



railwatch

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

No 142

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December 2014

**Vienna's new
central station**

See page 2

Winners of the Railfuture annual draw were revealed at the On Track for Success conference on 1 November:

£500 Mr F Smith, Ilkley. £200 Ms B Burfoot, Alton. £100 John Groves, Dursley. £50 Mr P Hurford, Hailsham. £20 Neil Henderson, Hatfield, P Finigan, Caterham, Mr R Blake, London and Mr R Khan, Llandudno.

£10 Mr A Edwards, Borehamwood, Mr S Adams, Bury St Edmunds, CPunchard, Durham, Mr R White, Hebden Bridge, Leominster C of E Team, Leominster, Alan Everett, London, Louis Long, Rugby and Mr D Allard, Royston.

Page one picture

Vienna has followed the example of Berlin by building a new Hauptbahnhof which integrates north-south and east-west routes through the city.

The new European station was opened in October after five years of building works.

It replaces Sudbahnhof and Ostbahnhof which were at right angles to each other.

Once fully operational, the new station will see 1,000 trains a day.

Regional trains started using Hauptbahnhof in 2012 and many long-distance trains will serve the station from this month when the timetable changes.

Most of the remaining long-distance trains, mainly Vienna-Salzburg, will be switched to the new station in December next year.

Austrian president Heinz Fischer launched two days of celebrations at the new station on 10 October.

Hauptbahnhof is linked to the

city centre by easy connections to underground trains and trams. The Austrian capital's other main stations are within a 30-minute journey time.

There are 10 platforms and a glass and steel roof. Unlike in British stations, there are 800 seats where passengers can wait for their trains without having to buy a cup of coffee.

There are 90 shops and free wi-fi in designated areas.

The travel centre includes a Kids Corner.

Step-free access is provided by 29 escalators and 14 lifts.

The £774 million cost of building the station has been paid by the national railway OBB, the city, European Union grants and property developments.

"With Wien Hauptbahnhof we are setting new standards for the 21st century," said OBB chief executive Christian Kern.

The new station provides connec-

tions to Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Poland. A new two kilometre chord line opens this month which will enable ICE trains from Germany to serve the new station and also Vienna airport.

The new station is crucial in the European Unions's developing Trans European Networks.

TEN 17: Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-Vienna-Bratislava

TEN 22: Athens-Sofia-Budapest-Vienna-Prague-Nuremberg/Dresden

TEN 23: Gdansk-Warsaw-Bрно/Bratislava-Vienna-Venice

Alps update

Track laying work on the 35 mile long Gotthard base tunnel, featured on page 1 of *Railwatch* 141, has been completed.

Test operations in the tunnel will start in autumn 2015 and the tunnel is expected to enter service in June 2016.



Speedlink wagon from the British Rail era

Rail freight new hope

By Gary Tinsey

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Railfuture's freight group is hoping that an innovative website could bring back a large amount of freight to rail, by consolidating smaller loads.

If it succeeds, it could help reverse the loss of business since British Rail abandoned wagon-load freight 23 years ago when it axed Speedlink in 1991.

The website, FreightArranger.co.uk, aims to find ways of combining individual loads and encouraging back-loading of empty wagons, for journeys of over 100 miles.

FreightArranger says it is a free online booking and tracking service, which makes it easy for consignors to use rail operations in the UK for freight flows as small as a single container.

FreightArranger handles all the complications of container types, routes, gauges, timetables and collection/delivery to offer reliable transit options.

It says freight consignors do not need to get involved in the complexities, because FreightArranger provides real-time tracking information, with user-customised alerts and aims to find the "best value solution". The tipping point at which rail costs less than road is said to be usually between 120 and 150 miles, but varies according to route and the commodity carried.

Back in 1991, Tim Hansford, then director of Railfreight Distribution, explained his decision to axe Speedlink.

He said freight trains had to pay their full track costs while road haulage had the roads provided for them by the Government.

He reckoned that between 1986 and 1990, the Government gave a £5 billion subsidy to the road network.

He said rail would have to re-focus on trainload freight where it could make a profit.

He predicted that trainload freight would profit from the Channel Tunnel when it opened in 1994 and that there would 54 trains a day, rising to 70 a day. Sadly that prediction has proved far from a reality.

In 2013, only seven freight trains a day used the Channel Tunnel.



Cross-Channel rail freight was discussed by the Rail Freight Group at a meeting of its members in November.

RFG said that in recent months there has been a welcome upturn in traffic levels, supported by Eurotunnel's decision to reduce tolls, overall economic recovery and for many services, the superior loading gauge on High Speed One.

Also in November, Europorte announced the launch of a new service between Barking, Essex, and Dourges, France, on behalf of John G Russell.

But RFG believes a number of hurdles to growth still exist and action by the industry is needed, including:

- The introduction of innovative services, such as piggyback, to open up new markets

- Physical network restrictions in Britain and elsewhere

- Terminal capacity, particularly to meet growing needs at Barking

- Measures to improve efficiency and increase train loading and capacity

- Responding to the impact of the European Union sulphur directive which is likely to increase costs for cross-channel ferries and create potential for rail operators.

Appeal to Chancellor

Freight on Rail has called on Chancellor George Osborne to use his December statement to support rail freight, which generates more than £1.5 billion worth of British economic benefits each year. FoR says rail freight can play an even bigger role in reducing road congestion, road fatalities and pollution.

FoR calls for a national networks planning policy which recognises the need for strategic rail freight interchanges, confirmation of rail freight grants for the next five years, and releasing more capacity on the West Coast main line for freight trains to cater for the forecast four-fold growth in consumer rail freight over the next 30 years.

Yorkshire

By Chris Hyomes
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■ ■ HS3 for the North of England

The Government is examining plans for an HS3 rail link across the north of England, suggested by Sir David Higgins of HS2. Sir David said journey times from Manchester to Leeds could be cut almost in half. His proposals *Rebalancing Britain: from HS2 towards a national transport strategy* were welcomed by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive. His report recommends the development of a faster TransNorth rail link, together with the creation of a Transport for the North group led by the combined authorities of Sheffield, Leeds, Hull, Manchester, Newcastle and Liverpool aimed at stimulating local economies by developing rail and road networks.

SYPTe's Julie Hurley said: "We warmly welcome Sir David's recognition of the support from the Sheffield City Region for HS2 and the ongoing confidence in SCR's suitability for an HS2 station location. However, careful consideration needs to be given to how to best derive benefits for the SCR as well as neighbouring regions on the HS2 route. It is only by making sure the HS2 network is well connected to the whole transport network that the benefits of the new line will be maximised."

"Improving connections between the East and West is vital. But investment in the TransNorth HS3 line must not be only Leeds and Manchester focused, and serious consideration must be given to connecting Sheffield to Manchester and Leeds. Sir David's proposed Transport for the North powerhouse will only be realised if a connection to SCR is included within the plans. Linking the SCR HS2 station to the TransNorth line will bring towns and cities closer together in order to boost skills, enable inter-city employment, encourage regional investment and provide security for the North."

■ ■ HS3 talk fails to deflect battle over proposed cuts

Rail union RMT said it was cynical and hypocritical that the Government and Rail North are promoting HS3 but are also threatening to "devastate jobs and services through the new Northern and TPE franchises". More than 50 MPs have signed early day motion 174 against cuts to jobs and services in the Government's proposals for the future of the Northern and TransPennine Express franchises. RMT was organising a lobby of Parliament on 4 November.

■ ■ Pacer is symbol of what is wrong in north of England

A symbol of what is wrong with transport in the north of England is the Pacer train, *Yorkshire Post* readers were told in an article by Stephen Joseph, chief executive of the Campaign for Better Transport. He said: "Despite some upgrades, Pacers have a badly outdated design. To save money, they are based on the design of a Leyland bus, rather than a train. This means their wheels "squeal" when going round tighter bends, and they have poor suspension, leading to the nickname "nodding donkeys".

"They are also uncomfortable. Significant numbers have old-fashioned bench seating and their peculiar inward-opening doors have steps, making access difficult, especially for those with reduced mobility. Indeed, most commentators assumed the Pacers' death knell had been sounded when they fell foul of the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act, meaning they will be illegal by 2020 without major refurbishment."

He concluded: "Replacing the Pacers has become a test – a symbol of how serious the Government is about upgrading the North's infrastructure."

LOCAL ACTION



railwatch

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Elections Board elections held annually. Nomination forms can be obtained from www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Elections

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

High speed rail salute

Britain's only domestic high speed rail service celebrates its fifth anniversary this month to the cheers of Ashford Borough Council.

The council believes the 140mph train service, and the Eurostar link to Brussels and Paris, has transformed the town's economic fortunes.

Javelin trains slashed journey times from Ashford to London by more than half in December 2009. It takes 31 minutes to get to Stratford or 38 minutes to St Pancras International.

Council leader Gerry Clarkson says the fast train service has attracted businesses and created jobs, improved the quality of life of commuters, drawn more people to live in the Garden of England and has put Ashford in pole position with access to both London and European markets.

"HS1 is the most important economic boost to the South East in years and has strengthened Ashford's reputation as the powerhouse economy of Kent.

"With our connectivity, we have truly now become the UK's only international town."

Operator Southeastern says more than 70% of journeys from Ashford are now made on high-speed trains. Richard Dean of Southeastern said: "Over the next four years we will be able to expand our high-speed service further, taking it to more stations and opening up journey opportunities for even more

passengers." Even French companies have relocated to Ashford in recent years, with all of them citing top class rail links as part of the reason.

Electronics after-sales firm SBE, foods supplements specialist Sante Verte, and web TV channel Eclipsia have joined established French employers such as perfumes manufacturer Givaudan in making the Kent town their home.

Jo James of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, said: "We have seen businesses move to Ashford as a result of HS1 and we also know of existing firms who have decided to expand thanks to the introduction of fast trains.

"I have been contacted by groups involved in the HS2 project keen to know what impact HS1 has had on the economy here and I have told them that it has been an overwhelming success."

Alex Davies of Hobbs Parker estate agents said HS1 is a key factor for property buyers.

"The train is a constant in many of our enquiries, especially from people looking to move into the area," he said.

"Interestingly, the spectrum of buyers is broader than many predicted when HS1 launched."

McArthurGlen has unveiled plans for the expansion of its Ashford Designer Outlet, which already attracts around three million visitors a year and is a short walk from Ashford International Station.

Lincolnshire

By Don Peacock
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■ ■ Improvements promised

Lincolnshire branch led Railfuture's response to the public consultation on the East Midlands Trains franchise. The present EMT franchise, operated by Stagecoach, would have ended in October next year but the Government is now planning to negotiate a new short-term direct award franchise which would run until October 2017. We have a meeting arranged with Department for Transport to discuss our response to the consultation. We have stressed the opportunities for service improvements which are now available following the completion of the upgrade of the Lincoln-Spalding "Joint Line". Following the welcome news that we were going to get an improved Nottingham-Lincoln service from May next year, EMT has consulted on the proposed timetable. Railfuture has also been involved in Nottingham to Lincoln Stakeholder Board discussions on fine tuning the timetable to meet the points raised by respondents.

■ ■ Better service sought on Lincoln-Sheffield line

Railfuture Lincolnshire is continuing its attempts to get some improvements on the Lincoln-Sheffield route which is served by both Northern Rail and EMT.

■ ■ Bid to upgrade station for disabled travellers

A meeting with East Coast Trains was held recently to look at ways of improving access for the disabled to Retford's low level platforms and generally making the platforms a more welcoming experience for passengers.

■ ■ Railfuture set to meet Northern and TPE bidders

Meetings with the bidders for the new Northern and TransPennine Express franchises are being planned by Railfuture Lincolnshire.

■ ■ Fears over truncating long-distance services

We are monitoring the recent discussions on improved north of England connectivity, especially in light of the Department for Transport suggestion of terminating through services to Manchester from Cleethorpes at Doncaster, and providing comment to north and north east Lincolnshire councils.

■ ■ AGM date set for 2015

Railfuture Lincolnshire AGM is set for 14 March 2015 at St Hugh's Church Hall in Lincoln.

Railfuture AGM notice

Notice is hereby given that the annual general meeting of the Railway Development Society Ltd will be held at the Savoy Hotel, Queens Promenade, Blackpool FY2 9SJ on 16 May 2015. There will be a morning session with one or more guest speakers followed by a break for lunch. The formal AGM will commence at 13.30. Nominations for election for chairman and to the board of directors must be sent to Railfuture Returning Officer, 12 Valley View, Great Bourton, Banbury OX17 1QJ to arrive by 1 February 2015. Nomination forms can be obtained from the same address or from the Railfuture website at www.railfuture.org.uk

Motions for discussion at the AGM must be sent to the Company Secretary, 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Ipswich IP9 2ND to arrive by 28 April 2015. They should be posted in typed format or emailed to CompanySecretary@railfuture.org.uk

Details and a booking form for the buffet lunch will be sent to members later. By order of the board, L Butler, Company Secretary. Railfuture is the campaigning name of the Railway Development Society Ltd. More info: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

Rail leads the way to a sounder economy

By Ian Brown
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Railfuture members and branches have certainly taken on the duty of briefing potential political candidates at local and national level. Rail has risen up the agenda, even rivalling health and education for air time.

Some of this resulted from negative publicity fuelled by issues such as the damaging fares fiasco in the North of England and the perceived wish of the Government to see Pacer trains survive beyond the next franchise round.

But the positive effect is the increasing recognition that rail has a major contribution to make in sustaining and revitalising the economy across the country as has long been acknowledged in London and the South East.

This has been reinforced by a London-based government embracing such projects as Thameslink and Crossrail, and the expanding Overground.

The objectives are to make rail effective in coping with expected population growth and also to stimulate the economy.

However, given the large new construction element associated with these projects, the solution to other key concerns is starting to be linked to new rail projects.

There are many other rivals for capital project approval, such as replacing old water pipes and new road construction.

Rail, however, has a very important advantage over many of these rivals for capital funds and this is being increasingly recognised.

I am thinking particularly of the UK rail supply industry, which includes many small and medium-sized enterprises in the supply chain – bringing jobs and developing skills.

The benefits of rail projects are not limited to physical construction. A rail project includes the construction of new trains, provision of track and complex control systems, much of which is high value and high tech, requiring an increasingly skilled workforce.

Additionally, a railway creates the need for long-term sustainable skilled employment to operate it. Continuous development of rail not only helps to reduce unemployment, but it speeds up the progression towards a more technically skilled workforce.

Undoubtedly, investment in London is starting to bring employment and skill benefits across the country. Such a limited approach, of course, will not bring the economic benefits of better transport to the rest of the country. Understanding



IAN BROWN

economic theory is not easy and many Chancellors of the Exchequer have great difficulty with it. However, even politicians should be capable of grasping that what is clearly working in London should work in the same way in the rest of the country, particularly as population growth is increasingly concentrated on cities.

Our advocacy of rail development should take more account of these wider benefits of investing in rail projects.

Rail projects that potentially provide a strategic fit with these wider imperatives include those that make cities work better.

Cities such as Bristol and Nottingham are in this category, where well-thought-through rail schemes can improve the local economies and also allow those economies to grow in a sustainable way.

In a city such as Cardiff, effective rail schemes can provide a kick-start to generate completely new economic activity.

Chancellor George Osborne's HS3 announcement is interesting in this context. The announcement came out of the blue, although cynics could say it was well timed for the coming general election on Thursday 7 May.

However, its significance could be far-reaching and fundamental, more so than the concept of High Speed Two, which was initially all about speed to London.

Why is this so? The answer may come from the source of the announcement. The Treasury was the backer for Crossrail and the announcement on planning for HS3 came from Mr Osborne, that is from the Treasury, not the Department for Transport, which appears to maintain the mindset that urban railways that lose money should continue as shoe-string operations.

The breakthrough in thinking is the realisation that the London experience can be replicated if northern cities can be treated as an agglomeration, so potentially creating a second English economic powerhouse. Transport



LEEDS: The current TransPennine Express services, operated by class 170 and 185 diesels, have been described as more TransPennine than Express but the Government is now considering ambitious "HS3" plans to upgrade and speed up the route between Manchester and Leeds and beyond as a way to boost the economy of northern English cities

Scotland has already recognised this, as evidenced by the electrification currently under way in the Central Belt and indeed the new Scottish rail franchise.

Glasgow to Edinburgh and Manchester to Leeds are similar in length to London's Crossrail, so the principle of integration should apply.

Interestingly, the Scottish project is designed to bring transport and economic benefits to the whole Central Belt region, not just the important single points of Glasgow and Edinburgh city centres, both of which do connect into regional systems.

All the initial talk about HS2 was based on improving travel speeds between single points in cities but the realisation gradually dawned that the more important issues are rail capacity and improving regional economies by improving regional connectivity.

HS3 represents a big opportunity in achieving those goals. The challenge is to get it right at the planning stage, rather than try to adapt later, as HS2 proponents have had to do.

Railfuture's advocacy is important in this direction. We should clearly set out what we need from HS3. The actual design and choice of route should then lead naturally from these principles. Such principles might well include lessons from HS2.

Four principles that come to mind include:

■ Economic and transport benefits should accrue to the whole region whose core is defined as Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire.

■ Through connectivity is essential from Merseyside and

Lancashire as well as Hull, Lincolnshire and the north east of England. A separate dedicated Birmingham to the North East HS2 service competing with CrossCountry's South West-Birmingham-North East service is doomed for example.

■ HS2, HS3, and the rail network in general should integrate properly with city rail and light rail systems.

■ The route chosen should not put at risk existing, increasingly important routes such as those between Manchester and Leeds or Sheffield, which are playing a more substantial role.

In a declining rail industry that gave birth to Railfuture, we had an important role.

In an expanding rail industry our role is changing significantly. In some ways it is more significant as the evidence is there that informed advocacy of rail works.

Success with extending HS1 Javelin services to serve Deal and Sandwich is dramatic.

We can also influence schemes that have not been thought through properly, often being announced with political expediency in mind. We can help to put them on the right track.

However we look at this, it is absolutely clear our members and branches have got their work cut out.

It will be worth the effort though because an opportunity to play such an important part in shaping the developing railway does not occur very often.

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

LOCAL ACTION



LOCAL ACTION

North West

By Arthur Thomson
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■ ■ Rochdale opportunity

Rochdale rail campaigners are worried that a station upgrade as part of the Northern Hub proposals will be an opportunity missed. Instead of providing a new full-length platform, there are reports that a west-facing bay platform (with a maximum capacity of four coaches) is to be carved out of the existing island platform. The local rail user group, Support The Oldham Rochdale Manchester line (STORM), believes the plan is short-sighted and the new platform needs to be able to take longer trains in future. Work was programmed to start in November 2014 with detailed plans submitted to Rochdale Council before that, but no plans have yet been seen. STORM suggests that Littleborough offers a cheaper, easier option for upgrade.

■ ■ Northern backs plans to boost Mid Cheshire services

Campaigners from Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association persuaded Northern Trains' managing director Alex Hynes to join them on the "Sardines Express" 07.17 Piccadilly to Chester which often leaves people behind when it is a Pacer rather than a Sprinter. He has committed Northern to working up a business and resource case to see if a "two trains an hour" service can be introduced before the end of the current franchise in 2016. The Cheshire & Warrington local transport board supports the proposal to double the number of train services on the line through Knutsford.

■ ■ Friends of Reddish South win backing from the top

Restoring a full passenger service on the line from Stockport to Manchester Victoria via Reddish South and Denton stations, is backed by Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce in its response to the Northern franchise consultation. The Friends of Reddish South campaign with sister group Friends of Denton were delighted to receive the good news from Andrew Gwynne MP. FORSS was invited to a meeting with Transport for Greater Manchester's Roy Chapman and other officials. Noel Henry of FORSS explained plans for the reinstatement of Stockport-Manchester services.

■ ■ Councils join forces to back Colne-Skipton rail link

Lancashire County Council transport chiefs are to meet with their counterparts in North Yorkshire in a bid to make progress on the reopening of the Colne-Skipton line. Councillor John Fillis told a delegation from the Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership (SELRAP) that it would be the first step in forming a project development group tasked with overseeing the reinstatement of the line.

SELRAP's Andy Shackleton said: "One of the first tasks for the fledgling project development group will be to secure funding for a GRIP 3 study." GRIP 3 (Governance for Rail Investment Projects) is the point where engineering options for reopening the Skipton-Colne rail line will be developed and accurately costed. See also picture on page 9.

In the same week, Dr Jon Lamonte of the One North group told the Commons transport committee that the group would consider the case for reinstating the 11.5 mile missing section of line between Skipton and Colne. Dr Lamonte is also chief executive of Transport for Greater Manchester. Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne has said he is ready to fund viable proposals in One North's submission, as part of his plans for a "Northern powerhouse" of better-connected places.



Wales

By Rowland Pittard
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■ ■ Heads of the Valleys road
Work to upgrade the A465 road from Brynmawr to Tredegar is due for completion in 2015 at a cost of £168 million. Work will start soon on the next stage from Brynmawr to Gilwern. Over a 20-year period and at a total cost of £800 million, the A465, otherwise known as the heads of the valleys road, will become a dual carriageway. While the road was being upgraded, the Welsh government reduced other transport spending, including bus grants. The A465 follows the routes of the former Abergavenny-Merthyr and Merthyr-Neath rail lines and Railfuture regrets both that an alternative rail route was not retained to West Wales and that public transport has been neglected. Rather than continually spending money on road upgrades, Railfuture believes more thought should be given to creating an integrated public transport network, including rail and bus links. Concentrating so much of the transport budget on road building forces poor families to own cars, putting extra stress on household budgets. Road traffic is declining with more young people every year finding it impossible to afford cars. Many say they would rather own a smart phone and access to wifi than a car.

■ ■ South Wales cut off from English network

South Wales was isolated by several incidents in October, a combination of engineering works and infrastructure failures on the network in England.

■ ■ Another step forward towards a Cardiff region metro
News that was more positive came in August when Transport Minister Edwina Hart published plans for the next stage of the Cardiff Capital Region Metro, which aims to deliver integrated public transport for south east Wales. Railfuture has been a key campaign group in calling for Metro style upgrades to rail services in the area between Newport and Bridgend.

■ ■ Magor Action Group keeps up the pressure for station
Railfuture South Wales welcomes the representation of the Magor Action Group on its committee. MAG continues to be very active and welcomed to a recent meeting Mark Youngman, formerly transport manager for Monmouthshire, in his new role as First Great Western's development manager – Wales. It is essential that the relief lines between Severn Tunnel Junction and Cardiff are electrified to enable the station to be built at Magor for which MAG has achieved almost 100% support locally.

■ ■ Network Rail positive approach to electrification project
Network Rail has updated Monmouthshire County Council's strategic transport group on the electrification project in South Wales. While there is still no final government decision on electrifying the relief lines between Cardiff and Severn Tunnel Junction, NR is providing for the electrification in its design. Detailed local consultation with the local councils will be followed by a full public exhibition.

■ ■ First trains in 50 years give Llangollen Railway a boost
Passenger trains ran from Llangollen to Corwen in October for the first time in 50 years when the heritage Llangollen Railway extended public services from Carrog to Corwen East. The railway is fund-raising for a further extension to a permanent station nearer Corwen town.

■ ■ Signals upgrade and more loops needed to cut delays
There were a number of freight train failures on the Welsh Marches line in October causing three-hour delays to passenger trains and day-long disruptions. Railfuture has campaigned for reversible signalling, additional crossovers and more loops to reduce delays.

www.railfuturewales.org.uk



Action stations for Railfuture

By Chris Page

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At Railfuture's annual general meeting in May I promised to dedicate this year's branches and groups day to understanding the lessons of the Have Your Say survey conducted at the end of last year, and to agreeing the actions required to implement them.

On 11 October, 30 of the most active members of Railfuture, representing our branches, groups and board, met at the Birmingham and Midland Institute.

The main aim of the day was to encourage members to work together to develop Railfuture as an effective campaigning organisation which is respected by government, rail industry and public so that it will survive and grow.

Unlike previous branches and groups days, this was a workshop session. There was no audience, and no "Death by Powerpoint".

All the delegates were performers and the session was led by an independent professional facilitator, Paul Kaerger, so that everyone had an equal voice.

To set the context of our current situation, our finance team David Harby and Jerry Alderson explained how our ageing membership means that our income and the number of active members, and hence our ability to campaign, will shrink unless we can recruit and enthuse sufficient new members.

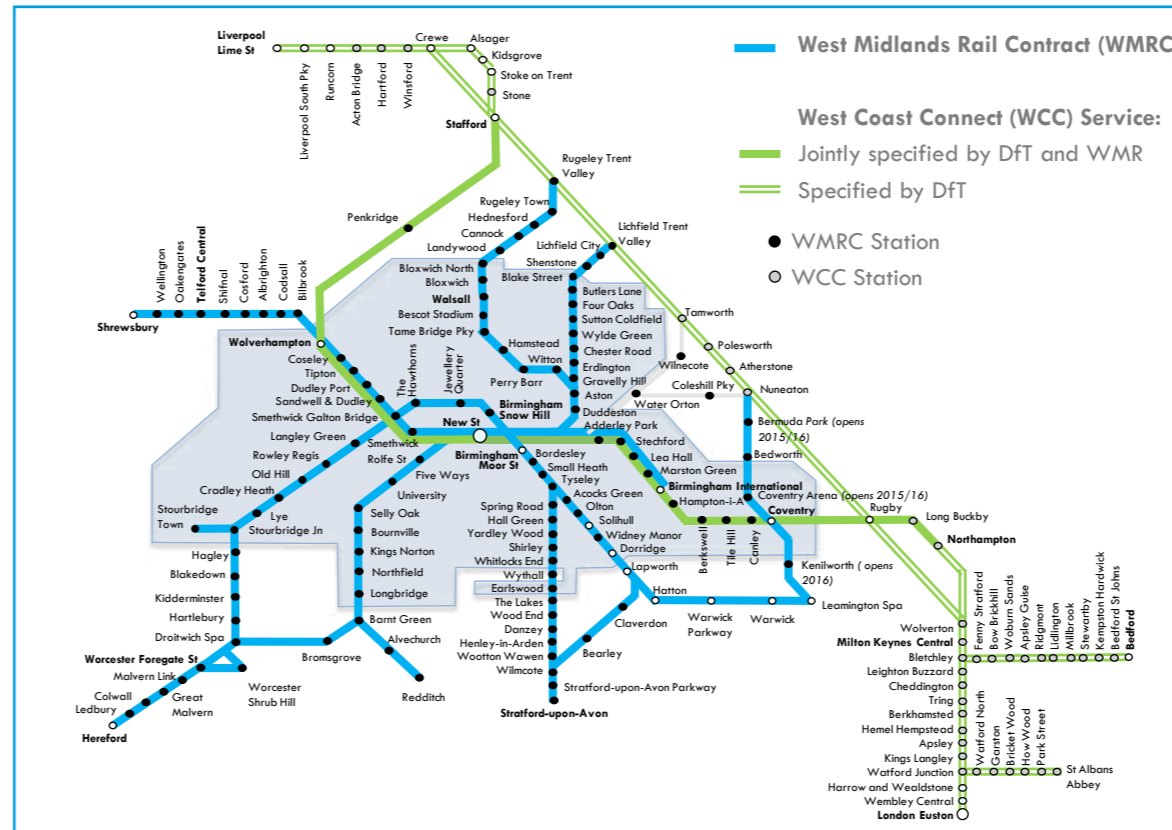
The Have Your Say survey showed that we can meet that challenge by campaigning, by celebrating our successes, and building on the willingness of our members to support us by recruiting amongst their friends.

Railfuture board member Roger Blake described the opportunity that the current popularity and growth of rail travel has given us. The need for an independent and nationwide voice to represent the views of rail users from a wide range of backgrounds has never been more important.

In teams we reviewed what Railfuture does well. These are the things of which we, as members, are proud.

We will highlight these achievements in every publication and channel we use. The common themes are that we are a nationwide organisation which also delivers successful local campaigns, we are well-informed and well-respected in the rail industry, and that we successfully deliver high profile campaigns.

We are independent, well-informed, and open-minded,



campaigning on the issues that affect rail users. We stand for better and more integrated rail travel.

At the end of the morning session, what was positive was that the delegates had a shared view of what Railfuture stood for and what its achievements have been over the past few years.

There was a willingness to participate in finding ways in which Railfuture can develop and grow in the forthcoming years, taking on new challenges.

We then identified our stakeholders, the principal groups of people we engage with.

The list included rail industry participants, national and local government bodies, rail users, the public, businesses and UK visitors.

This list shows the reach and influence that Railfuture has. It is important that we keep a track of who we interact with and why.

Interwoven were the benefits that the stakeholders get from engaging with Railfuture, for example helping MPs, Councillors, and Officers to understand transport issues and appreciate what is deliverable.

It is important to include these benefits in communications with our stakeholders, to make sure they recognise the value of what we do.

Our afternoon session focused on what to do next. In another team exercise we brainstormed

BIRMINGHAM: Railfuture chose the heart of the British rail network for its "Look into the Future" meeting in October. Change is coming to the West Midlands rail network with discussions already under way in the corridors of power to split the London Midland franchise. See map above and page 17. Railfuture West Midlands is already on the case and, following the October meeting, has identified campaigns on which it will concentrate over the next five years. It is considering organising a public forum to ensure that the Birmingham Mobility Action Plan is analysed and properly implemented. Railfuture West Midlands aims to raise its own profile by airing the issues around the plan

our hopes and fears for the future. We identified what we know, what could go wrong, the risks to our organisation and the rail industry, and what success will look like.

The common theme was to increase the scope and influence of Railfuture.

This list of options was wide-ranging and further work will be undertaken to identify which opportunities to grasp.

But the day ended with agreement to a 90-day action plan, starting on 1 November 2014, to kick start this change process.

During the day many more issues facing Railfuture were identified than it was possible to resolve in the time available.

These issues were all captured and assigned to individuals, and will also be addressed in the action plan which has been sent to all the delegates.

Perhaps the key immediate action was for all delegates to brief their

branch members within 30 days on the outcome of the workshop, by newsletter, presentations or email.

Please contact your branch chair if you have not yet heard from your branch representative.

If you have an email address but not yet given it to us, please share it with us so that we can keep you updated, as it is not economical to contact everyone by letter or phone.

Everyone felt that it had been a thought-provoking, rewarding, enjoyable and successful day. However now comes the hard bit – taking the ideas and positive feeling that we generated at the workshop, implementing the 90-day action plan, improving communication within Railfuture, and then keeping the momentum going in the years ahead to ensure the survival and growth of Railfuture as an effective campaigning organisation.

Chris Page is vice-chairman of Railfuture

◆◆◆◆ Russia is planning a new 475-mile long high speed line from Moscow to Kazan

Thames Valley

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

■ ■ New service timetabled

Chiltern Railways has published a draft timetable for the new Oxford Parkway-Marylebone service which is due to start next year. It offers a half-hourly frequency. The Oxford and Bicester Rail Action Group, however, believes Islip needs a better service. A public meeting in Islip was held before formal representations after news that Islip services are being cut from 11 to seven or eight journeys a day. We praise Chiltern's tremendous achievements but this plan needs revisiting and Islip passenger needs met. Oxford-Bicester upgrade work is continuing on schedule.

■ ■ Design work continues on Bicester-Bletchley link

Progress continues on the next stage of the East West Rail link, from Bicester to Bletchley. Parsons Brinckerhoff has been awarded an £8 million Network Rail contract to develop timetables, track plans, civil engineering and station designs in preparation for detailed design and specification work. Public exhibitions are being held to seek views on proposed crossing changes while Thomson Ecology is undertaking environmental studies. The leaders of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire councils have welcomed the positive findings of the latest East West Rail study which looks at options for routes from Bedford to Cambridge. Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg gave a commitment to the link at his party conference as part of a plan for garden cities along the "brain belt". EWR was also mentioned at the Tory conference with Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin praising Iain Stewart, MP for Milton Keynes South.

■ ■ MPs call for new Bristol-Oxford service

The Department for Transport is being urged to consider introducing a Bristol-Oxford service, in an open letter from MPs along the route, which is supported by the local enterprise partnerships. If a Bristol-Oxford local service was introduced it could help make a better case for reopening stations such as Grove/Wantage Road. Both Railfuture and Oxfordshire County Council support reopening. The Bristol-Oxford service could of course also be extended to Bedford.

■ ■ New Chiltern Railways depot planned for Banbury

A planning application from Chiltern Railways for a maintenance depot and sidings on the former engine shed site at Banbury has been presented to Cherwell District Council. This is needed to cope with extra stock used to meet passenger growth. Stabling, light maintenance, cleaning and fuelling will be provided for 58 vehicles.

■ ■ A minor victory for passengers at Bletchley

The Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users Association reports that after years of campaigning, most services will now terminate in platform 5 at Bletchley which has lift access, a waiting room and cross-platform interchange to London-bound trains. No progress has been made though on extending services to Milton Keynes Central. Meanwhile, proposals to improve access to the town are being developed.

■ ■ £35m funding for Witney transport corridor

Witney has received £35 million of government funding towards improving the transport corridor. Rail campaigners met Prime Minister David Cameron, the local MP, who supports the move and wishes to see all options evaluated. Oxfordshire County Council plans to set up a stakeholder group and have a public consultation in mid 2015. Railfuture will continue to work with the Witney Oxford Transport Group to promote the rail option.

■ ■ Bridleway idea threat to Heathrow airport link line

Hopes of reopening the High Wycombe-Bourne End line, which could be used for Heathrow services, may be put at risk by suggestions that the track bed is used as a bridleway.





Your letters

Bring back BR

After more than 20 years as a member of the society, I have decided to discontinue my membership. With some regret, I have come to the conclusion that the society's unwillingness to unequivocally oppose rail privatisation and call for full renationalisation means it is wasting its time.

I see it as a great irony that the "Railway Development Society" does not acknowledge privatisation as the single biggest threat to the development of Britain's railways since Ernest Marples, it having made the rail industry so hugely expensive that most of the improvements and reopenings the society campaigns for simply are not going to happen.

While the vast input of public money directed at the privatised industry in recent years is delivering some benefits (and therefore to some extent masking the failure of privatisation which would, we were told, reduce the level of subsidy needed), this degree of funding is not only unsustainable but is giving taxpayers extremely poor value for money.

Despite receiving billions of pounds more in subsidies each year than British Rail, the privatised railway has given us the highest rail fares in Europe and added more than £30 billion to the national debt.

At some point in the future, public funding to the railways will inevitably be cut. When that occurs, I want to see the rail industry structured in such a way that maximises efficiency, the ability to do more with less. Otherwise, there will likely be service cuts and possibly even line closures. None of us wants to see that.

I was invited to join the society after having a letter published in a local newsletter in which I expressed deep concern over the effects of impending rail privatisation, my concerns having now largely been

realised (higher fares, higher costs, inefficiency caused by fragmentation). The society was, at that time, very vocal in highlighting the dangers of privatisation and I was only too happy to join.

The society avoids publicly stating a position for or against rail privatisation so as to remain "politically neutral", which makes little sense when none of the principal political parties currently has a policy to renationalise the railways.

I am therefore diverting my full support to the Bring Back British Rail campaign.

Name and address supplied

Railhead Watford

The interim Virgin franchise for the West Coast included various "passenger benefits", including Watford Junction as a calling point. But I suspect the Department for Transport will not change the Virgin policy of providing a "limited service" at Watford. Currently that means a reasonable service to Birmingham but basically only one daily direct train to Liverpool, Glasgow or Manchester (at 05.45, 05.50, 06.51).

In the 1980s and 1990s, Watford was an effective railhead for a population of about one million, and enjoyed a sequence of convenient departures for business travellers to Liverpool, Glasgow and Manchester. Virtually all disappeared with the late 1990s Virgin franchise.

I suspect the DfT wants the fastest possible A to B timings and believes a Watford stop would interrupt the flow. It would probably argue that passengers from Watford can get the local service to Milton Keynes and change to northbound trains. This is so inconvenient that drivers who would have gone to Watford would divert up the M1 and park at Milton Keynes instead.

Should we therefore press the DfT to require a few more

Watford "stoppers" in the next franchise for 2017? If the departures were around midday, the early-morning pressure would have subsided and ex-London trains would have fewer passengers.

The small delay and additional energy-use would surely be offset by additional income, not to say the goodwill and publicity engendered in the Watford area. Or do we have to be patient and wait for HS2 to relieve the pressure!

The railhead concept can be good for the operator and convenient for the large outer-London customer base, just as Stevenage is still, to some degree, on the East Coast main line.

John Davis, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 5UD

Village France

I read Peter Solomon's letter in *Railwatch* 141 and agree with him both about the beauty of the Catalan area of France and the pleasure of travelling there by train. But even the main line between the coastal towns has a two-hour gap between trains for much of the day and, even in summer, there are gaps of double that on the line running inland from Perpignan. Such a service pattern is found in much of France, away from the major population areas. Indeed there are continuing examples of rural rail lines being closed and replaced by buses and of cross-country services being truncated.

The idea of buses replacing trains is worrying for *Railwatch* readers. However, it is quite usual that these are run on behalf of the regional authority and not only link in with main line trains but have through ticketing arrangements. The bus can also access village centres while the railway station can be some distance away. When lines are closed in France, the track, or at least the trackbed, is retained. This aids reopening if circumstances change. Reopenings have happened, between Cannes and Grasse on the Cote d'Azur and between Nantes and Chateaubriant in

western France for a tram-train service.

There is much to admire in the French approach to railways, but undoubtedly there was a period when the emphasis was so heavily on developing the TGV network that other lines were starved of management interest and investment. This has changed somewhat over the past 15 years or so after responsibility for local public transport was regionalised, although this varies from area to area.

There are also signs that connecting the TGV network to local services is being given greater importance. A rail link has been established recently between Avignon TGV station and the station in the town centre, while a long-closed line to Besancon has been reopened to link with Besancon TGV station on the Rhone-Rhin line.

I will continue to explore France, taking several trips a year on trains. However, I am increasingly prepared that some local journeys will turn out to be on a bus.

John Stanford, Colvestone Crescent, London E8 jhn.stnfrd@tiscali.co.uk

Cash for delays

I would be interested to know whether *Railwatch* readers think delayed passengers should receive not only a refund of their ticket costs but also expenses incurred when making alternative arrangements after missing a flight or Eurostar. My wife and I missed a Eurostar connection because of the failure of two train operating companies and Network Rail to provide accurate information to passengers, which would have avoided us having to pay supplementary charges on Eurostar when we missed our booked train.

We travelled by London Midland from Birmingham to London Euston leaving two hours to get to St Pancras. On arrival at Northampton passengers were told after 20 minutes waiting on the train that a driver was awaited. Five minutes later we were told the train had been cancelled because of an emergency blockage of the line at Watford. No information was given to passengers about alternative travel but we decided to hire a taxi to Wellingborough which has direct services to St Pancras. That cost £31. The next train from

Wellingborough was shown as running 10 minutes late, but an announcement was made that it had been cancelled. There was now no way we could get to St Pancras to check in 30 minutes before departure time. When we finally arrived in London two and a half hours late, we went straight to the Eurostar booking office and were told there was space available on a later train but a supplement of £39 each would be payable. So our expenses had mounted to £110.

I read a case on the Passenger Focus website where in similar circumstances a passenger on an East Coast train found his train cancelled at Newcastle and was on a booked flight at Edinburgh. There was a signal failure so there were no trains until further notice. He claimed £242 for his taxi fare from Newcastle to Edinburgh which was initially refused by East Coast Trains on the basis it was "a consequential loss" but after taking up the matter with Passenger Focus they refunded his taxi fare.

I consider that when there are genuine circumstances whereby a passenger has incurred expenses, they should be refunded without recourse to Passenger Focus.

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

Overground threat

In *Railwatch* 141 Bob Howes cited examples of the downside of Transport for London's expansion as it has affected the Oxted line. Peckham Rye had enjoyed a frequent daily service of electric trains to Victoria virtually since 1909, but no longer. The service is now weekdays only. The first train arrives at Victoria at 07.04, the last departure is 20.09, a Southeastern service whose origins can be traced back to the rush hour services introduced by the Southern Railway in 1935 between Holborn Viaduct and the Dartford lines.

I understand that improvements are promised in connection with services to compensate for Thameslink works disruption.

TfL does not have much experience of sharing running powers with other operators but tracks in central London have very intensive use and are shared with services travelling longer distances.

Local councils in Kent, Surrey and Sussex must watch that



SELRAP's Derek Jennings (in the green tie) shakes hands with Lancashire County Councillor John Fillis who is portfolio holder for transport. Also in the picture are, from left, County Councillor Azhar Ali, Pendle Borough Councillor Ian Tweedie, Andy Shackleton and Peter Nowland

Shake on it – partners in rail campaign

Campaigners from the Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership had a "very positive" meeting with council leaders at the Ace Centre in Nelson, Lancashire, in October. SELRAP is raising funds for a GRIP 3 (Governance for Rail Investment Projects) into its plans to reopen the line from Skipton, North Yorkshire, to Colne, Lancashire.

SELRAP has also held meetings with Rachel Brown of the Department for Transport, David Hoggarth of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and ARUP representatives. You can donate to the cause and find out about the latest action at SELRAP's website

www.selrap.org.uk

TfL does not always seize the biggest and prime slice of track space.

Tony Logan, Lichfield Court, Sheen Road, Richmond TW9 1AX tony@tlogan.org.uk

Rural envy

The map in *Railwatch* 141 showing rail improvements in the London area was wonderful.

It makes those of us living "in the sticks" envious but at least there is good news with the doubling of the Kemble-Swindon line.

Jeremy Evered, Goylands Close, Llandrindod Wells LD1 5RB

North south divide

The London area map in *Railwatch* 141 does indeed show "the tremendous strides that have been made in improving London's rail network." Alas, the situation is not so positive here in the north.

Grimsby for instance has only

a Saturday service on the Brigg line, while buses often replace trains on the route to Barton.

Meanwhile we await news of whether or not the direct service to Manchester Airport will cease, and if we might be so lucky as to have a single direct train to London.

When one considers that a major beneficiary of better services in the capital is overseas tourists, it does make one think politicians need to remove their London blinkers.

Perhaps we should move Parliament further north and

then MPs would readjust their priorities.

Tim Mickleburgh, Boulevard Avenue, Grimsby DN31 2JP. timmickleburgh2013@yahoo.co.uk

Heritage link-up

Out of pure interest, what has happened to the heritage railway section in *Railwatch*? Now that the Bluebell Railway has extended to East Grinstead, passenger figures have jumped enormously. I think I am right in saying that some of those are genuine passengers, cars off the road. We at the Rother Valley Railway are expecting the same thing to happen when we join up with the Kent and East Sussex Railway. We will be joined physically to the main line once more.

M Jary, Conqueror Road, Saint Leonards on Sea, East Sussex TN38 8DD

Send your letters to:

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

Heritage column: Page 14

Stop rearranging the deckchairs

The rail industry was warned to "stop rearranging the deckchairs" and embrace the new digital world which is coming down the track – fast.

Anna Matthews, chief executive officer of DeltaRail, warned that the speed of technological change is extraordinary.

New quantum computers have the potential to solve problems that would take a "classical" computer longer than the age of the universe.

She said the industry needs to return to its 19th century innovative roots and identify "game changers".

Five years ago, mobile phones were stupid rather than smart. Yet Blackberry did not see the threat to its business from the new iPhone.

By contrast, America's space agency is using 3D printers to make parts for space exploration. 3D printers costing £4,800 opened the opportunity for railway parts to be produced at maintenance depots.

Remote-controlled drones and smart robots were being examined carefully by other industries and some of the new technologies could threaten rail.

BlaBlaCar which facilitates car sharing is so popular in France that the chairman of French national rail SNCF believes it is one of the biggest threats to rail.

Young people are now happy to interact with people all over the world via their smart phones or Skype and may not see it as necessary for so many face-to-face meetings which rail enables – and benefits from.

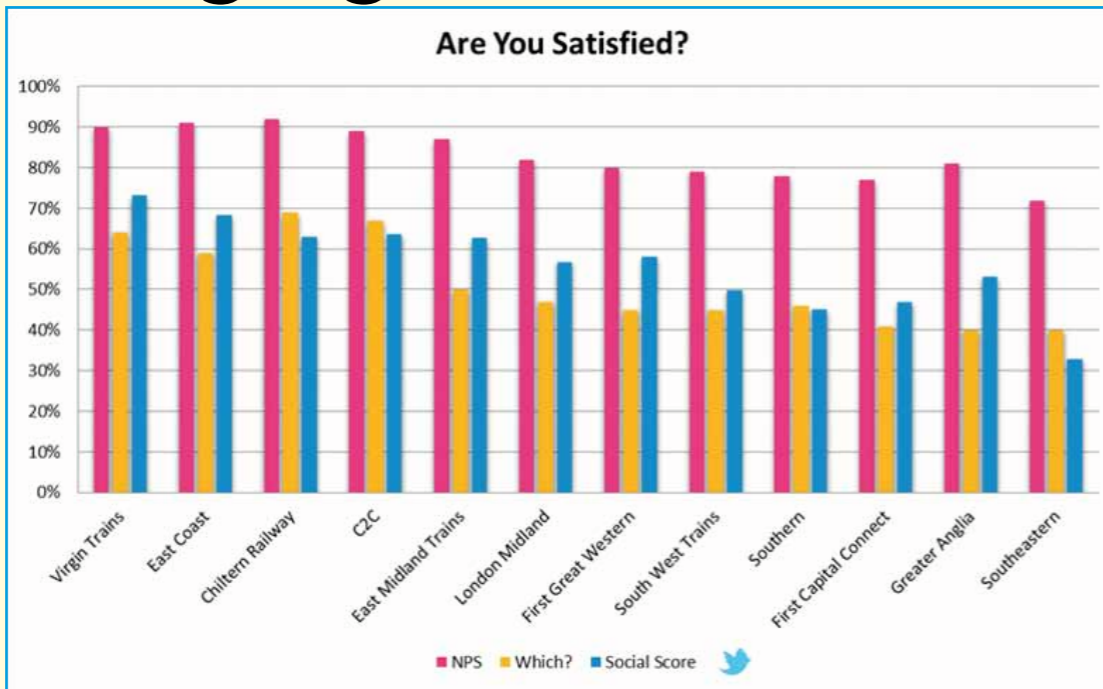
In a survey, the Royal College of Arts asked: "Would you rather a 40 minute journey with wifi or 20 minute journey without wifi? Most over-40s went for the 20 minute journey while most under-40s went for the 40 minute journey.

Anna said the rail industry should free up its data for use by third parties without restrictions. At the moment, the industry refuses to allow a database query to display late trains.

"What are they trying to hide?" asked Anna.

Anna said the national passenger survey was a highly choreographed piece of "low volume sampling".

She also praised Railfuture vice-President Roger Ford for identifying the importance of looking at the growth of passenger kilometres as a measure,



MYTH AND REALITY: Levels of satisfaction, according to the National Passenger Survey, an investigation by Which? magazine and based on evidence from Twitter and Facebook

rather than the increase in passenger journeys which hides the fact that rail growth may be flat-lining.

She criticised First Great Western and Thameslink for the way they use Twitter. Passengers have been left in the dark for hours when the technology exists to keep them up to date.

She said sometimes the service deteriorates to such an appalling level that commentators have warned of "transport riots". Now even Transport for London's Peter Hendy sees this as possible if public transport does not improve fast.

Anna warned: "No business can survive long term with such abysmal customer satisfaction."

She said she had been ostracised and attacked for being outspoken but insisted: "Rail has the potential to help drive forward UK plc."



Anna Matthews

Woman of the Year at conference

Woman of the Year 2014 Karen Boswell was one of the key speakers at Railfuture's London conference.

The managing director of train operator East Coast said passengers are her favourite subject but one of her priorities is to ensure East Coast is a great place to work. "Making people happy can also make money for the business," she said.

She said East Coast had returned £1 billion to the Treasury in the five years since it was established by Directly Operated Trains following the failure of two private companies to run the franchise.

The rail industry needs to embrace change and she challenged the rest of the industry to "match our achievements".

Stefanie Browne of RAIL magazine said the rail industry was seriously lacking in diversity and was not female friendly, but girls should be encouraged to take a role in some of the biggest projects in the world.

Sharon Hedges of Passenger Focus said renewal of franchises gave campaigners the opportunity to lobby for better services but most people do not understand the franchising process. For the majority, the price of rail tickets is top priority.

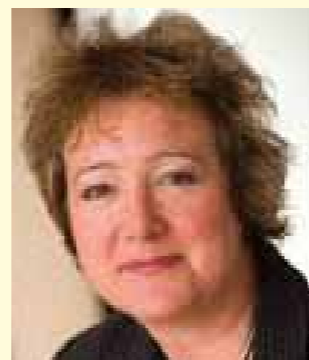
The challenge of offering a good range of smart tickets was revealed by Trevor Birch, who is involved with a Department for Transport project to integrate Oyster and other cards.



Karen Boswell



Stefanie Browne



Sharon Hedges

Picture: CROSSRAIL



Breakthrough by Crossrail in London Docklands

Just a few days before Railfuture's conference in London, Crossrail announced that its tunnel machine had broken through at Victoria Dock, to mark a major step forward in the project. With 87% of the tunnelling complete, machines are now

working on the last leg from Whitechapel to Farringdon which is expected to be completed next year. Fitting out will follow and trains should start running in 2017. Railfuture vice-president Ian Brown told the conference that he was involved with

Transport for London in putting the Crossrail project together. It was conceived as a way to relieve the Central line and to make the city work. The benefits it will bring are immense. He said it was easier and more cost-effective to build a new railway rather

than trying to upgrade the Central line. Crossrail 2 would be needed to boost rail capacity in London by another 10%. He said London has been obsessed by the Tube but the national rail network would have to do most of the work in future.

North East

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

East Coast main line target for the Lionheart team

The remarkable progress being made at Lionheart station at Alnwick was outlined to Railfuture North East branch in November by Roger Jeremy of the Aln Valley Railway. An appeal has been opened to raise the £60,000 needed to buy enough track to reach – almost – to the East Coast main line. www.alnvalleyrailway.co.uk

Authority brings hope of better bus and rail services

Local authorities have come together in the new North East Combined Authority which will collaborate with Tees Valley and elsewhere on key issues such as transport. NECA has agreed to introduce quality contracts for bus services, which is bitterly opposed by the big bus operators who have formed the North East Bus Operators' Association to defend their position. NECA hopes to adopt the tendered system operated successfully in London. Hopefully this new consortium will in future be able to influence the operators of local rail services. www.northeastca.gov.uk

That's the spirit, bus services provide links to rail station

Spirit Buses of Rothbury has commenced operations in central Northumberland with five routes including one to Alnwick, which links with rail services at Alnmouth station.

Smart move by RUG to inspire the next generation

In partnership with the School of Computing Science at Newcastle University, South East Northumberland Rail Users Group has been developing a smartphone app to enable rail users to get train information and news from SENRUG.

SENRUG's schools competition to produce a short DVD showing the need for and anticipated benefits of a reopened Ashington Blyth and Tyne railway was won by Ashington's Hirst Park Middle School.

Northern Echo wins backing for its rail campaign

The Coastliners rail users group has teamed up with Saltburn Line Group to support the Northern Echo newspaper campaign The Right Lines: Fighting for our Railways. It aims to improve radically the prospects for the new franchises in the Teesside area. Prominent among the groups' aims are a faster and more direct Middlesbrough-Newcastle passenger service using the freight-only Stockton-Ferryhill route, and a new all-stations York-Sunderland service. This would serve Stockton, Billingham and Seaham which have a combined population of 150,000. It would also provide an alternative to the increasingly congested A19 road.

College provides apprentice skills for future rail

In addition to the university-level courses at Newcastle University by NewRail, another venture opened in the autumn. Newcastle College's Rail Academy in Gateshead provides full-time courses for a level 3 diploma in rail engineering. The college facilities, which include workshops and full-scale track and signalling installations, have attracted a good complement of students. Nexus Rail, which maintains the Tyne and Wear Metro, has linked with the academy to provide 30 new engineering apprenticeships. For further details: www.ncl-coll.ac.uk/railacademy

Tyne Valley Line gets on track as community service

Minister of State Baroness Kramer visited Hexham station in October to unveil a plaque which records the designated community status of the line, which means the line is one of just 50 in the country acknowledged by the Department for Transport as being operated specifically for the benefit of local people. The Tyne Valley rail user group held its AGM in October when a TransPennine Express speaker explained the role of the present-day railway guard.

Railfuture maintains links with train lease company

Railfuture North East officers attended a second meeting with the representative of Eversholt Rail, the rolling stock leasing company, which owns a third of Britain's trains.

Okehampton is priority route for South West

By Gerard Duddridge

gerard.duddridge@railfuture.org.uk

Network Rail published its *West of Exeter Resilience Study* in the summer of 2014.

Taking that evidence into account, Railfuture continues to recommend reopening the Exeter to Plymouth via Okehampton line as the first priority.

In the future, Railfuture believes an inland route could be required based on Network Rail's C4 or C5 schemes or C5 modified to include Teignmouth.

The Network Rail report presents options for new or reopened railways to bypass the vulnerable coastal stretch of the Exeter-Plymouth line.

Costs are given for each option, with a 66% uplift for contingency. And at long last a realistic figure of under 55 minutes for Exeter to Plymouth non-stop via Okehampton is accepted.

Potentially confusing is the 10 to 14 minutes added to through trains to Cornwall, that must include the normal three minutes dwell time for passengers to get on and off both at Exeter and Plymouth.

For Plymouth only one reversal at Exeter affects times, so the actual time penalty with a Cross-Country Voyager from the north is likely to be around two minutes and four minutes for a First Great Western IC125 train from London Paddington.

Prior to the NR report those keen for faster services from London to Plymouth overestimated the time saving of a new tunnelled route between Exeter and Newton Abbot, and also underestimated the speed potential of the Okehampton line.

Only the Okehampton option (option A) gives two entirely independent routes to secure services to Plymouth all year round except Christmas day.

The Exeter-Newton Abbot options (options C1 to C5, Figure 1) still leave over 35 miles of line vulnerable to essential maintenance closure and other factors such as train breakdowns.

Some commentators in Dawlish and Teignmouth reject the Okehampton option, perhaps not realising that a direct bypass tunnel behind the towns may tip the economic case against priority repair of the coast line.

Repair of a major break in the sea wall, as at Dawlish this February, might be less urgent once temporary stability is achieved. Teignmouth would still be linked to the rail network via Newton Abbot and trains from Exeter would go as far as Dawlish Warren or Dawlish. Fortunately

there is a lot of support for the Okehampton option.

In October a special train from Exeter ran to Okehampton and back, with Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin on board, and around 15 others including Mark Hopwood from First Great Western, the head of highways and transportation at Devon County Council, and the MP for Central Devon. Hopefully this is a good omen for not just Exeter-Okehampton, but the whole route through to Plymouth

Worrying nevertheless is the cost of the Okehampton option of £875 million. If this proves too costly for Government funding, a cheaper single track route would be better than nothing, so long as there is sufficient double track through the Crediton area to permit a half-hourly Exeter-Barnstaple service if needed. The NR report gives a saving of £175 million to £220 million for reopening a single track with long dynamic passing loops.

There should be a minimum capacity to allow an extension of the Waterloo-Exeter service to Plymouth, plus two diversionary paths an hour for CrossCountry and Paddington services.

On normal days the diversionary paths would be available to increase the local commuter service between Tavistock and Plymouth. Other possibilities might include a daily Paddington service via Tavistock and Okehampton, and an extension of all Manchester to Bristol CrossCountry services to Exeter. From there a service would alternate between Plymouth via Okehampton and Tavistock, and Paignton via Newton Abbot.

In the long term a new Exeter-Newton Abbot route may be needed to back up services to Newton Abbot, Totnes and Torbay. However, the longer tunnelled options, C1, C2 and C3 in the Network Rail report are exceptionally expensive, respectively £3.1 billion, £2.51 billion and £2.25 billion.

The C2 option is similar to Railfuture's seven-mile Little Haldon tunnel shown in *Railwatch 140* and it is clear that the length of tunnel is critical to the price. The C4 option from Exminster to Bishopsteignton is similar to the pre-war Great Western scheme, but using the Railfuture idea of a deeper tunnel to avoid housing development in Teignmouth.

With around three miles less tunnelling the price drops to £1.56 billion, but time savings are still around five to six minutes as achieved by options C1 to C3. So these options can be ruled out. The C5 option from Dawlish

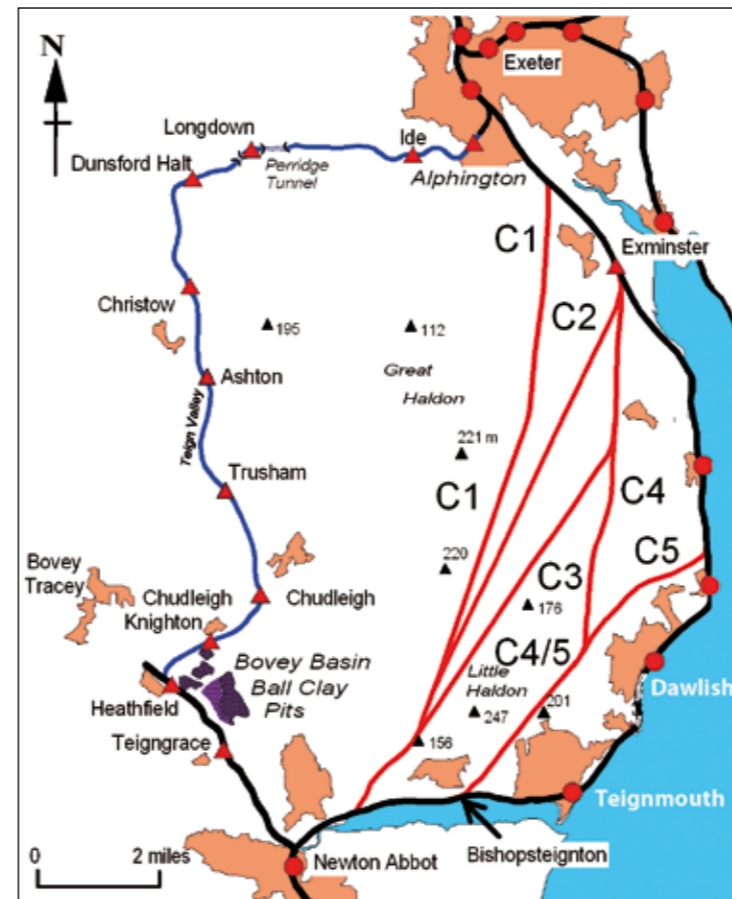


Figure 1. The Network Rail inland Exeter-Newton Abbot route options C1 to C5 are shown in red. The blue route is the Teign Valley line (option B) discussed in *Railwatch 140*. Existing lines in black. Red triangles show former stations and black triangles are altitude values. Ball clay pits in purple.



Figure 2. The original Railfuture plan for an inland route to avoid the coast at Dawlish and Teignmouth. This is similar to Network Rail option 5. It runs deeper and slightly further inland than the original Great Western Railway plan from before the Second World War. Also shown is the Railfuture idea for a direct link into Teignmouth from the inland tunnel

For map of Okehampton route, see *Railwatch 140*

Warren to Bishopsteignton is marginally cheaper at £1.49 billion, but only saves three minutes for non-stop trains.

Chief advantage is the possibility of a new Dawlish station at Shutterton Bridge, although rather compromised by the new Sainsbury's supermarket. A further modification of the C5 scheme, based on an original idea in the March 2000 Rail Strategy is to divert either C4 or C5 from Bishopsteignton to join the existing line at a redesigned Teignmouth station (Figure 2).

Time savings for non-stop trains would be no more than a minute, but it guarantees Teignmouth retaining inter-city as well as local services. Within the hillside, the tunnel could be designed to allow the shorter route to Bishopsteignton to be added later.

Severnside

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

Bridgwater needs upgrade

A report making the case for improved facilities and rail services at Bridgwater, Somerset, was produced in September by the Friends of Bridgwater Station, a corporate member of Railfuture. The station serves the town of 38,000 population plus its rural hinterland. Noting that Somerset County Council's transport strategy had still to be written, the Friends nevertheless consider that the county council's public transport forum, which was expected to meet in November, offers the best hope of influencing service improvements in the franchising process. The Friends believe Bridgwater needs faster trains to Bristol in order to achieve much needed regeneration. CrossCountry has not called at Bridgwater since the 1980s but the Friends hope the next franchise will consider reinstating some of these stops. It is also asking for all First Great Western services passing through Bridgwater to stop. Other priorities in the Strategy for Bridgwater Station include longer ticket office hours, more parking spaces and better access for the disabled

Metro West plans and other options for improvements

An update of the Metro West scheme was given at TravelWatch South West's meeting in Taunton on 4 October by James White of the West of England Partnership. I suggested that, to avoid making journeys from Bridgwater and Highbridge even slower, a half-hourly service at Bedminster and Parson Street could be achieved by stopping alternate Portishead trains at the two latter stations to complement existing calls by Bristol Parkway-Weston locals. Mr White replied that there were a number of ways in which suburban stations could get half-hourly frequencies. Asked whether there were plans for faster trains to Bristol from Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire, he said the partnership was at present concentrating on services within the four unitary authorities of Greater Bristol.

Positive responses to Henbury loop train plan

Following press reports that Bristol Port Company was opposed to restoration of passenger trains on the Henbury loop, Bruce Williamson wrote to the local press to support reopening (*Railwatch 141*), pointing out that electrification was the best way to develop Bristol's rail network for both passengers and freight. More recently, David Wood attended a meeting with the port company officials, arranged by Charlotte Leslie, MP for Bristol North West, who has been a strong supporter of reopening the line to passengers. The BPC representatives denied the company was opposed to a restored passenger service and said it was looking for a solution to benefit both freight and passengers. Network Rail has since unveiled its draft Western Route Study to a wider stakeholder meeting in Bristol, attended by Railfuture and Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways. The study is currently the subject of consultation and would appear to favour electrification of the Henbury loop after completion of current work to electrify from London to Bristol.

Hopes of steam line link to Taunton station

Railfuture was represented at the West Somerset Railway plc's stakeholder meeting on 18 October, which reported progress on its corporate plan. Stephen Williams, a WSR director, confirmed that the plc would be watching developments on the Swanage Railway to see how WSR might achieve a regular link with the national network at Taunton. Asked whether WSR had any plans to carry traffic for the paper mill at Watchet, general manager Paul Conibear referred to a scheme in the recent past for a wood-fired power station on the site. This had not materialised but it was possible that the mill might require a cheaper source of energy in the future which could be carried by rail.

Wessex

By David Brace
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■ ■ Planning for more growth

Network Rail has published for consultation a draft of its Western route study. This is part of the long-term planning process covering the next 30 years but is also an important input to the development of the plans for control period 6 starting in 2019. The Railfuture Wessex area lies to the south of the Western route but four groups of services cross the boundary. These are Basingstoke-Reading, Portsmouth-Cardiff, Weymouth-Bristol and Waterloo-Exeter. Because of anticipated growth of container traffic, there will be a need for capacity enhancements on the southern approach to Reading, in addition to the current grade separation works soon to be completed west of Reading. A line of route assessment is needed in conjunction with a similar study for the Wessex area. CrossCountry services from the south via Basingstoke and Reading to the north will require lengthening to meet future demand and two alternatives are proposed. A quick review of the 270-plus pages of the study does not provide any information on the three other routes that cross the boundary other than the need to carry out earthworks between Yeovil and Honiton as this line will develop further to provide an alternative diversionary route when there is disruption on the Western main line to the west. We await with keen anticipation the publication of the draft route study for Wessex expected in November.

■ ■ Heritage line set for diesel link to main line at Wareham

The project to reconnect the heritage Swanage Railway to the national rail network at Wareham continues to make progress. In September, a lease agreement was signed with Dorset County Council giving the railway access to a further three miles of track formerly used for oil trains. Then in October, some old track points were removed at the boundary with the newly leased line and replaced with plain track, marking the start of a year-long project to upgrade the route into Wareham. An experimental passenger service using heritage diesel units is expected to start in September next year.

■ ■ Leaking sewer delays work to stabilise the Island Line

In *Railwatch* 141 we reported on the planned closure of the Island Line needed for Network Rail to carry out essential earthwork stabilisation. This now will not take place until December at the earliest and probably not until the New Year, as a leaking Victorian sewer has been discovered and Southern Water now needs to schedule repairs.

■ ■ Railfuture meeting at Isle of Wight heritage centre

Isle of Wight members were invited to meet the Wessex branch committee when it held its August meeting at Brading Heritage Centre on Brading station. There we were delighted to be greeted by Brading Council's traffic and transport portfolio holder Councillor Robin Attwood who recently joined Railfuture. After the meeting members were able to tour the recently restored Brading signal box.

■ ■ Campaigners help counts at community rail stations

Railfuture Wessex secretary Charles Burns provided help to the South Downs community rail partnership during October by taking part in a detailed passenger count at Liphook station. The CRP wants to establish the number of passengers joining or leaving at each of the four stations it is responsible for, namely Rowlands Castle, Petersfield, Liss and Liphook.

■ ■ Railfuture Wessex fixes March date for AGM

The Railfuture Wessex AGM will be held in Fareham on Saturday 22 March 2015 and all branch members will be welcome to attend. More details will be circulated later.



HERITAGE RAIL

By Chris Austin
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By popular demand, I return to the question of the potential transport role of heritage railways.

First, the hard truth. The model for heritage railways and community railways is different.

Heritage rail operates without subsidy, relying heavily, sometimes exclusively, on a volunteer workforce. It is generally subject to a 25 mph speed restriction under the terms of a light railway order.

Heritage railways normally run between 200 and 250 days a year as a visitor attraction rather than as a transport provider.

Community railways use paid staff, receive support payments (subsidy) from government, and are transport providers.

Heritage railways could provide a public service but this would mean extending operating hours and running on a daily basis.

This would require paid staff and perhaps a higher line speed, which would require a fundamental change in the

nature of the railway, and in the business model. Such a service would require public subsidy.

Heritage railways do well in providing "tourist transport" to sensitive areas such as national parks, and are good for walkers. The Welsh Highland and North York Moors service to Whitby are good examples.

The Swanage Railway plans to run to Wareham and this too will be for a limited number of days each year.

The Bluebell Railway extension to East Grinstead has proved successful in providing a link to Southern services, and it has brought more passengers. This means longer trains and larger locomotives, so the implications are far reaching!

Good luck too, to the Rother Valley Railway in Sussex which plans to link the Kent & East Sussex Railway to South-Eastern trains at Robertsbridge.

It has already tackled the replacement of bridges and track and has the task of crossing the A21 bypass near the junction. There are just over



Picture: MARTIN SOUTHWOOD

Western Champion on the West Somerset Railway with a return charter from Minehead to Chester on 6 September. Could more through trains use the link to the main line?

100 heritage railways in Great Britain and Ireland, some relatively remote, linking small settlements such as the lovely Lincolnshire Wolds Railway at Ludborough or the delightful Bala Lake Railway.

At least 47 heritage lines have the potential to be linked with the national network, directly or via an interchange station.

Of these, 31 have a rail link or an interchange station and a further 16 have plans to link up. So, there is lively interest in the possibilities, and the current

round of Network Rail route plan consultations are a chance to make sure these possibilities are flagged up.

But remember, there has to be a business case and a willing sponsor.

Important too to ensure that the heritage railway itself wants to link up. They are privately owned and generally exempt from regulation, and do not forget that without their efforts over 30 years or so, the railway would not have survived.

5 million reasons why HS2 Stoke is better than Crewe

By Graham Nalty
graham@grahamnalty.co.uk

Crewe would be "a more natural location" for a High Speed Two station, given its strategic position so far as Wales, Merseyside and the North West region are concerned.

That is the view of Sir David Higgins, executive chairman of HS2 Ltd.

But rail campaigners should consider carefully the claim by Stoke City Council that Stoke-on-Trent would be a far better choice for an HS2 stop than the station proposed to be built near Crewe.

For many people who are familiar with the rail network, Crewe might at first seem an obvious choice.

However, closer examination shows the evidence to be strongly in favour of Stoke.

1 Stoke is at a crossroads between the route from Birmingham to Manchester and from Derby to Liverpool.

2 All the services which now call at Crewe could easily be accessed via Stoke with the exception of the Manchester to

Shrewsbury and South Wales services. If these services were to call at the new proposed HS2 station at Crewe, this would involve reversal and an extra five to ten minutes on the journey time.

But the HS2 station proposed for Crewe could not provide connectivity from London and Birmingham to Stockport and Macclesfield, which could be provided via Stoke. These are much bigger traffic generators than Manchester to South Wales.

3 It is a matter of history that the main West Coast line runs via Crewe. If the present West Coast main line were to be diverted via Stoke, with new track suitable for 125 mph running, Stoke would see a doubling of passengers from 2.5 million to over 5 million.

By being a much greater changing point on the rail network, Stoke would enjoy a comparable footfall per head of population to that at Derby – at least.

If all the high speed Pendolinos were diverted via Stoke, some could still call at Crewe.

Even with the loss of connectiv-

ity that would occur by re-routing the West Coast main line via Stoke, Crewe would still be an important junction with station usage comparable to Rugby and Stafford of about 1.8 million, a reduction of about 600,000.

So the net effect of diverting the present West Coast main line via Stoke could be an increase in rail passenger numbers of about two million.

With the expected growth in rail travel over the next 20 years and locating the main HS2 station at Stoke rather than Crewe, we could see an extra 4-5 million rail passengers after HS2 is built.

These are five million passengers who would not use rail if Crewe HS2 parkway were built.

4 The proposed new HS2 station for Crewe will not be at Crewe, but will be a parkway station two miles south of the present station.

By extrapolating figures provided by Stoke City Council in their recent report on their HS2 proposal, it would appear that bringing HS2 trains into the city centre generates about 20 new

jobs per 1,000 population in that city. When the city is served by an HS2 parkway station four miles outside the city centre, the number of jobs gained as a result of building HS2 is more than halved.

When the HS2 parkway is eight miles from the city centre, only about 15% of the jobs that a city centre station would generate would be gained.

Stoke City Council reckons that the building of a parkway station near Crewe will reduce Stoke's economic output by more than will be gained at Crewe by the new station.

Parkway stations simply lose job opportunities in the locations they are meant to serve.

Finally, if devolution of transport funds to local areas proceeds at the present rate, and Stoke and Staffordshire have comparable transport spend per head in future as London has now, then it might be possible that Stoke City Council will decide to spend their funds on linking Stoke to HS2 in spite of HS2 Ltd's present wish to build a parkway station outside Crewe.

London and South East

By Roger Blake
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■ ■ A high speed future beckons

Railfuture could justly congratulate itself when Eurostar clocked up 20 years of operations on 14 November. We campaigned for the Channel Tunnel and its rail link on the basis of their transport, economic and environmental benefits when rail advocates were often ignored. Railfuture will also be celebrating the fifth anniversary of Javelin services on High Speed One on 13 December. Now we want a national high speed rail network, starting with HS2 (and a link to HS1), to connect our regional economies and enable modal shift from roads. A linked HS1 and HS2 can develop into a high speed rail spine for the whole country. We should be thinking of Javelins running to Northampton and an Ashford International to Birmingham service.

■ ■ Rail campaigners proving they are winners

South East rail user groups were presented with awards at Railfuture's national conference in London. Congratulations to newly affiliated Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association for this year's best website entry and to Trains4Deal/Trains4Kent Coast for this year's best campaign.

<http://srta.org.uk>
<http://www.trains4deal.com/>
<http://trains4kentcoast.weebly.com/>

■ ■ Network Rail lays down its plans for the 2020s

Network Rail is unleashing a series of consultations on draft route studies as the next phase in its new long-term planning process. Following last year's passenger and freight market studies, the route studies develop plans for investment between 2019-24 (control period 6). First out was the route study for Western, then Sussex, followed by Anglia. Wessex and East Midlands are next. These are vital opportunities for Railfuture to influence the size and shape of our rail network in a decade's time. With input from this and other branches, Railfuture's responses will be co-ordinated by our national infrastructure and networks group, chaired by Chris Austin OBE.

■ ■ Railfuture makes its voice heard in corridors of power

Railfuture has welcomed Transport for London's proposal to extend Gospel Oak-Barking line services to Barking Riverside. Far-sighted campaigners believe it is perfectly aligned for another river crossing to Abbey Wood. Railfuture also responded to the Greater London Authority's London Infrastructure Plan 2050 consultation, and to TfL's plans for an Old Oak Overground station linking with High Speed Two and to extend the Bakerloo line via Lewisham and Catford to Hayes. East Sussex County Council sought views on an interchange hub at Newhaven Town station. Railfuture supported it.

Chiltern Railways' consultation on its timetable for September 2015, when London Marylebone-Oxford Parkway services begin, included additional weekday evening calls at Sudbury Hill Harrow, which Railfuture applauded. Greater Thameslink Railway has launched its proposals for the December 2015 timetable for all services using the Brighton main line. This will be a stepping-stone to the post-Thameslink Programme December 2018 timetable.

■ More local news in Railfuture London and South East's quarterly newsletter *railise* at:
www.railfuture.org.uk/London+and+South+East+branch+news



RAIL USER GROUP AWARDS

Nine Railfuture rail user group awards were handed out at the On Track for Success conference in London on 1 November.

President Christian Wolmar made the awards, now in their third year. They were as follows:

Best website

Gold: Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association. The judges commented that it was "easy to navigate, relevant and engaging with latest news, a rail user's one-stop shop".

Silver: Trains for Deal/Kent Coast and SENRUG – The South East Northumberland Rail User Group.

Best newsletter

Gold: Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield RUA. The judges said it was "engaging, deals with range of topics, addressed to wider community and explains in lay terms, passes 'the platform test'".

Silver: South East Northumberland RUG.

Commended: Friends of the West Highland Lines, which judges said was "a quality magazine".

Best campaign

Winner: Trains for Deal/Kent Coast. Judges' comments: "success in achieving key goal and identifies next steps to continue campaign".

Best new group

The Oliver Lovell Award, in memory of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group founder who died in 2013. Commendation: Friends of the Brigg & Lincoln Lines. Judges' comments: "deserves recognition, look forward to hearing more in development of this local campaign".

Judges' special award

Highly commended: SENRUG Schools competition and the winning entry from Hirst Park Middle School. Judges' comments: "quality campaigning engaging younger generation using one form of social media".

Chance to have a part in the future

By Chris Austin

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Network Rail has embarked on a long-term planning process that will cover the entire national rail network over the next four years, with each route study taking around 18 months to complete.

Network Rail is consulting widely on it, and this welcome approach allows Railfuture to make a positive input to the preparation of plans for the network covering the next 30 years to 2043.

I worked on a number of strategic plans in my role as a British Rail planning officer during the 1970s and 1980s.

But none of them stood the test of time, because of the uncertainty of Government funding which was doled out on an unpredictable annual basis and often cut at short

notice when there was a squeeze on public expenditure.

This plan will have more success though, for three reasons:

■ Infrastructure spending is no longer left to the whim of Government, but is a contractual commitment between Government, Network Rail and train operators, overseen by the Office of Rail Regulation which ensures value for money.

■ Government, to its credit, has recognised the value of railway infrastructure investment with its welcome support for High Speed Two and for the huge investment programme during control period 5 from 2014 to 2019.

■ The Department for Transport is now part of the planning process and will need to support the route studies as

the basis of forward planning of expenditure for control period 6 and beyond.

Problems remain with constraints on public expenditure and the mounting NR debt, but we are in a much better place than in BR days, with the chance of producing a coherent forward plan for the railway, funded and in line with Government policy.

Railfuture's infrastructure and networks group will be responding to each study, based on input from branches and the expertise of its members.

I am contacting Railfuture branch chairmen as each consultation paper is published setting out the timescale and the process involved. Route studies already started are:

Sussex (LB&SC routes together with the West London line)

Western area (GW lines,

excluding Wales and the Paddington to Birmingham line)

Anglia (Great Eastern, LT&S, North London and Gospel Oak – Barking lines)

Expected soon are the Wessex, Wales and East Midlands studies.

The first two require a response by the beginning of January, so will need input before Christmas.

Timings will be tight and the pressure on the group to deliver will be huge, so your help in making a timely input in the areas in which you have an interest would be much appreciated.

I will summarise our responses for future editions of *Railwatch* and the website, so that members can see the picture as it builds up.

LOCAL ACTION

West Midlands

By Steve Wright

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Worcester's parkway station will straddle two main lines

The Government has made £7.5 million available for a £17 million Worcestershire Parkway Regional Interchange station, where the Cotswold line crosses the Birmingham-Bristol line. A final decision from the county council is expected next year and the station, first suggested 36 years ago, could open in 2017. Consultation was open until 30 November. More details:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20055/strategies_plans_and_bids/995/parkway

Councils make a bid to take over rail franchises

Centro and 14 local authorities are negotiating with the Department for Transport for powers to run



the rail franchising process, including setting timetables, throughout the West Midlands region. From 2017, the London Midland franchise could be split. West Midlands Rail would run regional services, including 50% of the trains serving Birmingham. West Coast Connect would include services to London and Liverpool and might become part of the West Coast franchise.

Sunday trains problem put to Centro

A Railfuture West Midlands delegation held wide-ranging discussions with Centro in September. One of the topics raised was the lack of capacity on Sunday trains at the time shops close.

■ Survey shows evening crowding worse than morning
Railfuture volunteers took part in a survey of CrossCountry services to establish the extent of overcrowding during the peaks at Birmingham New Street station. The survey showed that more than half the CrossCountry trains leaving the station in the evening peak were uncomfortably overcrowded, whereas only a quarter of morning peak arrivals were. This confirms a common phenomenon that the evening peak tends to be more concentrated than the morning, possibly because of people returning home from leisure, education and business activities at the same time as regular commuters going home from work. Railfuture intends to repeat this survey and also to include other major stations served by CrossCountry.

Not-for-dividend plan explained to rail users

Professor Paul Salveson was guest speaker at the Shrewsbury-Chester Rail Users public meeting in Gobowen on 11 November. Paul, author of the book *Railpolitik*, spoke about his ideas for a publicly run not-for-dividend rail franchise for Wales and the Borders. More detail:

<http://www.party.coop/files/2012/11/Welsh-Rail-pamphlet-online.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf>

■ Regional West Midlands contact:
westmidlands@railfuture.org.uk

LOCAL ACTION

East Midlands

By Anthony Kay
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Rail Summit

An East Midlands rail summit was held in Loughborough on 10 October, chaired by rail enthusiast Pete Waterman and opened by Loughborough MP Nicky Morgan. The first session had four speakers from the rail industry on *Rail Investment in the East Midlands: 2019 and beyond*, obviously focusing on electrification and all the associated works to remove bottlenecks and improve stations for passengers, but also including a railfreight perspective. Next were Alison Munro of HS2 Ltd and Jon Collins of the East Midlands HS2 Strategic Board, who put forward the strong case that Britain and in particular the East Midlands needs High Speed Two — but the question of where is the best location for the East Midlands hub station remains controversial, although at least it was emphasised that HS2 must be fully integrated into the classic rail network. The afternoon session on *Rail as an Engine of Economic Growth* was opened by shadow rail minister Lillian Greenwood. Bridget Rosewell of Volterra Ltd pointed out how the growth in demand for rail transport is outstripping the growth in supply, and the environmental as well as economic benefits of improving the rail network. Two further speakers, from the Chambers of Commerce and the Derby & Derbyshire Rail Forum, discussed the importance of rail to the economy of the region.

Ilkeston station delay and £3 million extra

There has been another delay to the opening of Ilkeston station, which was due this December. The station site is in a flood plain, and the Environment Agency has now asked for further works to ensure that the car park does not flood and to mitigate flood risk to third parties. It is estimated that these works will cost £3 million, as well as delaying the opening until next Spring.



Rewards for commitment

The tenth annual awards for going the extra mile on community rail took place at Scarborough at the beginning of October, before a record audience of around 450 and this year, for the first time, with the Rail Minister, Baroness Kramer in attendance.

She is a great supporter of the work of community rail partnerships, and it was good to see a dozen representatives of the Department for Transport including Claire Moriarty, director general of the Rail Executive.

Among the 11 categories and the 30 award winners were those who still have the power to surprise, with their innovative approach, imagination and flair. I only have space to cover a few of my favourites.

Involving Young People (sponsored by the European Union) is so important in engaging with the next generation of rail passengers. Brian Haworth and Marjorie Birch from Community Rail Lancashire were worthy winners for their work in developing the Young Persons Passport to Safe Travel.

Over six hours of education about railway history, using timetables and safe travel have been developed, working with over 5,000 primary school children. So successful has

this been, that the schools themselves have embraced the benefits, and now regularly choose the train for school outings.

Flooding did so much damage to tourism in the South West in 2013, and at Looe they were faced with road access being limited for some time as repairs were carried out.

The "Love Looe" campaign was designed to encourage visitors by rail (as the road was closed) and was developed by local businesses and the local tourist office along with the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership. It won first prize as Best Marketing Campaign (sponsored by Rail Media) and netted 10,000 additional passengers for the line during June and July 2013. Indeed, it was so successful that it was repeated this year following the restoration of the railway after the flooding in February.

The dramatic breach of the sea wall at Dawlish in the February storms led to a massive project to rebuild the railway, but also to repair and restore the station. The station friends group re-formed, and with advice and practical help from TV gardener Toby Buckland, transformed the station with planters and blooms. In partnership with First Great Western, the town council and the local MP,

COMMUNITY RAIL

By Chris Austin

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Pitlochry station (enhanced by its fountain and floral display) won first prize in the 'most enhanced station' category, sponsored by the Railway Heritage Trust.

staff and volunteers worked side by side to get the station ready for reopening in April when the Prime Minister was a visitor. For this, Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and the other partners received the Outstanding Teamwork Award (sponsored by Network Rail) and presented by Jerry Swift who has now retired from the company after contributing so much to the development of community rail. He will be

sorely missed. Congratulations too to those recognised for their outstanding personal contributions as volunteers – Pauline Jenkinson, who has helped to transform the appearance of Helsby station and has volunteered there for 17 years; Louis Wall of the South West Railway station adopters gardening group; and Tony Day, the tenacious and very effective chairman of the Avocet Line Rail Users' Group.

Picture: dancingbeastie@wordpress.com

Scotland

By Jane Ann Liston
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■ ■ All eyes on the Dutch promises

There is great interest among Scottish railway campaigners in how the Dutch company Abellio will tackle running the majority of Scotland's trains and how it will respond to requests for new and reopened services now that it has won the 10-year ScotRail franchise starting in April next year. Abellio has already chosen the Japanese company Hitachi, which is building a train factory in northern England, as "preferred supplier" of 70 trains which will run from 2017 on the Edinburgh-Glasgow line (being electrified as part of the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme). They will also run on the Stirling-Alloa-Dunblane lines. There will be wifi throughout the trains. Abellio also plans to refurbish 40-year-old InterCity 125 trains to operate Glasgow-Aberdeen services. Abellio is also reported to be investigating steam services on scenic routes. Railfuture will be keen to see more progress on reopenings. So far it seems Abellio has committed to only six new or reopened stations. Railfuture Scotland has a "top twenty" list of stations that could be reopened.

■ ■ Despair of Beeching era leads to hope for HS2

Railfuture Scotland's autumn meeting in the Royal Overseas League, in Princes Street, Edinburgh on 15 November was addressed by Lord Faulkner, co-author with Chris Austin of *Holding the Line – How Britain's Railways were Saved*. The talk was entitled *From despair to hope – the revival of Britain's railways from Beeching to HS2*.

■ ■ Appeal for cash to support campaign for Beattock station

Beattock Station Action Group is calling on the communities of Beattock, Moffat and the surrounding areas to donate towards a STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) report, which will be carried out by an industry specialist. From an extensive recent survey, over 600 locals and visitors gave 50 different advantages of a station at Beattock, including 100-200 who said they would commute from there to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Carlisle. 100 young people thought it would give them greater independence in travelling. These responses were from open questions, which took nine months to collate into a readable database but was well worth the effort. Benefits to tourism and environmental advantages, as well as enabling people to stay in the area, were among other reasons elicited from the survey. The BSAG has clear and substantial evidence that a station at Beattock makes economic, environmental and social sense.

■ ■ Allies sought in struggle to reopen line to St Andrews

Starlink, the St Andrews campaign, has had informal but encouraging meetings with Network Rail and SESTRAN, the regional transport partnership, which it is hoped will lead to some pre-STAG work. In the meantime, the Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council has contacted its counterparts in Milngavie, Alloa and North Berwick, to find out what these communities consider have been the advantages of having a rail service. The responses will then be used to extrapolate what a railway would mean for St Andrews.

■ ■ Rail campaign contacts

Rail Action Group, East of Scotland (RAGES)
<http://www.rages.org.uk/>

Beattock Station Action Group
<http://www.beattockstationactiongroup.org.uk/>

Capital Rail Action Group (CRAG)
<https://sites.google.com/site/capitalrailactiongroup/>

St Andrews Rail Link (Starlink) campaign
<http://www.starlink-campaign.org.uk/>

Newburgh Train Station campaign
<http://newburghtrainstation.org.uk/>

Levenmouth Rail Campaign
<http://www.lmrc-action.org.uk/>



Operators need to consider people who don't go by rail

By Trevor Garrod

trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk

As chairman of the European Passengers Federation, I addressed two international conferences in October.

One was at Bucharest where Railfuture vice-president Lord Tony Berkeley was also a keynote speaker. The other was in Salzburg.

My message was that train and bus operators should consult with their passengers, but also with people who do not use public transport but are potential customers.

I am grateful to several Railfuture branches who told me of their own experiences in this respect, and to Continental colleagues, notably in the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden who shared their experiences.

Dialogue should really start with the Government and other public authorities well before a franchise or concession is let.

It should continue with companies bidding for franchises or concessions and continue on a regular basis with operators when they are running services.

There should be regular dialogue between politicians, operators and passengers when there are publicly owned services as well.

The European Union publishes Eurobarometer statistics on customer satisfaction with a variety of service industries, from banking to supermarkets, and these can be helpful.

However, independent surveys of passengers in particular countries give a clearer view of individual operators, and I emphasised the importance of the British national passenger survey, which now covers buses as well as trains. I also drew attention to Railfuture's own work,



Picture: HAUPTBAHNHOF-WIEN

NEW FACE OF EUROPE: Entrance to Vienna's new Hauptbahnhof

EPF-affiliated national associations. On the day after the conference, visits to places of transport and other interest in and near Budapest are being organised, while from Sunday evening to Monday there will be an optional excursion to Hungary's second city, Debrecen. Full details of the conference and how to register for it will be on the EPF website by Christmas:

www.epf.eu

A paper version is available from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ.

InterRail

If you want to travel by train on mainland Europe for at least five days, InterRail is often the ideal ticket. It is flexible and can be good value for money.

InterRail is not just for tourists, but can also be suitable if you are on the continent on business and travelling between two, three or four different centres in different countries, or out by one route and back by another. In some countries, including Britain, InterRail is not promoted as widely as it should be. That is one reason why Railfuture's international group members Don Payne and Simon Hope are

currently undertaking a study of it, and Railfuture's recommendations will then be sent in a report to a wide range of railway professionals. We hope to report on the results in the April *Railwatch*.

Meanwhile the Association of Train Operating Companies sells InterRail tickets and you can buy one by logging on to www.myinterrail.co.uk. You can also purchase InterRail from specialist travel agents. See Railfuture's leaflet *Going Abroad* which can be downloaded from:

www.railfuture.org.uk/International

See also

www.railfuture.org.uk/Going+abroad

Eurostar survey

Thanks to members who have already completed Railfuture's questionnaire about journeys made by Eurostar between July 2014 and the end of June 2015. A paper questionnaire was enclosed with *Railwatch*.141 or you can also fill in the electronic version at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/International

A report will be produced next year and sent to all relevant decision-makers.

ADVERTISEMENT

ROSTOCK



RDS Group Travel visit by train to
Germany's Baltic coast
history, trains, narrow-gauge steam
5-12 May 2015 (Tuesday-Tuesday)

REIMS



RDS Group Travel visit by train to
Champagne-Ardenne
city of champagne, history, trains
22-26 September 2015 (Tuesday-Saturday)

For details, email trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk or send an SAE to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ

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You get four copies of *Railwatch* magazine a year and the chance to help make Britain's railways great again

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East Anglia

By Paul Hollinghurst
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■ ■ Mapping out the future

The viability of a rail link between Bedford and Cambridge as part of a long-distance rail route has been examined by the East West Rail Consortium. The results were published in a conditional outputs statement in August. The study examined the potential for linking 25 existing stations and ranks station pairs in order of economic benefit. Railfuture East Anglia Branch extended this work by considering how a Bedford-Cambridge link could improve journeys identified as high priority such as Cambridge to Northampton, and how the link can bring benefits to new and expanding communities in Cambridgeshire. Work is already under way in the Oxford area to clear the way for a London-Oxford service. The Oxford-Bicester section will then in effect be stage one in restoring the East West link. Railfuture's 13-page briefing document, including 14 maps, can be found here:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/ox-cam/docs/Railfuture-Maps-of-East-West-Rail-Line-Journey-Pairs.pdf>

■ ■ Cambridge station upgrade could be better

Demolition work has started at Cambridge station as work continues with the station area redevelopment which will see the ticket hall extended within the existing building and the construction of a 3,000 space cycle park. Railfuture East Anglia is campaigning to improve unsatisfactory features of the development, including unnecessarily long distances from bus stops to the station entrance, and from the new cycle park to the platforms. The current plan requires passengers to walk 300 yards and climb three flights of steps to gain access to platform 7. A direct link to the footbridge would reduce this to 30 yards and one set of steps. More information:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Cambridge+Railway+Station>

■ ■ Abellio Greater Anglia boss wants new trains for future

The next Greater Anglia passenger franchise must include requirements for major investment in new rolling stock and additional train services, according to Greater Anglia managing director Jamie Burles, speaking at Railfuture East Anglia's Norwich meeting in September. However Mr Burles warned that unless this investment was part of the franchise specification, bidders would be forced to go for the lower cost option with less investment. New trains for the London-Norwich service are needed for the "Norwich in 90" aspirations, and additional stock is also needed for rural routes to reduce overcrowding and increase frequencies. Mr Burles accepted that the operator's recent performance had not been acceptable, particularly with the service to Felixstowe. Measures were being put in place to deal with these issues, including having maintenance staff at Liverpool Street station to respond to problems more quickly.

■ ■ More loops needed to keep the freight trains rolling

The need for more passing loops on the Ipswich-Felixstowe line is becoming ever more urgent, now that 30 freight trains a day are being handled over a line that is really only equipped to handle 22 freight trains, in addition to the timetabled passenger trains. Railfuture East Anglia and Felixstowe Travel Watch welcome the growth in the number of freight trains but are worried by the increasing delays and cancellations of passenger trains. A scheme for enhancing the capacity of the line is reportedly being worked on and FTW comments: "These improvements cannot come a moment too soon."

■ ■ Keep in touch at: www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia

■ ■ Twitter: @RailfutureEA





Picture: NORTHANTS TELEGRAPH



PRIZE WINNER: This photograph by Jim Wade (pictured left) of two freight trains at Peterborough is the winner in Railfuture's postcard competition, announced at Railfuture's On Track for Success conference in London in November. He will receive a painting by Railfuture member Mike Turner of a Javelin train at Ore, near Hastings. Jim's picture shows one of Britain's newest diesel class, 68004, working from Norwich to Doncaster while 66529 brings an empty stone train from March, bound for Mountsorrel. Long-time rail campaigner Jim, whose father was a loco driver, is a volunteer adopter of Corby station which was reopened thanks to years of campaigning by Jim and his colleagues

Rail projects waiting for the go-ahead

Chancellor George Osborne will be making his December expenditure statement at about the same time as this *Railwatch* is published.

There has been lots of talk about rail projects being given the go-ahead, especially in the north of England, so rail campaigners are hoping for good news.

The north of England deserves High Speed Three across the Pennines, although the very idea seems a far cry from the reality of today's travel by the "nodding donkey" Pacer trains.

A series of electrification schemes needs to be added to the projects in northern England already announced. The Liverpool-Manchester electrification scheme should be completed this year

and the Bolton-Wigan North Western line will be electrified by 2017. However decisions are needed on Harrogate, Middlesbrough and Chester.

Of course, other areas of Britain are also crying out for investment in the railways, with England's south west region needing a plan to ensure resilience, following the breach of the Dawlish sea wall.

Although the London area appears to be doing well at the moment with two enormous schemes, Crossrail and Thameslink, under way, the expensive Crossrail tunnelling machines will be finishing their work next year and the rumour is that they are going back to Germany where they were built.

It's a pity that they could not move on from Crossrail to another ready-made rail project somewhere in Britain.

They could even have moved straight on to Crossrail 2 if the political and planning decisions had been made earlier. It cannot now be completed until 2030 at

the earliest, but for commuters towards the ends of the line in Kingston or Dalston, it could eventually mean a reduction of three to four hours in commuting time each week.

Sadly, at a time when money for public projects is in short supply, Prime Minister David Cameron is reported in *The Times* as wanting multi-million pound spending on a "roads revolution" if the Tories win the general election next year.

Extra lanes on motorways and trunk roads will be built, with another 100 road projects introduced by the end of the decade.

Mr Cameron is claiming that the Government will engage in the biggest road-building and upgrading programme since the 1970s. The programme forms part of the Government's already-announced £15 billion spending on roads up to 2020 and is being promoted as an "election winner". It is doubtful in this day and age whether road building is an election winner. Good rail and public transport are the

key to making towns and cities civilised and attractive places to live. A major programme of rail reopenings would almost certainly be more popular and public demands for freight to be switched from road to rail have been ignored for years.

The East West Rail link, Lewes-Uckfield, Bourne End-High Wycombe, Stansted-Braintree, Okehampton-Bere Alston are crucial projects which could give a big payback. Many others deserve consideration.

Despite that, London Mayor Boris Johnson is boasting of spending £4 billion in a "road modernisation plan".

He also has a "toxic plan" to build a road tunnel under the Thames at Silvertown which will generate more road traffic in a wide area of East London already blighted by road congestion and pollution.

Despite denials by Transport for London officials, the road lobby is still active and very powerful. Railfuture may have to up its game to match it.

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