

# *rail*watch

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

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**World's 'most powerful' electric loco**

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Our page one picture shows what is claimed to be the world's most powerful electric locomotive.

Built by the Russian factory at Novochoerkassk, near Rostov, the Ermak loco will operate in Siberia on the 5ft-gauge Baikal-Amur main line, reducing the need for two locos to work in tandem.

The loco, codenamed 4ES5K, is able to report automatically by satellite on its maintenance needs to the factory and depots.

Meanwhile at the Scherbinka test track 20 miles south of Moscow, a standard gauge electric multiple unit prototype developed at the Tver factory (100 miles north of Moscow) was undergoing trials in March.

The five-car 3kV DC EG2Tv unit has been developed in cooperation with a Spanish company and can be used for 100 mph commuter and inter-regional trains.

Both the Tver and Novochoerkassk factories are now owned by Transmashholding.

Back in 1962, Soviet troops killed 26 people at Novochoerkassk during protests by railway workers over the rising price of food. Since 2000, Transmash has produced 3,000 locomotives, as well as diesel and electric multiple units.

There are 140,000 miles of Russian 5ft gauge track throughout the world, including lines in Estonia, Latvia and Finland.

Russia is also planning to develop a high speed rail line alongside the Trans Siberian Railway to speed up communi-



RUSSIA: Electric multiple unit EG2Tv



UKRAINE: Prototype loco 2EKr12

cations between Europe and Asia. Vladimir Yakunin, head of Russian Railways, told the Russian Academy of Science the project would involve state enterprises, as an alternative to the neo-liberal model used elsewhere in the world.

Russia has already issued tenders relating to its plans to build a 480-mile high speed line from Moscow to Kazan and Yekaterinburg. It is likely to involve Chinese rail companies.

In Latvia, Russian Railways Logistics has taken a 50% stake in the Latvian rail freight company LNT.

In Estonia rail operator Go Rail "temporarily suspended" its passenger service from Tallinn to Moscow and St Petersburg in May because of a significant decrease in the number of tourists from Russia.

In Ukraine, the Kryukov VSZ factory in Kremenchug is considering building an

electric locomotive to reduce Ukraine's dependence on Russian manufacturers. There are plans to produce a prototype by 2017 with the aim of supplying 40 locos to Ukrainian railways. The dual voltage 2EKr12 loco will be used on heavy iron ore trains from Kryvyi Rih and Dnipropetrovsk and on freight services to the Black Sea port of Odessa.

In the past, Russia has supplied most of the 1,200 locos used on the Ukrainian network, which is the same gauge as Russia's but the locos are nearing the end of their working lives.

The Kryukov factory has previously specialised in wagons, coaches and multiple units. It has exported vehicles to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

In Bulgaria, Sofia's metro line 1 was extended in April to serve the airport.

In Finland, a new rail link to the airport will open this year.

## Revealed: Big challenges ahead for European

By Simon Hope

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A two-day European Passenger Federation conference was opened in Budapest in March with a welcome from Railfuture's Trevor Garrod who is also president of EPF.

Eight Railfuture members joined 60 other participants at the conference, taking advantage of the opportunity to visit the beautiful city on the banks of the Danube.

A presentation from Budapest's deputy mayor Balazs Szeneczey described the history of the city's transport system.

One presentation explained how public transport declined and car use boomed in Hungary following the collapse of communism in 1989.

By the late 1990s VEKE (the association for urban and suburban transport) was formed and achieved successes by improving links with politicians, government and the media.

Railfuture's international expert Ian McDonald spoke of the need



DEBRECEN: New low-floor trams now working in the east Hungarian city. The Spanish-built vehicles are two years old

to change the existing EuroCity route system of semi-joined-up main lines into a proper international network, with the added aim of including high speed trains. In his discussion paper, he raised the issues of fare supplements and compulsory reservations, border security and related on-train and off-train checks, reducing station stop times and

increasing train frequencies at border stations, replacing locomotives with fixed-formation trains.

The presentation from ProBahn Austria reported that the 11 rail links between Hungary and Austria that existed in 1930 have now been reduced to three. Some important lines to Romania have

also been closed over the years. Other speakers focused on how to get travel information prior to booking. It is often available only on the Internet.

Pro Bahn Germany reported that it is also sometimes difficult to buy a single ticket for a multi-modal journey in Europe. No international tickets are now sold by Swedish Railways. Many called for reduced international fares to encourage car users to switch to trains. There is also a campaign to win Europe-wide compensation for delayed or cancelled trains, as in Britain.

The problems of French Railways, including large debts and rural lines threatened with closure, were also discussed.

The European Investment Bank's Lothar Zeller questioned procedures for using European Union funds to invest in transport and said that often the best solution is based on the premise "Small is beautiful". MEP Olga Sehnalova spoke of her work on cross-border issues, passenger rights,

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## Aiming for a bright future

By Chris Brown

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As your new chairman I want to carry on the good work of the current board in moving the organisation forward.

We must, as our name implies, look to the future development of the British rail industry, pushing not only for line and station reopenings, where appropriate, but also for better services and rolling stock on existing routes.

I will make it a priority to increase our membership, including both young and female rail passengers, to improve both our influence and credibility.

We also need to increase the awareness of Railfuture among everyday rail users as they are our best eyes and ears for what is happening now and what needs to happen in the future.

It became apparent over the past few years that the media are more aware of Railfuture and there is a greater respect for us among senior members of the rail industry and the Department for Transport. I want to encourage both trends and welcome ideas on how to achieve this.

I want to look at the structures within Railfuture to make sure we are as efficient as possible and do not waste time duplicating work, as well as joining with other organisations on campaigns and projects so that we are not duplicating their efforts



CHAIRMAN: Chris Brown

but are there to support them. We must, as an organisation, speak with one voice so we give consistent information to outside bodies. We can disagree within the organisation but not in public.

I am passionate about integrated transport. One of my big worries is that as financial cuts bite even more, a big constraint on rail travel will be the inability to get to a rail station because of the withdrawal of all but the busiest bus routes.

I look forward to serving you all in the next year and welcome workable ideas from members as to how we can move forward.

I currently serve on the Lincolnshire branch committee, the international group and the finance and corporate governance group.

## railway campaigners

pan-European multi-modal ticketing, journey planner information and with the European Consumer Centre which helps with passenger complaints.

Marton Feldmann, chief operating officer of Hungarian Railways (now known as MAV-Start) spoke of problems with investment finance for suburban networks but an increase in the number of international passengers. Rolling stock is being modernised with wi-fi included, while a new ticketing system is being introduced.

Andreas Ekes of the Metropolitan Research Institute emphasised the importance of eastern Europe, where there is a growing market for second-hand vehicles and better vision where each city is developing different solutions with the help of EU funding for new projects.

Members asked about the future of night trains and the demise of Scandinavian links. Stadler Rail's chief engineer Franz Laczó revealed details of its new trains,

◆◆◆◆ Borders Railway opens in September, Edinburgh to Galashiels and Tweedbank



LOCAL ACTION

### Yorkshire

By Chris Hyomes  
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#### ■ ■ New stations

Work has started on two new stations at Kirkstall Forge and Apperley Bridge. Trains are expected to begin serving the stations in December. Elland station is the favourite to be reopened among 51 possible candidates emerging from the West and North Yorkshire new stations study, according to Halifax & District Rail Action Group. HADRAG has also called on the new franchise bidders to provide better Sunday services, more for the Brighouse line and more trains stopping at Sowerby Bridge.



#### ■ ■ Rail expansion plans get aired in election campaign

Rail campaigner Paul Salveson was a Yorkshire First candidate for Colne Valley in the general election, calling for line reopenings and electrification "to reverse the damage done by Dr Beeching in the 1960s". Party leader Richard Carter, who stood in Dewsbury said: "Yorkshire struggles on with outdated and inadequate trains and poor quality station infrastructure. We need a modern, expanding rail network that is fully integrated with other forms of transport." Dr Bob Buxton, Leeds North-West, said: "We need to plan for the reopening of the railway to Otley, creating a loop from Leeds via Horsforth and Arthington to Pool, Otley, Menston and Guiseley. It's crazy that Leeds/Bradford Airport is not rail-served and we want to look at options for how this can be achieved over the next 10 years." Rod Sutcliffe, the party's candidate for Calder Valley said: "The Calder Valley Line has long been the poor relation compared to the TransPennine route via Huddersfield. Trains are overcrowded and unreliable and busy stations like Todmorden and Hebden Bridge have poor accessibility for people with mobility difficulties."

#### ■ ■ Northern powerhouse rail plans could cost £50 billion

The Government published plans in March for a major upgrade of rail in the north of England. It includes the idea for a TransNorth rail system that could radically reduce travel times and complement High Speed Two. The cost is estimated to equal the £50 billion earmarked for HS2.

#### ■ ■ Settle-Carlisle missing out on engineering diversions

Virgin and TransPennine Express are reluctant to use the Settle-Carlisle line when engineering work blocks the West Coast main line, a TravelWatch NorthWest conference heard in February, even though Government policy calls for rail replacement services rather than buses. John Moorhouse of TravelWatch said: "If East Coast can manage trains and train crew to give their customers a decent service during disruption why cannot Virgin and TPE?" Since March, however, East Coast has been run by Virgin (and Stagecoach). There is a suspicion among rail campaigners that bus/rail companies are exploiting rail passengers who expect to travel by rail when they buy a train ticket. Mr Moorhouse added: "It may well be that the use of replacement buses is a cheaper option, but it is not in passengers' best interests."

#### ■ ■ Massive backing for Skipton-Colne reopening

More than 150 businesses and trade organisations nationwide have written to tell the Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership that they want the Skipton-Colne rail line reopened, as have over 500 councils near the route, together with 191 MPs, 80 peers and 22 MEPs.

#### ■ ■ Volunteer efforts are flowering at Poppleton

Poppleton Community Railway Nursery near York is renovating historic greenhouses and a narrow gauge railway. It sells its produce to the public and to rail stations for their displays. You can help: www.poppletonrailwaynursery.co.uk

## Scotland

By Jane Ann Liston secretary@railfutureScotland.org.uk

## ■ Rail freight's big advantage over lorries

The potential of rail freight has not been realised, Railfuture Scotland's AGM in Edinburgh was told in March by railway author David Spaven. Rail is a resilient method of moving freight and has a clear advantage over lorries, with only a third of the carbon dioxide emissions of road transport.

## ■ Lack of response to potential of Beattock station

Beattock Station Action Group reported to Railfuture Scotland's AGM on encouraging results of a local survey it had carried out, which suggested that between 100 and 200 commuters would use a rail service three days a week as a quicker and less stressful way of getting to work. Access to the rest of the rail network, particularly Glasgow and Edinburgh, and boosting tourism are further benefits. Despite this, a request to the local council for money for a Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) evaluation was refused.

## ■ Progress towards Portobello station reopening

Following the then transport minister's recommendation last year that Portobello Community Council contact the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership to pursue Portobello station reopening, a meeting was held on site in March. Capital Rail Action Group stressed that even with a journey time of less than five minutes to Waverley station (compared to 25 minutes by bus), a frequency of at least four trains per hour would be required and the station should be served by local services on the East Coast main line and on the new Borders Railway. Any remodelling of Portobello junction should take this into account. SEStran will now take these issues up with City of Edinburgh Council.

## ■ New Carstairs-Edinburgh service proves a success

The new station at Plains, on the Airdrie-Bathgate line was the subject of two well-attended meetings held during the general election campaign. At one, a North Lanarkshire Council officer appeared to say money would be found for the STAG evaluation. The new Carstairs-Edinburgh service is proving such a success that the existing car park cannot cope with demand. A new car park is planned.

## ■ Glasgow Crossrail and a rail boost must be in Clydeplan

Railfuture Scotland's vice-chair Roddy McDougall has made a submission to the ClydePlan, supporting the RailQwest goals of achieving Glasgow Crossrail and a link to the airport, as well as a total of 63 new stations.

## ■ Golf millions could help bring rail back to St Andrews

The Starlink campaign to bring the railway back to St Andrews is planning to meet the successful Alloa reinstatement campaign. There have also been further contacts with the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership about some pre-STAG work. With several rail campaigns stymied by the need for a STAG costing £100,000, Railfuture Scotland must find a solution. In the meantime St Andrews is preparing for the Open in July, with a deluge of golf fans and the world's media expected. The Scottish economy is expected to benefit by £500 million. As local people can expect massive disruption to their lives, it would be fair if a share of that money financed a reopened rail line.

## ■ Shortage of trains set to undermine station reopenings

Members of Rail Action Group East of Scotland were disappointed to hear that the new franchise holder, Abellio, had stated that trains would not be available to stop at proposed new stations at East Linton and Reston until 2018, because of a shortage of rolling stock. A meeting is urgently being sought with Transport Scotland to clarify matters.

■ 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/>

## The network effect works its magic

By Ian Brown

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IAN BROWN

The number of promises on rail development were more frequent than many train services in the weeks leading up to the election.

The sum of these exceeded our expectations – certainly on electrification perhaps less so on reopenings – and was actually beyond the capacity of the industry to deliver either financially or physically.

However, transport has risen up a political agenda normally dominated by health, education and the economy. Rail projects are also now seen to be crucial to the health of the economy.

This is in no small part due to the efforts of Railfuture members and branches who helped candidates develop their manifestos.

Our manifesto, which is a distilled summary of members' and branches' input, was published on the Railfuture website, then cut and pasted by many candidates.

All this is far more healthy than the simplistic arguments that HS2 is good or HS2 is bad.

Less welcome is the fact that only election winners can be held to account. Even promises by those elected can, as we well know, be dropped.

Our role in advocating the development of railways continues.

We were successful in getting the local reopenings message across, but we need to think about how reopenings can be justified by their economic benefit, as with electrification.

We can make the transport case, but economic arguments score highly in business cases on projects such as London's Crossrail.

For the time being, we have to concentrate on jobs (as a proxy for the economy) and reducing congestion (as a proxy for the environment).

This is recognised in London and parts of the South East, resulting in major projects such as the London Overground, light rail extensions and Crossrail, none of which had an earth-shattering business case if considered on purely transport grounds.

There has been considerable frustration among members as to why this logic does not apply to the rest of the country. It does, but we are slow to recognise it. The Northern Powerhouse has emerged from the Pacer-dominated ashes and we should welcome it. The North needs an integrated regional rail network together with much improved city access. The key locations of Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield,

Leeds, Bradford and Hull, while needing improved city-wide integrated rail and light rail services, are too close together to be treated in isolation when it comes to the provision of an efficient electric regional rail network.

Integrated joint control of rail services across the region can bring huge benefits as long as the Government is prepared to provide capital investment when presented with an economic business case.

The start made by Lord Adonis on incremental electrification schemes in the North West, each building on the previous stage, is an intelligent example of this, providing better city services, but also addressing the regional opportunity.

For example, the first stage of the little electrification scheme from Manchester to the West Coast main line south of Wigan yields an hourly inter-regional electric service to Scotland, and the next section to Liverpool gives a Liverpool-Manchester inter-regional service with capacity for coping with growth into both Liverpool and Manchester.

Resilience is another benefit. Manchester-Preston cannot be electrified without disruption, so providing a high-speed, high-capacity, electrified, diversionary route via Wigan North Western allows a viable service to be provided for passengers to Preston and beyond.

The extra capacity created on the upgraded route can be devoted to better services for intermediate passengers. Each step in improving the rail network, if planned intelligently, facilitates the next.

When considering reopenings, we should take the same approach.

Look at Colne-Skipton in that light. The Todmorden curve has allowed access to Burnley, Accrington and Blackburn while the route through Bolton is upgraded, and now provides a viable transport scheme in itself for the future. The Scottish Government through Transport



Picture: RIBA COMPETITIONS

**TRAIN OF TOMORROW:** This design by Andreas Vogler and the German aerospace centre DLR was one of three finalists in a contest run by the Royal Institute of British Architects to find better British trains. The £2 million prize will be used to develop the Aeroliner 3000 which uses lightweight technology, an adaptable coach from 42 Technology of Cambridge and flexible seating by Priestman Goode of London

Scotland has taken a similar approach with the Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Project. EGIP again provides for electrification, but is designed in a similar way to provide integrated services within the whole region rather than seeing Glasgow and Edinburgh as two separate cities.

EGIP's aim is to bring economic benefits to the whole of the Central belt. Again, resilience of the network is important during this large construction project, including providing access from intermediate stations. An example of this incremental planning is the provision of the Anniesland chord, useful in itself in the long term to give access from intermediate stations via Falkirk, but essential short-term to provide a service during next year's 20-week blockade for work to replace the slab track in the tunnel at Queen Street.

Good progress in England and Scotland is matched by the Welsh Assembly Government also stirring to do similar things to unite and uplift the economy of Wales by providing an upgraded regional network with good access to Manchester, Birmingham and London, together with an electrified upgraded network serving Cardiff and the Valleys.

Given these moves in four distinct parts of the United Kingdom, one might assume that the rest of the country will get some spin-off. I am not so sure. The same logic and potential economic benefits apply to the east and west Midlands. An integrated approach is required here too, with a need for upgraded regional and inter-regional services as well as more commuter trains around Birmingham, Nottingham and Leicester.

A real danger is fragmentation. We have already seen attempts to split inter-regional services such as Liverpool-Norwich at Nottingham and Manchester-Cleethorpes at Doncaster. I am

worried too by the potential creeping separation of south west Cumbria from the rest of the rail network, even though electrification will come to the rescue of Windermere.

Passengers driving cars do not expect to change vehicles mid-journey and we must resist these pressures for operational convenience.

Lincolnshire, has long been an area with poor rail services, particularly at weekends and in the evenings. The high cost of maintaining armies of manual signal boxes has been an excuse, but the upgrade of the Peterborough-Doncaster joint line via Spalding and Lincoln changes the equation. There is no reason why an all-day quality hourly through regional service cannot be provided, which in turn can form the basis of a regional network east of this line.

Rail is crucial for connectivity within the region but also to key centres in other regions, and East Anglia, with its vibrant economy based on Cambridge as a rail hub, also deserves attention. Good through services from the three key corridors of Norwich, Ipswich and Cambridge are needed to key centres such as Manchester and Birmingham. The need is for more through services, not fewer, as threatened in rail franchise consultations.

This logic applies in other areas too. After the storm of the election, we must continue to argue for a growing railway, based on intelligent incremental development.

Rail development is now seen as a solution to economic development, not a subsidy problem, the mistaken attitude that led to the Pacer era. Good luck.

■ 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.

## North West

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

## ■ Photography competition

Northern Rail is offering two-day travel passes for the three winners of a photographic competition, promoted by the Leeds-Morecambe community rail partnership to provide images that capture the spirit of the line. "It is not about pictures of trains but about people and places along the line," said Pete Myers of Northern Rail. There will be a prize winner for each section: Leeds-Skipton, Gargrave-Wennington and Carnforth-Morecambe. Images should be sent by email to [pete.myers@northernrail.org](mailto:pete.myers@northernrail.org) before 30 September 2015.

## ■ Friends fight for improvements in Northern franchise

The Friends of Reddish South and Denton were disappointed that the recent invitation to tender for the new Northern franchise did not include any proposal to improve services on their line, from the present "Parliamentary" once-weekly Friday service, and are also concerned that the present Stockport-Stalybridge service may be curtailed at Guide Bridge to provide a path from Guide Bridge to Stalybridge for an additional TransPennine Express service. They wrote to the then deputy prime minister Nick Clegg who suggested that the group contact the franchise bidders directly. He also said the Department for Transport expects bidders to exceed the minimum expectation.

## ■ STORM expresses concern over D78 trains

Rail campaigners in the Oldham and Rochdale area have spoken out against the idea of former London Underground trains being used in their area. Rail Minister Claire Perry has said the revamped D78 trains would not work services in the north of England "on her watch". Support The Oldham Rochdale Manchester line (STORM) wants new trains, despite claims that the D78s would be "as good as new". STORM says the problems include: the 60 mph maximum speed, no toilets, the D78s cannot couple to other trains, are being fitted with diesel lorry engines and height variation of door to platform makes disabled access difficult.

## ■ Irlam station renovated at cost of £2 million

Irlam is the busiest unstaffed station in Greater Manchester and now its building, right, has been renovated at a cost of £2 million after lying derelict for 25 years. The restoration, with help from the Hamilton Davies Trust, includes a cafe, toilets and cycle hub. With luck Irlam in Salford will be an inspiration to other towns and cities where magnificent railway buildings have been allowed to deteriorate.



## ■ First stage of Northern Hub approved by Government

The £85 million Ordsall curve, which will allow trains to link Piccadilly and Victoria stations in Manchester, was given the go-ahead by the Government in March. The Department for Transport said the need for the curve outweighs objections. The curve will allow improvements to services to Manchester airport but the Government also sees it as the first component in the wider Northern Hub programme.

Cymru Wales

By Rowland Pittard  
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Too much road in new plan

Roads are given too much emphasis in the Welsh Government's draft national transport plan at the expense of rail and other modes of transport, Railfuture Cymru Wales said in its official response. We said: "Road infrastructure expenditure is devolved but rail infrastructure expenditure is not devolved. The Welsh Government has little direct control of rail other than sponsoring particular projects, rolling stock and services. However this should not be the case in the future. The Welsh Government has already set up a not-for-dividend company to assist with projects such as the South East Wales Metro and procuring the next franchise, but its remit could be expanded. It could become the core of a not-for-dividend franchise, or it could specify the concession details should a concession rather than franchise be deemed the best way forward. The Welsh Government should have greater control over Network Rail and ensure that it receives the appropriate finance devolved to deliver the infrastructure that is appropriate for Wales. We consider that the Welsh Rail network should have new-build diesel and electric rolling stock and not cast-off older and more unsuitable stock from other parts of the country." Railfuture Wales chairman John Rogers had an opportunity to express Railfuture's views in a radio interview on the morning the draft was published.

Route study needs joint Anglo-Welsh response

Railfuture Wales is consulting with other branches in its response to Network Rail's Wales route study consultation because it includes extensions into England (to Pilning, Gloucester, Crewe, Chester and Bidston). West Midlands branch will be interested in the proposals for Hereford and Shrewsbury. The basis for our response will be in line with Railfuture's *Development Plan for the Railways of Wales*.

Rail and sail boosts west Wales links to Ireland

Arriva Trains Wales is once again promoting Rail and Sail for foot passengers for the Pembroke Dock and Fishguard routes to Rosslare, but the Dun Laoghaire service from Holyhead has been withdrawn.

Wales needs upgraded rail links to Manchester airport

Manchester is seen as the main airport serving North Wales so Railfuture has expressed concern to the Welsh Government at the refusal of Northern and TransPennine Express to allow ATW to extend its services hourly from Manchester Piccadilly to Manchester Airport now that the additional platform has been opened at the airport station.

Welcome boost to Heart of Wales and Cambrian services

Railfuture has welcomed additional services on the Heart of Wales and Cambrian lines and the extension of services from Ebbw Vale Parkway to Ebbw Vale Town in its response to ATW's consultation on the 2015 summer timetable.

Fears over delays to Valleys electrification

Railfuture is concerned that delays in Great Western electrification and major signalling schemes will have a serious impact on the electrification of the South Wales valley lines. A major problem is that there is no additional rolling stock for the rapidly increasing number of passengers. Another stage of the improvements to the Valley lines infrastructure was completed in April when the Penarth Curve East to Penarth Curve North section of the City line was doubled. Work has also started on doubling the Ebbw Vale line between Crosskeys and Aberbeeg. The construction of a passing loop on the Maesteg branch is still awaited.

www.railfuturewales.org.uk

# Great Lakes potential

The American state of Michigan was once the heartland of the great car economy with Detroit as its industrial centre.

Ford, General Motors and Chrysler had factories there or nearby but now much of Detroit's east side has become a grim landscape of boarded-up stores, abandoned homes and empty lots as the American car industry has reinvented itself with factories elsewhere.

Just as the ties between Michigan and the car industry are weakening, people are looking to the railways to provide the backbone for a public transport system for the future of the Great Lakes area.

The Amtrak passenger service between Detroit and Chicago is laughable by British standards, with few daily trains at inconvenient times and often running late.

Even so the appetite for rail travel is strong and growing, with Michigan ridership increasing by 78% since 2002. In the world-class university town of Ann Arbor rail passenger numbers grew by nearly 10% in 2013 alone and many other towns and cities in Michigan are clamouring to be reconnected to the national network, often using freight-only lines which lost their passenger service years ago.

One ambitious campaign is to reinstate a coast-to-coast line from Holland (on Lake Michigan) to Detroit (a few miles from Lake Erie) with stations at Grand Rapids and Lansing, now the state capital.

A study has been carried out with the backing of several Michigan

state bodies and Friends of WALLY, which supports a plan for developing rail services in Washtenaw and Livingstone counties. Initially, they want the 27-mile freight-only line to be reopened to passenger use from Ann Arbor to Howell, with stops in Genoa township and Whitmore Lake.

The University of Michigan has offered to underwrite the fare for its 3,700 employees living in Livingston County, a good kickstart to the service's ridership base.

A poll in 2009 found that between 75% and 80% approve or strongly approve of the plan.

More ambitious rail campaigners want the trains to run much further north, as far as Traverse City with a 2014 report called *Getting Back on Track*. Some hope they can eventually reach Petoskey, even further north towards Canada.

Even the current slim service delivers £42 million a year in community benefits alone.

In the neighbouring state of Ohio, train use has grown by 91% in Elyria, 64% in Sandusky, 36% in Toledo and 38% in Cleveland, even though the few train departures are during the night.

Amtrak president Joseph Boardman said: "It is clear that Americans want a national system of inter-city passenger rail, and will continue to use it in greater numbers if we can provide it."

1,500 miles away from Michigan, the west coast state of California ceremonially started work in January on a high speed rail route from Los Angeles to San Francisco. But as Paul Sherman told



the *Michigan Daily*: "High speed rail makes even more sense in higher density areas such as Detroit to Chicago."

Tom Zoellner told the *Wall Street Journal*: "At an average speed of just 68 mph, Amtrak's Acela (between Boston, New York and Washington) is a lumbering mastodon compared to true

186 mph high speed rail. Yet the Acela and other trains in the North East Corridor still manage to capture three-quarters of the air and rail travellers between the nation's capital and its dominant financial centre.

"Journeys such as these are where the airlines are at their most wasteful and damaging."

## Diesel time penalty on way down west

By Gerard Duddridge  
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When the new bi-mode Inter City Express trains for Great Western are delivered, in theory they should be able to speed along the electrified network at 140 mph. But in diesel mode they are unlikely to go faster than 100 mph which raises serious questions as to the timetable possibilities off the electric network.

London Paddington to Plymouth is about 226 miles by train. At present, trains take three hours or more, comparing badly with services to northern cities at similar geographical distances. Preston is 209 miles by rail from London Euston, but the train takes only two hours eight minutes

with two stops. Recent calls for a two hours 15 minute London Paddington-Plymouth timing seem reasonable, but ignore the technical difficulties.

It could be achieved with stops at Reading and Exeter if the following improvements were made: Electrify throughout and use Pendolino tilting trains, bypass the 70 mph Crofton restriction west of Great Bedwyn, replace level crossings with bridges, increase line speeds between Reading and Exeter from 100 mph to 125 mph and to 140 mph from Great Bedwyn to Westbury, tunnel a new direct Exeter to Newton Abbot line, and realign numerous curves between Newton Abbot and Plymouth. However, the bi-mode AT300 trains



HITACHI'S AT300 TRAIN: How the interior could look

being built by Hitachi do not tilt and will run at restricted speeds on diesel power. What would be crucial in improving possibilities down the line would be electrification of the 43 miles of track

from Newbury to Westbury, plus upgrading of curves to 125 mph except at Hungerford. A future Railwatch article will discuss upgrades and journey time improvements.

◆◆◆◆ You can join the Railfuture lottery at www.railfuture.org.uk/lottery

Thames Valley

By Martin Smith  
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Oxfordshire development

Railfuture Thames Valley committee members have had meetings with Councillor David Nimmo-Smith, the Oxfordshire cabinet member for transport, and the senior transport officer. We were reassured that passive provision will be made for the proposed station at Grove (formerly Wantage Road). We also welcomed Oxfordshire's local transport plan which foresees other improvements, including four-tracking between Didcot and Oxford and development of Culham station to serve the science centre, and restoration of passenger services to Cowley to serve the science park and business park. We are planning to arrange similar meetings with Buckinghamshire.

Motorists prioritised in Witney-Oxford rail plans

Railfuture Thames Valley has always advocated light rail or tram-trains between Carterton, Witney and Oxford, and we have been working closely with the Witney-Oxford Transport stakeholder group. Oxfordshire County Council has £40 million available to spend on improving transport in the A40 corridor, which is not enough for a light rail line (or guided busway), but we are anxious this money is not frittered away on short-term schemes. Consultants URS rejected light rail because of the shambles over the Rotherham project, and lean towards heavy rail solutions. However the supposedly "heavy rail" solutions seem to be car-orientated, based on park-and-ride provision. Carterton, with a population of 12,000 and growing, would seem to be left out of consideration. We await the outcome of the engineering study.

Human touch missing at Chiltern's new stations

We are looking forward to trains starting to run from Marylebone to Oxford Parkway this year. Chiltern Railways' decision to rename Bicester Town station as Bicester Village has stirred angry protests from local people who say that Bicester is a town. Thousands of foreign tourists though will find it easier to get on the right train at Marylebone if they see "Bicester Village" on the departure screen. Railfuture is, however, worried that neither Bicester Village nor Oxford Parkway will have a booking office. Instead there will be so-called "interactive walls", super touchscreen ticket machines, and a roving member of staff to assist passengers. When the line to Bletchley is reopened, there will be many people wanting information who would prefer to talk to a human being than to a wall. We deplore this move to substitute humans with machines, which will deter many people, particularly first-time rail passengers and older people.

Keep blockages off potential Heathrow rail route

Railfuture Thames Valley has objected to a planning application for a housing development which will obstruct part of the track between Bourne End and High Wycombe. Railfuture has campaigned for years against developments which could prevent disused rail tracks from being brought back into use, but the planners never learn. This section is the missing link in a potential rail route from Milton Keynes to Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Maidenhead and Heathrow.

Rail improvements bring out alarmist objectors

Thames Valley branch contributed to Railfuture's response to Network Rail's western route study, welcoming all the positive proposals for developing the rail network to 2043. The proposal for a flyover at Oxford North Junction has set alarm bells ringing in North Oxford. Protesters object that it will ruin the view from the historic Port Meadow and another objected to the proposed flyover east of Didcot. Railfuture members have written to the local press, refuting these alarmist fears.

**Wessex**

By David Brace david.brace@railfuture.org.uk

■ ■ Railfuture bids to support other rail campaigners

Railfuture was given an opportunity in February to explain to other rail supporters how we can help and support them. The occasion was South West Trains' first community rail partnership conference, held at Basingstoke station. A wide range of stakeholders was invited, including Railfuture Wessex, the community rail partnerships and friends of stations in the SWT area. Each organisation gave a presentation about its activities. This should be of great help for newly formed organisations or those looking for fresh ideas to encourage support for their station or line.

■ ■ Engineers upgrade Island line after winter storms

Network Rail completed substantial remedial engineering works between Sandown and Brading ahead of time following damage from the 2013 winter storms. Routine maintenance was also carried out while the Isle of Wight line was closed.

■ ■ Yeovil will gain new links in SWT expansion plan

South West Trains, in conjunction with the Department for Transport, has applied to add a number of extra trains on services west of Salisbury. SWT wishes to split some Waterloo-Exeter services at Salisbury and run a three-car class 159 via Westbury and Castle Cary to Yeovil Pen Mill and Yeovil Junction. Westbury to Castle Cary and south to Yeovil Pen Mill is currently the sole preserve of First Great Western. SWT also wants to run a number of shuttle services every day between the two Yeovil stations (currently requiring use of a bus) and to extend some services currently terminating at Gillingham. Additional and longer trains west of Salisbury are planned for Sundays. A limited number of additional trains are also planned on the Waterloo-Southampton line.

■ ■ Flyover and dive-under may boost line capacity

Railfuture Wessex committee carried out a substantial review of the Network Rail Wessex route study draft published before Christmas. Like the western route study in October, the latest study attempts to predict demand from 2019 to 2043. It concentrates on providing peak hour capacity on the main line into Waterloo, but SWT routes further west and non-London routes receive less attention. It is predicted a further 40% capacity will have to be provided inbound from Woking to Waterloo. As many as 35 trains will be needed in the busiest hour against the 25 run now. Additional capacity will be needed by the end of control period 6 in 2024 which could include a Portsmouth line flyover at Woking and a Reading line dive-under at Basingstoke. All peak-hour services from Southampton inbound need to be increased to 12 cars. Controversially, it is suggested that all long-distance services (Basingstoke and beyond) should be fitted with 2+3 seating like the unpopular class 450 Desiro trains. A short-term driver signalling advisory system to allow non-stop trains to run closer together is also suggested, with the ERTMS fitted in the longer term. Double decker trains will be considered for Waterloo-Basingstoke and possibly Southampton.

■ ■ Few incentives when Govia expands to the west

The Railfuture Wessex AGM in Fareham in March welcomed Phil Hutchinson, head of timetable development for Govia Thameslink Railway. He explained to an audience, which included a councillor and a press reporter, the seven-year GTR management contract, which started in September. DfT keeps the fare box and pays the franchisee to operate a defined service covering 22% of Britain's rail passenger services. We were warned not to expect improvements to service patterns, rolling stock and pricing policy for the Southern services that serve South Hampshire, nor the long-term aspiration to provide a regular rail link from the east to Southampton Airport when the current Southern franchise is incorporated into the GTR franchise in July 2015. Railfuture is concerned that the management contract appears to remove financial incentives for the operator to find ways to improve income and may look like a reinvention of British Rail. Time will tell.

# Your letters

## Eurostar facts

Many thanks for the article on Eurostar in *Railwatch* 143 but please get your facts right.

The London-Marseille is not a daily service. It is three trains a week in May and one day a week in November. See: [http://www.eurostar.com/sites/default/files/e-commerce/destinations/Lyon\\_journey\\_guide.pdf](http://www.eurostar.com/sites/default/files/e-commerce/destinations/Lyon_journey_guide.pdf)

The train leaves St Pancras at 07.19 so you need to be at the station by 06.30. This is hardly convenient to passengers even if they live in London, especially families. So what time would you have to leave in the morning? I would have to leave my house by 05.00.

For coming back, the train does not arrive until 22.12 at St Pancras, limiting options for onward travel. You also have to de-train at Lille Europe on the way back and go through border control. I expect chaos, given how small the Eurostar hall is. The service has been hyped up, especially by Eurostar, but in reality it is not such a good deal! Railfuture should push for a more sensible option.

Lionel Colby, Drayton Parslow, Milton Keynes MK17 0JY  
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## Garden cities

The idea of new towns generate vociferous opposition. The most cogent grounds are usually traffic generation and urbanisation, and whether the site happens to have been a former airfield or quarry does not affect these.

The answer is to build compact developments without the paraphernalia required to accommodate universal car ownership. The designation "garden city" should involve the liberal provision of pleasant, traffic-free cycle and walking routes as in the Netherlands. They should not only have a



railway station but this should be right in the centre so that shoppers and workers can come in by train without the need for a long walk or connecting bus.

If significant portions of the development are made completely car-free, this would not only open up new choices for people who want to escape the blight of traffic but also help to underpin good public transport within the development and in the surrounding area.

Simon Norton, Hertford Street, Cambridge CB4 3AG  
simon@maths.cam.ac.uk

## Far North 'elephant'

We took a holiday at Rogat on the Far North line, around a decade ago, and the trip was beset with cancellations, rescheduled trains, unscheduled delays, and at the end of the holiday we nearly missed our sleeper south. I never went back, but always assumed things had got better. How disappointing to read in *Railwatch* 143 that things seem to have got much worse.

The elephant in the room is, of course, that the Department for Transport refused to fund the Dornoch cut-off when the Dornoch Firth road bridge was built. For as long as bus and coach schedules remain quicker than the train, investment in the Far North line will not be forthcoming, and campaigners will always be fighting a rearguard action for scraps of investment. The

only way to sort this mess out is to campaign hard for the big, but manageable, investment required to bring the Far North line up to date.

David Henshaw, West Park, Castle Cary, Somerset BA7 7DB  
atob@atob.org.uk

## Far North signals

I refer to Mr J Artherton's letter in *Railwatch* 143 in relation to the request stops on the Far North line. I agree that little would be saved by abolishing some of the request stops, but believe, with some modest expenditure, these could all be retained while the service is speeded up.

I would suggest a similar system be adopted as on some secondary lines in Switzerland. Intending passengers wishing to stop a train press a button on the platform which illuminates a flashing light for the train at a safe braking distance. A light by the button shows passengers the train will stop.

The train driver does not need to slow down to look for passengers giving a hand signal. With trains able to proceed at full line speed unless definitely required to stop, several minutes can be saved on longer journeys, with the timetable based on the average number of request stops normally required.

This system would benefit the Far North line, and could be used on other lines, such as the Central Wales line.

David Carpenter, Addison Road, Rugby CV22 7DA  
d.m.carpenter@btinternet.com

## Far North for locals

As a regular user of railways in the Far North and a local rail campaigner, I and many others are all too familiar with the difficulties presented by a slow, unreliable, and inconvenient rail service from Inverness to Thurso and Wick. I would like to express my thanks to Railfuture's Allison Cosgrove for coming up to meet us in December and again in March to meet with local community representatives and officials from Network Rail and First Scotrail.

While we welcome the recent emphasis on the Inverness-Wick line being a "Great Scenic Line", I have serious concern at the

service disruptions and delays and subsequent journey time lengthenings by between five and 20 minutes. It already takes twice as long to travel between Caithness and Inverness by train as it does by car, and recent surveys confirm that passengers' highest priority is journey time reductions.

The Dornoch Rail Link is a critically necessary improvement. Tourist potential is all very well but local residents need more than vague promises. Request stops on the northern end of the line perform a useful service for locals who may not have access to either car or road in some cases.

Abellio could instead look at cutting out stations like Beaully, Conon Bridge, Alness and Fearn for Caithness rail services as these stations already have perfectly good Invernet and bus services. Efforts must continue to ensure that our line improves, as its viability and survival depend on usefulness to the communities it serves in Caithness and elsewhere. A slow, unreliable rail line is a useless line, which may then close. We need to fight to get our line improved and times shortened, by any means necessary.

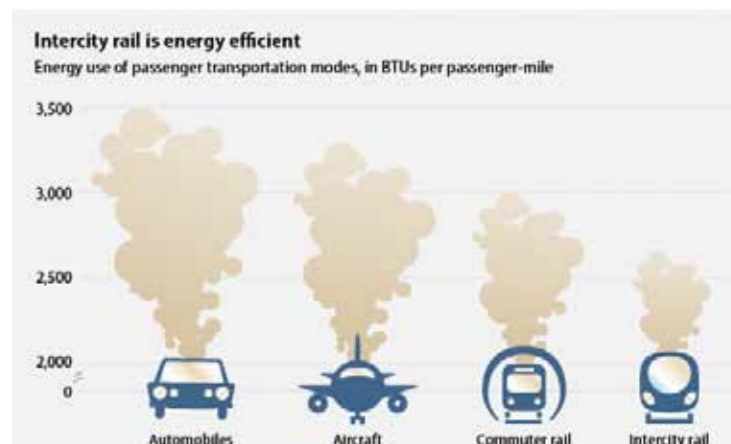
Mark W Norton, Convener, North Rail Line Action Group, Seaview Cottage, Barrock, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8SY  
mm.wnorton@btinternet.com

## Look to the deer

It was good to hear of a positive contribution to Scottish tourism by Friends of the West Highland Line who, with Network Rail's agreement, removed short stretches of lineside vegetation so that passengers could enjoy the views. However, the vegetation may soon re-grow and obscure the view again.

On recently returning from Fort William, I noted that the extensive hillside above Loch Treig had been grazed almost free of vegetation by the deer, except for some lineside trees, protected by fencing.

Once these trees are in leaf they will almost obliterate the



From the US Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration, Vision for High-Speed in America April 2009

view. If both trees and fencing were removed, the deer would probably ensure there was no need for a repeat cut and the view from the train would be clear. Incidentally, low seat backs on the class 156 trains helped me to enjoy the magnificent views.

Sunshine, snow and even a little ski-ing on Aonach Mor above Fort William made my trip truly memorable.

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

## Acton challenge

Recently a friend and I set ourselves a challenge, to visit all the stations in London with the name Acton in the shortest possible time, these being Acton Main Line, Acton Central, Acton Town and North, South, East and West Acton. They are to be found on several different lines and the object was to see how quickly they could all be reached.

However, to make things slightly more interesting each station had to be exited and could not then be used again. The starting station was Acton Main Line and the finish was Acton Town with the others visited in the following order: Acton Central (from Willesden Junction), East Acton (from Ealing Broadway), West Acton (from White City), North Acton (from Ealing Broadway), South Acton (from Willesden Junction) and Acton Town (from

Chiswick Park). Buses were used to get from one station to another in order to reach lines allowing us to get to the various Acton stations. Our total time was 2 hours 46 mins and 58 secs. Perhaps someone may like to try and better that.

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dmhorwill@aol.com

## Poll link

Can you provide a link to the full YouGov poll mentioned on page 8 of *Railwatch* 143?

Gerald Brown, Fieldview, Norwich NR5 8AQ  
brown.gerald@ntlworld.com

Editors' note: <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2013/11/04/nationalise-energy-and-rail-companies-say-public/>

## Glasgow Crossrail

*RAIL* magazine issue 773 has a powerful feature article headed Missing links in Glasgow's rail evolution. It is supportive of NEWgarl and the associated Crossrail Link and is essential reading for those who want a rail network fit for the 21st century.

Ken Sutherland, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 1NP  
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## Another success

Added to the list of Lincolnshire successes in the Annual Review that came with *Railwatch* 143 must be the campaign to prevent the ending of direct train services from Cleethorpes/Grimsby to Manchester Airport. This had the backing of the local council, businesses, MPs and the *Grimsby Telegraph*, and thankfully achieved its goal last autumn.

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

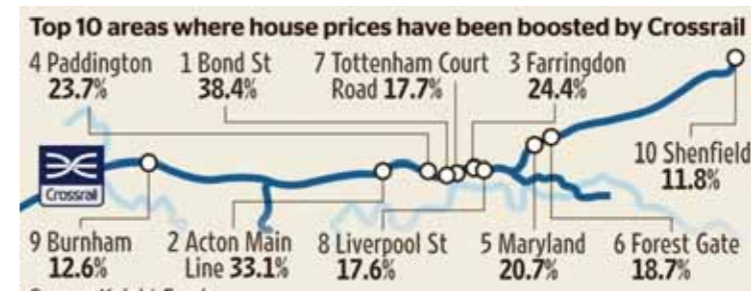


Source: Office of Rail Regulation GB rail industry financial 2013/14

How some rail franchises make money while others need it

## 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



Source: Knight Frank  
An estate agent's estimate of London Crossrail's cash benefit

# Think big to make rail freight deliver

Britain needs more rail lines that can cope with continental gauge freight trains.

Network Rail has spent millions enlarging the structure gauge on some routes to cope with bigger, modern containers. But more needs to be done.

When Railfuture members were campaigning for the Channel Tunnel in the 1970s and 1980s, they hoped it would reduce lorry traffic causing pollution and danger on the roads through Kent.

Sadly, the Channel Tunnel has not lived up to expectations because continental size freight trains cannot be operated on our Victorian rail infrastructure.

So growing numbers of lorries continue to despoil Kent while the number of freight trains using the Channel Tunnel is shrinking, not growing.

In 2014, only 2,900 freight trains used the Channel Tunnel, compared to 3,902 in 2005.

The 1.65 million tonnes of freight carried on freight trains was dwarfed by the 18.7 million tonnes carried by lorries on Eurotunnel's Shuttle trains.

That may be good for Eurotunnel's profits but it is bad news for Kent. A staggering 1,440,214 lorries travelled through Kent in 2014 on the way to the Shuttle. An estimated 500,000 other lorries travelled through Kent to the ferry ports.

Apart from the danger and pollution, vast amounts of energy are wasted in freight by lorry. The average Channel Tunnel freight train delivers 568 tonnes of freight compared to the average lorry load over the Channel of 12 tonnes. Even though the British Government and the European Union are turning a blind eye to these problems, people in Flanders are becoming increasingly concerned by the numbers of British-bound lorries on their roads, according to *World Cargo News*. Nearly two million British-bound lorries went through Calais alone in 2014.

## Good news

The Dow Corning chemical factory at Barry, south Wales, receives high-grade silica from France via Channel Tunnel trains and even its exports go by rail – in containers to the docks at Portbury, Southampton and Tilbury.

Daily trains of high quality steel made in Scunthorpe run down the East Coast main line,

	EUROTUNNEL SHUTTLE SERVICES					HIGH SPEED TRAINS	RAIL FREIGHT TRAINS	
	Trucks	Equivalent in tonnes of freight carried (in million)	Cars	Coaches	Equivalent in passengers (in million)	Passengers <sup>1</sup>	Tonnes de freight (in million)	Number of rail freight trains
2014	1,440,214	18.7	2,572,263	63,059	10.6	10,397,694	1.65	2,900
2013	1,362,849	17.7	2,481,167	64,507	10.3	10,132,691	1.36	2,547
2012	1,464,880	19	2,424,342	58,966	10	9,911,649	1.23	2,325
2011	1,263,327	16.4	2,262,811	56,095	9.3	9,679,764	1.32	2,388
2010	1,089,051	14.2	2,125,259	56,507	7.5	9,528,556	1.13	2,097
2009	769,261	10.0	1,916,647	54,547	6.9	9,220,233	1.18	2,403
2008	1,254,282	14.2	1,907,484	55,751	7.0	9,113,371	1.24	2,718
2007	1,414,709	18.4	2,141,573	65,331	7.9	8,260,980	1.21	2,840
2006	1,296,269	16.9	2,021,543	67,201	7.8	7,858,337	1.6	3,786
2005	1,308,786	17	2,047,166	77,267	8.2	7,454,497	1.6	3,902

<sup>1</sup> Only passengers using Eurostar to cross the Channel are included in this table, thus excluding journeys between Paris-Calais and Brussels-Lille.

through Kent and the Channel Tunnel to rolling mills in northern France. A two-way traffic of aluminium has also developed between Merseyside and Germany. Increasing quantities of general imports are coming to the developing international freight hub at Barking in east London.

But more hubs are needed and soon rail traffic could be rolling into a new strategic rail freight terminal that could be built by Helioslough on the former airfield at Radlett, Hertfordshire, following a High Court ruling in March. The plan has been on hold since 2006.

Railfuture's freight group points out that this expensive struggle exemplifies the need for a UK-wide land use planning framework that supports rail where proposals for terminals are put forward, and actively seeks to identify and safeguard opportunities for freight terminal development.

The expertise of logistics providers, the rail industry, the Department for Transport and local planning authorities needs to be brought together – possibly via regional working groups – to find a way for future terminal

developments, and to identify how these will deliver potential growth in rail's modal share to 19% by 2033, a figure already identified as feasible by Network Rail.

Railfuture believes that in future, a range of terminal types needs to be catered for, including:

- Strategic rail freight interchanges. Typically over 60 hectares in size
- Intermodal-only rail interchanges. Typically sites of 10-30 hectares
- Rail-linked warehousing. Sites of 10-30 hectares
- Bulk material rail interchanges. Sites of 5-10 hectares
- Freight consolidation centres

In addition, there is a need to consider how the planning system can require developers, in consultation with the rail industry, to make passive provision for rail access to sites where this is not a customer requirement at the time a development is first occupied.

After all, no one expects a business to move on to a development site that does not have access by road, so why should rail access be treated differently?

The planned Transport for the North authority should also clear the way for a better multi-modal freight strategy.

Freight on Rail's Philippa Edmunds said: "Rail freight is an intrinsic part of the economy in the North of England, transporting consumer products and bulk traffic such as coal, biomass, aggregates, steel and petrochemicals. The North of England is the origin or destination of over 40% of UK rail freight volumes.

"A freight strategy should define what capacity and intermodal terminals are needed to unlock rail's potential to further reduce road congestion, road fatalities, infrastructure damage and pollution."

A new £5 million terminal is being planned at Calais to allow rail freight from all over Europe to be switched to lorries for delivery to Britain.

It seems that for many years to come, Britain will be lagging behind other countries in tackling pollution from transport – notwithstanding the enormous amounts of taxpayers' money which were invested in the Channel Tunnel and HS1, with more to come for HS2.

## New flexible design idea opens way for parcels

A new flexible design of rail carriage, which allows freight and parcels to be carried on passenger trains, opens up enormous potential for rail to win back high-value freight traffic which has been lost to the road.

The design is the work of Cambridgeshire company 42 Technology, a finalist in the Tomorrow's Train Design Today competition.

The design allows a carriage to be quickly reconfigured to carry passengers or freight. The crucial element of the design is folding seats on a novel floor mounting, allowing freight containers to be carried in the freed-up space.

A novel mechanism allows the seats to be locked securely in variable safe positions and an integrated control system can automatically reconfigure the carriage between passenger and freight modes.

In the next 18 months of the competition, 42 Technology will carry out detailed work to develop a full scale demonstrator model.

It believes the design could bring in £100 million by allowing more intensive use of rolling stock with no significant increase in operating cost.

Jon Spratley led 42 Technology's multidisciplinary team in developing the winning concept.

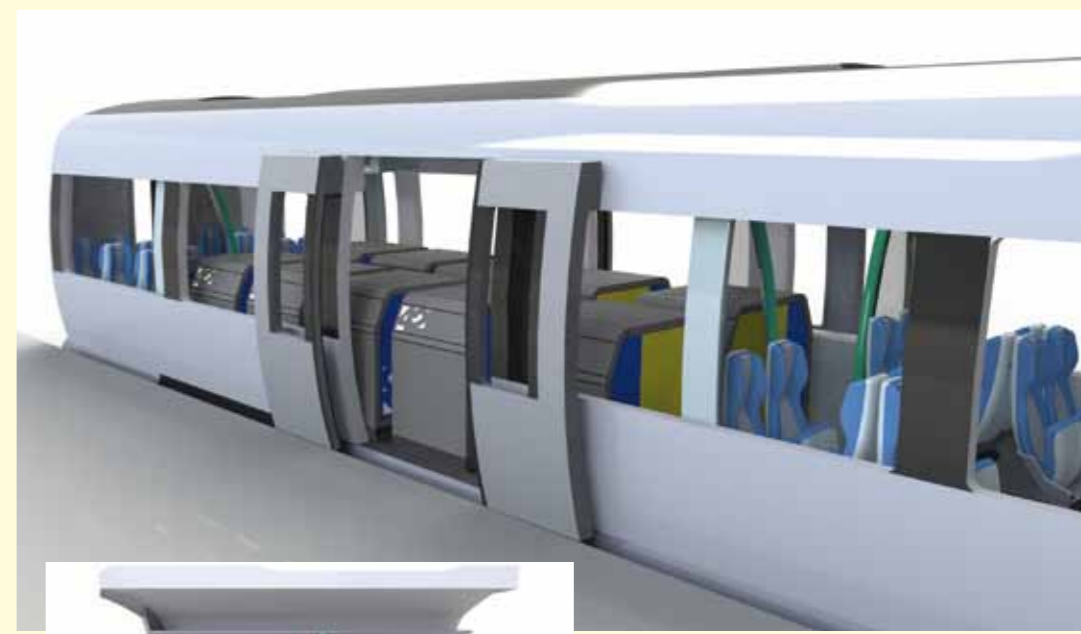
Three finalists were chosen, including Andreas Vogler with the German Aerospace Center DLR (see also page 5).

The Aeroliner 3000 brings lightweight thinking into the train world, combining aerodynamics, interactive control systems and even passenger psychology.

The other finalist was Priestman Goode of London. Its Horizon train includes a seating concept that can change between peak and off-peak periods to offer a standard seat during off peak and a peak-hour commuter seat. The competition was promoted jointly by the Rail Safety and Standards Board and the Royal Institute of British Architects.

It is backed by funding from Network Rail's future railway programme and the Department for Transport.

The £2 million prize will be used to develop the three concepts.



**CARRIAGE:** 42 Technology's new design allows freight and passengers to be accommodated

Transferring freight to rail has huge road safety benefits as lorries are five times more likely than cars to be involved in fatal accidents on local roads, because of their size and weight. Even on motorways, the "safest" roads, lorries are involved in 51% of fatal accidents even though they only make up 11% of the traffic, in terms of miles driven.

## £1.6 billion rail freight success

By **Maryanne Sonnemann**  
Freightliner

Rail freight contributes an estimated £1.6 billion worth of benefits to Britain's economy each year. Research carried out in 2013 estimated that freight delivers productivity gains for British businesses, and congestion and environmental benefits totalling over £1.5 billion per year.

Continued growth in the transport of goods by rail since then means these benefits are now estimated to be worth over £1.6 billion annually.

A new Rail Delivery Group report shows:

■ Each year the five major rail freight operators transport goods worth over £30 billion, including supermarket groceries, luxury cars for export and half of the fuel used to generate electricity

■ There has been a 30% rise in the movement of containers by rail since 2006, fuelled by the growing consumer goods market – one in four containers entering the country is now moved by rail

■ Train numbers have fallen by 30% since 2003, yet freight tonnes lifted has increased by 30%, resulting in an increase in tonnes per train of over 80%

■ Each train removes up to 76 lorries from Britain's roads, resulting in 1.6 billion fewer HGV km a year

■ Each tonne transferred by rail rather than road cuts carbon emissions by up to 76%

The growth in volumes has been possible through significant investments made by freight operators as well as ports, terminals and other customers, Network Rail and the Government.

That in turn has allowed the sector to be more competitive, particularly with road transport, and savings to be passed down to the freight customer. The resulting productivity benefits for UK plc are valued at over £1.1 billion per year, helping to underpin economic growth.

Freight also has a key part to play in meeting government environmental targets, particularly since investment in the network and new rolling stock has resulted in more efficient, longer and heavier trains. Alongside reduced congestion and improved safety, the environmental benefits are worth over £0.5 billion a year to the UK economy.

With continued investment from all parties it is forecast that the annual economic benefits generated by freight could

rise to nearly £2 billion by 2023. Peter Maybury, chairman of Freightliner, said: "Investment and a commitment to service excellence has helped our sector to grow by 80% in the past 20 years, and increase its share of the market for transporting goods.

"The growth seen in the past 12 months underlines how vital the sector is to maintaining Britain's economic competitiveness.

"Freight operators also play a key role in supporting the operation and reliability of GB rail, moving materials needed for crucial network improvements and keeping lines clear in times of severe weather.

"Greater certainty in the long-term charging and regulatory regimes will help provide the stability needed to ensure continued investment in the future, and allow us to build on our success and further increase the benefits of rail freight to the UK economy."

The *Freight Britain* report can be downloaded along with an earlier 2014 report *Keeping the lights on and the traffic moving: The benefits of rail freight for the UK economy* from [www.raildelivery-group.com/what-we-do/our-reports-presentation-speeches/](http://www.raildelivery-group.com/what-we-do/our-reports-presentation-speeches/)

## North East

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

### ■ ■ 'Steady as you go' vote

A well attended AGM of the branch was held in Newcastle in March. Trevor Watson continues as chairman, supported by the existing officials and committee. James Wilkin, the development officer (north) for the Association of Community Rail Partnerships for Scotland gave an illustrated talk on the introduction of partnerships north of the Border. The branch liaises closely with Railfuture Scotland and was pleased to welcome Allison Cosgrove to this meeting. The chairman and committee members continue to attend consultative meetings with existing and new franchise operators. In view of the pending decisions on the Northern and TransPennine franchises, a second meeting with Tim Burleigh of Eversholt Rail was held in March to explore the future provision of rolling stock.

### ■ ■ Sunderland coast line hopes for a brighter future

The Coastliners rail user group is concerned that the new franchises will perpetuate the arbitrary separation of its line from the rest of the Northern network imposed in 2004. It supports the development of a Saltburn-Middlesbrough-Stockton-Durham-Newcastle-Carlisle-Whitehaven link and is delighted the new rail connection to Teesport and the strong case for electrifying the line from Northallerton to Middlesbrough should stop a diesel-operated rump stretching from Teesside to York.

### ■ ■ MP helps to improve outlook for Tyne Valley line

The Tyne Valley Line Rail User Group reports that the campaign to reopen Gilsland station received a boost in February when Transport Minister Claire Perry visited the station site at the invitation of local MP Guy Opperman. They were joined by representatives from the rail industry, county council, user group, community rail partnership and members of the Campaign to Open Gilsland Station. Ms Perry said she was thrilled with the site and its surroundings and the meeting proved productive and positive.

### ■ ■ Improved service promised by Northern franchise

The invitation to tender for the Northern franchise contains the welcome proposal that all trains in both directions should run from Newcastle to Carlisle and not start or terminate at Hexham. This would give a half-hourly service, with the possibility of some faster trains. The Tyne Valley Line Rail User Group is working with the community rail partnership to ensure the needs of the area are met.

### ■ ■ Four-year hope for Ashington passenger reopening

Now that the Ashington line has been mentioned in the invitation to tender for the Northern franchise, the South East Northumberland Rail User Group welcomed a March press release from Northumberland County Council which showed commitment to bringing back the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne passenger service. The council has included in its capital projects budget preliminary costings for the scheme and expects to cooperate with the successful franchise bidder, with 2019 as a target date for completion.

### ■ ■ Anglo-Scot open access bid would benefit Morpeth

The open access bid by First Group to run five services a day from Edinburgh to King's Cross, calling at Morpeth and Newcastle and with some trains stopping at Stevenage, was welcomed by the South East Northumberland Rail User Group in its campaign to improve services to Morpeth.



Picture: NEWCASTLE COLLEGE

**BLUE HELMETS:** Students in their high-viz gear line up with, left to right, Network Rail's Guy Wilmshurst-Smith, rail academy head Marc McPake and London Underground's David Waboso

## New rail academy

By Peter Kenyon

peter.kenyon@railfuture.org.uk

The official launch of Newcastle College's new multi-million pound Rail Academy in Gateshead took place in March.

Guests were welcomed by students on the Hospitality course and background music was provided by students from the music department.

Visitors were conducted through the teaching rooms where students demonstrated practical tasks and in the vast indoor area showed off the extensive track and signalling facility.

Business Secretary Vince Cable joined in by video link from Westminster. He endorsed the college as an important initiative that will support the future of the UK's rail infrastructure and be a critical part of the nation's "future investment in skills".

Network Rail's head of professional training and development Guy Wilmshurst-Smith, and London Underground's capital programmes director David Waboso emphasised that the

average age of engineers in the industry is now 55 and that some 55,000 retirements are in prospect, which presented a huge challenge to an industry facing a new digital age.

At the same time the expansion and development of railways worldwide would provide global opportunities for the new generation.

Links with industry are a first priority for the academy. It aims to serve all age groups, including young people looking to develop a career in the rail sector, those wanting to change careers and employers who need to up-skill their existing workforce or simply recruit for further growth.

Facilities for maintenance experience include outdoor and indoor track systems with signalling systems ranging from surviving upper quadrant semaphores to state of the art electronic programmes.

More information about the Academy and its courses can be found at [newcastlecollege.co.uk/railacademy](http://newcastlecollege.co.uk/railacademy)

## Rail finances under examination

Railfuture member Tony Sheward, in his first venture as an author, has published a book about railway finances.

Making use of records in the National Archives, Tony charts the way in which railway companies presented financial information to shareholders from the early days of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway to nationalisation of the railways in 1948.

*The Development of Railway Financial Statements 1827-1948* also analyses the influence of canals, railway regulation, company law and the railway companies' individual pattern of development.

This is an area of railway research which has hitherto been only sparsely covered.

The book uses six companies to illustrate the changes, comparisons being made with the requirements of the Companies Acts. The rest gives examples of the statements.

The book is A4 size, has 164 pages and a softback cover. Its ISBN number is 978-9565663-4-8.

Railfuture is offering the book for £18.00, including postage (a discount of £2.00) and every purchase will also support our campaigning. See [www.railfuture.org.uk/shop/books.php#drfs](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/shop/books.php#drfs)

## Sheffield deserves a better HS2 deal

By Graham Nalty

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Few Railfuture members support building parkway stations, and there have been very few, if any, successful parkway stations on high speed lines anywhere in the world.

HS2 Ltd has expressed a preference for building an HS2 parkway station at Meadowhall rather than in the centre of Sheffield.

"User time savings" are used to justify this, and HS2 Ltd claims there is a better cost-to-benefit ratio for Meadowhall.

This is their argument: A station in Sheffield city centre would have the same journey time from London as Meadowhall and in *Rebalancing Britain*, HS2 Ltd claims that the connection from HS2 at Meadowhall into Sheffield city centre adds 10 minutes.

With approximately 750,000 passengers a year, a city centre HS2 station would save 7.5 million passenger minutes a year.

But diverting HS2 via Sheffield Victoria would add five to six extra minutes for passengers travelling beyond Sheffield, and there are six million of them going to Leeds, York, Newcastle and Edinburgh who would be delayed a total of 30-36 million passenger minutes a year.

So the official view is that routing HS2 through Sheffield adds too much time to longer journeys.

This argument fails because cities beyond Sheffield still have a very fast journey time to London and their economic loss from these extra minutes would be minimal.

At Sheffield, where a city centre HS2 station would generate thousands of extra jobs by making the city attractive to investors and tourists, 70% of those jobs would be lost to the whole South Yorkshire region if the HS2 station were at Meadowhall, according to expert studies by Volterra.

Other studies have shown a city centre HS2 station at Sheffield would attract many more passengers.

Building parkway stations on HS2 could prove disastrous for the economies of third tier cities, not only Sheffield but also Stoke, Nottingham and Derby.

The case for Meadowhall can be demolished by challenging the information in *Rebalancing Britain*. No HS2 passenger arriving at Meadowhall can expect to

reach Sheffield Midland 10 minutes later. Sheffield to Meadowhall takes five to six minutes one way and seven to eight minutes the other way, allowing only two-five minutes to get from a long HS2 train to a local train on a different vertical level. This would not be possible.

Using interchange times on the real railway suggests about 15 to 20 minutes would be needed. So a direct HS2 train to Sheffield city centre would deliver a 23 minute gain, compared to changing at Meadowhall.

The Department for Transport has allowed five to six minutes extra for routing HS2 via Sheffield. A better estimate, given to me by a highly qualified civil engineer, would be little more than one minute.

When these more accurate figures are used, the Sheffield city centre option saves more passenger minutes per year by 17.25 million to 6 million. HS2 Ltd has made the wrong choice of station in South Yorkshire by either oversight or design. Is HS2 Ltd more concerned with trying to protect its original option than reaching the best solution? This is worrying, and may be one reason why HS2 is held in such low public esteem.

I have campaigned for high speed rail since long before HS2 and I feel embarrassed by the errors of detail in operating knowledge, civil engineering and the ability to read a timetable by those responsible for building Britain's high speed rail network.

George Osborne is the first UK Chancellor of the Exchequer to recognise the catalytic effect that good public transport has in stimulating economic growth and is doing something about it through the Northern Powerhouse.

That is good for the economies outside London and good for the aims of Railfuture. But is it right that HS2 Ltd can override the wishes of local elected representatives when the Northern Powerhouse depends on individual cities making their own transport decisions?

If HS2 Ltd can make such a damaging decision at Meadowhall/Sheffield, how many other controversial decisions made by HS2 Ltd are flawed?

Re-examining other aspects of the proposed HS2 route may be sensible as opposition to HS2 in certain quarters shows no sign of diminishing.

## Severnside

By Nigel Bray

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### ■ ■ Station to be Somerset railhead

A wide area of central Somerset currently lacking direct access to the rail network could be served by a reopened station at Langport on the London-Penzance main line.

A Railfuture meeting at Taunton in February heard Phil Edge, Martin Read and Chris Maltin from Langport Transport Group outline the campaign to reopen the station, which closed in 1962. The proposal was inspired by a consultation by Langport Town Council which identified the need for a station as a high priority. The former station site is undeveloped and would be within 1,000 metres of almost the entire combined 3,500 population of Langport and Huish Episcopi. The group believes that proposed new housing could help fund the station. The project would also make an important contribution to transport resilience during periods of extreme weather. Langport is at the heart of the Somerset Levels, which were severely flooded in the early months of 2014, although the main line remained open almost throughout that period. A business case is needed, but a possible obstacle is Somerset County Council which has told the group its transport priority is roads.

### ■ ■ Reopened station will be near new housing at Portishead

A decision has at last been reached on the site for Portishead station – at the junction of Quays Avenue and Harbour Road. Although less central than the former station, which closed in 1964, it is closer to most of the newer housing which has more than doubled the town's population in the past 50 years. The line is due to reopen under Metro West Phase 1 in 2019.

### ■ ■ Mind the freight gap in county's transport plan

Railfuture Severnside welcomed proposals to reduce car dependency and enhance connectivity between rail and bus services in Gloucestershire's local transport plan, but criticised the lack of any provision for a rail freight depot in the county. In 2010 the previous LTP had talked down the viability of sidings at Ashchurch and Sharpness Docks. More recently the county council has removed protection from the Ministry of Defence sidings at Ashchurch. Railfuture believes this is at odds with National Planning Policy guidelines and has suggested alternative locations.

### ■ ■ Passengers flock to better TransWilts train service

The success of the campaign, supported by Railfuture, to quadruple the train service on the TransWilts route between Swindon and Westbury was explained by Graham Ellis in an entertaining talk to Railfuture Severnside's AGM in Melksham on 11 April. Graham, who is president of Melksham Chamber of Commerce, explained that when the service was cut to two trains each way in 2006, it was challenging to develop a business case for a more relevant timetable and to demonstrate that people would use it. A milestone was sponsorship from local businesses in 2011 for a summer Sunday service to Weymouth, which proved extremely popular. After Wiltshire Council realised it could apply for local sustainable transport funding, this proved to be the catalyst for the introduction of the enhanced service, which has operated since December 2013. The additional trains are funded by LSTF for three years but will continue if the Department for Transport considers the experiment has succeeded. The target for the Chippenham-Trowbridge section of the route was 45,000 passengers in Year 1 and 108,000 in Year 3 but actual journeys in Year 1 were 183,000 according to First Great Western – four times greater than predicted. Graham Ellis summed up by saying that FGW, Wiltshire Council and the local community had worked together to achieve this. He explained that 70 volunteers distribute local publicity.



## Lincolnshire

By Don Peacock  
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### ■ ■ Tribute to Brian Hastings

Railfuture Lincolnshire chairman David Harby paid a memorial tribute at the AGM in March to Brian Hastings who died in February. The tribute was followed by a minute's silence. Stephen Abbott of TravelWatch East Midlands addressed the public part of the meeting on the project to improve Lincoln-Nottingham services, which is now producing results. Alan Gouldthorpe reported on the branch Twitter account, which started in December 2013. Since then more than 100 messages, a mixture of composed messages and forwarding of other messages, have been sent. We have 106 followers.

### ■ ■ £85 million signalling project keeps line speeds at 60mph

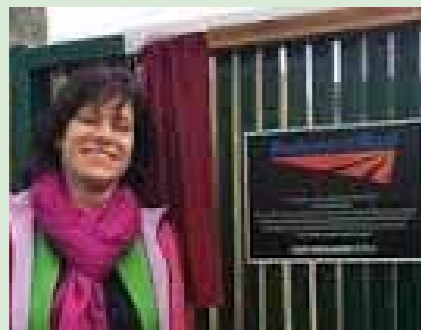
Committee member Mike Savage organised a March meeting with Network Rail on the North Lincolnshire signalling project. It was hosted by the project manager at Network Rail control office at North Killingholme. The project will cost about £85 million and result in the area being controlled from York rail operating centre. The resignalling disappointingly will not see line speeds increased east of Scunthorpe above the current 55/60 mph. This is now even more galling with the recently announced £80 million upgrade of the A160 and A180 roads to Immingham for port traffic and no mention of any benefits from the 1 North project south of the Humber. The resignalling was said to have been future-proofed so for example there was no obstacle to reinstating the up slow line east of Barnetby to increase capacity. If train operators wish to run at higher speeds this can be accommodated at a price.

### ■ ■ Franchises in focus at meeting with Go-Ahead

Mike Savage has also arranged a meeting with Go-Ahead Group to discuss the Northern Rail and TransPennine Express franchises. Again this is for branch members and will be held at the pub on Cleethorpes station. Three operators have been shortlisted for the Northern and three for the TPE franchise, with the winners due to be announced in October 2015. The new franchises start in April next year.

### ■ ■ Joint line upgrade to relieve East Coast main line

Rail minister Claire Perry, right, launched a £280 million government-funded project in March to enhance the 86-mile long Peterborough-Doncaster line via Lincoln. It will include enhancements to freight links and an increase in capacity as a way to offset congestion on the neighbouring East Coast main line. Ms Perry said it would help remove slow-moving freight from the busy East Coast main line. The Department for Transport said the upgrade will clear the way for additional East Midlands Trains and Northern Rail services along the Joint Great Northern-Great Eastern line. Work includes installing 20 new bridges, making 32 level crossings safer and the signalling system more reliable. It will mean two freight trains an hour can be diverted from the East Coast main line. The UK Government is investing more than £38 billion on the country's rail network between 2014 and 2019. Last year, Network Rail completed major upgrades to the Joint line, including the modernisation of 15 level crossings and 15 miles of new signalling.



# Rail staff are vital

The importance of staff on trains was emphasised at a March meeting of the European Transport Workers' Federation in Brussels addressed by Railfuture's Trevor Garrod, who is also president of the European Passengers Federation.

Staff are necessary to check tickets, help passengers, deal with security, emergencies and disruption, as well as to give advice on connections.

Technology allows some trains, such as the Docklands Light Railway, to operate without drivers. Driver-only trains have also been operating for years on commuter routes and technology can provide real-time information.

But staff are needed both at stations and at the end of a telephone. Staff can also multi-task. Catering staff on Eurostars also sell public transport tickets on the way to Paris. The same service should be available to Brussels-bound passengers. On some trains between Sweden and Norway, buffet car attendants also check tickets.

The key thing, said Mr Garrod, was for all staff to be well trained, well informed, well equipped and well motivated.

When franchises are renewed, rail users should stress the importance of adequate staffing. EPF is also involved in a review

of the European Commission's white paper on transport which was published in 2011. Many proposals in the white paper were welcomed by Railfuture and sister organisations in the European Passengers Federation.

The paper proposed there should be a modal shift to public transport over the period to 2050, with rail becoming the main mode for medium distance passenger journeys. It also called for greater integration, reductions on carbon emissions and multimodal information and booking systems.

The review is taking place amid fears that its aims might be diluted. EPF is urging the European Union and its 28 member states to tackle the problem of air pollution caused by traffic, to recognise cars cause congestion and occupy parking space that could be used more productively.

EPF wants to reduce the car-dependency of EU citizens, treat public transport as a central element in the planning of urban and journey-to-work areas, encourage public transport to help create high-quality jobs in research, manufacturing, and the knowledge economy.

Focusing on modes such as cycling, walking and public transport will reduce fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

## IN BRIEF + IN BRIEF + IN BRIEF + IN BRIEF + IN BRIEF + IN BRIEF

◆◆ The votes cast in the 2015 Railfuture board elections were as follows. Elected: Stewart Palmer, 243 votes; Chris Page, 222; Trevor Garrod, 180. Not elected: Ian McDonald, 168; Chris Fribbins, 163.

◆◆ More than 440 apprentices have been taken on to help build London's Crossrail, after training at the London Tunnelling Academy. More than 740 unemployed jobseekers have also been given jobs with Crossrail.

◆◆ Rail campaigner Harry Maughan died in March after years of distinguished service to the Bedford-Bletchley Rail Users Association and the Oxon and Bucks Rail Action Campaign. Harry, 79, lived in Ridgmont and was an inspiration to other campaigners. He campaigned successfully for East West Rail and in vain for the restoration of the Luton-Dunstable-Leighton Buzzard railway.

◆◆ Railfuture contributed to the cost of seats at Halesworth and Oulton Broad North stations, in memory of Albert Godfrey and Olga Awty, founder members of the East Suffolk Travellers Association. Without their efforts 50

years ago, and the efforts of other campaigners in the 1960s, there would be no railway between Ipswich and Lowestoft today.

If you would like to send a contribution to the £800 cost of the seats, please send a cheque, payable to ESTA, to Alan Williams, 51 Links Way, Thurlton, Norwich NR14 6RF.

◆◆ A new rail line should be built from London Liverpool Street to Stansted airport to provide a 30-minute journey to Canary Wharf and improve services to Cambridge, Colchester, Norwich and Ipswich. The idea comes from Jim Steer of Steer Davies Gleave, who said Stansted has spare runway capacity, contradicting the airline industry's propaganda.

◆◆ Many local enterprise partnerships have been hijacked by the road lobby, diverting funds that should be spent on public transport into road building. LEP Watch has been set up by the Campaign for Better Transport to expose what is going on. See: [www.bettertransport.org.uk/blog/roads/220415-lepwatch-tour-of-hastings](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/blog/roads/220415-lepwatch-tour-of-hastings)

# A detailed look into the future



Picture: NORTH STAFFS CRP

Passengers board a one-coach train at Blythe Bridge on the Crewe-Derby line, also known as the North Staffordshire line. Railfuture has highlighted the strategic importance of this route which links the East Midlands to the North West

By Chris Austin

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Two new Network Rail draft route studies are now being scrutinised by Railfuture.

The infrastructure and networks group have been consulting Railfuture branches about the studies for the East Midlands and Wales.

In the meantime we have also submitted our response on the Wessex study.

The Wessex draft was prepared by the South Western Alliance of South West Trains and Network Rail.

The quality of the proposals reflects the closer integration that exists in this part of the railway, but by the same token it was a bit light on other operators' services, particularly CrossCountry. So no organisation is perfect!

The study understandably focused on how to move the huge numbers of people in and out of Waterloo each day on a network whose design capacity is already being exceeded.

For this reason, Railfuture highlighted areas that get less attention, including the Waterloo-Exeter line, and the Cardiff-Portsmouth route where there are a lot of unfulfilled opportunities. A separate route study is planned for the Island line.

The East Midlands study gives us the first opportunity to consider the effect of High Speed Two on classic network services.

In particular, connectivity at the East Midlands hub station is an issue, as is the likely effect of HS2 on the demand for other services in the region.

Fortunately, Network Rail has carried out a proper assessment of potential demand, demonstrating that on the majority of flows, demand will continue to be high as suppressed demand for rail travel fills the space left as passengers to and from London

and the South East transfer to the new high speed line. An ambitious electrification programme is proposed in the region and we have stressed the need for this to be designed to allow trains to use alternative routes during times of disruption or planned engineering, for example by including early electrification of the Erewash Valley line.

These route studies are aimed at meeting growing demand, so inevitably focus on enhancements to the existing network rather than new lines.

However, East West Rail is included, and we have proposed new lines and stations where we believe these extend the reach of the railway and also help relieve pressure on the existing network. Reopening the Leicester-Burton line, for example, would clearly reduce pressure on road access to Leicester from the direction of Coalville and Moira.

In Wales, we can see a rather clearer picture than for the English regions as the Welsh Government has set out some priorities which are reflected in the study.

Electrification of both north and south Wales main lines as well as Valley lines opens up some interesting possibilities, including new rolling stock.

The most recent additional services on the Heart of Wales and Cambrian lines are assumed to continue, which is welcome.

In responding to these draft papers, we are also gaining a unique insight into the detail of the plans for the future of Britain's rail network over a 30-year period and as we respond, we are building up a valuable body of information on new station and line proposals which can support future campaigning.

■ Chris Austin is head of Railfuture's infrastructure and networks group.

## London and South East

By Roger Blake  
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### ■ ■ Uckfield-Lewes boost

The Government will provide £100,000 for a further study into reopening Lewes-Uckfield, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne announced in his March budget. This good news comes two months after Railfuture called for such a study in our response to the Network Rail draft route study for Sussex. We need an evaluation of the combined benefits of a phased Wealden line extension (based on the range of possible reopening schemes including through links with Brighton such as the Lewes horseshoe loop), including diversionary and additional peak capacity between London and the Sussex Coast, local traffic between the Weald/Tunbridge Wells and Brighton and Sussex coast centres, and the wider economic benefits of everyday rail access to Brighton for jobs, education and tourism. Ideally the study should be completed in a year so a scheme can be included as a network enhancement project in Network Rail's initial industry plan for control period 6 (2019-24) to be published for consultation in September next year. Railfuture published proposed terms of reference for the study at [www.railfuture.org.uk/article1548-Budget-2015-Uckfield-win](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1548-Budget-2015-Uckfield-win).

### ■ ■ Trains could link Tunbridge Wells and Uckfield again

Railfuture is keen to work with heritage railways and aims to support the Spa Valley Railway in its project to provide a run-round loop at Eridge. The cost is estimated at £145,000. It will enable an everyday service between Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge where passengers can change for Southern services from Uckfield and Crowborough. It would allow Tunbridge Wells and Uckfield to be rail-connected again with a potential journey time of 45 minutes compared to one hour by bus, and would encourage use of the heritage line by workers, students and shoppers. The Spa Valley Railway is staging special events on the weekend of 4-5 July to mark 30 years since the closure to passengers of Eridge to Tunbridge Wells.

### ■ ■ Volunteers make the most of rail exhibition

Railfuture volunteers staffed a stall at the London Festival of Railway Modelling at Alexandra Palace in March. Banners promoted Railfuture campaigns for better management of disruption, featuring Dawlish, and for a "Thameslink 2" from Brighton to Canary Wharf. We gave away copies of Railfuture's Annual Review and other Railfuture material. We had lots of fruitful discussions with the visitors.

### ■ ■ Campaigning via the official channels

Railfuture has responded to Kent County Council's consultation on a proposed Thanet Parkway station which will be served by high speed and classic trains. The council believes building a station west of the village of Cliffsend on the Ashford-Ramsgate line will increase connectivity between East Kent, London and the rest of Kent. It hopes the station will improve investment opportunities at Discovery Park Enterprise Zone, the Manston airport site and the other business parks in Thanet. It hopes to deliver the station by 2019 with help from a £10 million Government grant. The branch also contributed to Network Rail's draft route study for the East Midlands. See Chris Austin's report on this page.

■ More local news in Railfuture London and South East's quarterly newsletter *raise* at: [www.railfuture.org.uk/London+and+South+East+branch+news](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/London+and+South+East+branch+news)



## East Midlands

By Anthony Kay  
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and Roger Bacon  
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### Looking 30 years ahead

A group of branch committee members led by Ariadne Tampion prepared comments which formed the core of Railfuture's response prepared by Chris Austin to Network Rail's East Midlands route study. The study looks as far ahead as 2043 and we welcome the philosophy of expansion and upgrading although we are concerned about connectivity. Other worries include provision for freight, especially in the Leicester area, and the location of the East Midlands HS2 station. We believe there is greater potential for better services to cities outside the region, Leicester-Manchester, Nottingham-Birmingham (avoiding Derby), and Nottingham-Glasgow via Settle and Carlisle. We also want to see reopenings, including Shirebrook-Ollerton, Leicester to Burton-on-Trent via Coalville, Matlock-Buxton and other routes in the Peak District as well as Bedford-Northampton. Better local services are also needed, including a Lichfield-Nottingham service with new stations at Alrewas and Castle Donington, and the possibility of several new stations on the Midland main line.

### Workshop line needs some speedy care and attention

Nottinghamshire County Council is calling for improvements to services on the line between Sheffield, Worksop, Retford and Lincolnshire. Railfuture is also concerned about poor connections at Worksop from the Robin Hood line. Travellers are often faced with a 40-minute wait for a connection in either direction (to Sheffield or Lincoln). A journey from Mansfield to Sheffield is sometimes quicker going south to Nottingham and then north, rather than via Worksop!

### Minibus links trains and planes at East Midlands Airport

A new hourly minibus between East Midlands Airport and East Midlands Parkway station started on 29 March. The Parkway Railink service will be operated by vehicles with a capacity for six passengers and their luggage, with a single fare of £6.

### Getting ready for another year of rail campaigning

At Railfuture East Midlands AGM in March, Ariadne Tampion was elected to succeed Dave Shaw as vice-chair, with Dave continuing in the role of membership secretary. Other committee members were all re-elected. There was also a discussion on the coming year's campaigns: Ollerton reopening, Worksop connections, Market Harborough station improvements, Midland electrification and rolling stock, HS2 East Midlands station location, Leicester-Burton-on-Trent reopening, mobility and disability issues and re-franchising.

### More trains make life better for Newark passengers

Supported by £2 million of local and government financing, from May there are faster journey times on many Nottingham-Lincoln services. An additional 25 trains will run each weekday between Nottingham and Newark, creating a half hourly timetable, when most of the current services from Matlock are extended beyond Nottingham. This will provide a major boost to services, with a 76% increase in weekday services at Carlton, a 29% increase at Burton Joyce, 24% at Lowdham, 28% at Thurgarton and 111% at Fiskerton. The 1846 Midland Railway building at Newark Castle station is also to be reopened with ticketing and retail facilities. The improved Castle Line timetable is perfectly timed to support the opening of Newark's new National Civil War Centre in May and the Magna Carta celebrations in Lincoln.



# Guided Farceway

The Cambridge guided busway was closed in April to allow emergency repair work to be carried out at Histon, Trumpington and St Ives.

Money for the repairs, to be carried out by Skanska, is being found by the county council which is fighting a legal battle with the original contractors BAM Nuttall.

The council has chosen to implement a £30 million "proactive" repair programme to replace all the potentially defective parts, despite being told the repairs could eventually cost more than £200 million.

Railfuture vice president Peter Rayner said: "The dreaded Cambridge Guided Farceway is trundling on."

He adds: "It now seems that every concrete beam on the busway will have to be replaced. Not four years old, flawed from start to finish and repairs said

to be in excess of £200 million. Repairs! Do you remember the original cost? It was £180 million.

"The tragedy is that, as a railway, the St Ives-Cambridge had tremendous strategic value. Trains to and from the East Coast main line could have been routed that way and so on to Stansted, Stratford and London.

"The busway has also destroyed an easy rail route out of Cambridge which could have formed part of the East West Rail.

"I worked Lord's Bridge on the route to Sandy, on the St Ives loop at Histon and Oakington stations. Thousands of tons of coal were carried on a route with wooden sleepers. By contrast, concrete beams have cracked with the weight of a bus! The Government arrogantly halted tram schemes in Liverpool and Hampshire and yet let millions be wasted,



**WASTED ASSET:**  
The guided busway under construction in 2009 on the trackbed of the Cambridge-St Ives line

pouring concrete into the Fens, despite my warnings against it in at least six issues of *Railwatch*.

"As I said then, south of Peterborough, alternative capacity for sections of two-track East Coast main line must be found. Using the Huntingdon-St Ives connection and thence to Cambridge would allow some trains to travel into Stansted and London. Opportunity lost! What about Oxford-Cambridge via Milton Keynes? Opportunity lost!"

Devolution of transport planning is fashionable but can be a recipe for disaster. Although the worst example by far is the Cambridge guided busway, do not forget the Luton-Dunstable line wrecked by another busway.

"My advice to friends in Railfuture is think outside your region and remember the Mother Railway."

## West Midlands

### Rail devolution

The first phase of devolution of powers from the Department for Transport to local control could take place in 2017, after a memorandum of agreement was drawn up. This will coincide with the end of the London Midland franchise. But control of West Coast main line services is likely to remain with the DfT until 2024.

### New Street set for opening

A Railfuture West Midlands delegation met a representative of Network Rail in March for a presentation and discussion on the second phase of New Street Station redevelopment. The opening is confirmed for September 2015. More ticket machines are to be installed. Additional toilet facilities will be provided, but on the rail side of the ticket barriers. Network Rail was keen to hear our views on the location of information screens and signs. Volunteers will be on hand to help passengers, both for the opening and also in the long term.

### Help for passengers needed at Smethwick Galton Bridge



Railfuture believes the importance of Smethwick Galton Bridge station is not publicised widely enough. It is not obvious to passengers that this is an important interchange from Snow Hill lines to Birmingham New Street and north to Wolverhampton and Liverpool. We believe it should be a regular part of the pre-recorded audio announcements on trains. Centro is to raise this with London Midland and ask for route diagrams to be reinstated on trains, showing interchange points.

### Planning for the next 30 years of rail services

Network Rail is currently preparing a route study for the West Midlands and Chilterns area. This will be a key opportunity for Railfuture West Midlands to have an input into the planning process for control period 6 (2019-2024), and forward planning for the period up to 2043. The draft is expected to be published in August and will concentrate on how to make best use of the existing network and which infrastructure enhancements should be chosen.

### Shadow transport minister turns out for rail campaigners

The then shadow transport minister Richard Burden was guest speaker at Railfuture West Midlands AGM in Birmingham in April. Mr Burden is a motorsport fan and has appeared on the BBC TV Programme Top Gear. The other speakers were Toby Rackliff, rail policy and strategy manager for the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority, and Rachel Groves, communications manager for Network Rail at Birmingham New Street.

### Keeping track of ticket office closures

Railfuture has raised concerns over the unexpected closures of ticket offices on the cross-city line, particularly at Kings Norton, Northfield and Selly Oak. We plan to record the closures and report them to London Midland and CENTRO.

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



# Lancs leads the way

Lancashire is a centre of excellence for community rail and consequently has a much better rail service on its local lines than would otherwise be the case.

It punches above its weight in the North West and has successfully made the case for investment and development outside the busy urban areas around Manchester and Liverpool served by the passenger transport executives.

Working together as Community Rail Lancashire, the partnerships have focused on innovation in station design, a radical assessment of the priorities of rail passengers and how best to meet them, and on work with schools, a particularly valuable approach which has proved to be most effective.

Partnerships cover the Wigan-Southport and Ormskirk-Preston lines as well as the Blackpool South line.

Many of the stations throughout the county are looked after by active station friends' groups, and it shows in the bright flower beds and tidy platforms as well as the lack of graffiti!

In east Lancashire, the partnership lines are not in rural areas but serve former mill towns such as Accrington where a new Eco Station has been constructed.

Using reclaimed stone, glulam timber, recycled glass and aggregates along with rainwater harvesting and solar power for energy and hot water, this sustainable station is the home of Community Rail Lancashire.

More recently, these principles were taken a stage further in a project that shared best practice, again through the European Union's Interreg IVb programme, with other local railways in France and the Netherlands.

The £2.3 million project involved a new station for Burnley at Manchester Road where the striking design attracts the attention of the town to its railway, from which the new direct service to Manchester started running via the Todmorden west curve from May. Citizens' Rail funding from the European Union has also been earmarked to support a marketing campaign for the new link.

The Ribble Valley line from Blackburn to Clitheroe was reopened in 1990. Today it is supported by the Clitheroe Line Community Rail Partnership which covers the whole line from Manchester to Clitheroe. Major investment is taking place on the route to increase train frequency. The partnership has already introduced several generations



**RURAL RIDE:** The Heysham-Leeds boat train crosses Clapham viaduct on the Bentham line

of local schoolchildren to rail travel, broadening their horizons and ensuring they understand the safety message as well. An award-winning Passport to Safer Rail Travel was introduced to encourage structured learning about rail safety by local children. It also provides them with a period of free travel on their local line.

In the north of the county, the Bentham line links Morecambe and Lancaster in Lancashire with Skipton in North Yorkshire and Leeds. With only five trains each way daily, the newly formed partnership has a challenge, but has

already kicked off a number of initiatives involving the communities along the line, and has secured funding to provide CCTV at Bentham.

Lancashire is a member of Rail North and has ensured that the new Northern franchise specification has taken proper account of the important role that community rail plays in the county. For more information and to read some of the case studies, go to www.communityraillancashire.co.uk or better still go for a trip on one of the lines and see for yourself! In the next edition, we will concentrate on Sussex.

Picture: COMMUNITY RAIL LANCASHIRE

## East Anglia

By Paul Hollinghurst  
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### Leaflet campaign for Haverhill

Railfuture East Anglia is teaming up with Rail Haverhill to campaign for the reopening of the railway from Haverhill to Cambridge, serving stations at Linton, Granta Park and Abington, Sawston and then on to Cambridge, including the soon-to-be-built Cambridge North station, and the proposed south Cambridge station at Addenbrooke's. Haverhill, on the Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Essex border, has a population of 30,000 and is currently linked by bus to Cambridge taking around an hour and a half for the 20 miles. A reopened railway would transform journeys along this corridor. Railfuture is funding the printing of 15,000 leaflets to distribute to homes in the area building on the work which Rail Haverhill has done over a number of years to promote the scheme. Cambridgeshire County Council shows a Cambridge to Haverhill link in its Local Transport Plan, but with a guided bus option to be considered along with rail, so the need to push for the rail option is vital.

[www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Haverhill](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Haverhill)

### How rail can deliver a good deal for Cambridge travellers

Cambridge is currently assessing how to invest an initial tranche of City Deal funding of £100 million (potentially doubling with other funding) available for improving transport infrastructure. The deal was signed by central Government, council leaders, businesses and Cambridge University and aims to secure hundreds of millions of pounds for Cambridge city and South Cambridgeshire. The city suffers from severe congestion with public transport journeys in the peak taking significantly longer than the equivalent off-peak journey. A number of schemes are being assessed, mainly bus priority, park and ride and cycle projects. The contribution from the region's expanding rail network has been largely ignored, so Railfuture East Anglia has been actively promoting how the rail network could contribute. Two documents have been produced, *Cambridge Metro: High quality transport infrastructure for the Cambridge City Deal* and *Cambridge Metro: Delivering an urban rail scheme for the Cambridge City Deal*. These draw together potential upgrades to the rail network, including line reopenings to Wisbech and Haverhill, East West Rail to Bedford, and station openings, linked by a frequent train service. Railfuture work has already featured in the local press and opened up discussion with members of the City Deal assembly.

[www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Cambridge+City+Deal](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Cambridge+City+Deal)

### Passengers to benefit from strategic freight upgrade

Several members of Railfuture East Anglia attended a public consultation held by Network Rail in Soham where Network Rail project leaders were on hand to explain plans for full doubling of the line from Soham to Ely. The work will include removing and rebuilding a stretch of unstable embankment. As there will be some new land take, a Transport and Works Act public enquiry will be necessary before the target completion date in 2019. At Soham, NR is ensuring that track remodelling helps bring the Cambridgeshire County Council's plan for a station to a satisfactory conclusion, hopefully within the six-month line doubling closure. These works will make sure there is capacity for more intermodal trains to and from Felixstowe docks in conjunction with work to double the Felixstowe branch, currently the subject of a positive section 106 funding agreement between Suffolk Coastal district council and Felixstowe port.

[www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Consultations+and+Surveys](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Consultations+and+Surveys)

Keep in touch at: [www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia)

Twitter: @RailfutureEA



## Strategic needs

The January landslip at Harbury on the Leamington-Banbury line highlighted the fact that there is no alternative rail route. In addition to Chiltern and CrossCountry services, the line carries heavy freight traffic, which had to be diverted over heavily congested circuitous routes.

The obvious answer is to reopen the six mile Stratford-upon-Avon to Long Marston railway line. The whole of the Stratford-upon-Avon to Honeybourne and Cheltenham line (closed 1976) would have provided an alternative and diversionary route from Birmingham to both Oxford and Cheltenham, the latter avoiding the 1 in 37 Lickey incline. The decision has been regretted ever since.

The Stratford-Honeybourne section was the subject of a 2012 Arup business study which considered the reinstatement was perfectly feasible, at a cost of £60 million for mainly single line, and would be viable with a cost benefit ratio of 2.03. Stratford-upon-Avon, one of the world's top tourist destinations, is poorly served by rail. Tourists question why the British railway network almost omits Stratford.

I cannot believe Chiltern Railways are planning to drastically reduce the number of through rail services from Stratford to London Marylebone from September 2015, with virtually none at weekends, because of capacity problems with the new Oxford-Bicester-Marylebone service.

Until 2004, when Chiltern took over the London service, Stratford had a through service to Oxford, Reading and Paddington, which should be reinstated with the reopening of the Stratford-Honeybourne line, which is 13 miles shorter than the route via Leamington. A park-and-ride station could be opened at Long Marston, serving not only the new housing development at Meon Vale on the former defence ministry site but also a wide area south of Stratford and the river

**Railfuture's branches and groups day is on Saturday 3 October in Birmingham. Last year's event committed Railfuture to an action plan to ensure its survival and growth as an effective campaigning organisation.**

## Letters extra

Avon. A major 3,500 housing development is proposed on the adjacent Long Marston Airfield, where developers are offering a large contribution towards reopening the railway.

Michael Brockington, Long Marston Road, Welford-on-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 8EG  
michael@mbrockington2.plus.com

## London CIV snag

There is a snag to the London International CIV ticket rightly recommended by Julian Langston in *Railwatch* 143. It does not open ticket gates at intermediate stations, as I discovered when needing to change to a substitute bus on the way home from St Pancras.

There is also a snag to some of the maps and documents in *Railwatch*. Lettering and other details are so small as to be almost illegible, particularly important on maps of areas with which one is not familiar.

M J Leppard, St George's Court, East Grinstead RH19 1QP

**Editors' note: Apologies for several examples of graphics in *Railwatch* 143 which were difficult to read.**

## Stoke alternative

I am concerned at the space given to the Stoke-on-Trent HS2 lobby in *Railwatch*. I would expect you to be more even handed. I live in Ellesmere Port and need to change trains three times at Hooton, Chester and Crewe to travel the 50 miles to Stoke-on-Trent. The idea of travelling to Stoke to catch a fast train to London is absurd.

CrossCountry's decision to run all services to the south via Stoke instead of Crewe is most inconvenient for those of us living in West Cheshire and North Wales. Surely they should alternate. HS2 trains should serve the whole of northern England and not just be a private service for the selected few in Manchester, Leeds and one or two places en route. High speed trains should diverge from HS2 to the existing network and run through to all the major cities and towns in the north and midlands. This is what happens to ICE trains in Germany.

Peter Zemroch, Ellesmere Port  
Peter.Zemroch@btinternet.com



Picture: NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE CRP

**WORTHWHILE ALLIES: Volunteers at Kidsgrove, where the station has been transformed with gardens, a new waiting room, passenger information indicators and other improvements**

# Adding value

By Chris Austin

christopher.austin@railfuture.org.uk

A new report by independent consultants has calculated the benefits of community rail and volunteering and three key figures stand out:

Community rail lines are growing at a faster rate than the average for regional services. Regional lines are growing by an average of 4% each year while community rail lines grew 2.8% each year above that. Over the six year period studied (2006-12), growth on CR lines was 18% higher than that for regional services generally.

Community Rail Partnerships draw many volunteers to the railway and the study found that 3,200 volunteers contributed 250,000 hours a year to supporting their local lines. Based on the UK average hourly wage rate, this was estimated to be worth £3.4 million each year.

From the point of view of the Government and the industry, the good news is that CRPs pay for themselves. They generate more income from additional passengers, and more social and economic value than they cost to operate.

With results like these, Government has responded positively. The introduction to the report is written by the Department for Transport's Pete Wilkinson who is chief executive (passenger services) for the Rail Executive. He makes clear that the Government recognises the benefits of partnerships in creating job opportunities, social cohesion and "by reducing the adverse societal effects caused by the abandonment of parts of the railway."

So, at last, the Government has recognised the damage done by some of the earlier closures, and it is great that the present team at DfT is prepared to mitigate this through some practical help for local services. It will put the

partnerships on a more sustainable footing with higher funding, via franchise agreements.

It will also expect local authorities, users and community groups to work proactively in partnership to get the full benefit from local lines. Railfuture needs to welcome this imaginative change in policy and grasp the opportunity to prove the point we have made over many years: local railways have more to offer, given modest investment and support instead of the negative option of cutting back services, which triggers a downward spiral and results in poor value for money.

Building on these possibilities, the specification for the Northern franchise demands more from bidders and from CRPs.

At the same time, the Government is looking for more from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships. ACoRP's role as a trade association for partnerships and station adopters has always included sharing ideas and encouraging good practice, but now there is more to do.

In the next few months, ACoRP will work on initiatives to make better use of stations, showing how they can be developed as community hubs as well as access points for the rail network.

Encouraging young people working in the sector and helping them with the skills they require through an apprenticeship scheme is also planned. ACoRP contributed significantly to the design of the Northern franchise and more input will be needed as the re-franchising programme rolls forward.

Exciting and demanding times are ahead as community rail goes mainstream, and the opportunities for local involvement in planning and delivering local rail services increases.

Read more at [www.acorp.uk.com](http://www.acorp.uk.com)

## Holidays with a rail flavour

The first Continental trip organised this year by RDS Group Travel was an eight-day visit to Rostock, Germany. Later this year the group is experimenting with a second, shorter trip, to Reims in eastern France from 22-25 September.

The historic city has a new tramway and is less than an hour from Paris by TGV. The small city of Laon is also within easy reach and is worth a visit. Members who have already expressed an interest in this visit should by now have received details. RDS Group Travel is independent of Railfuture and has been running such Continental trips since 1994.

If you are also interested in the Reims trip, please contact Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ or email: [trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk)

Reader's holiday suggestion:

I am a grandmother of five, born within five years of each other. We introduced them to train-riding by travelling on the pretty Looe line; drinks and crisps at the child-friendly pub across the road from Liskeard station, and then back again. The big trains also pass through Liskeard, so that is exciting. The other ride is the Falmouth-Truro line. You don't need a car if you stay in Falmouth. Boats, buses, and trains in plenty. To add interest to their train trips, they could get to Truro by boat, and then come back by train. They have all made further journeys: Paris, Disneyland Paris, and through France. And of course, what could be better than a big family get-together in York, and lunch at the Railway Museum?

Margaret Astill

Send your railway holiday ideas to [editor@railwatch.org.uk](mailto:editor@railwatch.org.uk)

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**Who's Who** Many other useful contact details can be found on the Railfuture website: [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)



**LOOK UP:** Vapour trails from aircraft over London's Limehouse Basin and Canary Wharf disfigure the sky. For years, politicians and planners have ignored the serious pollution problems caused by air and road transport while failing to give adequate attention to rail which offers better mobility for all while efficiently using fuel and causing minimal pollution compared to the other modes

# Polluters are coining it in dirty old UK

If there was a proper carbon dioxide pollution tax, the discount airlines would go broke, it is predicted.

At the moment pollution levels from aircraft are literally sky high but the issue was not effectively raised during the general election campaign.

No mention of the fact that there is no tax on airline fuel!

Airline boss Willie Walsh is even complaining about air passenger duty even though airlines are paying nowhere near enough for the enormous environmental damage they are doing.

The Government issued warnings to millions of people not to exercise in the open air because of severe pollution on 10 April.

Three weeks later the British Supreme Court ordered the British Government to take action on air pollution. This is the fifth court hearing after Britain was found in breach of article 13 of

the European Union air quality directive. The pollution in April was blamed on Sahara dust and industrial pollution from Europe. The main culprit, pollution from road and air traffic, was virtually ignored.

One of the worst areas blighted by road traffic pollution is London, where Transport for London was found guilty in April of misleading the public with its adverts about the ultra-low emission zone which will not be introduced until 2020. The Advertising Standards Authority said claims it would reduce pollution by half were misleading and breached the ASA code. Simon Birkett of Clean Air for London had complained to the ASA.

Repeated high and very high smog alerts were issued for London in April, with children and old people most at risk.

London has broken one or more of the EU pollution limits every year since they came into effect in 2005. The politicians' response was to blame Europe for exporting its pollution to Britain, because easterly winds replaced the prevailing westerly winds for several days at a time.

The European Court of Justice has also ruled that the British Government must produce a

plan to deal with the pollution. The deadly dangers of polluted air are well known to politicians but the mainstream media routinely ignore them. The link between airborne pollution and heart disease is well established. A recent study found it could take as little as two hours' exposure to typical pollution levels on London's Oxford Street to induce a measurable stiffening of human arteries. Particulate pollution from road traffic also causes lung and bladder cancer and is classified by the World Health Organisation as carcinogenic.

Large-scale studies have linked exposure to particulates and nitrogen dioxide to cognitive impairment in children, heightened risk of type 2 diabetes, weakened immunity and even fractured DNA in sperm.

Blaming Britain's bad air on others is as foolish as ignoring it.

The tiny particles that foul urban air kill 30,000 people a year excluding premature deaths attributable to nitrogen dioxide, a main pollutant from diesel.

Yet Britain has subsidised diesel engines on grounds of fuel economy.

The Social Progress Index ranked Britain 87th in the world for air quality. Not very impressive for a

supposedly rich and enlightened country. No British government has grappled in earnest with air pollution since the Clean Air Act of 1968.

No local government has seized control of the issue since Ken Livingstone introduced London's congestion charging 12 years ago. London Mayor Boris Johnson in particular has failed to take a lead. London's air is foul after just a few days of hot weather, which causes Los Angeles style smog.

It is also claimed that breathing polluted air can raise the risk of dementia and stroke.

A scientific study found those living near major roads suffered cerebral shrinkage.

This has aged their brains by the equivalent of one year and increased dementia risk. They were also almost 50% more likely to have a type of silent stroke – caused by a blockage in the blood vessels supplying the brain – which increases the chance of degenerative disease.

The report by Kiran Randhawa was tucked away on an inside page of the *Evening Standard*, a cheerleader for Boris Johnson.

The full report is available in the medical journal *Stroke*. <http://stroke.ahajournals.org>

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