith that they can find a "profitable core" of the rail network.

There are also still those who think that transport is a perfect market and that there is no case for rail subsidy, even though roads are provided by the state at no cost at the point of use, and investment in rail saves unsustainable spending on roads which encourages car dependency.

But the railway is a network, with a high degree of shared costs where much of the



Fighting closures: Chris Austin's new book



PUTTING BACK THE TRACK: A £70 million scheme restored 21 miles of the Cotswold Line in 2011 to improve reliability. The line was not listed 'for development' in the second Beeching report in 1965 and was reduced to single track in 1971. Here a train for Great Malvern calls at Charlbury's new platform on one of the redoubled sections. In the background is the Brunel station building, while to the left is the memorial garden to former British Rail chairman Sir Peter Parker, who lived nearby and was a regular user of the station

income, particularly for freight, is earned by services that cross boundaries.

Looney Tunes

Giving evidence to the Commons transport select committee on 4 September 2012, Dr Richard Wellings of the Institute of Economic Affairs argued that all subsidies to the railway should be cut out before any new investment programme was agreed.

Rail users, he claimed, were far wealthier than the population at large.

Rural rail routes such as the Heart of Wales line should be closed down. Electrification of the Valleys Lines was particularly poor value for money.

The IEA claims to be a free-market think-tank but does not appear to be good at supporting its arguments with evidence.

Earlier, on August 20, Dr Tim Leung of the "liberal think-tank" CentreForum, writing on the Conservative Home website, proposed saving money by cutting lines and stations outside the main inter-city routes and London commuter network, and cancelling the electrification programme.

Most politicians now understand the tremendous value of rail to the communities

it serves and to the economy generally. Secretaries of State for Transport have an average tenure of office of only 14 months, and closures take about two years to implement, and which minister wants to be remembered as a railway axeman?

But as the two current examples show, some people have not learned the lessons of history, and are still prepared to drag out

tired old discredited arguments in favour of further pruning. Rail campaigners need to watch for this and to deal with these superficial arguments before they take root.

□ *Holding the Line How Britain's Railways were Saved* by Richard Faulkner and Chris Austin, charts the political and social history of closures. It will be published by Ian Allan in November.

A new method to expand the rail network

Network Rail may make it easier to reopen closed lines and stations in future. It has decided to use a Long Term Planning Process to succeed its route utilisation strategies in examining demand for rail over the next 30 years. The new process will take a broader view on how train services can support other aims, such as achieving economic growth, like connecting residential areas to labour markets. A series of studies is planned to understand

what future investment will be required. Market studies will forecast demand for freight and for three passenger markets, long distance, regional urban and London and the south east. Route studies will develop options for all future train services, based on the demand forecasts and priorities set by the market studies. The first market study is expected to be completed by the end of 2013 with the working groups expected to be set up soon.

Railfuture has spent the past 50 years trying to get the railway reconnected to many of the communities which lost their links following the Beeching report.

Lines and stations have reopened and prospects for the £400 million East West Rail project now look good, with electrification as well as reopening from Oxford to Bedford.

It has been estimated however that a serious programme of reopening 6,000 miles of line could cost around £20 billion.

Railfuture member Daniel Casey came to this conclusion after interviewing rail professionals for his essay *Reversing Beeching's Legacy*.

He concludes: "There is so much enthusiasm for rail in the country, but too much of it is channelled into train-spotting, nostalgia, and playing with full-sized model railways."

His essay is in September's issue of *The Land*. More info: www.thelandmagazine.org.uk

Let's hope his essay will stimulate more strategic thinking about what lines and stations need to be reopened.

According to the *Oxford Mail*, the Government has already agreed that it will consider approving a reinstated service between Oxford and Stratford-upon-Avon (axed in 2004) as part of an agreement to run the Great Western franchise from 2013 to 2028.

The line from Braintree to Stansted Airport should be rebuilt, urge Witham and Braintree Rail Users. They say they have found a suitable new route.

The Campaign for Better Transport published a new report in July, entitled *Reopening Railways - the case for growing the rail network and how it can be achieved*.

To read the report in full visit □ www.bettertransport.org.uk/files/reopening-railways-report.pdf.

Picture COTSWOLD LINE PROMOTION GROUP

North East

By Peter Kenyon

peter.kenyon@railfuture.org.uk

■ ■ Ticketyboo progress on the Tyne and Wear Metro

The Tyne and Wear Metro provided free parking at six of its park-and-ride sites during the school summer holidays which proved so popular that it was extended to the end of September. The 16-18 youth card season ticket scheme has been extended to include all passengers in this age group, not just those enrolled at schools and colleges. The change opened the door to cheaper fares for up to 12,000 young people in vocational or work-based training programmes. The Metro's infrastructure was also upgraded, although services were suspended for 23 days between Wallsend and Byker to allow signalling, electronic communication and track to be improved. The line reopened on 3 September when North Shields station came back into full use after two years of building work. Heworth bus interchange is currently being refurbished at a cost of £200,000, with the aim of encouraging use



of the Metro which aims to extend its Pop smart card next year, pictured at its launch in 2011.

■ ■ How to boost the new InterCity East Coast franchise

Railfuture North East called for improvements in the main line services and to the five Northern rail feeder services which could be incorporated in the new franchise. The South East Northumberland Rail Users' Group also coordinated a Morpeth-based response to the Department for Transport consultation.

■ ■ Alnmouth-Alnwick reopening project is coming to fruition

Stimulated by the granting of the necessary exemption certificate by the Office of Rail Regulation, work proceeds apace on the Aln Valley Railway. The Lionheart station site was open to the public for three days a week until the end of September. Tracklaying has begun and the 17-year campaign to reopen the railway from Alnmouth to Alnwick, supported by Railfuture, is coming to fruition. www.alnvalleyrailway.co.uk

■ ■ Rail reopening project wins backing and publicity

The South East Northumberland Rail Users' Group is cheered by the county council's support for the Ashington Blyth and Tyne reopening project, which is backed by Railfuture North East. For more news of SENRUG, including improvements at Morpeth station, the East Coast managing director's positive response to the doubling of passenger numbers at Morpeth and a comprehensive rail strategy for Northumberland, see SENRUG's newsletter at www.senrug.co.uk.

■ ■ Railfuture makes alliances to improve public transport

Railfuture North East is active in NECTAR, the North East Combined Transport Activists Round Table, an open voluntary umbrella body, established to provide a forum in which associated bodies can develop a coordinated view on contemporary transport issues. Among its aims are the promotion of sustainable transport and its structures, integrated transport, better provision of public transport, walking and cycling, minimising the negative environmental and social impacts of transport, and maximising its accessibility and safety. As part of its policy of engaging with other organisations, Railfuture North East president Martin Murphy and other committee members attend NECTAR meetings. Martin also represents NECTAR in the Tyne and Wear Freight Partnership and its Rail Freight Partner Group, where he seeks to capitalise on the recent local interest in the increased use of rail for freight transport. Railfuture North East is also represented on the Rail Freight Partner Group.

A railway success story



Airdrie-Bathgate tracklaying. One of the book's illustrations

By Trevor Garrod

trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk

Reconnecting Communities is the subtitle of this well illustrated book by Dr Ann Glen, and after reading it you feel that you really know the communities across Monklands and West Lothian.

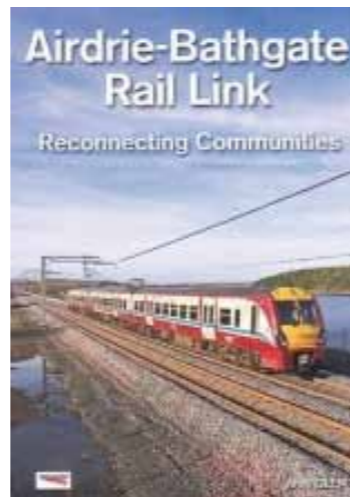
The Industrial Revolution came early to this part of Scotland, prompting the building of canals and then railways, but in the 20th century came the steady decline of mining, ironworks and shale extraction as well as paraffin and paper manufacturing, while newer industries such as car making and electronics came and went.

These trends are well documented in the book, as is the closure of the East-West rail link between Airdrie and Bathgate, part of a through Edinburgh-Glasgow route, to passengers in 1956 and ultimately to freight, with its lifting in the early 1980s.

However, the line was sold to Sustrans for conversion to a cycleway, on the understanding that if it was ever required for future rail use, the cycle path would be moved to allow reinstatement of the railway.

In the 1990s, local councils started to look at the role of a rebuilt railway from east to west in rejuvenating the area, encouraged by the success of the restored Edinburgh-Bathgate passenger service. In 2000 a report by RDS Scotland (now Railfuture Scotland), part-financed by West Lothian Council, also put the case for a new line.

Dr Glen explains the processes of consultation and planning that followed and the passing



of an Act by the Scottish Parliament. Great care was taken over this and she states, "looking back now it can be said that the Airdrie-Bathgate line would become the most publicly consulted upon and openly explained rail project ever to occur in Scotland."

A detailed chapter is devoted to the challenges overcome in the construction of the 15 miles of new railway and upgrading of existing sections at either end; while a concluding chapter looks towards the economic, social and leisure prospects for the new service.

Ann Glen's book is highly recommended reading for everyone pressing for a new or reopened railway. It can be obtained from the author at 21 Monks Road, Airdrie ML6 9QW.

The 112-page *Airdrie-Bathgate Rail Link* is published by Lili Publications at £16. Please add £1 for postage if ordering from the author. ISBN 978-1-907945-01-4

Railfuture president bids to be mayor

Railfuture president Christian Wolmar has announced that he hopes to become Labour's 2016 candidate for Mayor of London. See his manifesto at: <http://tinyurl.com/d4pdnk3>

www.railfuture.org.uk

Rail key to regeneration

By John Stanford

john.stanford@railfuture.org.uk

Rail services seem to develop well where transport decisions have been devolved.

Scotland, Wales, London and the passenger transport executives in English cities are good examples.

The Government has tried to build on this effect by devolving more transport and planning powers and in July announced the first wave of deals under its Unlocking Growth in Cities programme.

The eight programmes involve Birmingham and Solihull, Bristol and the West of England, Greater Manchester, Leeds City Region, Liverpool City Region, Nottingham, Newcastle and Sheffield City Region. Several include greater powers and resources in relation to transport.

The Bristol and the West of England deal covers the four unitary authorities that used to form Avon County and provides 10-year funding for the development of the Greater Bristol Metro project. It also gives freedom to go ahead with Bus Rapid Transit plans, together with the ability to recycle any savings that can be made. There will also be new local powers to deliver rail services.

The Greater Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield proposals include plans for them to work together for the devolution of the Northern Rail franchise.

To this end, the Leeds City Region includes not only the West Yorkshire Metro authorities but also Barnsley, York, Selby, Harrogate and the very rural Craven. Similarly Sheffield City Region includes not only South Yorkshire but also Bassetlaw, Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire. Barnsley seems to have got in both, perhaps because of the importance of the Penistone line! In addition to this, a Combined Authority

for West Yorkshire, similar to Transport for Greater Manchester, would be established for the existing passenger transport authority area with a £1 billion West Yorkshire Plus Transport fund from a levy on councils and a 10-year allocation of infrastructure spending.

There are similar plans for Liverpool and Sheffield, with Liverpool having responsibility for the port and Sheffield having management of the tram train project.

Proposals for Nottingham recognise the importance of longer distance transport with references to the need for improvements to the Midland main line and for high speed rail connections. They also promise to trial innovative ways to develop transport to encourage access to jobs.

The proposals for Greater Birmingham and Solihull make few references to transport beyond building on the area's position at the hub of the rail and motorway network. This may arise from the recognition of possible tension with Centro, which already has considerable transport powers in the West Midlands.

The North East deal is disappointing and is preoccupied with roads.

Key areas are excluded from the programme, Leicester and Teesside being the most obvious examples, although the Government has emphasised that this is the first wave of proposals and that more will follow.

So there is scope for Railfuture branches to press for greater recognition of the role of rail transport in economic and social regeneration in these areas and elsewhere, as well as monitoring the conversion of fine words and good intentions into practice.

Unlocking growth in cities: city deals wave 1 can be downloaded from www.dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Staff needed at stations

It is essential that Railfuture branches and delegations insist that train operators bidding for franchises employ enough front-line staff. Our AGM urged operators "to ensure sufficient numbers of front-line staff on trains, on stations and in call centres as appropriate. They should be well trained, well informed and well motivated."

Our resolution went on to say: "Advances in technology may alter the duties and responsibilities of customer-facing staff, but they remain essential for customer care, security and revenue protection. We therefore oppose cuts in front-line staff other than in exceptional circumstances." The resolution was sent to the relevant politicians, operators and trade unions.

At regular consultative meetings and surveys, passengers repeatedly ask for more human presence and more staff in defiance of the findings of so-called experts like Sir Roy McNulty.

◆◆◆◆ Every six seconds someone is killed or seriously injured on the world's roads

Severnside

By Nigel Bray

nigel.bray@railfuture.org.uk

■ ■ Millions for Trans Wilts



Railfuture Severnside was delighted that Wiltshire County Council's bid for £4.25 million to increase the frequency of train services between Swindon and Westbury via Melksham has been approved in the Local Sustainable Transport Fund process. The grant will also allow for the creation of transport hubs at stations on the whole of the Trans Wilts route through to Salisbury, as outlined in *Railwatch* 132. More information at www.transwiltsrail.org.uk

■ ■ Campaign for Bristol Metro and four-tracking pays off

In July the Government's Cities Minister Greg Clark announced approval for the Greater Bristol Metro project. £94 million is being made available to the West of England Partnership for the scheme, which includes reopening of nine stations by 2019, including three on the Portishead line. A later announcement from the Department for Transport confirmed that four-tracking between Dr Day's Junction and Filton would go ahead, something which Railfuture Severnside and our corporate member Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways see as essential for any major expansion of rail services in the Bristol area. More information at: www.greaterbristolrail.com

■ ■ Bus rapid transit scheme danger to rail

In June, Railfuture Severnside was represented at the inquiry into the BRT2 Bus Rapid Transit project, which would truncate the Bristol Harbour Railway and prevent it from having an effective role in public transport. Our evidence pointed out the dramatic increase in usage of Bristol suburban stations and made it clear that a rail-based scheme was more likely to attract people from their cars. More information at www.stopbrt2.org.uk/what-brt2

■ ■ Increase in rail use should clear way for more reopenings

The upsurge in business at local stations was also emphasised in our comments at the inquiry into South Gloucestershire Council's core strategy. Railfuture Severnside argued this was a strong indication that additional stations suggested by FoSBR at Winterbourne, Coalpit Heath and Chipping Sodbury, would be well supported. It was good to see that some of the points we made in earlier written consultations have been adopted by the council, including support for reopening of passenger services on the Henbury loop, subject to a satisfactory business case. More information at www.fosbr.org.uk

■ ■ New footbridge leaves 1.2 million at mercy of rain

Railfuture Severnside quizzed the Department for Transport as to why the new footbridge at Gloucester station, built under the Access for All programme, does not have a roof. Railfuture considers that the design specification should take into account average local rainfall and the fact that 1.2 million people use Gloucester station every year (according to Office of Rail Regulation data). In reply to Railfuture, Neil Priest of the DfT said that the design for Gloucester had been signed off in 2007 when there was pressure from Government ministers to include as many stations as possible in the AfA scheme and hence to drive down costs. He believed this had led Network Rail to adopt a "like for like" replacement policy. Railfuture Severnside is now preparing to lobby both city and county councils to rectify the situation.

HS2 should go to St Pancras, rather than Euston

People living near London's Euston station are calling for the £32 billion HS2 line to be realigned so it connects directly with HS1 and Eurostar services at St Pancras.

They are supported by Arup consultant Mark Bostock who believes there is no logic in bringing HS2 to Euston.

Mr Bostock unveiled an alternative route for HS2 at a Camden Town Hall meeting in September which attracted people from the Regent's Park estate whose homes are threatened by the current HS2 plan to rebuild and enlarge Euston station.

Manchester and Birmingham airports have also been involved in talks with the

Government about changing the route of HS2 to bring it closer to their terminals.

The High Court will hear five legal challenges to HS2 at a December hearing.

In other countries, high speed rail projects are zooming ahead. In France work started in July on the new £2.6 billion 82-mile-long high-speed line to Brittany.

France is also spending £12 million on eight new trains capable of 125 mph for local services on the high-speed line being built between Le Mans and Rennes. Steel made in Scunthorpe will be used for the TGV tracks. In Belgium a new rail link opened in June will allow high speed trains between

Brussels and Antwerp to stop at Brussels airport. South Korea has unveiled a 267 mph experimental train in May, with the aim of bringing its cities within 1.5 hours of each other. In September, Japan unveiled the high speed trains which will run on the new Tokyo-Kanazawa line, expected to open in 2014. Each train can carry 934 passengers. Sweden is to build a high speed line from Jarna to Linköping to add to the existing Y-shaped project to link Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö.

The California Senate approved in July a 130-mile stretch of high-speed line from Los Angeles to San Francisco and also a £3.5 billion bond scheme to finance it.

Rail users are being cheated over fares

By David Berman
chairman@railfuture.org.uk

Unexpectedly high inflation figures in July were bad news for rail passengers, as these figures are used to calculate the annual rail fare increases.

The Government is still showing no signs of backing down on its plans to increase fares in January by 3% above the level of inflation as measured by the Retail Price Index.

It is interesting that the Government wants to use the RPI figure, rather than the Consumer Price Index which is lower.

Increases in wages, pensions and benefits are now based on CPI, which excludes housing costs.

So rail fare increases will have an even bigger impact on people on average earnings which in many cases are static or even declining.

Train operating companies are also given the flexibility on ticket prices to make increases above that limit. Some fares may increase by 11%.

Former Transport Secretary Philip Hammond probably regretted saying last year that the railways were a rich man's toy, but his words are becoming ever more accurate.

Sky-high rail fares will discourage rail use, which has knock-on effects for the environment and for motorists too, who will suffer ever more congested roads, as people who want to take the train cannot afford to. More people will go by air which is already cheaper than it should be

because air fuel is exempt from taxation. That will lead to more air and noise pollution and more pressure for expanded airports. The coalition promised it would be the greenest government ever. It does not look like it now.

Increases in rail fares suck money out of the economy, which does not help economic recovery, and disproportionately harms those on lower incomes.

Of course, we have to recognise that we have to pay for the railways one way or another, but we think the Government has gone too far in trying to shift the burden on the taxpayer to the farepayer, much further than any other European country.

Recently the Government backed down on the planned increase in petrol duty and we think it is only fair that rail passengers are given the same sort of break that motorists enjoy.

We will continue to push for this. One of the arguments put forward for above-inflation fare rises is that this money is needed for investment that is happening on the railways. But is it fair that rail passengers feel the pinch now when they will not feel the benefits for many years?

The Government should limit the increase to RPI+1% as a measure to keep money in the pockets of consumers, if they are genuine about wanting to be green and stimulating the economy.

David Berman was elected chairman of Railfuture in 2012, succeeding Mike Crowhurst.

Fair points

Railfuture's Howard Thomas reports: I was shocked to find Greater Anglia had increased some of its regulated fares in September when I bought an off-peak Travelcard from Chelmsford. The last time I bought this fare on 28 August, it was £13.65 for a senior citizen. Now it is £15.70, an increase of £2.05, or 15%. I have noticed over the past few years that fares have often been surreptitiously increased in May and September.

Rail users are being hit twice as hard as motorists, with higher fares and cuts in services, according to the Institute for Public Policy Research. It recommends the Government invests in rail and bus services, in its report *War on motorists: myth or legend?*

Germany celebrates 20 years of the BahnCard, its national railcard, this year. The British Government refused to introduce a British national railcard despite a 2003 Railfuture report showing that everyone, including train operators, the Government and rail users, would benefit.

The bosses of the "big five" private transport operators, National Express, Stagecoach, Arriva, Go-Ahead and First, have pocketed an average £1 million each in pay, bagging an aggregate pay rise worth a shade shy of 20 per cent, a study by transport union RMT reveals.

The think tank Social Market Foundation, now associated with New Labour, wants pensioners to lose their free bus travel. But First Great Western has launched a trial in Worcester, Swindon, Westbury and Weymouth to use bus passes (for pensioners and disabled people) for discounted rail travel.

Stagecoach launched an ITSO stored-value smart card in March in Basingstoke that can be used as a season ticket on Stagecoach South buses and South West Trains.

◆◆◆◆ Forty cities in China will have metro systems by the year 2020

LOCAL ACTION

Lincolnshire

By Don Peacock
don.peacock@railfuture.org.uk

- Operator names station adopter Carolyn as the best
- Carolyn Sharp was named best station adopter by East Midlands Trains in July for her voluntary work at Skegness. Carolyn, who is on the committee of Railfuture Lincolnshire, was presented with flowers, a bottle of champagne and a certificate by EMT at a meeting for EMT adopters in Derby. At the following Railfuture committee meeting, we congratulated Carolyn and another committee member, Paul Jowett, who also received an award from EMT recognising his three years as an adopter at Ruskington station. We also noted the extra work done by an EMT staff member at Lincoln who produced a bus timetable for the proposed rail strike days. Another EMT staff member who worked on after the end of her shift on 6 July to cope with ad hoc diversions when flooding disrupted train services was also praised.
- HST crowd-busting service gets through to seaside
- A collapsed culvert at Sedgebrook closed the Grantham-Nottingham line and required major emergency engineering work by Network Rail, but it did not prevent the start of the summer HST service to Skegness, designed to relieve summer overcrowding. Operator EMT obtained special permission from the Office of Rail Regulation and Network Rail to run the Nottingham-Skegness service via Lincoln.
- Railfuture has its say on local transport plan for county
- Railfuture Lincolnshire has responded to Lincolnshire County Council's local transport plan consultation.
- Rail show gives Railfuture chance to attract members
- The branch promoted Railfuture's work with a stall at Grantham Rail Show on the first weekend of September.

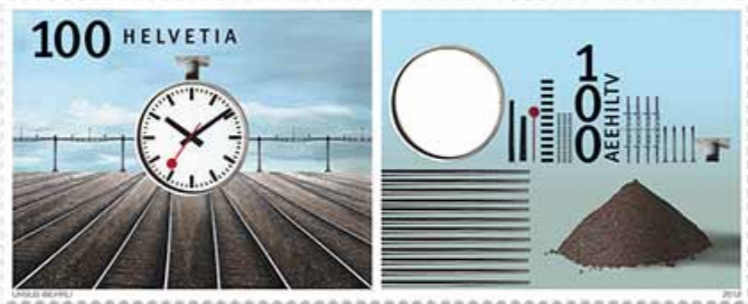
New ways to use website

The Railfuture website now allows members to renew their membership online at www.railfuture.org.uk/renewal/

Various other transactions can also be done online. New members can join at www.railfuture.org.uk/join

For as little as £1 a month, you can also join the Railfuture lottery at www.railfuture.org.uk/lottery/

And of course you can book your place at Railfuture conferences at www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/



Time called on Apple

Swiss Post has reissued a stamp design using the iconic Swiss railway clock, with a new, unusual image which shows its components.

In the new image on the right, the clock is taken to pieces showing a circle with two black hands and one red, plus 12 lines representing the hour markings.

The country's name, Helvetia, has been reordered alphabetically on the right as AEEHILTV. The track and ballast have also been rearranged. The new stamp is available until June next year. Information from Swiss Express, the magazine of the Swiss Railways Society. To buy the stamp, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/8pfra6u>

Meanwhile Swiss Federal Railways is seeking financial compensation from computer

maker Apple which it accuses of stealing its design. The clock icon that appears on the new iPad and iPhone operating system looks just like the ones that grace Swiss train stations.

Railway spokesman Christian Ginsig said: "We are happy that Apple adopted the Swiss railway clock. It just goes to show that it is truly a design piece."

The Swiss clock design was created in 1944 by Swiss electrical engineer and designer Hans Hilfiker but Mr Ginsig said Apple's use of it was unauthorised.

Apple's new mobile operating system iOS6 was introduced in September and the Swiss station clock appears on the iPad to represent its first internal timekeeper, which can also serve as an alarm clock.

Awards for campaigners

The first-ever Rail User Group awards will be made at Railfuture's Birmingham conference on Saturday 3 November.

The RUG awards will go to both groups and individuals who have made a great contribution to rail campaigning or development.

The award categories are for best newsletter (gold and silver awards), best website (gold and silver), most effective campaign, most effective new group, most outstanding individual RUG campaigner (the red carpet award?), judges' special award.

The closing date for entries was 1 October. Entries were invited in Tony Smale's August Rail User Express, viewable on the Railfuture website.

We are hoping that the RUG awards will persuade more rail user groups to affiliate to Railfuture.

A comprehensive list of rail user groups is available at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Key+rail+user+groups>

Regional lists are also available via the branch pages on the Railfuture website.

LOCAL ACTION

Thames Valley

By Chris Wright
chris.wright@railfuture.org.uk

- East West Rail victory
- The Oxford-Bletchley section of East West Rail gained Government funding approval in July, after 30 years of campaigning by Railfuture Thames Valley and others, including the crucial Oxon and Bucks Rail Action Committee. It is some reward for the enormous efforts campaigners have put in to reverse the 1967 closure which robbed a series of communities in Middle England of their rail services. The East West Rail Consortium is now working with the Department for Transport and Network Rail to plan the way forward. The EWRC is to be congratulated for its stalwart efforts which should clear the way for services to be reinstated in 2017. Councils along the route have agreed to contribute £30-50 million of funding over 15 years. Aylesbury Vale Council welcomed the news that the Milton Keynes-Aylesbury link is included, probably as an extension of the High Wycombe service. Buckinghamshire and South Midlands Local Enterprise Partnerships have announced funding, while Oxfordshire LEP supports the scheme as a priority. Winslow estate agents Wilkinsons, who have long recognised the benefits of the rail link, report an increase in interest in homes in the town, thanks to the rail approval.
- Electrification go-ahead is a giant leap forward
- News that the Great Western main line to Oxford was to be electrified was welcome, but Railfuture Thames Valley was delighted by the decision to include East West Rail in the electrified network. This means that electrically hauled passenger and freight trains will be able to gain access to Southampton from the West Coast and Midland main lines.
- Trains must wait for decision on bats welfare
- Rail campaigners are waiting to hear whether the Chiltern Railways proposal to upgrade the Bicester-Oxford line to provide a new London Marylebone-Oxford rail service will go ahead. Protection for bats in Wolvercote tunnel and great crested newts elsewhere led to the reopening of the public inquiry. A further Inquiry hearing, lasting seven days, has reported and the decision is awaited.
- Enhanced facilities for key stations
- A new multi-storey car park for 700 cars is to be built at Banbury station in a £10 million Network Rail project. Hanborough secured £40,000 for an extra 191 spaces and Charlbury £470,000 for 83 extra spaces. Milton Keynes Central is set to gain extra inter-city services with the new franchise, following a long battle by Milton Keynes rail users with Virgin Trains. Wolverton's new station buildings were opened in July just as London Midland announced proposed cuts in opening hours! The £897 million remodelling work at Reading station is reported ahead of schedule with a likely completion in late 2015. A Heathrow rail link is also now on the agenda.
- McNulty curse is now a real threat to booking offices
- Chiltern Railways has proposed cuts in booking office opening hours at most stations covered by the branch and we are disappointed at the loss of such provision.
- Rail can deliver the goods for new recycling site
- Railfuture has welcomed news that a rail connection is to be provided for Shipton old quarry site which is to be used as a recycling centre.
- New vision for the future is now overdue
- Railfuture Thames Valley is to review its campaigns as so many of our aspirations have now been met. We need to revisit the potential for Bicester Depot, Witney and Bourne End-Wycombe. The impact of Crossrail and electrification work and standards of service may become the emphasis.



East Midlands

By Roger Bacon
roger.bacon@railfuture.org.uk
and Anthony Kay
anthony.kay@railfuture.org.uk

■ ■ Boost for Ilkeston reopening

Campaigners wanting a reopened rail station in Ilkeston were cheered by an announcement from Transport Secretary Justine Greening (since moved in a Cabinet reshuffle) that she was making £20 million available for new stations. Communities will be invited to bid for a share of the cash but Ms Greening specifically told the House of Commons she hoped to see the Ilkeston project in the running. Tory MP Jessica Lee (Erewash) asked Ms Greening whether she thought there was a strong "regeneration case" for Ilkeston, and whether it was well matched to the new funding pot. Ms Greening replied: "It will be a decision for Network Rail but it was meetings I had with her and local councillors that brought it home to me that we needed money set aside for communities." To date, £1 million has been made available for the £5 million project through the Nottingham Housing Market Area's joint planning advisory board as long as the rest can be found. Three stations once served Ilkeston which now has a population of 38,000 but after the Beeching axe there were none, with the last, Ilkeston Junction station, closing in January 1967.

■ ■ East Midlands becoming part of strategic freight network

Railfuture has welcomed the decision to upgrade the 110 mile Doncaster to Water Orton rail route to allow freight trains with large "high cube" containers to use it as part of the strategic freight network. The work to adjust restrictive bridges, platforms and station canopies started early this year and by July, six track-lowering sites had been completed with 41 to go, according to the *Rail Engineer* website. The route passes through the East Midlands via Chesterfield, Langley Mill, Trent Junction, Castle Donington and Willington and is being enlarged to W12 loading gauge. The work is expected to be complete in 2014 and provide "an ideal route for freight from the North East to the West Midlands".

■ ■ Sparks effect coming to the Midland main line

After years of campaigning for electrification of the Midland main line, the good news came from the Government in July that the £500 million project would go ahead by 2019. Rail campaigners have been puzzling over what trains might be operating over the line once it is electrified north of Bedford to Derby, Sheffield and Nottingham. Coinciding with the Government's go-ahead came the publication of the Department for Transport's high level output specification which said that high speed electric trains would be replacing existing diesel IC125s and Meridians. In the same month the order for 92 Hitachi intercity express trains was signed, with most of them expected to go to the Great Western. Whatever happens, electric trains are expected to lead to a big increase in passenger numbers, the so-called "sparks effect".

■ ■ Work starts on £170m Nottingham area upgrade

Railfuture was delighted by the start in September of work on a three-year £170 million investment programme in Nottingham. Track, signalling and work on passenger facilities will improve train performance, create additional capacity and enhance the station. But next year there will be no rail access to Nottingham during parts of July and August while resignalling work takes place. London services will terminate at East Midlands Parkway with a bus service running through to Nottingham.

■ ■ Leicester station revamp welcomed by campaigners

Railfuture has joined Leicester Civic Society in welcoming the completion of the £3.7 million refurbishment of Leicester station. However, there will be further work at the station before 2019, as the platforms and track will need to be lowered when the Midland main line is electrified.



A rail future, well almost

By John Barfield

john.barfield@railfuture.org.uk

Railfuture's rich history now goes back more than 50 years.

It was way back in 1958 that I was persuaded to join the Society for the Reinvigoration of Unremunerative Branch Lines in the United Kingdom.

That long name was soon simplified to the Railway Invigoration Society of which I was general secretary from 1961 to 1968.

At the time branch line closures were few and far between but with the advent of the Marples-Beeching era in the mid 1960s the trickle became a torrent.

Encouraged by the poet John Betjeman and Robert Aickman, founder of the Inland Waterways Association, we persevered.

With the assistance of local action groups, such as the North London Line Committee and the East Suffolk Travellers Association, now chaired by Trevor Garrod, lines such as Ipswich-Lowestoft escaped the axe.

The Felixstowe Branch, ably defended by the redoubtable Charles Taylor, is now destined to become a strategic freight route to the Midlands.

It was around this time that the idea of a "bus on rails" was mooted and we were very much in favour, along with the concept of the "basic railway" by the farsighted railway manager Gerry Fiennes. Many rural lines were saved as a result.

What we did not envisage was that the dreaded Pacers would still be running on services for which they are totally unsuited.

The RIS was quick to embrace technology as the answer to many of the railways' problems.

We argued for capital investment to convert level crossings to automated operation, in order to save the long-term cost of staff wages.

In the early days RIS, led by Geoff Manley, Michael Caton, John Stanley, Richard Pullen and Rowland Victor Banks, was concerned with the ghost train from Clapham Junction to Olympia. Now of course this line is flourishing as part of the London Overground.

We also highlighted the fact that towns such as Bathgate in Central Scotland had been wiped off the railway map.

As assistant town clerk of Ashford Borough Council, Richard Pullen led the successful campaign against closure of Ashford-Hastings. We set up a branch network to pursue similar aims elsewhere. In 1978, the RIS merged with the Railway Development Association, founded in the early 1950s by

O Humberstone Prosser, spearheaded by John Stanley, Charles Rowe, Arthur Daniel, Frank Hastilow, Richard Hulse, Alan Bevan, Klaus Meyer, Frank Tomlins and Roland White.

In the year 2000, RDS adopted its current campaigning name, Railfuture. With the recent encouraging announcements about electrification and high speed rail, it is time to consider what we have achieved. Will it be a rail future?

The creation of London Overground grew from our campaigns. We persuaded the Greater London Council and its charismatic transport chief Dave Wetzel, to study it and the reopening of a disused tunnel between Farringdon and Blackfriars. The phenomenally successful Thameslink project was the result, with technology again providing dual voltage trains.

RDS and the Chelsea Riverside Action Group fought a plan for a motorway to be built on the West London Line. It is now a highly successful Overground line.

We also campaigned for the reopening of the North London route from Shoreditch to Dalston, now a busy part of the Overground network.

Despite the 1981 joint British Railways Board and Department of Transport report recommending a rolling programme of electrification, Railfuture has had to fight for years to get meaningful electrification back on the establishment's agenda.

The East Coast main line and London to Norwich and Cambridge and King's Lynn were eventually electrified on a piecemeal basis.

Following a survey by RDS it was discovered that most travellers from Cambridge and King's Lynn wanted to go to King's Cross, rather than Liverpool Street and so all fast services go to King's Cross, leaving the latter line to serve Stansted Airport, where RDS was and is calling for a rail link from the east.

Of course, RDS strongly championed the case for the Channel Tunnel and the High Speed Link to it.

We have sometimes been dismissed as a group of rail enthusiasts, but we have now won all the serious arguments about transport.

We still have a long way to go before we have an efficient railway, that is cheap and easy to use. We may have taught the politicians a few lessons about transport but they still have a long way to go to correct many stupid decisions of the past and deliver some quality for the future.



Picture: BOMBARDIER

This is the new face of rail travel in Europe, the latest version of Bombardier's Zefiro family of high speed trains which was displayed at Rimini in August and at the InnoTrans show at Berlin in September. The new train has a top speed of 220 mph, can carry 600 passengers and uses less energy than other high speed trains. It will begin test running later this year on Italian railways for which 50 have been ordered.

Ten years of success

By Trevor Garrod

trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk

Ten years ago this month, Railfuture was one of 14 organisations which met in Ghent, Belgium, to form the European Passengers Federation.

The EPF now has 33 member bodies in 19 countries, 17 of them within the European Union.

The other British organisations in EPF are Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch, TravelWatch South West and Bus Users UK.

Railfuture has always had an international aspect to its work. This was given further impetus when Eurostar trains linked London, Lille, Paris and Brussels in 1994.

The interest of the European Commission and Parliament in transport issues was increasing and our original informal grouping needed to be put on a more formal basis to respond.

EPF is an international not-for-profit association under Belgian law.

Britain's HS1 and the Channel Tunnel form part of a growing network of high-speed rail links, spreading its tentacles around Europe to complement the existing rail network.

Birmingham to Berlin or Peterborough to Perpignan by train, has become possible in a day.

Finding out about services and booking them, can however be daunting, and EPF is trying to persuade Eurostar, Thalys and the Railteam consortium to be more user friendly.

We have also been involved in the work of the European Railway Agency in developing IT.

The plans of the Commission to develop a Journeyplanner, building on the systems already in place in some countries, are an encouraging response.

The hard work of EPF vice chair-

man and Railfuture vice president Christopher Irwin, representing passengers on the agency board, has been invaluable.

Spreading good practice is a key part of EPF's work. The PLUS-BUS scheme in Britain, which promotes seamless travel by public transport, is an example.

Railfuture members, including Howard Thomas, Ian McDonald and Simon Hope, worked on the EPF project Journeys without Borders.

Copies of the October 2010 report are available from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ.

Like Railfuture at national level, EPF takes part in consultations at EU level, for example on the Urban Transport Action Plan in 2008; the Transport White Paper two years later, and the series of Railway Packages and consultations on passengers' rights.

Challenges in the next few years include measures to ensure that international rail travel is affordable, and comparable passenger rights across modes which are also simple to enforce.

The biggest challenge is for concrete realisable steps to implement the ambitious modal shift targets in the White Paper.

Most of the work of EPF is done by volunteers, as is the case with Railfuture and most of its other member associations.

In recent years the federation has been able to increase its profile and its income by taking part in some EU project work.

Every year we hold a conference. In 2008 it was in London. Our next conference will be 15-16 March in Basle, Switzerland.

For more information about EPF and its many affiliated associations, go to www.epf.eu where you can also read our free twice-yearly bulletin.



Wessex

By John Friedberger

john.friedberger@railfuture.org.uk

■ ■ Overhead to Southampton

Railfuture Wessex welcomed news that electrification of the lines from Nuneaton and Bedford to Oxford, Reading, Basingstoke and Southampton is planned for completion by 2019. The initial justification is for freight operations, but it will be interesting to see how CrossCountry services develop, when the Reading to Basingstoke line will see electric trains and, in the longer term, how the future of third rail electrification will be influenced by this extension of overhead wires to southern England. Of special relevance is a sentence in a letter from the Department for Transport: "The southern end of the electric spine entails the conversion of a section of the existing Southern third rail (750V DC) electrification system to the more modern and capable overhead (25kV AC) system to upgrade its capability. The Secretary of State also wishes the industry to develop a longer-term proposition and business case for the systematic upgrade from DC to AC of the whole Southern network, for consideration for future control periods."

■ ■ Station surveys reveal information shortfall

Following up a successful pilot scheme by Railfuture Wessex in 2011, six further stations were surveyed during the summer: Cosham, Gillingham (Dorset), Havant, Porchester, Sherborne and Templecombe. All are managed by South West Trains and were generally well kept and clean. Common themes from our surveyors' comments were:

- Information about nearby bus routes and cycle tracks is often poor.
- Local businesses at stations bring great benefit.
- Full car parks deter prospective passengers.
- The importance of staff at stations. Porchester, although with over 350,000 passengers per year, is unstaffed and has signs which are out of date, indicating some lack of daily care.

■ ■ Improvements sought in franchise renewal process

When a rail franchise is being re-let, the Department for Transport issues "invitation to tender" documents. They are not easy to decipher so we are grateful to neighbouring branches for taking the lead in Railfuture's response to the Great Western and the combined Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern consultations. Three GW routes (Portsmouth-Cardiff, Reading-Basingstoke and Weymouth-Bristol) along with the Southern service to Portsmouth and Southampton are of importance to Wessex branch members. We are seeking various improvements in the new franchises.

■ ■ £2.7m pledge aids Swanage plan to re-link to network

Swanage could be reconnected to the national rail network at Wareham within two years after Dorset County Council and Purbeck District Council leaders pledged £2.7 million to support the scheme. Network Rail bosses demanded a commitment from the councils ahead of this year's Poole-Wool re-signalling work which is expected to be completed by May next year. The new signalling will allow regular through running between Wareham and Swanage. County council leader Angus Campbell said: "Now we need to focus on the next phase of the project which is to help Swanage Railway lease and upgrade the line between Norden and Worgret Junction and to ensure legal agreements are in place to allow it to use the Furzebrook sidings to store and maintain trains." The long-term aim is to provide a regular community rail service. More information: www.swanagerailway.co.uk/dailysvce.htm



Scotland

Shameful cuts

Railfuture Scotland has protested over the shameful announcement of the Scottish Government to make £350 million worth of cuts in the £1 billion Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme. Railfuture's Ken Sutherland said that axing around 50% of the originally intended 200 miles of electrification in the central belt (to Stirling-Alloa/Dunblane), and all of the Falkirk Grahamston loop, would severely reduce the social and economic benefits of the scheme. Major projects such as the Dalmeny chord – which would allow Glasgow trains to switch on to Fife lines outside Edinburgh and give access to a new tram interchange at Gogar – have been cut, alongside grade-separated junctions at Winchburgh and Greenhill which would allow trains to pass on separate tracks. Mr Sutherland said the Scottish Government's rail cuts, announced in its Rail 2014 statement, were all the more disgraceful while it was simultaneously boasting of an accelerated road and motorway programme. Patrick Harvie, the Green MSP for Glasgow, said: "What a complete lack of ambition the SNP Government shows for our railways. These plans are pathetic." A debate on the EGIP cuts was expected to take place in the Scottish Parliament on 19 September when the Labour party opposition insisted that "vital elements" of the scheme have been axed.

Cutbacks are also a threat to Borders rail service

Rail campaigners have urged the Scottish Government not to make cuts to the planned Borders Railway. The Campaign for Borders Rail is alarmed by rumours that the length of crossing loops is to be reduced to save money. Chair Lorne Anton said: "The campaign is seriously concerned that the rail project will not be allowed to realise its full economic, social and environmental potential." Campaigners are also worried about the possibility that the terminus at Tweedbank may not be able to handle full-length tourist charter trains.

£12m 'alliance' investment to fast track Paisley Canal line

Network Rail and ScotRail are electrifying the five miles of line between Glasgow Central and Paisley Canal in a £12 million "alliance" investment. Work began in July and should be complete by December.

Cost savings have been secured by using extended neutral sections when passing under bridges. This reduces the need for rebuilding and moving power and telecoms cabling.

The aim is to provide sufficient clearance that will still allow a diesel unit to operate if no electric train is available and which will permit potential future freight traffic to Hawkhead station.

Susan Anderson, Network Rail's route commercial manager, said: "This is the first tangible benefit for rail customers to be delivered through this alliance with ScotRail. We are delighted to be able to achieve this much more quickly than under traditional arrangements."

Reopened station will ease Highland road congestion

Conon Bridge station in the Highlands, which has been closed to passengers for over 50 years, may be reopened to avert traffic chaos caused by road works. Highland Council hopes the station can be revamped and reopened before roadworks start on the Kessock Bridge near Inverness next year. The council is contributing £100,000 towards the £850,000 it will cost to get the station back into use.

Nuclear waste could pave way for more freight by rail

A new freight terminal was built this year at Georgemas Junction in Halkirk to carry nuclear waste from the decommissioned Dounreay power station to Sellafeld in Cumbria. Train operator Direct Rail Services hopes the terminal can also be used to open up other opportunities for rail freight.

Railfuture Scotland: mike.harrison@railfuturescotland.org.uk

www.railfuturescotland.org.uk



Threat to Cornwall

The news that Cornwall may lose a third of its through trains from London will draw much criticism.

The local nature of trains on the Cornish main line is indeed a problem, although first class carriages trundle around empty all over the country.

The prospect of changing trains at Plymouth could deter many potential holidaymakers and would apply an economic tourniquet to a county that is the poorest in Britain.

The supply of cheap seats is limited, as many of these are occupied by passengers to Devon, and trains from the Midlands and the North are bunched into a narrow time slot. Even the motorway finishes in Devon. Although the sleeper has been saved, the volume of tourists could adversely affect the entire county by this measure, and marginal constituencies could be at risk.

R S Moore, St Philip's Avenue, Worcester Park, London KT4 8JS

UK to Salzburg

A number of points arise from the article in *Railwatch* 132 about travelling to Salzburg.

I travel frequently to Germany visiting friends. I use Eurostar and the one-country InterRail pass for getting around.

However I have come to the conclusion that unless you are travelling a long distance in the day there may be occasions when it is more worthwhile to make use of a Schones Tag ticket which is valid on local trains.

I calculated that my six-day InterRail pass cost £44 per day, whereas a one-day ticket in Nordrhein-Westfalia costs £21 and a Bayern ticket £17. A day's track-bashing could well work out cheaper this way.

Unlike the InterRail pass, the day tickets are not valid on inter-city, Intercity Express, or Eurocity trains. If you buy the ticket from a machine this is not clear. Be warned. I had to pay a £13 penalty for travelling on an inter-city train from Dusseldorf to Koln Deutz.

However, there are also some trains on which the InterRail pass is not valid and

Your letters extra

that includes trains run by Bayerische Oberland Bahn (which is pictured in *Railwatch* 132) except between Aulendorf and Friedrichshafen Hafen.

That means that the branches to Lenggries, Tegernsee and Bayrischzell are out, whereas a Bayern Ticket will get you there.

The InterRail pass also does not work on a number of trains run by Ostdeutsche Eisenbahn, such as Zittau-Cottbus.

I was travelling last year from Zittau to Gorlitz and the conductor told me my ticket was not valid. However she did not ask me to pay, and I did not offer, and honour appeared to be satisfied!

When I raised this matter with my travel agent (Ffestiniog Travel) they sent me a six-page list of all that was covered and restricted for Germany. There are a number of other operators with restrictions.

Apparently it is not automatic that companies operating over DB tracks are contractually liable to carry InterRail travellers. This strikes me as a bit naughty.

Donald Payne, Dudley Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 8EE

President Wolmar

I refer to Michael Weinberg's letter in *Railwatch* 132 in which he expresses concern that Christian Wolmar has been elected president of Railfuture.

I was at the AGM in Worcester when there was unanimous support for choosing Christian as our president.

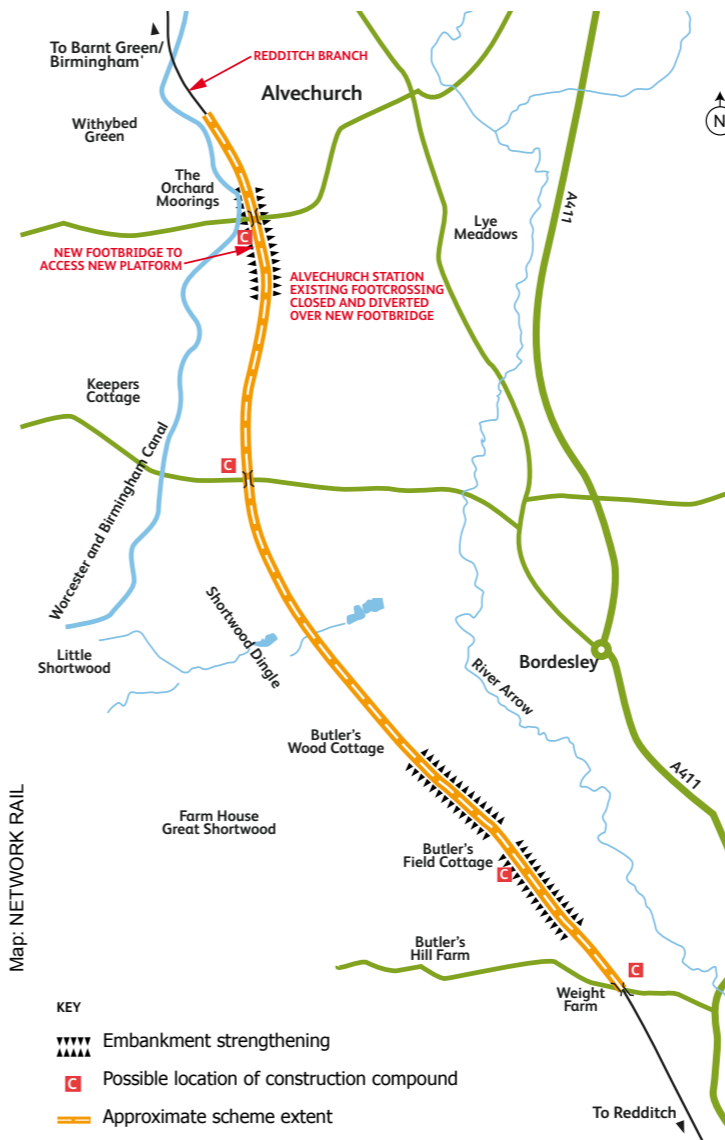
In my view he is an excellent choice as he is well known as a writer of books and articles in *RAIL* magazine which are always interesting to read even if one does not agree with his view on HS2.

Having him as president and the other vice presidents we elected at the AGM, can only be of benefit to Railfuture, which does need to attract new members and a more diverse membership than we currently have.

This is a matter that the board needs to address and getting into arguments about the merits of a particular person as president will not promote what we are about at all.

It is difficult to see what can be done to attract new members but young people are an obvious audience to capture. I read in the *Guardian* recently that the number of 18-year-olds holding driving licences has fallen significantly in the past four

www.railfuture.org.uk



BRANCH BOOST: Network Rail plans to improve the branch line to Redditch. See Local Action West Midlands, right

years and the fact is that my son and daughter have expressed no interest in driving a car.

I can only conclude more young people are using public transport so Railfuture should ask itself what it should be doing to make rail travel for that group easier.

Branches may consider tapping into colleges and universities. So please can we be grateful that the board has selected a president who in my view will only benefit the organisation and let us now concentrate on

what we need to do to attract members to join us.

William Whiting, Halesowen, West Midlands
williamwvt@hotmail.co.uk

Windfarm threat

I thought you might like to know about a new hazard for passenger journeys emerging on TravelWatch Isle of Man's patch, offshore windfarms. We are neither for, or against windfarms but we are concerned about their impact on long-established ferry routes.

This development indirectly impacts on rail and bus passengers. And given the scale of windfarm developments, other routes may come under threat in the future.

Brendan O'Friel, chairman
TravelWatch Isle of Man
brendan@ofriel.fsnet.co.uk

Send your letters to:

The Editors, 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU
Email: editor@railwatch.org.uk
Railwatch also welcomes articles and pictures. Please use email if possible. Last copy date is 29 October

◆◆◆◆ Opinions do not necessarily reflect Railfuture policies. Letters may be edited

West Midlands

By Peter Hughes
westmidlands@railfuture.org.uk

New Alvechurch station and boost for cross-city service

Railfuture has welcomed Network Rail's plans to upgrade the Redditch branch as a way of improving the cross-city service across Birmingham to Lichfield. Work is expected to start next year on doubling the largely single-track branch and rebuilding Alvechurch station. Saved from Beeching by a whisker, the line (electrified in 1991) is now very busy. Train frequency will increase from two to three an hour. Public consultation raised no serious issue and Railfuture expects the Transport and Works Act order to be imminent. www.networkrail.co.uk/redditch/

Electrification and four platforms for Bromsgrove

A new station is to be built to replace the current one-platform Bromsgrove station. Birmingham cross-city electrification will reach Bromsgrove once the new four-platform station is built, south of the present site. Worcestershire County Council starts public consultation this month and barring problems the new station will be operating in 2015. Then there will be a very strong case for CrossCountry trains from Cardiff and Bristol to stop there. Years of campaigning by Bromsgrove Rail User Group will be rewarded. www.bromsgroverail.org.uk

Resignalling and electrification boosts line speed

The Chase line from Walsall to Rugeley will benefit from electrification (see Electric spine item below) and current resignalling which will allow the line speed to be increased from 45 to 75 mph. The 20 mph restriction at Bloxwich will also be removed with the closure of the level crossing at the site of the original station. Railfuture supports Walsall Council's ambition for some future Birmingham to Manchester and Liverpool trains going via this route. But one operational difficulty would be southbound trains making a flat crossing of the West Coast main line at Rugeley Trent Valley.

Electric spine will allow major service improvements

The coalition announcement of electrification projects put Soho depot at Smethwick in the national spotlight for a day, and there is local rejoicing. This region fared better than most in the past, but electrifying Walsall-Rugeley is long overdue considering that preparatory work was done in the 1960s. The electric spine for freight was more than we were expecting and gives huge potential for passenger services in Warwickshire once the new Kenilworth station is built and the rest of Coventry-Leamington doubled. Snow Hill lines next please.

Midland Metro extension should have gone further

Construction of the Midland Metro extension is under way amid complaints of lost trade and inconvenience following re-location of bus stops due to closure of parts of Bull Street and Corporation Street in Birmingham city centre. The trams will terminate at a new Stephenson Street entrance to New Street station but should have gone through to the south of the city.

New Parkway station brings a host of benefits

Stratford-upon-Avon's new Parkway station will open in May next year at the existing park-and-ride site at Bishopton. Extra services supported by Centro will restore the Birmingham via Solihull service and should enable theatre-goers to get home after the final curtain. These improvements can only help the campaign by Shakespeare Line Promotion Group to reopen the line south of Stratford via Long Marston to Honeybourne to join the North Cotswold line.