

# railwatch

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

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**Crossrail  
in the  
limelight:  
See Page 2**



Good news about inter-city express trains for Britain's rail network was delivered by Andy Rogers of Hitachi Rail.

Hitachi is building a train factory at Newton Aycliffe, just 10 miles away from the Railfuture AGM venue at Durham.

Mr Rogers said Hitachi wanted to create an educated and skilled workforce to produce the replacement for Britain's iconic InterCity 125 and to build trains for export to mainland Europe.

Hitachi also wanted to be involved in building Tube trains for the London Underground as well as for Crossrail.

He said 59% of "bought-out components" of Hitachi's Javelin trains now operating in Britain came from UK suppliers.

Hitachi is planning to build 369 140 mph inter-city train coaches for Great Western, including both electric and bi-mode models, to start running in 2017. Mr

Rogers hoped there would also be 271 new train coaches for East Coast, including some bi-mode trains, to start operating in 2018. The bi-modes can be converted to all-electric at minimal cost.

The bi-modes will be able to switch over at full line speed from electric to diesel.

Hitachi will also build depots and maintain the trains which will be suitable for disabled people.

The trains will vary from five to 12 coaches long.

The additional weight of the bi-mode diesel engine is eight tons, compared to the 70 tons of an InterCity 125 power car.

Modern techniques will give the news trains much faster acceleration and lower energy consumption than the IC125s.

Most of Hitachi's suppliers will be in north-east England. Another speaker described how campaigners are arguing for



Picture: HITACHI

Artist's impression of the Hitachi factory at Newton Aycliffe

the reopening of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line.

Dennis Fancett of the South East Northumberland Rail Users Group said they wanted to be more than a user group. "We want to be constructive and promote

improvements on the railway," he said. "We want to look ahead but we also want to be realistic. No new tracks are needed. The reopening can be achieved with existing track infrastructure. We are talking about the reinvigora-

## Page one picture

**Our page one picture shows one of the Crossrail work sites at dusk on the Limmo peninsula where the river Lea meets the River Thames in east London.**

**The work site is bathed in artificial light, just like the Millennium Dome, now renamed the O2 arena, on the south side of the Thames.**

**At Limmo, two boring machines were lowered into a deep shaft in October so they could start tunnelling twin bores towards Canary Wharf and central London.**

**In late May, the tunnel boring machines Elizabeth and Victoria were under the Canary Wharf area – where a new station box has been constructed – and will continue towards Whitechapel and then Farringdon in central London.**

**Crossrail is one of the biggest infrastructure projects in Europe and spoil from the shaft at Limmo will be transported by ship and train to create a new nature reserve in the Thames estuary.**

**Five boring machines are currently at work on different parts of the route. New stations are being built at Paddington, Bond**

**Street, Tottenham Court Road, Farringdon, Liverpool Street, Whitechapel, Canary Wharf, Custom House and Woolwich.**

**Estimated to cost £15 billion, Crossrail is expected to be hugely successful, carrying 200 million passengers a year after it opens in 2018.**

**It has already boosted property values along the route and the eventual property "bonus" alone is expected to be £5.5 billion.**

**Even before Crossrail is completed, attention is now turning to Crossrail 2.**

**Public consultation began in May on the new scheme which will link south west London and Surrey to north east London and Hertfordshire. Crossrail 2 replaces an earlier scheme which was known as the Chelsea-Hackney line.**

**It could include a station serving high speed rail at Euston and St Pancras.**

**Planners are trying to decide whether it should concentrate on being a £9 billion metro-style line or whether it should be a £12 billion regional link as well. Consultation closes on 2 August. Have your say. More information: www.crossrail2.co.uk**

tion of the whole area which has a high unemployment rate with 27% in receipt of benefits."

Whereas £10 million would be needed for a single new road roundabout, only £20 million would give you a new railway.

Railfuture members were welcomed to Durham by Fiona Hall, the Liberal Democrat MEP for North East England.

She referred to the North East's wealth of railway history but added: "The emphasis has to be on the future which is why I am delighted that Andy Rogers from Hitachi is here.

"The competition to win the Hitachi factory contract was immense. All the politicians and all the local authorities in the region combined to secure this great prize".

She was followed by Alex Nelson, who described his Chester-le-Track ticket-selling business.

He said one of the problems with rail fares was that the people who set the fares, often get free travel and do not have to struggle with sorting out which is the best ticket and how to pay for it.

He said there were still bargains to be had. The 2153 ex Durham to London is a good buy at £50 first class but it gets into London in the early hours so is not suitable for everyone.

The Hadrian's Wall day ranger is also a good buy, providing rail travel as far as Ravenglass.

Railfuture president Christian Wolmar said Railfuture is going places, literally.

He added: "Haven't we done well? We all deserve a pat on our collective backs when you consider the state of the railways 20 years ago and the politics of the railway.

"Then, people would question whether investment in the railways was worth doing.

"Look at where we are now. For the first time, all the major political parties support railway investment. They accept it is a core part of the national infrastructure. The fact that the whole zeitgeist has changed should be celebrated." But he warned



Picture: HUGH JAEGER

Railfuture president Christian Wolmar at the Durham AGM

that there are possible pitfalls – "doggy times" ahead.

He said: "The franchising situation is a source of great amusement and I often ask: What is franchising for?"

"Over the next five years, the Government is expecting lots of money to be coming back to the Treasury but the delay puts this into question."

He said rail fares are now on the political agenda like the price of petrol and we should continue to press for a better deal on fares.

Network Rail's growing debt is also a problem, like a sword of Damocles hanging over the industry.

But he said Railfuture has been transformed in the past few years and was planning for a growing railway

He added: "We want a vibrant lively industry for the 21st century. One of the mottoes I agree with is: Achieve the achievable and the unachievable might well happen."

He recommended increasing use of Twitter and Facebook which are "amazing tools" for Railfuture campaigners.

Twitter is like the invention of the stamp in the 1840s. He said every Railfuture area should have a person in charge of a Twitter account.

## Railfuture election results

Railfuture returning officer Chris Precey gave the results of the elections for the chairman and board of directors. He said chairman Dr David Berman was returned unopposed.

Three candidates were elected as directors for three years, Allison Cosgrove, who received 235 votes, Roger Blake (228 votes) and Christopher Hyomes (207).

One candidate, Andrew Millward (196 votes) was elected for a one-year term. Ian McDonald (with 188 votes) was not elected. One candidate, Trevor Garrod, was disqualified.

◆◆◆◆ You can buy our book Britain's Growing Railway online at [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)

## Yorkshire

By Chris Hyomes  
[chris.hyomes@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:chris.hyomes@railfuture.org.uk)

### Temporary station approved

The Wensleydale Railway has won planning permission to build a temporary station on the outskirts of Northallerton on the East Coast main line. Councillor John Coulson of Hambleton District Council said: "I think everybody in this room remains committed to Wensleydale Railway and wants to see it coming to Northallerton. There is no doubt about that." Trains are expected to run into the temporary station next year. In the long term, the aim is to build a permanent station nearer the main line station with more facilities to allow passengers to transfer to main line trains, although that will require agreement with Network Rail. The railway is also hoping that excursion trains will be able to travel on to the preserved line from the main line. More info: [www.wensleydalerrail.com](http://www.wensleydalerrail.com)



### Public meeting boosts call for reopening line

Campaigners for the reopening of the Skipton to Colne line held a public meeting at Earby Community Centre in May, after celebrating signing up the 500th member of the Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership. Selrap has commissioned rail consultants ARUP to carry out the first stages of a Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) study, which, it believes, will strengthen its calls for the line to be reopened. Selrap is still fundraising to pay for the study. More info: <http://www.selrap.org.uk>

### Transport and economic development linked

The West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority looks set to be scrapped under plans of the five West Yorkshire districts to set up a new combined authority which would oversee both transport and economic development policies. The new authority could cover the districts of Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Calderdale, and Kirklees. Proponents say it will strengthen governance, which is currently "complex, fragmented and cumbersome". The new "CA" would provide a "visible, stable and streamlined body". The ITA, together with the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, is legally required to "secure or promote the provision of a system of public transport which meets the needs of the area". The ITA funds the executive through a levy on district councils in the area. If the new CA is set up, it will be able to establish a West Yorkshire Transport Fund. Railfuture Yorkshire members were contacted and asked to contribute to the consultation process which ended on 17 May.

### Sheffield city area in transport planning changes

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive is to be jointly managed by two directors, Ben Still and David Young, until a permanent appointment can be made, it was announced in May. The former director general David Brown has left to join Merseytravel as director general and chief executive. Like West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire is also planning to set up a combined authority for both transport and economic development from April next year. Its area will include Barnsley, Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, Doncaster, North East Derbyshire, Rotherham and Sheffield.

### Investment to boost passenger numbers by 20%

Network Rail chief Phil Verster told business leaders in York in May that there are plans to invest £400 million over five years in the London North Eastern and East Midlands areas. Mr Verster, route managing director based in York, said the overall aim was to boost passenger numbers by 20% and freight by 25%.

## railwatch

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is edited by Robert Stevens, John Stanford and Ray King, 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU Tel 020 8985 8548 [editor@railwatch.org.uk](mailto:editor@railwatch.org.uk) [john.stanford@railwatch.org.uk](mailto:john.stanford@railwatch.org.uk) [robert.stevens@railwatch.org.uk](mailto:robert.stevens@railwatch.org.uk) Printed by Print-Out, High Street, Histon, Cambridge CB4 4JD Tel 01223 232709. Railfuture members receive Railwatch free

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Registered Office: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingsstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND.

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

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**Elections** Board elections held annually. Nomination forms can be obtained from: Returning Officer, 63 Brascote Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 0YE. You can also download a form from [www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Elections](http://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](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)

**RAIL ACTION** The Rail Action e-zine is published between editions of Railwatch. If you did not receive the last issue, please email a request to [renewals@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:renewals@railfuture.org.uk)



## Lincolnshire

By David Harby  
david.harby@railfuture.org.uk

■ ■ Direct London train plea  
The chairman of the Parliamentary All Party Rail Group called for the reinstatement of a direct train from Cleethorpes to King's Cross when he attended the Railfuture-organised Cleethorpes 150 Rail Conference in March. Martin Vickers, MP for Cleethorpes, also called for action on an issue that crops up at every branch committee meeting, for instance, overcrowding, especially on the 16.45 Newark Northgate to Grimsby where a single-car class

153 often has standing passengers for most of its 90-minute journey. The Council Chamber of Cleethorpes Town Hall was filled with Railfuture members and Cleethorpes residents for the conference which we hope will be the first of 150 events to celebrate 150 years since the railway first came to Cleethorpes on 8 April 1863.

■ ■ The rich railway history that we should value

Local historian Dr Alan Dowling set the scene by describing the series of events which led to the railway being extended from Grimsby, and the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway developing Cleethorpes as a seaside resort. At the grouping in 1923 the MSL owned the promenade, pleasure gardens and Cleethorpes pier.

■ ■ Investment plans include Joint Line upgrade

Stephen Hind, route enhancement officer for Network Rail London North East, outlined the investment plans for the area, including the GN-GE Joint Line upgrade, North Lincolnshire resignalling and Doncaster North Chord. He finished by showing some photos of a topic that was mentioned regularly throughout the afternoon, the blocking of the very busy four-track Scunthorpe to Doncaster route by the collapse of a spoil tip at Hatfield Colliery.

■ ■ Rail freight faces challenges for the future

The MSL built the port of Immingham and in steam days, coal, iron ore, steel and fish were all important traffic flows. Robin Smith from the Rail Freight Group told us that Immingham is still very important with 25% of all UK rail freight and 33% of all bulk freight generated in Lincolnshire. But Lincolnshire does not have any of the fast-growing intermodal traffic mainly because we do not have a rail-served distribution terminal. The fish traffic may have gone but it has been replaced by fuel oil. Coal accounts for 31% of all UK rail freight but as power stations burn less coal, this traffic will decrease. There are hopes that it will be replaced by biomass traffic, but there is a cloud on the horizon in the shape of increased access charges, which risks destabilising the rail freight market.

■ ■ Disruption hits passenger numbers

The final presentation was by Nick Donovan, managing director of TransPennine Express who said that the Hatfield blockage and the alternative travel arrangements are now the most important issue for South Humberside passengers, with 10,000 passengers already affected. As a result, Grimsby and Cleethorpes passenger numbers have fallen by 25-30%.

It is becoming clear that the closure will last for 18 weeks or more, so an alternative route via the Brigg line is being considered to offer passengers an alternative, albeit slower, journey which does not involve a rail replacement bus. Nick outlined some of the difficulties involved in using a new route. Paths for TPE services have to be found among the dozens of diverted freight trains every day. The route has to be cleared for class 185 units, drivers have to be trained on the new route and platform time has to be found at Doncaster. In his closing remarks Councillor Chris Shaw, the leader of North East Lincolnshire Council, called for East Midlands Trains services to be extended from Grimsby to Cleethorpes. Lincolnshire branch is grateful to the Mayor of Cleethorpes, Councillor Mike Burton, and the Cleethorpes Charter Trustees for their sponsorship of the event.

# £200m of saving could buy trains

By Ian Brown

ian.brown@railfuture.org.uk

Most people, other than Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, understand that successful business strategies usually depend on growth, achieved by constant innovation and developing new products that people want to buy.

Interestingly, transport has always been a growing market, although our problem for a long time was that rail was not growing. How times change! Rail is now growing fast.

We can now "celebrate" 50 years of progress since the Beeching Report, although the current franchising fiascos remind us that there have been many setbacks along the way.

At the time of Beeching and for the 50 years that followed, railway costs were a problem but in my view not the problem. The real problem was the lack of an identified product range that could stimulate growth.

There were some growth areas in the years after Beeching, notably intermodal freight, block freight trains and indeed InterCity passenger trains, none of which required a comprehensive network. On branch lines, replacing high-cost locomotive-hauled trains with lower-cost diesel multiple units helped to reduce overall costs but revenue and market share continued to decline.

This was happening at a time when young people were getting provisional driving licences within minutes of their 17th or 18th birthday. Most continued to own and run a car for ever after.

The railways' cost-cutting strategy, though understandable, was potentially terminal because the new products identified by Beeching were not large enough to support a core network.

Reducing the capacity of the core network was, in my opinion, the biggest strategic mistake. Closing duplicate routes or singling them, rendered them incapable of becoming viable even if new products were found.

This retrenchment was not sustainable and could only lead to the rail network being seen as an expensive irrelevance. It also led inexorably towards an even more brutal closure programme.

That came in the shape of Serpell's recommendations in 1982.

That year saw the lowest number of passenger journeys of the second half of the 20th century, the lowest level of passenger-miles, and the lowest level of passenger revenue since 1968. Thankfully



IAN BROWN

the draconian Serpell report was not implemented, but even as recently as privatisation in the mid 1990s, the assumption was franchising on the basis of no growth – stagnation.

No new trains were expected for years, and the infrastructure would have such limited investment that it would be incapable of coping with growth.

The aim was to promote competition, not in order to attract more passengers, but to obtain the cheapest method of operation.

The strategic flaw – or strength – of this approach was an insistence that the franchise holder should take on the revenue risk.

This became an incentive to attract passengers, but sadly there was no mechanism to invest for growth.

Growth did occur right across the board and it was catered for largely by taking up what slack was left in the system.

Marketing by the private sector is often quoted as the reason for this growth and there is some truth in that, but other more potent factors have been at play.

These include an increase in travel demand as a result of a developing economy, a growing demand for long distance and regional journeys, and a change in the balance of the cost and attractiveness of rail versus driving a car.

The market share equation is also potent – and dangerous. With only 10% of the market, rail looks irrelevant and some mistakenly drew the conclusion that the best option was to build more roads.

But quite small drops in car use cause disproportionate increases in demand for rail where an attractive product is on offer. Recent figures on UK car usage indicate that it has peaked out in areas where rail has an effective product, as in the South East.

One result of this trend is the recent decision by Tesco, which does understand the UK market, not to construct 100 out-of-town car-based hypermarkets. Have they noticed the hordes of people



Picture: RAY KING

Meridian trains, like this one at Chesterfield in 2012, have transformed secondary services on the Midland main line. The only secondary services on the line were being provided by diesel multiple units like the one pictured at a down-at-heel London St Pancras station, below, in 1981. Electric trains replaced the diesels as far as Bedford in 1983

using – yes – public transport to visit the two rail-served Westfield shopping centres at Shepherd's Bush in west London, and Stratford in east London?

The danger is that this trend is already under way and rail will be too slow to respond because of problems associated with its structure and financing.

Then the rail network could become overwhelmed and other solutions will be looked at – and perhaps found.

Could it be that rail's greatest opportunity in a generation could come and go before the industry reacts?

Network Rail is of course providing more infrastructure such as at Reading, Peterborough and the Manchester Hub. There is also HS2, which could be powerful if properly integrated into the system and seen as increasing capacity rather than just a quest for high speed.

The South-North freight spine from Southampton to the east and west Midlands is a good example of a capacity initiative for freight and passengers.

This is a sign of strategic capacity thinking, but even that will quickly be filled to capacity.

As recently as two years ago, we were anticipating Sir Roy McNulty's 30% cost-cutting exercise. It was obvious then, and more so now, that the solution was not to cut costs by 30% but to hold costs and strategically increase capacity and ridership on the network by 100%.

At the same time this positive approach would create a viable growth-based business model satisfying latent demand for cost-efficient rail travel.

So what should we go for now? We should go flat out for reopening routes which can provide new links between conurbations



Picture: CREWCRASTRAIN

and increase overall capacity of the network.

Most of the Beeching duplicate route closures come into this category and are capable of being served by inter-conurbation services, similar to the existing Norwich-Liverpool service.

These could provide the UK with an economically effective, sustainable transport system of choice for future generations.

Where would we find the money? Well the Government has agreed to a whole series of franchise extensions to give a little more time following the West Coast franchise fiasco.

No less than 12 franchises are being extended, with a total extension time of 26 years! This is equivalent to about four re-lets of a seven-year franchise.

Each franchise re-let costs around £50 million in bidding and letting paperwork and spreadsheets.

What about putting this £200 million into buying a new fleet of regional trains to increase capacity into our regional cities?

Let's call it a down payment on a rail network fit for the future.

■ Ian Brown CBE FCILT is a former managing director of London Rail and was awarded a CBE for services to railways.

## North West

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

■ ■ Storm of protest

The inadequacy of bus services at Rochdale rail station during Metrolink works has provoked STORM (Support The Oldham Rochdale Manchester Lines) to protest to Transport for Greater Manchester, writes Richard S Greenwood. Because of road diversions and temporary closures, there have been no bus services at Rochdale rail station for more than two years. Pedestrians have suffered lengthy diversions. Work to complete the Metrolink extension from rail station to town centre is expected to finish in early 2014, but TfGM say it will be autumn before bus services serve the rail station.

On the fares front, Metrolink does not publish a comprehensive fare table and has refused formal requests for information on the grounds that competitors might use it to compete against them. Metrolink says that with time and persistence, such a fare table can be compiled from the internet. Research shows that peak rail fares between Rochdale and Manchester on a mileage basis are higher (sometimes over 20%) than any other rail fares within Greater Manchester, any other passenger transport executive area or any other significant conurbation, except between Bath and Bristol. Councillors are pressing for a fair deal on fares.

Development works have started at Manchester Victoria station, below, and include realignment of Metrolink tracks. Trams will not call at Victoria for nine months during next year. Passengers will have to use Shudehill station instead. All through Metrolink services between Victoria and Piccadilly

stations will be temporarily withdrawn. Whether there will be a satisfactory replacement bus service between the two stations remains to be seen.



Picture: NETWORK RAIL

■ ■ Partnership delivers for Glossop station

Glossop station won two national awards last year and in April, Friends of Glossop Station joined with Northern Rail to celebrate. A new display case was unveiled, featuring the awards, first place in the station development category of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships awards, and a highly commended conservation award from the Railway Heritage Trust. Sir William McAlpine, chairman of The Railway Heritage Trust, congratulated the Friends and commended the evolving inclusion of volunteers in station projects. He was welcomed to the event by the Friends' chairman Neil Williams. Also attending was Mark Barker who shortly afterwards retired from his post as stakeholder manager for Northern. Neil praised Mark for his involvement with FOGS over the years and he was thanked for his support and for instigating the recent infrastructure changes. Mark was presented with a framed picture with a montage showing him at Glossop station on various visits. Progress made at Glossop was the result of genuine teamwork involving many partners, said Neil, which had helped to make Glossop station pleasant and welcoming. More info: [www.friends-of-glossop-station.co.uk](http://www.friends-of-glossop-station.co.uk)



## Wales

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

■ ■ £60m new way to the West



Picture: NETWORK RAIL

Railfuture welcomed the removal of a crucial bottleneck on the main line from Swansea to west Wales at a cost of around £60 million – £48 million from the Welsh Government. The line was closed for two weeks between Swansea and Llandeilo Junction in March but works to replace the five-mile stretch of single track with double track took several months. The area affected was between Cockett West and Duffryn crossing and included the viaduct over the river Loughor and Gowerton station. The 18-span timber trestle viaduct, dating back to 1909, was replaced by a new steel bridge. At Gowerton, a second platform able to accept six-car trains, and a footbridge were built. The upgrade has enabled line speeds for freight trains to be increased but the maximum speed for passenger trains remains at 75 mph. Line capacity has been marginally increased and now passengers will not be kept waiting at each end of the single line when trains are running late. However there remains a single line section on the approach to Swansea at Landore and some trains still have to wait for a platform at Swansea. During the closure, trains from Manchester to West Wales and Heart of Wales trains were diverted and replacement bus services were also provided. The scheme was a significant landmark for Wales. It was the first major rail reinstatement in the country and followed the installation of loops on the Merthyr Tydfil and Ebbw Vale lines. Next year the line between Wrexham and Saltney Junction at Chester will also be doubled.

■ ■ Two new stations for reopened Ebbw Vale line  
Two new stations are to be built on the Ebbw Vale line which reopened in 2008 and has attracted far more passengers than expected. The Welsh Government announced approval in May for £11.5 million for a new station at Ebbw Vale Town. Tracks will be laid for just over a mile from the existing Ebbw Vale Parkway, and will be made ready for later electrification. Then the British Government approved a £3.5 million “shovel ready” plan for a new single-platform station at Pye Corner, near Newport. £2.5 million will come from the new station fund, set up in January, with the Welsh Government providing the balance. Economy and Transport Minister Edwina Hart said: “These new stations will greatly improve access to public transport, and help stimulate economic growth by linking to the region’s wider transport system.”

■ ■ Improvements at Aberystwyth and Barry Island  
Aberystwyth station is to be upgraded as part of the national station improvement scheme. There will be a new forecourt, improved taxi rank, accessibility ramp, ticket machines, automated screens, a CCTV system and better lighting. A replacement footbridge at Barry Island station has also been installed by the Vale of Glamorgan council across the preserved railway, with some funding from Network Rail.

■ ■ Railfuture urges bigger role for rail in Active Travel Bill  
Railfuture Wales has made a submission to the Welsh Government’s Enterprise and Business committee on the contents of the Bill. Railfuture Wales has stressed the importance of safe and direct walking routes between bus stops and rail stations.

www.railfuturewales.org.uk

## Eurostar opens up a new world of mobility

By David Allard

As I live in Royston, just a short train journey from London King’s Cross, going by Eurostar is easy for me, and so on Thursday 14 March I took the 09.17 from St Pancras, arriving at Paris Gare du Nord at 12.47.

At Paris I took the RER Line D to the Gare de Lyon from where the train left for Basel. Paris Metro tickets are obtainable at St Pancras. My train left Paris Lyon at 14.23 arriving in Basel at 17.26.

The city’s tram system is excellent and I bought a ticket from the automatic machine at the tram stop close to the station, although once I arrived at my hotel I was given a Mobility Ticket allowing me to travel free on all trams and buses.

Each hotel guest in Basel receives a free Mobility Ticket when checking in and can travel free on all public transport in the city area for up to 30 days.

The next day I took the tram to visit the Kunstmuseum (Art

Museum) which has many fine paintings, including by Picasso. In the afternoon I met fellow rail campaigners for the European Passengers Federation conference. We heard reports from public transport users’ organisations in Switzerland, France, Germany and Italy.

There was also a presentation by the EPF strategy working group on the proposed development of the federation over the coming 10 years.

Railfuture was one of the founder members of the federation in 2002 and there are now 34 member associations in 19 countries. A dinner followed at 18.30 in the Stucki Hotel, four stops on the tram line from our conference centre.

The next day was the start of the main conference, with Trevor Garrod welcoming us all at 09.00. A welcome by Caroline Beglinger, from the Swiss organisation Verkehrsclub der Schweiz, followed. The morning was then devoted to the theme *Mobility Across Frontiers*, with

five speakers. Two of them covered progress in Basel and its surrounding area.

We then learned about regionalisation of train services in Alsace, France, and regional franchising in Germany. In each case, passenger numbers were increasing.

Then the Chief Executive of TGV Lyria gave a presentation on the development of French high speed trains to key destinations in Switzerland.

An excellent buffet lunch was followed by a report on the USEmobility project, in which EPF had taken part.

This project was funded by the European Union to look at modal shift in several countries. Reports followed on the work of EPF concerning long-distance international rail services, urban transport and bus/coach issues.

The next session concerned consultation with passengers, when speakers from the Netherlands and Switzerland explained how it was done by their respective national

railways. Christopher Irwin, the EPF Vice-Chairman, then spoke on actions by EPF at European level and its future aspirations.

After the chairman’s closing remarks, we were told that next year’s conference would be in Milan on 14-15 March.

The AGM of the EPF was also held on the same day and later we all enjoyed a dinner at the Restaurant Schiff, again taking the tram and using our Mobility Tickets.

The next day, Sunday, most of us took a train to Mulhouse in France.

This city has developed a tram network in recent years and we were able to take the train-tram either to the French National Railway Museum or, continuing on ordinary rail tracks to the small town of Thann at the foot of the Vosges mountains.

If you would like a full report of the conference, contact Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ or email trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk

## London and SE

By Roger Blake roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk

■ ■ Looking ahead

Railfuture campaigners are already working hard on our input to Network Rail’s new way of planning for the future of railways in Britain. After spending seven years drawing up route utilisation studies, NR is now looking further ahead with its Long Term Planning Process. The LTPP covers the next 30 years but concentrates on control period 6, from 2019 to 2024. The four draft market studies were published on 24 April and require a response by the end of July. Our branch will focus on the London and South East passenger market study, but will also have a say on the long distance passenger and freight market drafts. The market studies will be supplemented by 10 route studies and cross-boundary analysis. The approach will attempt to identify how rail can stimulate and support economic growth. More info: [www.networkrail.co.uk/Long-Term-Planning-Process](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/Long-Term-Planning-Process)

■ ■ Surrey follows Kent example with rail plan

Railfuture’s Surrey division has held meetings with RUGs and with county council officials, feeding advice and information to the council which has followed the lead of other counties in drawing up a draft rail strategy. Consultation on the draft should have finished by the time this *Railwatch* is published. Surrey is emulating Kent with its effective Rail Action Plan and annual rail summits which are attended by Railfuture’s Kent division. Railfuture campaigners are ready to make contact with the county councillors elected on 2 May, with the aim of building more partnerships like the existing Thameslink and East-West Rail consortiums, East London Line and West Anglia Routes groups.

Surrey’s draft strategy is at: [www.surreycc.gov.uk/environment-housing-and-planning/development-in-surrey/surrey-future/the-surrey-rail-strategy](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/environment-housing-and-planning/development-in-surrey/surrey-future/the-surrey-rail-strategy)

■ ■ Progress through partnership on Uckfield reopening

Railfuture has used its fighting fund to appoint independent adviser Jonathan Roberts to build up an alliance of interested bodies to work towards reopening the Uckfield-Lewes line. Railfuture’s input last year into a road building consultation appears to have ensured that the need for a bridge over the rail route at Uckfield, if the road is built, is now accepted. A new Uckfield station car park now looks like a firm prospect. More info: [www.railfuture.org.uk/Uckfield+Lewes](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Uckfield+Lewes)

■ ■ Lea Bridge station news delights Railfuture campaigners

Lea Bridge station in east London will be reopened at a cost of £6.5 million, following a grant of £1 million from the Department for Transport’s new stations fund. Roger Gillam of the Chingford Line Users Association said: “It is fantastic news. We are obviously absolutely delighted.” The news came 11 months after Railfuture helped fund a report by consultant Jonathan Roberts for CLUA. Railfuture stalwart Robert Stripe will be particularly pleased. His great uncle was station master of the original station. The London Borough of Waltham Forest will team up with Network Rail aiming to get the new station, between Stratford and Tottenham Hale, open before the end of 2014. CLUA will now be concentrating on getting the Hall Farm Curve reopened, with the aim of introducing a train service from Chingford and Walthamstow to Stratford.

■ ■ Electrification campaigners hoping for a breakthrough

Railfuture members were hoping that an announcement would be made in June by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that £90 million had been found for electrification of the Gospel Oak-Barking line. In the same month, the Office of Rail Regulation was expected to give its provisional verdict on Network Rail’s strategic business plan. Railfuture will continue to press for both electrification and for services to be extended to the Barking Reach development area if these two opportunities are missed.

■ ■ Keep up to date at [www.railfuture.org.uk/branches](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/branches)

## Farewell to Clara, who was dedicated to rail

By Trevor Garrod trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk and Peter Wakefield peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk

Railfuture veteran Clara Zilahi died in March, aged 85, after a lifetime of campaigning.

Clara was born in Vienna and came to Britain at the age of 11 with her Hungarian parents after Hitler threatened mainland Europe by uniting Germany and Austria, the Anschluss, to create a “Greater Germany”.

When the German army marched into Vienna in 1938, the Zilahi family fled to Britain.

Clara arrived not knowing a word of English but, living at various times in Beccles, Cheshire and St Albans, she perfected her English by studying Shakespeare.

She graduated from Newnham College, Cambridge, with a BA, later qualifying as a doctor, and eventually becoming one of the first female Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons.

While working in the National Health Service in Stockton-on-Tees, she joined the predecessor body of Railfuture.

Back in Norfolk, Clara worked as a surgeon at Wisbech, Great Yarmouth and Lincolnshire.

After moving to East Anglia, she became more active in rail campaigning, helping in 1985 to

found a users group on the Ely-King’s Lynn line, which served her new home town of Downham Market.

That group developed into the Fen Line Users’ Association, which played a key role alongside Railfuture and the local council in securing electrification to King’s Lynn in 1991.

She helped form and run the West Norfolk Public Transport Users Association.

Clara served for many years on Railfuture’s East Anglian committee, serving as its membership secretary, and had two spells on Railfuture’s national board of directors.

She was Railfuture’s director responsible for disabled passengers, helping to campaign successfully for new lifts and a bridge at Ipswich station. She also raised money for a new cycle stand and shelter at Watlington station.

Clara lived an active life without driving a car and took part in many Railfuture sponsored cycle rides.

She had wide interests beyond transport, being highly knowledgeable about fauna and flora and was active in the Woodland Trust and the Cats’ Protection League. Clara was a devout Catholic and campaigned for the retention of the Latin mass which

www.railfuture.org.uk



Picture: CAMBRIDGE EVENING NEWS

**ACTION STATION:** Clara, left, with former Railfuture chairman Steve Wilkinson at Histon station in 1999. Clara, then 71, took part in a sponsored cycle ride as part of the campaign to reopen the Cambridge-St Ives line. The campaign won over the public but sadly the politicians and planners built a guided busway instead

was said at her funeral. Her funeral service on 13 April was attended by at least 10 Railfuture members. Clara was a kind, intelligent lady with a sense of humour, who will be sorely missed. But she should also be remembered by every passenger who uses the efficient electric trains serving the Cambridge to King’s Lynn line. She asked for

any donations in her memory to be made to Compassion in World Farming or the 1570 Society. If you wish to do so, please send your cheque made out to one or other organisation to Ms Mary Parlett, 7 Spruce Road, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 9PJ.

Railfuture is also hoping to put up a plaque at Downham Market station, in memory of Clara.

◆◆◆◆ France are to sign a deal to help Thailand develop a high speed rail network





## Premium payments

In *Railwatch* 134 Peter Rayner noted that East Coast, run by Government-owned Directly Operated Railways, paid £187 million in premium payments, while Virgin West Coast was subsidised under cap and collar arrangements. While this is true, Peter forgot to mention that West Coast also paid a large premium, in this case £209 million. After allowing for cap and collar payments amounting to £44 million, the net payment from West Coast to the Government was £165 million.

These are large sums, and in the year 2011-12 a total of 12 train operating companies paid premium payments amounting to a staggering £1.5 billion, while total subsidies paid to train operators, including cap and collar support, came to £786 million, leaving the Government with a very significant net profit of £694 million. (Source: *Hansard* 15 October 2012)

Along with tax issues detailed by Christian Wolmar elsewhere in *Railwatch* 134, this reinforces our argument that it is high time above-inflation fare increases were brought to an end.

*Norman Bradbury, The Mount, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 8UD  
norman.bradbury@railfuture.org.uk*

## Bus penalty

I am unhappy about the policy of Greater Anglia when franchised rail services are replaced by buses. On several occasions, they double journey times by insisting the buses visit lesser-used stations although the majority of users are destined for the larger towns.

An Ely-Norwich journey which takes about an hour took two hours by bus. Four people went to the smaller towns. A direct bus would have taken an hour. Surely a fast bus could be used for core passengers and a minibus for others.

Likewise, a Norwich-Great Yarmouth service, which takes about 30 minutes, was replaced

by a bus which took an hour by touring smaller stations. Again four people used the village stops! I would suggest that this is very poor customer care. It is annoying to transfer to a bus and this approach prolongs the journey unnecessarily. A combination of fast and stopping buses should be used.

The franchise extension and refranchising process should be used to eliminate this unnecessary inconvenience and waste of passenger time.

*Chris Wright, Victoria Street, Caister, Norfolk NR30 5HA  
chris.wright@railfuture.org.uk*

## BR was money saver

Mike Crowhurst argues for Directly Operated Railways, but only "as a temporary solution, or we risk going back to a Government-run railway" (*Railwatch* 135). What was wrong with British Rail? As a state-owned national network, it meant money was not wasted on either going to shareholders, or involving the railways in an expensive franchise set-up.

Rail union RMT says privatisation costs the equivalent of £1.2 billion a year compared to public ownership.

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

## Counting car costs

Mr Thorburn's letter in *Railwatch* 135 raises some controversial points, but the comparison of road and rail is more complicated. Private cars provide door-to-door transport, but the maintenance cost of a car is high, and the costs of insurance and vehicle taxation must be factored in, to work out the cost of using a car per mile or per hour. The car owner may be unpleasantly surprised at what figure emerges. Rail travel drastically reduces the risk of an accident. It may not appeal to car users to consider what happens after an incident on the road: inconvenience at best and a stay in hospital at the worst. Loss of a no-claims bonus may

result if there is no proof that a driver was not to blame.

Travelling on trains and being forced to stand is a disincentive, but queues on roads and in town centres are regular occurrences and are still aggravating. Mr Thorburn has said that he uses National Express coaches. This may work well from a major city like Birmingham, but services from certain provincial places, for example Shrewsbury, are minimal.

I agree that if he is travelling by car with someone else, the cost could be split but for one person the saving in doing a car journey solo may be rather debatable.

*David Peters, Sussex Drive, Shrewsbury SY3 7NG*

## Phone benefits

I think Mr Mickleburgh fails to appreciate the role that mobile phones have played in the massive increase in public transport use that we have seen in recent years. Because people have phones that can keep them in touch with their friends and families while they travel, they can make arrangements for onward travel and let their loved ones know if they are delayed, and they can feel safer on quieter unstaffed stations because they know help is just a phone call away.

*Simon Geller, Greystones, Sheffield  
simonmichaelgeller@gmail.com*

## Phone advice

Tim Mickleburgh raises the old chestnut of mobile phones on trains. It makes no sense to ban mobiles. The issue is one of volume. It is irrelevant whether the conversation is on a mobile or between people sitting next to each other. People in a shared space should be considerate and avoid talking loudly.

Mobile phone conversations sometimes involve poor sound quality, as a result of a weak signal or interference. I have worked in the mobile phone industry for 20 years, and I can say that talking louder does not strengthen the phone signal!

On the contrary, it may cause distortion. In many cases, the phone allows one to talk more quietly (not more loudly) than face-to-face.

The train companies need to educate people to talk no louder than when talking to someone next to them. It is also useful to face the window, rather than inwards to the carriage, to reduce the sound affecting

other passengers. Rather than banning phones, let us have "How to talk on your mobile" posters prominently displayed in stations and on trains.

*Nick Jones, Blar Mhor Road, Fort William PH33 7HR  
nicholas\_w\_jones@hotmail.com*

## Diesel dangers

George Boyle argues against a reduction in the cost of diesel for "essential" lorry journeys and in favour of dual power locomotives to enable freight to take advantage of more electric routes (*Railwatch* 135).

In both cases his argument is supported by the World Health Organisation which has classified diesel as a carcinogen. It reports that in France, where diesel is subsidised, diesel fumes are responsible for 40,000 premature deaths per annum.

*Peter Honniball, Woodbine Cottage, Dunsby, Bourne, Lincolnshire*

**Editors' note: France is reluctant to remove the diesel subsidy because Renault and other French companies specialise in diesel road vehicles. Two out of every three French drivers buy diesel cars.**

## Roscos in the dock

I enjoyed reading Mike Crowhurst's excellent article in *Railwatch* 135 on the way forward for the rail industry in the wake of the West Coast fiasco.

Unless I missed something, I did not see any reference in the article to the rolling stock companies. Many of us are tired of being told that "there is not enough rolling stock" to meet demand or that additional equipment would be too expensive to lease. Would Mike like to offer his views on this?

*Philip Bisatt, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4JT  
philip@brackenedge.wanadoo.co.uk*

## Reopening merits

I support Damian Bell on the merits of a revived Harrogate to Northallerton railway.

He has mentioned its many advantages as a national artery, including its potential as the northward extension of HS2's Leeds line. There are more. We on the Coast line, complete with its Leeds Northern mileposts, suffer to this day from the poorer passenger service that followed the closure of our direct link to Harrogate. Grand Central's direct trains from Sunderland

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

are now our only chance to go south to York and beyond by the logical rail route from the Durham coastal towns. Harrogate-Northallerton should also be seen, longer term, as the start of HS2's extension, first to Teesside (with Stockton as its HS2 railhead), then via Stillington, Ferryhill and the Leamside line into Newcastle.

*Peter Walker, chairman, Coastliners RUG, Devon Crescent, Billingham, Teesside  
pj.walker@zen.co.uk*

## My reopening choice

While I would support in principle most of the proposed railway restoration schemes mentioned in *Railwatch*, provided that the social benefits are commensurate with the frequently enormous capital costs, I am unclear as to the justification for a reopened link between Skipton and Colne.

A better and less expensive restoration would be to extend the soon-to-be-introduced Manchester-Burnley rail service beyond Rose Grove to Padiham (population 9,000) over the former North Lincs loop closed in the 1950s. Although out of use, I believe the track is still in situ to the former Padiham gas works.

*Alan Platt, Whitsand Road, Manchester  
aplatt@postmaster.co.uk*

## Towns need rail

After reading Barry Doe's article (*Railwatch* 135) I decided to look at transport options on the Somerset & Dorset corridor, surely one of the most damaging rail closures of all, severing a total of seven towns (Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Shepton Mallet, Wincanton, Staibridge, Sturminster Newton and Blandford Forum) from the rail network. Of these, only the first two have adequate buses in the evenings and on Sundays.

The surviving rail route between Bath and Dorchester is almost exactly the same length as the S&D line from Bath to Poole, and has 13 intermediate stations.

I have worked out criteria which suggest a case for 10 new stations on this surviving line. These criteria would call for a total of 28 stations on the S&D if it had survived.

Those interested in the S&D are recommended to visit Sturminster Newton. The museum, which has a gallery

◆◆◆◆ Australia is considering building a high speed rail line from Melbourne to Brisbane



Picture: PHILIP BISATT

**Steam engines do not feature in Railwatch very often, being confined to the heritage sidelines after diesels and electrics completed their takeover on the main rail network. In the past, however, there were many attempts to make steam more suitable for a rail future.**

**The first steam railmotors date back to the mid 19th century, but the idea came of age in the early years of the 20th century. They could be reversed quickly, without unnecessary shunting, and could be used for local trains making frequent stops.**

**The GWR, and other railways, also used "autotrains" which allowed carriages equipped with a driving cab, to be coupled to traditional steam engines. Once a second**

**coach was added, the resultant train could perhaps be described as a steam multiple unit.**

**This Great Western Railmotor 93 was in action at Llangollen with Trailer 92 for the April 2013 steam gala.**

**The Railmotor also undertook a tour of branch and heritage railways in the West Country early in 2013.**

**This summer both vehicles can be seen at the Didcot Railway Centre.**

**Philip Bisatt, who took this picture, commented: "From the look of autotrailer 92, it seems we have the GWR to blame for those draughty, hopper windows."**

about the line, is open three to four days a week. To get there, you can use bus 309 which stops outside Gillingham station and connects with some trains to and from London and Salisbury.  
*Simon Norton, Hertford Street, Cambridge CB4 3AG  
S.Norton@dpmm.cam.ac.uk*

## Plan for new station

Chris Wright referred to the campaign for a new station at Grove/Wantage Road, in *Railwatch* 135. I recently attended a presentation on the

Vale of White Horse District Council draft local plan, and I spoke to a planning officer about the proposal. He was extremely dismissive, saying that it would never happen, that it was merely an aspiration, and there was no money to pay for it. He trotted out the usual Network Rail objection that there is insufficient capacity on this Didcot-Swindon line for a local train service.

Grove station is in the long-term plans of both Oxfordshire County Council and the Vale District Council. The district council is proposing that 4,750 new homes should be built in Grove and Wantage, requiring the construction of a new link road between the Grove airfield development site and the A338, and an eastern Wantage bypass linking the A338 and the A417.

Yet they say that there is no money for a new railway station. I fear it may be too

late for Oxfordshire County Council to put in a bid for a share of the £20 million New Station Fund. With bids already made for Ilkeston, Kenilworth, Worcestershire Parkway, Haxby, Chapelford and Bradford Low Moor, the money will be spread very thinly.

It is essential that plans for electrifying the Great Western main line should make provision for the new station. It would be stupid to string up the overhead lines above the existing track layout. The quadruple track between Challow and Wantage Road needs to be extended a couple of miles to the east, so that trains stopping at Grove can join and leave the main lines at maximum line speed.

*Martin Smith, Bath Street, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1EA*

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# Scotland needs high speed rail network for all the UK

By Roderick McDougall

The case for a high-speed rail line connecting Scotland to London and the Continent is irrefutable on both economic and environmental grounds.

Scotland relies on good communications and transport links for its economic health.

One of Scotland's major economic generators is tourism, which relies on excellent transport connections from the rest of the country, the Continent and the rest of the world. Edinburgh and Glasgow are both ranked in the top 30 cities in the world for conferences and almost 30% of all international association meetings held in the UK are hosted in Scotland.

As the major cities in England (Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester) grow closer to each other and to London with faster rail links, their economic links with each other grow stronger.

There is a risk that, as a result, their economic links with the Scottish cities grow weaker, thereby harming the Scottish economy.

Rail capacity on the two routes to Scotland is estimated to reach saturation within 20 years, to the detriment of efforts to improve and expand rail freight movements across the border.

At present almost 80% of travel between central Scotland and London is by air with around 100 flights per day and 5.6 million passengers in 2009-10 as opposed to 1.66 million by rail and a negligible number by road. The carbon emissions from air travel are 131 grammes per passenger km while those from high-speed rail would be 31 grammes per passenger km or lower as electricity generation decarbonises.

The current travel time from central Scotland to London by air is generally accepted as three hours, taking into account travel time to and from the airports, check-in, security time, waiting time within the airports and flight time.

In order to cause the major mode shift from air to rail required to have a significant beneficial effect on the environment and to counter the air transport response to significant reductions in passenger numbers by reducing fares, the rail journey must reduce to less than two and a half hours. Obviously there will not be a 100% shift from air to rail because of "interlining" at the London airports.

But at this journey time, an 80%



shift could be expected, based on similar trips in Europe where high speed rail has been introduced, thereby increasing the rail passenger level to over six million per annum without taking into account passenger growth or generation. These passenger numbers alone would justify non-stop hourly services from both Edinburgh and Glasgow to London.

Both the major reports by Network Rail and Greengauge 21 conclude that the benefit to cost ratio is significantly greater when the segregated high-speed network is extended from London to Edinburgh and Glasgow than any of the other options examined. Network Rail also calculates that such a service would be almost immediately profitable. However London is not the only destination for public transport travellers to and from central Scotland. Figures from

*Scottish Transport Statistics 2011* show that there are annually 0.9 million to and from Birmingham (with 67% going by air); 1.84 million to and from Manchester (12.3% by air); 2.33 million to and from north-east England and Yorkshire (negligible by air); 0.37 million to and from East Midlands (56.5% by air); 0.5 million to and from Bristol (88% by air) and 0.35 million to Southampton by air. There will also be significant numbers by road on the shorter journeys, for instance, those to Manchester, north-east England and Yorkshire.

The 2006 Eddington Report into the future of transport emphasised the need for high speed rail stations, intermediate or terminal, to be sited in the heart of any city served. Most other studies also conclude that connectivity (both with the traditional network, for onward travel to regional destinations, and with

suitable transport facilities for local destinations) is essential.

As a minimum, a UK high speed rail network must connect all the major conurbations with a population greater than half a million.

That would include the eight core cities in England: Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham and Sheffield, plus Hull, Glasgow and London. Other significant centres of population such as Bradford, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Teesside should also be included. Although the combined populations of Southampton and Portsmouth would meet the population criteria, they are far enough apart not to be considered a single destination.

The combined population of Luton and Milton Keynes is less than the above criterion but the conurbation could be considered for inclusion, if the network naturally passes through the area.

The aims of a high-speed network must include reducing the carbon footprint of transport which by definition implies rail travel being competitive with both domestic air travel and car travel.

The majority of the main stakeholders in Scotland support the proposal to commence construction of a high-speed rail network from Central Scotland southwards simultaneously with construction from London northwards.

The main questions still to be answered therefore relate to routing, across the border and within Scotland. Proposals to route via either Glasgow or Edinburgh would not achieve the objective of a two and a half hour journey time or less to both cities. The Glasgow-Edinburgh Collaboration Initiative favoured a Y configuration within Scotland with a single new border crossing splitting at an appropriate location equidistant from Edinburgh and Glasgow to twin termini within the two cities. This approach would also allow a local high-speed link between the two cities.

This has now been accepted by the Scottish Government with the announcement by the Deputy First Minister that a high-speed link connecting the two cities, thereby forming the northern branches of the Scottish Y, will be built by 2024.

This leaves the location of the border crossing still to be decided. There is no obvious route, the choices all being through moun-

tainous country with the engineering problems to meet the high-speed criteria that would ensue. The far longer coastal routes would be unlikely to meet the journey time objective and be more likely to interfere with existing settlements, industrial and agricultural interests.

The routing decision must therefore be taken on the basis of the greatest benefit to the economy by reducing travel time to the intermediate destinations.

The most economically advantageous intermediate destinations lie in north-east England, Yorkshire and the East Midlands.

Although there is a substantial movement to and from Manchester, the imminent electrification of the lines from Preston to Manchester and Liverpool will

allow Pendolino trains to take over the routes to both Glasgow and Edinburgh resulting in significant journey time reductions to maximise modal shift towards rail.

My suggested route across the Border and down the east side of the Pennines to the East Midlands would intersect with the UK Government's published route for the northern extension of HS2 to Leeds, thus completing a route to Birmingham and London, although a more direct route via Luton Airport Parkway would be shorter and improve both international and local connectivity not least with Thameslink. However the HS2 proposals do not comply with two essential requirements. High speed stations should be in the heart of any

city to take advantage of existing onward connections throughout the conurbation and to be suitable for business premises.

High speed rail should also include loops or branches to other cities so that services are not required to slow down for too many stations on the line.

Neither of the stations for Sheffield or the East Midlands comply with these criteria. The main line should bypass Sheffield and have loops through the centres of both Sheffield and Nottingham.

Obviously trains on these loops will be either slowing down to stop in the city centre or speeding up from a standing start in the city centre so the loops would not need to be constructed to the same high geometric criteria as the main spine and could share

the main stations with the conventional network.

As far as Scotland alone is concerned, any route would be acceptable if it provides a journey time of less than two and a half hours between London and both Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Ideally it should also be possible to bypass London at high speed to reach the Channel Tunnel.

Because the London-Birmingham line might be overcrowded, Greengauge 21 is probably correct in the view that two separate high speed lines north from London are required and any second line could head directly towards Nottingham (via Luton Airport).

■ Roderick McDougall is a civil engineer and a member of Railfuture Scotland.

## THE BEST WAY FOR HS2 TO SERVE LONDON



**HIGH SPEED HEAVEN:** HS2 should come in from the west in tunnel to a new underground Euston Cross station linking the existing Euston and St Pancras International stations

An inventive way to integrate high speed rail into three London terminals has been backed by rail experts throughout Britain.

A new underground Euston Cross station should be built linking the existing Euston and St Pancras International stations, two rail experts have suggested.

The new station would be served by tunnels under Regent's Park from the planned station at Old Oak Common in the west and others linking east into the existing HS1 route from St Pancras.

The line from Old Oak Common would join the West Coast main line on its approaches to Euston to allow some high speed trains to terminate at the existing Euston station while others could serve Euston Cross and proceed, via Stratford, Ebbsfleet and Ashford to the Channel Tunnel.

The plan has been sent to the Government by Lords Bradshaw and Berkeley.

The idea would free up capacity in the existing Euston station, avoid the planned large-scale demolition of homes around Euston, as well as the major disruption to Overground service on the North London Line which HS2's current plans involve.

It would mean both inter-city and regional trains could run through from Kent to the Midlands, northern England and Scotland.

The Government-funded HS2 company said the proposal would cost "something like £5 billion" but Bradshaw and Berkeley insist it is the best solution to high-speed rail for London.

◆◆◆◆ Mega lorries are still being promoted by EU bureaucrats, warns Freight on Rail

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## North East

By Peter Kenyon peter.kenyon@railfuture.org.uk

### Historic station portico to be transformed

Newcastle Central is one of only six stations in the country listed as Grade One, and is entering an exciting new era. Constructed between 1845 and 1850 by renowned local architect John Dobson in collaboration with Robert Stephenson, a portico was added in 1863. For some years this feature has been a taxi rank and unloading site, but will now be glazed and transformed into a passenger reception and retail area (see picture below). Inside the building a new travel

centre, lifts and escalators, with a simplified retail layout will open vistas to the Norman castle keep. Cycle storage space will be doubled. New glazing will be



Picture: EAST COAST

fitted to the roof to increase natural light, and emphasise the curved layout of the station. The area outside will be revamped to provide a gateway to the city for pedestrians and a transport hub. The scheme was developed as a result of co-operation between NE1 Ltd (a business improvement organisation), Network Rail, which owns the building, East Coast Trains, which operates the station and Newcastle City Council. By working together funding estimated at £20 million is anticipated from European Union, regional, national and local sources. It is hoped that the project will stimulate the prosperity of the surrounding area. Already a new hotel project has been announced.

### World Heritage venue for Railfuture national AGM

Railfuture North East was pleased once again to host the national AGM, this time at Durham. We hope that those who attended enjoyed their visit to this historic city and World Heritage site.

### Gilsland station work cheers Tyne Valley users

Tyne Valley Rail Users' Group reports that the project to build a new station at Gilsland is now under way. JPM consultants have met local residents and are preparing to carry out initial demand and destination forecasting. A detailed site study by their engineer is under way. The group is also monitoring the franchising process in relation to the main line and reconstituted secondary rail services across the north of England.

### Rail users welcome improvements on main line

The South East Northumberland Rail Users Group is also keenly watching the refranchising process. At Morpeth station, the customer information screens and passenger lifts are at last working. Lack of coordination between Network Rail and BT appears to have caused the delay. At Cramlington a new disability-compliant pedestrian ramp, linking the northbound platform to the adjacent road, has been installed. At Low Fell the specially constructed and subsequently abandoned rail terminal for Royal Mail is being brought back into use for services to Willesden. This will reduce the number of lorries on the A1/M1 road.

### Work ahead of schedule on new station for Tees Valley

Coastliners report that Tees Valley Unlimited, a local enterprise partnership, is now sifting ideas for the renewal of the Northern and Transpennine rail franchises. A new North East Business Unit has been formed by local authorities to stimulate rail improvement. Construction of the new station to serve the James Cook University Hospital is well advanced and the station should be open by the end of the year, three months ahead of schedule.

# Mining revival but rail freight to be penalised

By Peter Wakefield

peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk

Changing world conditions have led economists to predict that previously abandoned mining operations in Britain could restart work.

Railfuture's freight group is concerned that it could result in an increase in juggernaut road traffic unless care is taken.

Initial low-volume mineral extraction may not be enough for a trainload, but planners must stipulate that environmentally friendly rail is used whenever possible.

An example of an abandoned mine that could be revived using modern techniques, is the Redmoor Kelly Bray Mine near Callington, Cornwall. It might again produce a variety of valuable metals for world markets.

Sifting several million tons of sand for the 5% of tin it contains, is also being proposed for north Cornwall.

Trainload freight could be important for some completely new mines.

A bulk potash mine, with many years potential, just south of Whitby is proposed on the edge of the North York Moors National Park.

A pipeline may take the material to Teesside but rail freight could do the job.

Large coal deposits also exist at Lochinvar, in the Borders country near Carlisle and a disused rail line could be reopened to make the project sustainable.

Other minerals are likely to outpace coal as the prime source of revenue for rail to cover track costs.

In Australia, Canada and Brazil there is ongoing demand for trains to transport rocks.

Increased worldwide demand for metals, above all iron and copper, is driven by the growing Asian economies.

For carting ingots in Britain, revived Freightliner trains or a modernised wagon load system could be used.

Already huge quantities of building materials such as road stone from the Mendips are efficiently moved in train-load quantities, but even this needs continuous investment.

Existing electrification plans would mean the wires stop at Newbury. Electrification should be extended to Westbury yard 43 miles further on.

But to achieve lower transport costs in the Dartmoor area, a change in railway operating technology is required, electrification or the reopening of the

more easily graded route via Okehampton.

Sometimes issues need to be addressed by the skills of more than one profession. It is not a simple question of market forces and a geological map.

Nor is there time or political appetite for the railway to be integrated into a public utility company.

A small team should be established to determine what minerals lie along the railway, what preparation they require for transport and how they can be moved.

A second stage should examine the question of new and reopened lines to exploit off-line major deposits.

The team could contain a geologist, an operator, a traction engineer, an economist or investment accountant and a civil engineer.

This is a job for in-house hands-on industry experts not expensive time-billing consultants.

Railfuture's freight group is concerned that piecemeal development of minerals will leave the rail freight industry unable to respond.

Already the Office of Rail Regulation is proposing increased access charges for coal from the New Cumnock mines and has watched while the traffic transfers to road, undermining the quality of life for many communities strung along the unsuitable road network and raising the prospect of avoidable injuries and death.

In Railfuture's response to the ORR's proposals we said: "If commodities of national importance are to be carried from a source, be it port or mine or quarry, they must be on rail."

"We do not believe it is the role of ORR to put a premium on access charges on the basis of what it believes the market will bear."

"The likelihood is (as was demonstrated during industrial disputes in the 1980s) that many such traffics will simply transfer to road. They are not a captive market for rail."

"If carriage of coal and iron ore is made more expensive, the cost will simply be passed on to the consumer and this will damage the competitiveness of British industry."

The mining industry is very sensitive to price changes and in April, Scotland's biggest coal-mining firm collapsed with the loss of almost 600 jobs.

Scottish Coal, which operated six open cast mines in East Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and Fife, has been put into liquidation. The Scottish coal industry supports

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



Picture: NETWORK RAIL

**ON TRACK: A diesel train on an electrified route. But at least the freight is on rail at the moment. How much traffic will be forced back on to the roads if the ORR puts up rail freight charges?**

4,500 direct and indirect jobs and is worth £500 million a year. Meanwhile, if there is any coal to transport, the road hauliers will be rubbing their hands with glee.

The Office of Rail Regulation is adding to rail's problems by planning to impose an increased track access charge for the rail transportation of coal for electricity supply in 2016.

The result: There will be more coal lorries on Scotland's roads.

Freight Transport Association head of policy for Scotland Chris MacRae said: "Potentially it means a shift from rail to road. At the moment a lot of the coal from Scotland travels down to the Midlands by rail." Referring to the ORR plans, MacRae estimates that there could be 148,000 extra trucks hauling coal on Scotland's roads.

The Rail Freight Group is also worried that the ORR will increase the charges for biomass (for electricity generation) by rail. The ORR wants the charges to contribute towards costs of

between £280 million to £400 million per year for wear and tear of the tracks, caused by rail freight.

Network Rail says the rail freight industry contributes £870 million to the British economy and supports an output of £5.9 billion.

The ORR should always consider the communities through which lorry traffic runs, the damage to roads, air and noise pollution and the resulting cost to the NHS. The costs of these far outweigh any cost rail freight incurs to Network Rail.

Local communities need rail to take a part in developing our natural resources to prevent lorry use.

We need a rail regulator that understands the responsibility to promote rail freight and protect communities from unsuitable forms of transport.

Network Rail has been consulting the public on rail freight as part of its long term planning process. More info: <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/ltp>

## Severnside

By Nigel Bray nigel.bray@railfuture.org.uk

### Reopening work is first step to creating Greater Bristol Metro

The Portishead line is planned to reopen as part of the Greater Bristol Metro and vegetation clearance has begun on the disused section west of Pill. A new road is expected to cross the line about 200 yards short of the site reserved for Portishead station. A bridge would add significantly to the cost of reopening but other solutions are being explored by North Somerset Council.



### Must try harder to make stations welcoming

Four Railfuture members who visited Bedminster and Parson Street stations in February, led by David Wood, saw at first hand why these Bristol suburban stations need to be made more attractive to potential users. At Bedminster one of the two entrances had been boarded up, resulting in an additional quarter-mile walk for Victoria Park residents. Both stations need more shelters and longer sections of their platforms to be made usable. Parson Street is close to a number of bus routes and the branch sees it as a potential transport hub, particularly when the Portishead line reopens. David reported the visit in his On Track column in the *Bristol Post*.

### Network Rail prompted to improve city station

A further development in the long-running saga of Gloucester station's new footbridge saw the lifts, promised since last summer under the Access for All programme, brought into use during March. Work had stopped at the end of 2012 without explanation from Network Rail but resumed within days of letters from the branch secretary and the city's MP Richard Graham. Both Mr Graham and the city council's leader, Councillor Paul James, have supported our calls for a roof to be fitted to the footbridge. Elsewhere in Gloucestershire, the branch is supporting efforts to reopen Stonehouse Bristol Road station and to safeguard the Ministry of Defence rail sidings at Ashchurch in the event of the Army depot being redeveloped for housing.

### Freight forgotten in planning for a low-carbon future

Our response to Swindon Borough Council's Local Plan 2026 noted that its contents were sensible enough, but appeared to have been considered in isolation from neighbouring counties where much of Swindon's road traffic originates and where there are proposals to reopen rail stations. Referring to the plan's theme of a low-carbon Swindon, we pointed out that Great Western electrification would make a major contribution to the decarbonisation of long-distance transport in the area. We were concerned that the Local Plan did not mention freight, although Swindon has three rail freight terminals, including one at South Marston which the borough council helped create.

### Campaigners celebrate post-Beeching victories

Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Beeching Report by publicising the success of the Severn Beach line, which not only survived the Beeching axe but is now carrying a million passengers a year. On 23 March rail campaigners travelled on the 13.16 Temple Meads to Severn Beach train, alighting on the return journey at Montpellier, where interviews were given before adjourning to the Halo Cafe for a campaign strategy meeting. Speakers from FoSBR, Tarka Rail Association, West Wiltshire Rail Users Group and the Campaign for Borders Rail discussed their achievements and next objectives.

## Join Railfuture

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OR JOIN ONLINE USING PAYPAL AT [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)



## Wessex

By John Friedberger  
john.friedberger@railfuture.org.uk

## ■ ■ Waterloo problems

We have been reassured that steps are being taken to combat serious disruption to services at London Waterloo which has occurred as a result of both track and signalling failures. The new South West Trains/Network Rail Alliance told us that "...we have a very large asset resilience and renewal programme under way around Waterloo that is designed to reduce significantly the chance of infrastructure failure effecting (sic) our customers." Let us hope so. Branch chairman Mike Southgate has made positive suggestions to improve contingency plans. Advice on alternative routes – including those using other operators' services – should be readily available and increased staff knowledge of diversionary routes would enable more trains to operate. For example, there is a secondary South West Trains route from Portsmouth to London via Basingstoke as well as a Southern service to Victoria. During recent engineering work neither was mentioned on the SWT website. Passengers were advised to travel to Petersfield and then by bus to Haslemere before rejoining a train, resulting in a longer and unsatisfactory journey.

## ■ ■ Swanage progress on passenger link to Bournemouth

Some members of Wessex Branch were passengers on what was billed as "the first ever passenger train to run between Bournemouth and Swanage for 41 years". The trip, on 26 March, was organised by South West Trains in partnership with Swanage Railway to give stakeholders the opportunity to see progress being made towards introducing a regular passenger service on the branch from 2015. This long-held ambition will finally be possible thanks to a grant of £1.47 million from the Coastal Communities Fund. Initially a trial service is planned for 50 days in 2015 and 90 days in 2016 with eventual year-round operation.

## ■ ■ Passenger trains planned for Fawley freight line

Hampshire County Council is making progress with plans to introduce passenger trains on this freight line. A service from Hythe and Marchwood is our top campaign priority and we continue to push for it to run via Southampton Central to either Fareham or Winchester to improve cross-city access.

## ■ ■ How the train can help make airport easier to reach

The branch is represented on the Southampton Airport Transport Forum. With a distance of 99 yards from platform to terminal, airport managers are keen to encourage greater rail access to the airport from the Portsmouth, Chichester, Salisbury and Bristol areas.

## ■ ■ Thanksgiving service for rail campaigner Jack

Railfuture activist Jack Richards who lived on the Isle of Wight has died, aged 65. "He was involved in the campaign to keep the Island Line station at Ventnor," said Railfuture member Josephine Martin. "He will be missed on the island and in Railfuture generally." A former British Rail employee, Mr Richards lived in Cowes after moving to the island as a child. Later, he was a professional percussionist, a teacher and a music examiner. He was leader of the island's rail user group, the first chairman of the island's community rail partnership, and also served on the Rail Passengers Committee for the South of England. A thanksgiving service for his life was held at Cowes Baptist Church on 26 April.



Jack Richards

## In brief: Reports of rail campaigning

## Railfuture in the Lords

Railfuture hosted a reception at the House of Lords for its vice presidents in March. President Christian Wolmar and chairman David Berman attended the event which was hosted by Lord Snape who was joined by Lord Berkeley, Chris Green, Barry Doe, George Boyle and Peter Lawrence.

## Walk or cycle the Link

Rail campaigners from Railfuture and the Campaign for Better Transport are invited to walk or cycle the missing link of the East West Rail link from Bedford to Sandy. Meet at Priory Country Park, Bedford MK41 9DJ on Saturday 29 June 2013 at 10.30 for

an 11.00 start. Free. More information at railfuture.org.uk/oxcam+walk

## Questions unanswered

Rail campaigner Neil Pothecary is worried by Beeching-style rail cuts threatened to international rail services. He has contacted Railfuture's international group but also handed in a report on surface transport links to the Lithuanian Ambassador when he visited Newcastle. Neil points out that Lithuania takes over the rotating presidency of the European Council in July 2013. His report highlighted one international route, from Belgrade to Sarajevo, which is electrified but

has not seen any rail service since December. Neil adds: "I have heard nothing from the Lithuanians since, and one can only speculate as to why that might be."

## Threat to Spanish rail

A Spanish newspaper has warned that rail lines could be cut as Spain struggles to narrow its budget deficit. *El Pais* said that 48 lines out of 127, were at risk from the conservative government's "proposal".

## Reopening hope

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin visited Lewes in May and asked Network Rail

to have another look at the case for reopening the nine-mile long Uckfield-Lewes line which Railfuture has been campaigning for – with the slogan Bridge the Gap. Lewes MP Norman Baker, who is a transport minister in the coalition government, described it as "wonderful news".

## Another new station

A station will be built at Newcourt, near Exeter, with help from the Government's new stations fund. Newcourt is on the Exmouth branch between Digby and Sowton and Topsham. Devon County Council and Network Rail hope to get the £1.5 million station open by 2014.



## New trains needed now

The recent Beeching anniversary was a reminder of past problems – a declining passenger base. Today the issue is the phenomenal growth of passengers on local railways.

In principle, the answer is simple – longer trains! It is not that Britain's local railways require a lot more infrastructure capacity, but just that they need more coaches and, in some cases, longer platforms.

How did we get to the position where it costs £250,000 a year just to LEASE one extra coach for around 70 passengers?

Add the operating costs and then work out how many tickets at an average regional fare of £3.21 you have to sell to cover the cost. Even with 100% occupancy for much of the day, you would not earn enough.

That cannot be right. Worse than this, even where you can persuade the specifying body (often the Department for Transport) of the need for additional rolling stock, where does it come from?

The current diesel fleet is well used, there is almost no spare capacity and nobody is building any new ones. This is a serious market failure that requires some intervention to put right.

The argument that new capacity will be provided by cascade of diesel units as a result of electrification is put very cogently

by the Association of Train Operating Companies together with other industry partners in a document issued in February.

The *Longer Term Passenger Rolling Stock Strategy for the Rail Industry* suggests that there would be no new requirement for new diesel trains until around 2024 and that between 400 and 800 diesel vehicles would then be required over the following decade.

However, such a strategy does raise a number of questions for regional rail services:

## Timescale

The new units are needed now and acute overcrowding problems will arise before cascaded stock will be available.

## Uncertainty

I have every confidence in Network Rail delivering the authorised programme of electrification, but what if Government approval of the later stages slips?

Past experience suggests this is likely, with serious consequences for the rolling stock cascade programme.

## Costs

Many of the units are old and will require significant expenditure to extend their lives, but also to bring them up to the standards expected by tomorrow's more discerning travellers, particularly in view of the



Picture: RAY KING

**Good diesel trains are in short supply in Britain but these Bombardier-built Turbostar diesels pictured at Haringay Green Lanes could be used elsewhere if the Barking to Gospel Oak line was electrified as it should be. If electric trains replaced them, the eight London Overground Turbostar trains would be eagerly welcomed by passengers crammed into unsuitable trains elsewhere**

looming date of 2019 to make the whole fleet fully compliant with requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

## Numbers

While the numbers of cascaded vehicles are expected to provide for both growth and replacement of some older trains like Pacers, it will be tight.

There are almost 30 variants of diesel multiple unit capable of use on local services, but not all can work everywhere, and given the likelihood that community railways will exceed even the upper end of the forecast growth rates, the numbers may not stack up.

## Suppliers

The strategy implies a return to stop-go ordering of units which has been a major problem for the supply industry in the past, and by 2024 what manufacturer

would be able to provide relatively small batches of bespoke diesel units for the specialised British market?

There would seem to be a good case for ordering a small fleet of diesel units sooner rather than later to tackle these obvious challenges, the first tranche to an existing design but later trains could be designed specifically to meet the needs of community railways.

Who would procure such trains? I have previously argued that an agency is needed to sponsor new railway lines in England outside London and the passenger transport executive areas.

Perhaps rolling stock is also something for such an agency to tackle. The present structure seems unlikely to deliver what is required.

## Thames Valley

By Chris Wright

chris.wright@railfuture.org.uk

## ■ ■ High Court backs new London-Oxford service

Chiltern Railways' plan for a new service from London Marylebone to Oxford won High Court backing in May when a one-man objection was rejected. However, Chiltern was already worried that the legal delays could mean the service will not start until after 2015. This was revealed when a Chiltern Railways representative spoke to the Railfuture Thames Valley AGM in Bicester. It is hoped that the Chiltern lines will be electrified in a future Network Rail investment period, possibly after 2019. The branch committee and officers were re-elected. Last year was a significant year with funding announced for East West Rail and electrification, the Reading project in hand, and proposals for improving Oxford station.

## ■ ■ Rail user groups conference planned for November

Railfuture Thames Valley will be hosting the Rail User Group conference in November in Oxford, with Lord Berkeley, Lord Faulkner, Network Rail, Chiltern Railways and East West Rail being confirmed contributors.

## ■ ■ Value for money is the key to East West Rail

East West Rail was approved because it has an exceptional business case and is excellent value for money, according to a Department for Transport official in a talk attended by some officers. It is expected to have a positive revenue stream. The long-time support of councils through the East West Rail Consortium, their financial contributions and inclusion in Local Plans was also a major factor. The active support of MPs and the formation of an all party parliamentary group were significant. The route forms a strategic link across a major growth area and increases connectivity within the rail network, offering new passenger journey and freight opportunities. Major journey time savings compared to congested road trips and possible cross country rail services can be achieved. Public support for the scheme was important. The outcome of the judicial review into upgrading Oxford-Bicester is awaited.

## ■ ■ Museum volunteers worry about new fast trains

Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at Quainton Road is concerned about the impact of High Speed Two and the proposed 90mph Aylesbury-Milton Keynes service passing through. The centre hopes, however, to gain access to the freight line. Special trains from Aylesbury are expected to run to Quainton Road on August Bank Holiday Monday.

## ■ ■ New stations and bridges planned for Oxford area

New stations have been suggested by Kidlington Council at the technology park and Lyne Mead while a proposed housing development at Fleet Marston, north of Aylesbury, reserves a site for a station. Buckinghamshire County Council has issued a "mitigation plan" if HS2 goes ahead. It includes the proposal that a station be built at Claydon Junction where an HS2 depot may be sited. Aristotle Lane Crossing, north of Oxford, provides access to allotments and was a major issue at the Evergreen 3 Inquiry. Network Rail applied successfully to Oxford City Council for closure on the grounds that the extra services will further endanger user lives. Work to provide an extra loop at Wolvercote is already under way. Meanwhile, proposals to replace a footbridge at Hinksey have also generated controversy as users wish to see disabled access rather than just a replacement.

## ■ ■ Improvements still needed on West Coast main line

Milton Keynes Council has met London Midland and Network Rail to discuss rail issues in the area. London Midland is introducing extra vehicles next year to boost its new 110 mph service. £1 million is to be spent on improving Milton Keynes Central station concourse to improve passenger circulation. Staffing at Wolverton (17 hours a week) is inadequate and timetabling was questioned. Two off-peak trains per hour are six minutes apart! Bletchley station is in need of improvement but may have to wait for East West Rail. The need for a forum to address concerns about East West Rail was highlighted. The council reiterated support for HS2 as it recognised the capacity benefits that would accrue to the West Coast main line. Meanwhile, local MPs want extra Virgin Trains stops at Milton Keynes Central.



## East Midlands

By Anthony Kay [anthony.kay@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:anthony.kay@railfuture.org.uk)  
and Roger Bacon [roger.bacon@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:roger.bacon@railfuture.org.uk)

■ ■ **£100m Nottingham upgrade requires six-week blockade**  
Nottingham station will be closed for six weeks from 20 July 2013 for Network Rail's £100 million project to renew six miles of track and install 140 new signals in and around the station. The works should allow the fastest trains to reach London in 94 minutes. A total of 25-35 rail replacement buses will leave Nottingham each hour to ferry passengers to nearby stations. Possibly the most disruptive part of the blockade for passengers will be the closure of the entire Robin Hood line between Nottingham, Mansfield and Worksop. This is required because the Eastcroft depot where trains are kept will be cut off from the network. On the other hand, some trains to Skegness will be kept running from Nottingham during the summer but, on some occasions, trains to Skegness will start at Grantham, with buses linking Nottingham and Grantham.

■ ■ **MP's cross-party alliance helps boost Midland main line**  
We were privileged to have two excellent guest speakers at our branch AGM on 20 April, held at the Great Central Railway's Lovatt House in Loughborough. Nicky Morgan, MP for Loughborough, gave us an insight into the successful campaign in Parliament for electrification of the Midland main line. Mrs Morgan led the campaign, and became known at Westminster as "The Midland Main Line MP", but she rallied MPs from all parties to support the project. She also insisted throughout the campaign that upgrading the line was necessary as well as electrification.

Nigel Harris, managing editor of *RAIL* magazine, was the second speaker, in his capacity as chairman of GCR Development Limited. He spoke about plans for "reunification" of the Great Central Railway, joining sections north and south of Loughborough to create an 18-mile railway along what was once the most direct route from Leicester to Nottingham. Atkins consultants have confirmed the feasibility of the project, which involves reinstating 500 metres of track and a bridge over the Midland main line. As well as enhancing the GCR as a tourist attraction, a reunited line would have increased potential as a test track and for freight traffic. The northern section is already used by British Gypsum at East Leake. There is the possibility of a connection to the Nottingham tram network, while the southern terminus is to become the home of Leicester Railway Museum, a new offshoot of the National Railway Museum.

■ ■ **HS2 station should have better links to existing services**  
Railfuture East Midlands is worried by the choice of Toton as the East Midlands HS2 station site where road access to Nottingham and Derby along the already highly congested A52 is often hampered by queuing in mornings and evenings. No existing rail services pass the site as it bypasses both Nottingham and Derby city centres. Shuttle trains from these cities will have to enter and then reverse out of the station. Most other "classic" rail services would have to do the same in order to access Toton and to service 95% of other stations in the conurbation.

Railfuture East Midlands would prefer a split-level station at East Midlands Parkway where the HS2 route will be adjacent to the existing main line passenger network. Better road access would be along the newly dualled and modern A453 road with easy access to the M1 and East Midlands Airport. East Midlands Parkway is three miles south of Toton and is already served by rail from Leicester (17 minutes), Derby (15 minutes), Nottingham (11 minutes), Beeston and Loughborough (both 7 minutes) and Long Eaton (5 minutes). The configuration could be similar to that proposed for Sheffield Meadowhall. Our proposal utilises and enhances existing stations and classic train resources.

■ ■ **New station for Ilkeston gets the go-ahead**  
Plans for a £6.5 million new rail station at Ilkeston on the Erewash Valley line between Nottingham and Langley Mill were given the go-ahead in May by the Government, thanks to its new station fund. Over 25% of the cost has already been committed from local sources. Derbyshire County Council has promoted the reopening, after a long-running campaign by Railfuture and Erewash MP Jessica Lee. The new station could be served by Northern and East Midlands Trains.

## RUG awards

If you know of a rail user group that is doing work, you could enter it for the 2013 Railfuture Awards for Rail User Groups. Closing date is Monday 30 September.

Awards will be given for best newsletter, as well as the most improved newsletter, best website, most improved website, most effective campaign in 2013, most effective 2013 new group, most outstanding individual RUG campaigner in 2013. There will also be a judges' special award.

More details are available at [www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Groups](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Groups)

The RUG Awards will be presented at Railfuture's autumn conference in Oxford on Saturday 2 November. Entries can be sent to Roger Blake, 70 Dynevor Road,

Stoke Newington, London N16 0DX or by email to [roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk)

A year's free membership of Railfuture will be given to the best design for a RUG Awards logo.

## 4th Railway Package

The European Commission has drawn up its 4th Railway Package in an attempt to improve the railways throughout Europe. It concentrates on ensuring new trains can run anywhere in Europe. It also aims to encourage the separation of infrastructure and operations, which some politicians have used as an excuse for more privatisation. The package also wants to open up the passenger rail "market" to more competition. Railfuture's Trevor Garrod attended a hearing in Brussels in April and warned that it was essential to consult with staff and

with customers when franchise plans were being drawn up. The European Economic and Social Committee plans to publish an "Opinion" on the package in July. You should be able to find it at [www.eesc.europa.eu/](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/)

## Travel planner

Rail companies are not brilliant at providing information about integrated transport. They are often interested only in their company's self interest. When they do provide bus information, they often direct passengers to Traveline. Many rail campaigners prefer the Transport Direct website which can give you information on journeys from one postcode to another as well as from one rail station to another. Rail campaigner Graham Lund, who supports Transport Direct, adds: "One busy interchange is Windermere

railway station where trains and buses meet in a few yards of each other. We need to rename this station "Windermere Interchange," electrify the branch to Oxenholme and consider fully how to develop the rail business."

## Rosco payouts

The rolling stock leasing companies are under scrutiny again when passengers are paying ever-higher fares. The Roscos use offshore tax havens to "export" their profits, according to the *Sunday Times* which identified £84 million of dividends. Angel Trains sent money to a Jersey holding company, Eversholt Rail's parent group is based in Luxembourg and Porterbrook is owned by a Jersey-based company, according to the paper.

As huge amounts of public investment are going into the railways, it should be made

clearer to taxpayers where the money is going.

## Return to Blackpool

Ten years after Virgin withdrew Blackpool's inter-city train service, it is planning to run some direct trains from London to Blackpool from December. It will also restore a limited inter-city service to Shrewsbury. Railfuture vice president Peter Rayner contacted *Railwatch* to remind Railfuture members: "Virgin should not expect too much credit. It was Virgin which withdrew these services in the first place!"

## European rail links

Britain's High Speed Two has joined the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) which brings together 78 railway undertakings. High Speed Two is wholly owned by the British Government and was established in 2009 to advise the Government on the development of the high-speed rail network in Great Britain. CER promotes a strong rail industry that can form the basis of a long-term sustainable European transport system.

## Rail is the key to air success

Rail is the key to Stansted Airport's success, says the airport's new owner MAG (Manchester Airport Group). It wants faster train links to the airport to double traffic. The airport's information also reveals that arguments for new and bigger airports for London are largely bogus. The airport's managing director Andrew Harrison said: "Stansted has substantial spare capacity across the day, which gives us the potential over the next 10 to 15 years to grow." He added: "Key to unlocking this potential is improving surface rail access to Stansted."

## Boycott call

Danish politicians, members of parliament as well as council members, have called for a boycott of Ryanair because of "bad conditions for the staff". Ryanair claims the conditions are "fair and reasonable".

## Reopening petition

An online petition has been launched to get the Kingham-Cheltenham rail line reopened. If you would like to sign, go to: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/267/515/172/re-open-the-cheltenham-to-kingham-railway-line-to-link-with-east-west-rail/>

## Train drivers appeal

Train drivers' union Aslef is calling for Coroners not to insist on drivers having to attend hearings because it is often very traumatic

for the drivers. Aslef says a written statement from the driver should be sufficient in almost all cases, including suicides and other incidents at level crossings. Aslef says incidents should be considered as a crime against the train driver. Aslef, however, says the union should be kept informed of any inquest or prosecution arising from an incident.

## Women in Rail

A new group called Women in Rail was launched in April to encourage women to work on the railways. Only 17% of rail workers are female and only 4% are drivers or engineers, so the industry is obviously ignoring a large pool of potential talent. Heidi Mottram, Dyan Crowther and Anna Walker attended the event. Veteran rail campaigner Paul Salvesson commented: "Pity there's nobody from the unions."

The RMT union published a YouGov survey last year showing that 28% of women do not feel safe on London Transport. The Labour Research Department conducted a *Women in the Railway Survey* for Aslef in 2011. It found one in five women felt she had been bullied or harassed in the previous year, most likely because of her gender, yet few lodged formal complaints. Only two in five women were satisfied the union was doing everything possible to push the equalities agenda in the rail industry. The most common topic suggested for the union to improve on was to push for more family-friendly working conditions. There were also calls for improved toilet facilities.

## Breath of fresh air

The lack of clean and proper toilets on trains and stations is a big problem for passengers. At least one person, Nicola Shaw, chief executive of High Speed One, which runs St Pancras International, is doing something about it. She said: "We are almost doubling the number of ladies' toilets available in the main arcade, opposite the Eurostar exit, and more washbasins and dryers are being provided. The new facilities will continue to be free."

## Woman Eurostar chief

Clare Hollingsworth, 53, was appointed in May as chairwoman of Eurostar, following the departure of Richard Brown to the Department for Transport to head the franchising advisory panel.

## Road crash map

If you are campaigning for road safety improvements, you can find details of fatal, serious and slight injuries in your area at <http://crashmap.co.uk>

## Joining up the dots

I set out the figures for heritage railways extending towards connections with the main line in *Railwatch* 125, back in October 2010.

Since that article, the Spa Valley has reached Eridge, the Welsh Highland has got to Portmadoc and the Ecclesbourne Valley line connects at Duffield near Derby.

Now the Bluebell Railway has triumphantly returned to East Grinstead. The opening on 23 March was marked with freezing weather and snow, but still drew thousands of people eager to see the restored line in its first few days of operation.

Five days later, the first through train from Victoria to Sheffield Park in over 50 years brought more visitors and an appreciation of what it meant to be linked back into the national network.

Some work remained to be done but this was completed on 4 May, following which the extension was fully open. What next for this pioneering heritage railway? Perhaps Ardingly and eventually Haywards Heath?

Celebrating their £1.47 million grant from the Coastal Communities fund, the Swanage Railway with South West Trains and a little help from Network Rail hosted two return trips from Wareham to Swanage on 26 March with a class 159 diesel multiple unit.

It gave a glimpse of what might have been, had this controversial 1972 closure been rejected, as it should have been. The grant will pay for the conversion of a heritage diesel multiple unit to enable it to operate on the main line between Worgret Junction and Wareham, and is in addition to the £3.2 million grant by Dorset County and Purbeck District Councils to provide for this service within the Dorset Coast resignalling scheme.

The Coastal Communities grant will fund a trial community service for part of the year, and clearly additional funding would be required to run what the railway describes as a full amenity service.

However, the initial service proposals will certainly demonstrate the feasibility and test the market. I am confident that within a short period the case for a more extensive local service will have been made.

Like the North York Moors service to Whitby, what started as a modest proposal has been successful and has grown. At Whitby, plans are well advanced for a second platform and altered signalling to allow a steam train to be "shut away" while it is serviced and the locomotive runs round the train, allowing a regular Esk Valley train access to the existing platform.

A number of heritage railways now provide a "tourist



The first through train from London Victoria for over 50 years arrives at Horsted Keynes on the Bluebell Railway on 28 March. On the same day, the visiting GB Railfreight class 66 locomotive was named Bluebell Railway

transport" service, even if they are not able to support a conventional public transport operation during commuter hours. Even this has considerable value in terms of providing car-free access to Snowdonia (via the Welsh Highland Railway) for example, or to the North York Moors national park via the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. The Swanage operation will be a boon for the town and will help mitigate the chronic summer

traffic congestion on the A351 road through Corfe Castle.

The West Somerset provides the same service to Exmoor and to Minehead, as does the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire, with a special charter train service on race days to Cheltenham racecourse.

Tourist Transport is the name of the game to get people back into the railway habit. Watch it grow, and remember, you read it in *Railwatch* first.

Picture: JOHN SANDYS



## Scotland

By Jane Ann Liston  
janeann.liston@railfuturescotland.org.uk

### ■ Fares cut on Stranraer line

Rail campaigners on the Stranraer line have been cheered by news of big fare cuts on their line. Tickets between Glasgow and Stranraer will be reduced by 48% from £44.80 to £23.00 for an anytime return. The Stranraer-Ayr Line Support Association are pleased to report that fares between Stranraer and Ayr are also to fall, though it is not clear whether the same will apply to Girvan-Ayr journeys, or exactly when the reduction will take effect. The fare cuts are welcome as Stranraer suffered a blow from Stena moving its Northern Ireland ferries to join P&O at Cairnryan, a port accessible only by road. Rail passengers arriving at Stranraer now have to take a bus to Cairnryan and the connections are not convenient. Rail passengers can endure a 45 mile bus journey from Ayr to reach the ferry or they can change at Girvan for a bus to Cairnryan. Cheaper fares on the line though should help mitigate the loss of the "rail & sail" passenger traffic. There is also interest among SAYLSA members in reopening stations on the Ayr-Stranraer line. In addition, the reopening of a small branch line in Kilmarnock, within eight minutes drive of 10,000 people, is being mooted. If the line was reopened and electrified, the additional train service could be accommodated within the existing timetable. More info: [www.saylsa.org.uk/](http://www.saylsa.org.uk/)

### ■ High hopes for expanding Edinburgh-Dunbar service

Rail campaigners in eastern Scotland have been waiting for the imminent publication of a consultant's study into the expansion of the Edinburgh-Dunbar service, along with the possible reopening of East Linton and Reston stations. Rail Action Group East of Scotland have discussed the findings with East Lothian and Scottish Borders councillors. Reopening East Linton and Reston would provide railway access to the two communities for the first time in 45 years and would significantly reduce the demand for car parking at existing East Lothian stations. More info: [www.rages.org.uk/](http://www.rages.org.uk/)

### ■ Tourism boost expected on reopened Borders line

Construction of the 30 mile-long Borders line from Edinburgh to Tweedbank is well under way, with work being carried out at Gorebridge in May. After vigorous campaigning a welcome last-minute change to the specification included provision for excursion trains at Tweedbank, so important for tourism.

### ■ Rail service reinstated after 20 years

Twenty years of campaigning by the Clydesdale Rail Action Group have finally paid off with the reinstatement of the Carluke-Carstairs-Edinburgh service. Strathclyde Partnership for Transport is now revisiting the question of funding a Carstairs station car park. Thanks are due to all the organisations which have brought these improvements about.

### ■ Talks to ensure future of Anglo-Scottish sleepers

The Scottish Government has split the Caledonian Sleeper from the ScotRail franchise. Discussions are under way to ensure a reliable service with comfortable accommodation, appropriate for the needs of today's passengers, is achieved without making it too expensive for any but the rich to use.

### ■ Glasgow needs Crossrail and link to airport

In Glasgow, RailQwest, the campaign to improve railways in the West of Scotland, wants action on Glasgow Crossrail and a rail link to Glasgow airport. It is also protesting about the downgrading of the promised Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme.

### ■ Starlink campaigners win support for reopening

The StARLink (St Andrews Rail Link) campaign has gained the support of Fife Council Transportation Service, as well as considerable interest from ScotRail. It is hoped that the Scottish transport appraisal guidance will soon be applied to the proposal, and also that the line will be included in the forthcoming revision of TayPlan, the strategic plan for Tayside and North East Fife, to safeguard any new alignment. More info: <http://starlink-campaign.org.uk>



## Opportunity missed

Railfuture has remained too quiet over the Beeching anniversary, which was a golden opportunity to highlight the mistakes of the past to help shape the future. It would also have exposed the dirty tricks and shady practices of the 1960s and 1970s.

Politicians need reminding of their past mistakes and should not be let off the hook. While passengers are flocking back to the railway, many are simultaneously deserting the polling stations, disillusioned by politicians with selective memories.

It would also have been good for Railfuture to pay tribute to the railway volunteers whose marathon efforts have led to some station and line reopenings, thanks to patience, pressure and persistence.

I hope that in what is left of 2013, Beeching's 50th anniversary, Railfuture can be more proactive by bringing back Rail Development Week which was inspirational in the 1980s.

*A Oldfield, Long Lane, Worrall, Sheffield S35 0AF*

## Bias accusation

I consider Railfuture cannot claim to be unbiased after publishing the letter by Chris Bowers headed "Lib Dems pressure" in *Railwatch* 135. Very

convenient that it was published in the run-up to the local government elections on 2 May, so no time to publish an apology or retraction before voting took place.

*Richard Holland, Princes Gardens, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 7RH  
richolland1@btinternet.com*

## Thank you, Chris

Campaigners fighting to reopen the Uckfield-Lewes line are grateful to Chris Bowers (*Railwatch* 135) for his support. He discovered that the business case for reopening is probably three times better than stated in Network Rail's 2008 reinstatement study.

Railfuture's Sussex and Coastway division is now leading a fresh campaign, based on an all-party partnership approach with a clear programme to "bridge the gap". An affordable first-phase link is deliverable within a decade. Please register your support at [www.railfuture.org.uk/Uckfield+Lewes](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Uckfield+Lewes)

*Dick Tyler, Roger Blake and Chris Page, Railfuture Sussex & Coastway  
bridgethegap@railfuture.org.uk*

**Editors' note: You can read more about Chris Bowers and the Lewes-Uckfield studies at [http://chrisbowers.standsfor.me.uk/Latest\\_News/Articles/example2.xalter](http://chrisbowers.standsfor.me.uk/Latest_News/Articles/example2.xalter)**

## Road and rail poems

I thought your readers might be interested in two poems I have written. The first was prompted by a friend's purchase of a Volkswagen car, a vehicle

## Your letters extra

I always see as a product of Nazi ideology. The second was inspired by my first trip on Eurostar in 2010.

## The rhyme of the road lobby

We hate buses, we hate trains,  
We're all mouth and have no brains;  
Disrespect the workers' skill;  
Disregard the poor and ill.  
Traffic jams are what we like;  
You'll never see us on a bike.  
"Mass produce the People's Car"  
Quoth the Fuhrer – there you are.

Ford and fascist, hand in hand,  
Smash and bash our precious land;

"Fit to drive or fit to die" –

Why not ask the reason why.  
Arms exporters have their way;  
Oil and weapons rule, OK?

## A song for Railfuture

Eurostar once was just a dream;  
A far-fetched engineering scheme:

Political madness - Bonaparte's joy?

How many houses will it destroy?

Cross-channel genius then took hold;

Then came a workforce, gallant and bold,

The feat was accomplished – now we can see

A great Way to travel, for you and for me.

*Jo Martin, Downs View, Camp Road, Freshwater, Isle of Wight  
PO40 9HR*

## Positive in Ireland

As the author of the Northern Ireland letter in *Railwatch* 134, I was pleased by Peter Solomon's reaction to it in *Railwatch* 135.

There is now a very positive attitude to railways by the management of NI Railways and, more importantly, by civil servants. Despite our other political problems, most politicians now have a favourable approach to railways.

Fifty years ago, there was a very different approach by the late, unlamented Ulster Transport Authority – downhill to rail closures.

Recently though there has been a series of public meetings and consultations on positive developments, including electrification and reopening of some closed lines. There are also proposals for doubling of single track across Belfast

Dargan bridge without which rail services north of Belfast cannot develop.

As a senior citizen, I am unlikely to see electric trains operating in Northern Ireland in my lifetime, but I hope the decision to introduce them will come soon.

Now is the right time for such a decision. The entire suburban fleet of NI Railways has been renewed in recent years, and while replacements may be 30 years away, they should be electric.

The outlook was brightened by the Budget in March which produced a further £54 million for Northern Ireland. There will be many hands stretching out for this largesse and I already hear talk of the petrol heads wanting more road building. I can only hope local rail management will seek as large a share as possible.

By July, the Coleraine-Londonderry line will have reopened after phase 1 of its reconstruction, although it will be handicapped by a 28-mile single-line section, but phase 2 will see this section provided with an intermediate passing loop.

Another positive development has been the recent opening of Adelaide depot, Belfast's third. Adelaide depot is on the site of the largest engine shed of the Great Northern Railway (Ireland). The original shed opened in 1911.

While it may seem morbid, railways will survive me, whereas 50 years ago there was every prospect of NI Railways dying before me.

*R A Hunter, Barn Road, Carrickfergus BT38 7EU*

## Driver's top read

As a former footplateman with British Railways for 18 years, I look forward to every issue of *Railwatch*, the most interesting magazine of the many I have read in retirement over the past 25 years.

I began work in Wales as an engine cleaner, later transferring to Neasden, London. I moved back to Aberystwyth where we had varied duties including working the "posh" Cambrian Coast Express. When Aberystwyth depot closed, I moved to Crewe where I had fantastic experiences as a driver on all sorts of trains, including the Glasgow link.

*John A Davies, Plas Helyg Avenue, Penparcall, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 1QR*

## East Anglia

By Paul Hollinghurst  
paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk

### ■ Wisbech reopening campaign

Railfuture East Anglia launched a public campaign in February to gain support for reopening seven miles of railway line from March to Wisbech. We proposed a direct service to Cambridge, a journey that could take just 40 minutes and provide Wisbech with better transport links and aid economic development. We publicised a website petition in the local media and 12,000 leaflets were distributed by volunteers to every home in the Wisbech area. This generated extraordinary interest and, by early May, more than 2,800 people had signed the petition which will be presented to the county council. The council is carrying out a three-phase feasibility study, with the first stage recently published showing that the line would be commercially viable. The second stage, assessing the engineering costs, is about to be commissioned.

### ■ Cambridge station ticket hall expansion

Greater Anglia has announced that Cambridge station will benefit from a £4.25 million improvement scheme funded by Brookgate, developers of the adjacent CB1 project. The work will provide a concourse and booking hall three times larger than the existing one. The aim is to start work this summer with completion next year. Network Rail, Greater Anglia and Brookgate will work together on the wider regeneration of the area which will include improvements to the station approach, creating a station square, an hotel and a 3,000 space cycle park. Cambridge station was used by 8.8 million people in 2011/12, an increase of 7% over the previous year.

### ■ High hopes for new Cambridge Science Park station

In two years time, Cambridge should have a new station at Chesterton Junction, called Cambridge Science Park. Milton Parish Council has been told the station should stimulate high quality business development. Railfuture wants as many trains as possible to call there.

### ■ Two-year extension for Greater Anglia franchise

The Greater Anglia franchise is being extended to October 2016. Railfuture has sent a list of aspirations covering service, infrastructure, rolling stock, station and ticket machine improvements. These include additional services from Ipswich to Peterborough, Norwich to Cambridge, Cambridge to Stansted Airport and Colchester to Clacton and Walton-on-the-Naze, refurbishment or replacement of the inter-city trains, refurbishment of West Anglia class 317s, improvements to stations at Bury St Edmunds, Thetford and Newmarket, and station openings at Cambridge Science Park and Soham. The branch calls on Greater Anglia to repair Bury St Edmunds station to bring it back from the edge of complete dereliction and also provide a much-needed, heated passenger waiting room on the Cambridge-bound platform.

### ■ Better train service leads to 27% more passengers

The Office of Rail Regulation has published the 2011-12 station footfall statistics which show significant growth in passenger numbers between Ipswich and Saxmundham following the introduction of additional services to give an hourly frequency. This has resulted in annual growth of 10% at Westerfield, 27% at Woodbridge, 27% at Melton, 10% at Wickham Market and 8% at Saxmundham. The branch will carry out its own footfall count later this year at Halesworth to establish the effect of the recently introduced hourly service there.

### ■ New curve to speed freight trains from Felixstowe docks

Work is well under way north of Ipswich station to construct the north-to-east double-track curve to enable freight trains from the Stowmarket direction to run directly on to the East Suffolk line for the port of Felixstowe, where a third intermodal rail terminal will soon open, doubling rail capacity.



Monday 9 to Saturday 14 September 2013  
Group visit by rail-sea-rail via Holyhead

**IRELAND**  
based in the Dublin area  
with rail and tram trips

For details send SAE to Trevor Garrod,  
15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ  
or email [trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk)





**This is an artist's impression of the amazing roof which will be installed over the next five years as London Bridge station is rebuilt. London Bridge station, not far from Tower Bridge and HMS Belfast, both seen at the top of the picture, is being modified to accommodate a new Thameslink viaduct which will boost the number of through platforms from six to nine. There are also nine other terminal platforms. The new station will have 66% more space for passengers and, for the first time, a below-platform concourse will allow passengers access to platforms from one place. Network Rail's Andrew Hutton and Dave Blackall from the Department for Transport gave a presentation on Thameslink and London Bridge at a Railfuture meeting in May. More information is available at <http://www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk>**

## Finding a way out of the franchise fiasco

Twelve of the existing rail franchises are being extended by two years, with little democratic input or regard to passenger views, following the West Coast main line franchise fiasco.

Many campaigners are dubious about the rationale for franchising, while others claim Britain has a rail system to be proud of.

Louise Ellman, chair of the Commons transport committee, said the contract extensions, which add up to a total of 29 years, could not "seriously deliver value for money" for the taxpayer.

At Railfuture's AGM in Durham in May, president Christian Wolmar repeated his question: "What is rail franchising for?"

Railfuture vice president Peter Rayner says he despairs of franchising but Jim Steer, new president of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport said: "The European Union is encouraging member states to follow the British example in managing their railways and they cite ours as the best railway in Europe." The Government, buoyed by

this view, is planning to sell off East Coast, currently run by the not-for-profit publicly owned Directly Operated Railways.

Keeping East Coast in the public sector would allow a benchmark by which to judge the privatised franchises, and TSSA rail union boss Manuel Cortes believes the Government is selling off East Coast because it shows how well it is run compared to some of the other franchises.

He said: "It exposes the whole farce of the taxpayer funded private franchise system".

He added: "East Coast has paid over £600 million to the Treasury over the past three years while Virgin has effectively paid not one penny in the past 15 years because it was handed a taxpayer subsidy of £1.4 billion in 2007.

"This is the economics of the madhouse. They do not want passengers to know the truth about our massively expensive privately run system."

Leaving East Coast in the public sector would allow a future government to bring the other train

operators back into the public sector by allowing Directly Operated Railways to take them over without compensation when each franchise runs out. The leader of train drivers union Aslef, Mick Whelan, said the rush to dish out rail franchises shows that the Tories are expecting a defeat at the 2015 general election.

He criticised the Government decision when there is an active public debate over the way franchising should be implemented, and if it should continue.

He said franchising has "taken railway profits away from our industry and popped it into investor's pockets. It could have been invested in the future of rail. And it has cost the taxpayer millions in failed bids."

Detailed analysis by the Office of Rail Regulation shows that East Coast required only 0.2 per cent of subsidy, less than all its 18 rivals, and paid back the second highest return. The Labour party is divided over whether train operators should be brought back

into public control, although it is "keen" to make a pledge on keeping rail fares under control.

Rail campaigner Paul Salvesson is calling for more use of social enterprise and co-operatives, as well as more involvement of passengers and staff in running the railways.

He advocates a single, publicly owned InterCity UK with a network of regional rail services specified by regional authorities.

He added: "Scotland and London already have significant control over their railways. Northern English authorities are likely to want the same."

His report *Socialising Transport* is available online at [www.chartist.org.uk](http://www.chartist.org.uk)

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