

*rail*watch

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

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**Manchester
set for change**
SEE PAGE 2

By Ray King

Amanda White, pictured on the cover, faces a long-term challenge in making Manchester's rail network fit for the future.

As head of rail at Transport for Greater Manchester, she aims to make devolution work by integrating rail and other public transport as a catalyst for economic regeneration.

TfGM wants to own and manage 97 rail stations in Greater Manchester, including the biggest – Piccadilly – and three stations outside the authority's boundary.

At present it owns only one, Horwich Parkway, which was opened in 1999 on the Preston-Manchester line, and which serves Bolton Wanderers' football stadium.

TfGM believes there is an immediate good business case for 94 stations to transfer to its ownership.

The authority believes that by owning the stations, it can introduce a long-term investment programme.

It plans to rebrand and deep clean the stations and then target things that can be improved. "We will start with the basics and



CASE FOR CHANGE GREATER MANCHESTER RAIL STATION TRANSFER

PRESENTED TO GOVERNMENT: TfGM's March 2017 argument

build up," said Ms White. Long-term plans have already been drawn up for 21 stations and the rest will be ready within 18 months.

One idea is to create offices for community support officers at stations where there are problems of antisocial behaviour.

All the operational station staff will transfer to TfGM, which should give them greater confidence and security.

Manchester has already signed a devolution deal with the Government, and a detailed plan was presented to the Government in

TfGM's *Case for Change* in March. The document argues that an innovative approach will allow TfGM to unlock the true value of stations as a catalyst for redevelopment that supports ambitious targets for new housing.

Ms White said: "Even though we do not have responsibility for the stations at the moment, we receive complaints about them.

"There is confusion among the public about ownership now.

"At the moment, the rail stations are the missing piece of the jigsaw. We do not have as much influence as we do with the

Metrolink infrastructure." Many of Manchester's rail services are provided by the Northern franchise, which was awarded to Arriva last year.

TfGM helped define the franchise specification for both Northern and TransPennine.

Arriva is legally answerable only to the Government for delivering the franchise, but under devolution, TfGM would have a contract with Northern.

Apart from the stations, rail infrastructure will remain with Network Rail.

Community rail partnerships are expected to become more important and some stations could become community gyms, cafes, health centres, art galleries and centres for meetings.

Ms White moved to TfGM in 2014 from High Speed Two where she had been designing the route from Manchester to Birmingham. She joined Network Rail from Leeds University.

At school she was the only female in her A-level physics class and she was one of only three women out of 30 students to complete her university mechanical engineering course.

Railfuture elections

Veteran Railfuture campaigner Trevor Garrod, who was general secretary of the Railway Development Society from 1986 to 2001, has failed to win election to the Railfuture board.

The results of the election were announced at the AGM in Peterborough on 20 May.

The following were elected for three-year terms: Charlene Wallace (327 votes), Jerry Alderson (324), William Whiting (304).

Elected for a one-year term was Wendy Thorne (286). Trevor Garrod received 115 votes.

One third of the board are now women, three out of a total of nine. The directors' average age is 60. It was the fourth Railfuture election to include online voting and 15% of the membership voted.

The following motions were passed: The official name of

the Railway Development Society should be changed to Railfuture.

Railfuture should set up a European Passenger group.

Defeated:

The chair of Railfuture to be elected by the membership rather than board members.

To change the rules on removal of a director.

Railfuture chairman Chris Page said the board aimed to focus on a few key achievable priorities.

A membership director had been recruited and we needed to recruit a wider range of people because the people who travel by train are more diverse than our current membership.

We also have to convince the rail companies that customer service should be a key part of their approach.

More AGM news: Back page

Sustrans warning over ScotRail bikes

Sustrans has warned that ScotRail is planning to reduce cycle spaces on long-distance services from four to two. Press reports say that when it uses refurbished InterCity 125 trains from 2018, only two bike spaces will be available. In 2015, Abellio said it would aim to provide space for 20 bikes on each train. The Scottish cycling campaign group Spokes is planning to raise the matter with ScotRail.

Swanage breakthrough

A heritage railway is celebrating a historic breakthrough. The Swanage Railway is running a regular public train service to Wareham, relinking the two towns after a break of 45 years and forming a connection between the volunteer-run railway and the national network. Trains began running on Tuesday 13 June and will continue until Sunday 3 September after completion of a £5.5 million project.

"Several generations of volunteers have worked to achieve this," said Trevor Parsons, the chairman of Swanage Railway.

Funds came from Purbeck District Council, Dorset County Council, BP and £1.8 million grant from the Government's Coastal Communities Fund.

Four return trips a day run every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. See www.swanagerailway.co.uk

Railfuture lottery winners

WITH more entrants, the Railfuture Lottery prize pot has grown!

Prizes totalling £111 were paid out in the May draw, with an equal amount going into Railfuture campaign funds, so if more members join the scheme, the prize fund will grow even further!

You can join on our website using PayPal, or pay by internet banking or simply send a cheque, for a multiple of £12 for a year's entries, to Railfuture Lottery, 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone,

Suffolk IP9 2ND. Email lottery@railfuture.org.uk for more details.

Recent winners - **February:** Janet Cuff, Neville Bramhall, Peter Pass, Alan Boulton, Brian Balmain, P J Rowland, **March:** Fiona Mackey, Michael Tombs, Michael Groll, John O'Sullivan, David Peters, David Brady, **April:** Michael Groll, Gerald Chandler, Peter Hillier-Palmer, Ralph Coulson, Peter Pass, Roger Blake. **May:** Bill Berridge, A T Hill, David Stocks, Peter R Lawrence, Mike Kneen, Hugh Walker.

Tories will starve rail of cash

By Christian Wolmar
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Mystic Wolmar, who appears intermittently in RAIL magazine, has a rather poor record of predicting the future, but the editor of *Railwatch* has invited me to attempt to assess the post-election scenario for rail.

Let's get one thing straight that clearly sticks a bit in my craw. Theresa May will be back in Number 10 on 9 June. What, though, will that mean for the railway?

I doubt whether many of the train companies were anxiously holding their breath because of concerns that the railways would be renationalised by Jeremy Corbyn, but they may allow themselves a little sigh of relief.

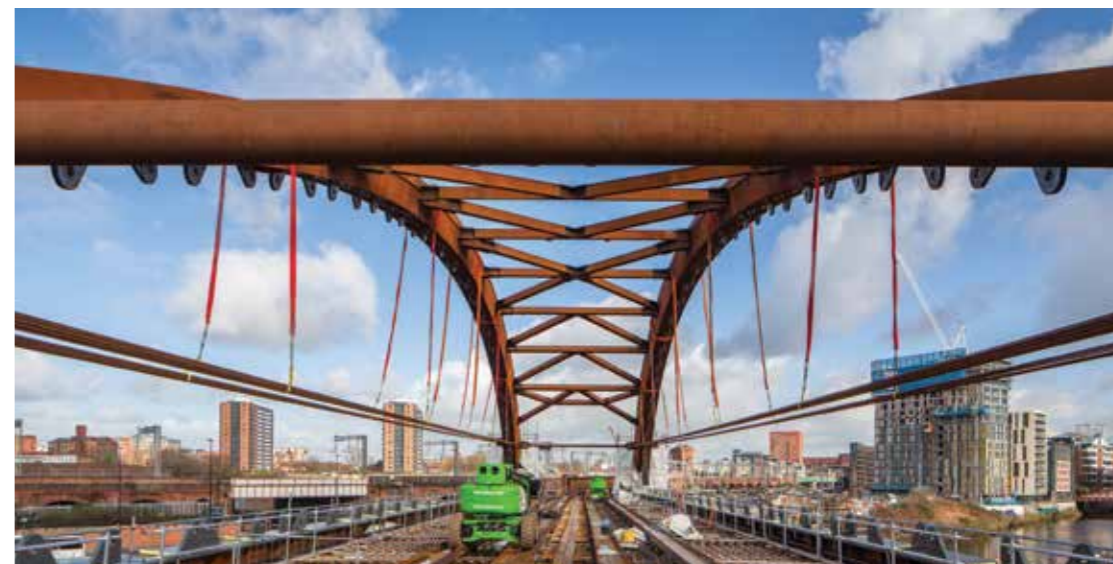
However, the main problems facing the operators, and indeed the industry as a whole, relate to matters that would have affected the new government irrespective of its hue with possibly a couple of exceptions: the policy on air pollution and HS2.

The Conservative government's draft plan to tackle air pollution is a sorry little document, utterly bereft of any cogent plan to deal with an issue which is becoming a major concern among the wider public. It dodges any proposal which could be perceived as anti-motorist and is entirely silent on extra taxation or road pricing, the only measures which would have an impact.

For the rail industry, this ditches any hope that there would be a carrot and stick approach to encourage freight to transfer to rail. The plan puts all the onus on already hard-pressed local authorities, which means that in practice very little will happen.

Labour, despite not always having a sufficiently green agenda, would probably have used the strong public sentiment on the issue to have developed a more environmentally sustainable approach that could have resulted in a modal shift to the railways.

On HS2, the Tories' consistent support has always been somewhat surprising. Indeed, when Mrs May took over as PM last year, there was some speculation that the scheme might be delayed, especially as the Treasury had sent its attack dogs to reappraise the scheme. Instead, Mrs May and her Transport Secretary Chris Grayling have been unstinting in their support of HS2 and work is now about to start on building it. Everything so far has been related to "preliminary works". But could there be a last minute hiccup? There have been



MANCHESTER: Network Rail's work on the Ordsall chord continues. About 300 metres of new track will link Manchester's main stations – Victoria, Oxford Road and Piccadilly. The work should be complete by December and its aim is to reduce congestion and allow new direct links to Manchester Airport from many parts of the North of England

several reports in the right-wing press quoting Tory MPs who are demanding a rethink in the light of suggestions that the bill for the initial London-Birmingham section will top £50 billion. The make-up of the new Parliament, with a rampant Tory party full of right-wingers, could push Mrs May into stalling work on the scheme given this pressure.

'The Government's plan to tackle air pollution is a sorry little document'

My view – but remember the warning about Mystic at the start of this article – is that work will carry on regardless, though I suspect the scheme will get increasing flak – and if the *Daily Mail* really goes into two-barrel mode, then watch for some fudging such as cutting back on costs, which would not be a bad thing, especially if it meant ditching the plan to build it for 400 kph running.

The much more pressing issue for the industry and, indeed, for Railfuture members, is the future of the investment programme. Here, however clouded my crystal ball, the news is not good. Signs are already apparent of widespread cutbacks, not just in investment but also in simple renewals.

There have been extensive reductions on several routes to the planned rail replacement programmes and even ballast cleaning has been hit.

This does not augur well and is bound to lead to temporary speed restrictions, which in turn will hit performance. This type of move is, of course, currently well below the political radar and will emerge only when passengers

begin to complain about their trains being late. The big issue is what happens to Control Period 6, the five-year industry-wide investment programme that starts in April 2019. It is actually the knock-on effects of the failure to deliver projects in the current control period that will have the most impact. Not only has the huge Great Western electrification

got into trouble, but the delays on the smaller Gospel Oak -

Barking line, where even after an eight-month closure not all the posts had been installed and other problems had arisen, highlights the fact that the programme is dysfunctional. Network Rail's inability to run projects efficiently and on time is causing consternation.

Network Rail has commissioned a study, chaired by Professor Peter Hansford, to examine ways of bringing more private sector money into the industry, an issue fully supported by Mr Grayling. However, past experience has shown that there is a great reluctance on the part of investors to take on the risks inherent in the rail industry, particularly as Network Rail will remain the dominant player.

That the much-vaunted private sector involvement in East West Rail, the completion of the Oxford-Cambridge link, which has so far not materialised is a pointer to the difficulties of attracting private capital into the industry. And it is really needed since further trouble lies ahead for Network Rail's £1.8 billion

asset sale, cobbled together by chairman Peter Hendy in 2015 when Network Rail lost control of the Great Western electrification project. Now it seems that the Treasury has its eyes on this money as Network Rail board minutes, released recently, suggest that the Government wants to use this cash to reduce the historic debt, rather than paying for improvements. That would be disastrous for the railway's long-term investment programme.

The other area where there is great uncertainty is freight. The fact that Britain had a day without using any coal for electricity generation shows the extent to which what was once black gold is no longer valued.

The implications for railfreight, which has relied on coal as its core business, are devastating. Unless the new government faces up to the issue, and puts in specific measures to encourage new flows, many freight paths will revert to passenger use and will restrict the ability of railfreight to recover in the long term.

The new Tory government, with probably yet another transport secretary, will therefore face a lot of pressure to increase spending on the railways in order to cope with this crisis.

However, with Network Rail now on the Government books and no longer enjoying an unlimited credit card, it is difficult to see where the money will come from.

Railfuture campaigners, hoping to push their local schemes, will need to be aware that those with some external funding will stand more chance of success.

Picture: MATTHEW NICHOLLS for Network Rail

Derby-Stoke

Calls by Railfuture's Graham Nalty for major investment in the Derby-Stoke route (*Railwatch* 151) have been echoed by East Midlands Chamber (representing Chambers of Commerce in the region) and Midlands Connect. The chamber is calling on the Transport Secretary to increase capacity, reduce journey times, improve frequency and ensure that stations are fully accessible so it can fulfil its potential as a strategic east-west route. Its importance will increase when it connects to the proposed High Speed 2 hubs at Toton and Crewe. Midlands Connect's strategy document calls for three trains per hour with a journey time of 23 minutes. The current one train per hour is frequently overcrowded and takes 51 minutes from Derby to Stoke. See *Graham Nalty: Page 7*

Derwent Valley

Friends of the Derwent Valley Line are looking into the possibility of passing loops after being told their aspiration for a full Sunday service (rather than the present one train every two hours) is not compatible with charters on to Peak Rail.

Support for East Midlands Parkway

A recent blog by Jim Steer, director of Greengauge 21, points out that fast Birmingham-Nottingham services on HS2 could not be provided via a hub at Toton. They would require a connection to the Midland main line at East Midlands Parkway, which is where Railfuture East Midlands has long argued that the HS2 hub for our region should be.

Kettering Rail Users

Kettering Rail Users group was re-established in February, prompted by the news that the Sunday timetable would be changed in May to make northward travel as awkward as it already is on weekdays. The weekday timetable has one train per hour north along the Midland main line from Kettering, a Nottingham service which is often overcrowded. KRU argue that introducing a Kettering stop into the semi-fast train to Sheffield would not unduly slow down travel from London to Sheffield and would provide direct access to Derby and Sheffield. It would also give Kettering a half-hourly service to Leicester which KRU want to be a new franchise commitment, a fast service to London, and would also improve connections from Corby to Leicester and beyond. KRU also want a new entrance on the west side of the station, to provide better access to a conference centre, leisure facilities and new housing. The users have had meetings with East Midlands Trains, involving officers from the local authorities, and have the backing of MP Philip Hollobone.

Ilkeston reopening

Around 300 people crowded the platforms at the new Ilkeston station for the arrival of the first train, the 09.45 on Sunday 2 April. Most services are provided by Northern Rail's Nottingham-Leeds trains, although a few of East Midlands Trains' Norwich-Liverpool services will stop there.

Maid Marian line

Local authorities are developing proposals to reintroduce passenger services on the freight-only line between Kirkby-in-Ashfield on the Robin Hood Line and Pye Bridge on

the Erewash Valley line. The route, dubbed the Maid Marian Line, would provide direct services from the Mansfield and Ashfield areas to the proposed HS2 station at Toton or East Midlands Parkway. There would also be the possibility of a new station at Pinxton.

Car parking problems

Recent improvements to services on the Nottingham-Lincoln line have had unintended consequences. Streets near the station in the village of Lowdham are clogged with parked cars, as the rail service now attracts people from surrounding villages. Similar problems have also been reported up the line at Fiskerton. Currently, East Midlands Trains have no plans to extend car parking facilities at either station.

AGM and other meetings

At the branch AGM in Loughborough on 1 April, Ariadne Tampion was elected new chair, with former chair Terry Holt becoming vice-chair. Long-serving Roger Bacon stepped down as secretary although he remains treasurer. The responsibilities of secretary are being distributed among various committee members. Future meetings include a lunch-social meeting at the Canalhouse pub in Nottingham for informal discussion of issues, at 12.00 on Tuesday 1 August. All members in the region are welcome. More info:

www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Midlands+Branch
Twitter: @RailfutureEMids

East Anglia

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Ely North upgrade

Campaigning by Railfuture East Anglia for an hourly service between Ipswich and Peterborough resulted in its inclusion in the Anglia franchise announced last summer. Now Network Rail says it is not possible because of insufficient capacity at Ely. Greater Anglia has appealed to Railfuture and other stakeholders to lobby ministers and Department for Transport officials to ensure Ely is given top priority in control period 6 (2019-24). Railfuture East Anglia chair Nick Dibben said: "Capacity at this junction is hopelessly inadequate to meet the needs of the local economy. The cities of Norwich, Cambridge and Ipswich as well as the port of Felixstowe and Stansted Airport all rely on rail services that pass through Ely. The New Anglia and Greater Cambridge and Peterborough local enterprise partnerships have agreed to co-fund a business case study for this project – the first time the New Anglia LEP has put money into rail"

Rail projects for the future mayor

Railfuture East Anglia has produced a leaflet which highlights some of the rail projects required to meet future growth in rail use for both passengers and freight in Cambridgeshire. We contacted the candidates for the Cambridgeshire Combined Authority Mayor and challenged them to work with the Government and rail industry to ensure an early delivery of these schemes, with improvement to the complex rail junction north of Ely as the priority, along with the reopening of the line from March to Wisbech, double tracking the Cambridge to Newmarket line, studying options for light rail in Cambridge, and working with the Infrastructure Commission on East West Rail.

Rail use in Cambridgeshire has doubled in recent years and new housing will put further pressure on the rail network. There is a need

Twitter: @railwatch

for extra capacity, new services and station improvements. The new Combined Authority Mayor for Cambridgeshire provides an opportunity to get new rail schemes delivered quickly to provide people with an alternative to using a car for many business and leisure trips.

Greater Anglia ticket office closures

Railfuture and over 200 other people have objected to Greater Anglia's proposal to close or downgrade seven station booking offices in Essex. We stressed the importance of having a human presence at the stations at Walton-on-the-Naze, Harwich's International and Dovercourt stations, Great Chesterford, Alresford, Great Bentley and Thorpe-le-Soken where large numbers of passengers change trains. Travel habits and ticketing technology may mean a ticket office does not open all day, but the needs of people with reduced mobility should be recognised as well as station security. We made these points at Greater Anglia's community rail conference in Ipswich on 7 April. We plan talks with GA to mitigate these proposals. Certain reassurances have already been given.

www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia
Twitter: @RailfutureEA

Yorkshire

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Pontefract campaigners join Railfuture

The Pontefract Civic Society has decided to affiliate to Railfuture as part of its campaign to get better local rail services. Members of the Campaign for Improved Rail Services in Pontefract, Knottingley and Featherstone met Councillor Keith Wakefield of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority at Monkhill railway station in March to discuss ways of getting improvements in the Northern franchise.

Direct rail link to South Manchester

Calder Valley Line trains are expected to be running across Manchester via the new Ordsall chord by the end of this year, according to Halifax and District Rail Action Group. Two trains an hour from Leeds and Halifax will serve south Manchester for the first time.

Low Moor station reopens

An eager crowd of passengers greeted the first trains at West Yorkshire's newest station. Low Moor now has hourly Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield trains and Grand Central's London expresses. Now the Halifax and District Rail Action Group (HADRAG) is campaigning for a station at Elland. HADRAG wants Northern and Network Rail to commit themselves now to a December 2019 timetable so all trains that currently stop at Brighouse can stop at Elland.

Hitachi gets to work on East Coast trains

Work has begun on building 65 new Hitachi Azuma trains for the East Coast main line. Body shells are being made in Japan, with the trains being completed at the new train factory in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham. The trains will be delivered next year.

Wensleydale volunteer appeal

The Wensleydale Railway is appealing for volunteers. Steam services began on 20 May, running from Northallerton to Redmire on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. More info at wensleydalerrailway.com

www.railfuture.org.uk/Yorkshire+Branch
Twitter: @RailfutureYorks

www.railfuture.org.uk

Tell your new MP what the railway needs

By Ian Brown
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Many of those candidates who were successful in the local council elections in May and the general election in June are unlikely to be well briefed on rail development issues. This is potentially an opportunity for Railfuture.

Transport has risen up the political agenda nationally, in London and the South East and other devolved areas.

Crossrail has established the link between transport infrastructure schemes such as HS2 and the economy in general.

Construction itself stimulates the economy and once operational, rail schemes deliver a boost to a healthy economy and provide a shot in the arm for areas needing regeneration.

Railfuture has campaigned hard to ensure that HS2 is properly integrated into regional rail networks.

The Railfuture remit is to campaign for a bigger, better railway in Britain. We have sharpened our act in responding in an informed way to national consultations and establishing direct dialogue with key industry and government stakeholders. This is fine, when government asks the questions.

It does not address the many rail issues where we have a point of view which the Government or local councils fail to address.

Much of our success comes from the work done by the Railfuture branches where members have increasingly established effective contact with train operating companies, local and regional government and stakeholders.

A wider debate

Even national issues such as properly integrating HS2 and value for money rational rail fares have a local dimension. We campaign for rail, not in isolation but as part of an integrated transport system.

Nostalgia is irrelevant when we campaign for line reopenings on the basis of sustainability and where there are sound business cases. We have recently been asked to join in the debate on fares, on commuter health, on light rail and on airport strategy. Our position on many of these issues can be found on the Railfuture website.

The snap general election presented us with an opportunity. Railfuture is proud of being independent of any political party so we can talk to all of them confidently on rail issues. We are not compromised by allegiance to any party and certainly would not try to tell members

◆◆◆◆ You can buy Railfuture draw tickets at: www.railfuture.org.uk/Annual+Draw.



BOOST FOR THE ECONOMY: London's Crossrail has firmly established the link between improving rail infrastructure and boosting the economy in general, even before it opens fully next year. This new train, built in Derby by Bombardier, started service in June running out of London Liverpool Street to Shenfield and was a regular sight at Romford in May. Each of the 66 new Crossrail (Elizabeth line) trains are air-conditioned and can carry 1,500 passengers. Next year the trains will run from east London to Paddington. The full Crossrail service will operate by 2019

how to vote. But many of the new intake of politicians are not particularly well informed on transport issues and are receptive to dialogue.

Some may not yet realise that transport is a major political issue despite being elected!

They now want, or should want, to know what issues concern us as they take on their new roles. A refresh to re-elected existing politicians will do no harm either, given increasingly expressed concerns about the emerging transport policy vacuum which applies right across government on rail.

Given Railfuture's large membership base, spread right across the country, we are well placed to make our mark.

Please support them by talking with and writing to local politicians and MPs as well to the local press. Let us make rail development a key political issue in the future in as many places as possible.

A bigger railway includes support for more capacity to accommodate growth on the network with more rail services, longer modern trains and incremental electrification.

It also includes support for light rail and integrated rail schemes as well as line reopenings. The reopenings we campaign for

have strong business cases. Examples such as Bicester-Bedford-Cambridge and Wisbech-March are obvious examples. Our reopening campaigns are listed on the website.

Our campaigns for light rail and integrated transport schemes are set against a background where our cities are under congestion pressure and environmental and pollution issues are re-emerging as a serious health concern.

Don't forget freight

Please do not forget to use every opportunity to mention freight on rail. Rail must be considered properly in planning terms as freight moves from traditional heavy industry to distribution. We support freight terminal construction, which can provoke reaction from nimbys who then make it a key issue for local councillors.

We all need a better railway which is reliable and resilient even when there is disruption. Good information is essential when disruption does occur.

We campaign for better facilities at stations, particularly smaller stations, where again good information is important along with passengers' personal security, the ability to park cars and bikes and progressive improvements for disability access. We also campaign for far better

fares information and passenger communication, including wi-fi. Given such an opportunity, Railfuture has decided to publish its own, post-local and post-parliamentary election rail manifesto to inform politicians on the benefits provided by developing railways and rail services.

The *Railfuture Rail Manifesto* is available on the website (search for DL 1544).

So, please engage with councillors and MPs to promote rail development in this post election period before policies formulate and views harden.

As a Railfuture member, you are likely to have a better knowledge of well-formulated sustainable proposals to develop rail than many politicians have.

But feel free to print off the manifesto and hand it to politicians and your local press who are always hungry for material.

Please let your Railfuture branch know of any responses so they can add names to their list of stakeholders interested in promoting rail development. Good luck and enjoy this opportunity to make a difference in contributing to our efforts to campaign for a "Bigger, Better Railway in Britain".

■ Ian Brown CBE FCILT is Railfuture's director of policy

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Railfuture board member and Railwatch correspondent Roger Blake (centre above) was presented with an "outstanding personal contribution" award at the London Transport Awards Ceremony in March. The tenacity of Roger, who worked for Hackney Council for 30 years, was "key to the transformation of rail services in the borough and north east London.

"His work kept alive the hope that one day the East London line might be extended from Shoreditch to Dalston Junction and Highbury and Islington stations. Twenty years of work with fellow campaigners led to more and better train services for Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations.

"He also had a key role in the upgrading of the North London line from two trains an hour to eight, which played a vital part in delivering the Olympic Games."

The picture shows Roger, centre, with Channel 4 news presenter Cathy Newman and Vernon Barker of Siemens.

London & South East

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South Coast rail corridor study

Railfuture's Thameslink 2 concept and proposals for reinstatement of the missing Uckfield-Lewes link have been scrutinised in an independent report ordered by former Chancellor George Osborne. Commissioned by the Department for Transport and completed a year ago, it was published in March. Its main conclusion was that there will be no need for a second main line for a generation. It also concluded that the transport case for reinstating Uckfield-Lewes remains weak and that a wider economic case based on local growth is needed to justify it. That case would be strengthened if Tunbridge Wells could be brought into the scope of the project.

Railfuture welcomes the new private sector London and Southern Counties Railways Consortium which has been encouraged by Transport Secretary Chris Grayling to develop ideas for a Croydon-Lewisham-Canary Wharf-Stratford link, connecting Brighton, Tunbridge Wells and Gatwick Airport directly from the south, and Harlow, Cambridge, Chelmsford and Colchester directly from the north. Railfuture also welcomes the *New approach to Lewes-Uckfield* outlined by consultants WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff in their report to the DfT. Local authorities and local enterprise partnerships are essential for both rail and economic development. Railfuture will continue its campaign to restore the Uckfield-Lewes link.

Shaping South Eastern

The future of the South Eastern franchise is being considered following two consultation processes. The DfT consulted on the options

for a future seven or ten year franchise while Network Rail is examining the infrastructure needed over the next few decades. South Eastern faces a capacity crunch after Network Rail's 2019-24 control period 6. Rebuilding Charing Cross station Blackfriars-style across the Thames is a long-term prospect. More trains are needed to run all Javelin services at full length, and to extend to Rye-Hastings-Bexhill and possibly to Eastbourne. Transferring MarshLink services from Southern to South Eastern is suggested, but splitting the through service to Brighton is strongly opposed by local user groups. Railfuture will continue to focus on reducing journey times to London.

STAR (Stratford Tottenham Hale Angel Road)

The STAR project for an extra two trains an hour between Stratford, Tottenham Hale and Angel Road was first canvassed in a Railfuture-funded report for an affiliated rail user group five years ago. Now it is gaining momentum. Work is under way at Tottenham Hale and Northumberland Park stations to reinstate a third track. The Stratford-Angel Road section of the Lee Valley line will have four trains an hour from next year. Meridian Estates has started building new homes near Angel Road station as part of a £3.5 billion project and a much-needed revamp of the station is likely to start soon. STAR will be the second West Anglia line campaign success for Railfuture, following the reopening of Lea Bridge station a year ago.

Stratford station

Stratford station has been a fantastic success following the 2012 Olympics and big improvements to rail services. But facilities have failed to match the growth. Railfuture's eastern division is seeking a meeting with Transport for London which now runs Stratford station to discuss the lack of adequate toilets, a cramped and unsuitable ticket office, conflicting passenger flows in the busy tunnels, a lack of canopies on some platforms and poor facilities for bus passengers at Stratford City bus station which adjoins the station and also serves Westfield shopping centre.

Preparing for Thameslink

Hitchin rail users met Thameslink managers in May to discuss the new timetable from May next year. The completion of this long-awaited project will bring new journey opportunities, but delays in building an extra platform at Stevenage could mean short-term aggravation in the shape of bus replacement services from Stevenage to Watton and Hertford North.

See the Railfuture website for latest news
Twitter: @RailfutureLSE

Scotland

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Progress on new stations

The Rail Action Group East of Scotland reports progress towards reopening stations at East Linton and Reston. NetworkRail has held two open meetings for the public in Dunbar, one of which was in the station, showing plans for the northbound platform which is expected to be installed in 2019. The reopening of the two stations is now scheduled for control period 6 which runs from 2019 to 2024. RAGES, Scottish Borders, and East Lothian councils hope both stations will be built and opened between 2019-2020. In addition, the RAGES chairman Tom Thorburn and vice chairman Barrie Forrest BEM were invited to a meeting with Transport Minister Humza Yousaf in June.

Twitter: @RailfutureScot

Fund raising for Beattock station

Fund raising by Beattock Station Action Group continued as the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership received the completed stage 1 appraisal report in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guide process. Officers will review the appraisal and prepare a report for consideration for the new SWESTRANS board meeting on 14 July.

St Andrews Rail Link

Peter Brett Associates have completed the *St Andrews Transport Study - Policy Review*, funded by Railfuture and the Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council. The results will be presented to interested parties shortly when it is hoped that Fife Council and the South East of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership will take charge of the next stage of the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guide process. Office bearers also attended a very encouraging meeting in the Scottish Parliament, at which Newburgh Train Station campaigners were also present. The event was hosted by North East Fife MSP, Willie Rennie, with cross-party attendance by Mid Scotland & Fife MSPs Mark Ruskell and Dean Lockhart. As a result Mark Ruskell MSP and the Scottish Greens organised a Mid Scotland & Fife Rail Forum, featuring a presentation by David Prescott of Allan Rail Solutions. As well as StARLink, the Levenmouth Rail and Newburgh Train Station Campaigns were represented, and advocates for the upgrade of the Alloa-Dunfermline freight line also attended. We look forward to further developments as a result of both these events.

Contacts:

Rail Action Group, East of Scotland:
www.rages.org.uk/

Beattock Station Action Group:
www.beattockstationactiongroup.org.uk/

St Andrews Rail Link campaign:
www.starlink-campaign.org.uk/
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LevenMouth Rail Campaign:
www.lmrc-action.org.uk/
www.facebook.com/Levenmouth-Rail-Campagin-432832616900648/

Capital Rail Action Group:
www.capitalrail.org.uk/

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

Forth Rail Link:
<https://www.facebook.com/forthraillink/>
[twitter@forthraillink](https://twitter.com/forthraillink)



StARLink goes to Holyrood (left to right): StARLink secretary Dita Stanis-Traken, MSP Willie Rennie, StARLink convenor Jane Ann Liston and Cameron Little, who is Alloa community councillor and one-time secretary of the Campaign for Passenger Trains to Alloa.

Rail campaigners sent congratulations in early May to Jane Ann Liston when she was elected Liberal Democrat councillor for Fife Council, representing the St Andrews ward.

www.railfuturescotland.org.uk

Parkway, not Hub, for our HS2 station

By Graham Nalty

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Terry Holt's article in *Railwatch* 151 makes a very convincing case for locating an East Midlands HS2 station at East Midlands Parkway rather than the Government's preferred option of Toton.

Some readers may wonder why the East Midlands branch is proposing this alternative when Toton has been agreed by local authorities after lengthy discussions.

The simple answer is that a high speed station named East Midlands Hub at Toton simply cannot achieve the connectivity benefits that are claimed by HS2 Ltd.

While Toton might seem plausible to politicians and business leaders unfamiliar with the fine details of railway operation, providing connecting services from Nottingham and Derby would cause very difficult capacity challenges.

In a recent blog for *Railway Technology Magazine*, Greengauge 21 director Jim Steer points out that Toton "doesn't cut the mustard" in meeting the aspirations of Midlands Connect for delivering shorter journey times between Birmingham and Nottingham.

He suggests that "the travel market would remain on the parallel A42/M42".

Mr Steer points out that while there would be additional cost in building a link from the Midland main line on to HS2, "the cost of a major new station at Toton could be saved".

There is an important debate that needs to be addressed of whether HS2 should be built solely for the benefit of people travelling to and from London.

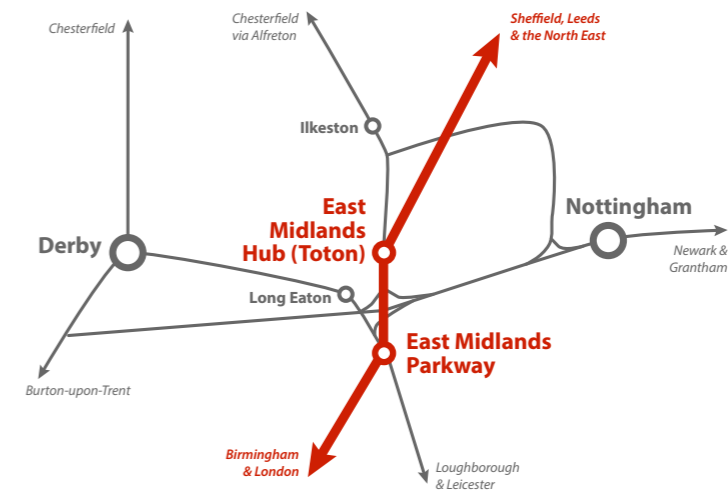
We believe the spare capacity should be used to meet the needs of the east and west Midlands regions in the same way that the Javelin services on High Speed One meet the needs of Kent rail users.

Although HS2 Ltd would like people to think their selection of Toton was made with care, their documentation shows very serious flaws in their methods.

First, HS2 Ltd selected a list of no more than over 30 possible station locations. To anyone who knows the area, more than half are most politely described as being silly. Pear Tree in Derby, Clifton in Nottingham, Glenfield in Leicester, and Stenson Fields in Derby could never be suitable. It is hard to imagine that a sifting process including such locations could deliver a sensible choice.

Second, there is no evidence from HS2 Ltd's description of

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



TOTON: HS2 Ltd calls it East Midlands Hub. Toton is equidistant from Derby and Nottingham. Railfuture campaigners believe the HS2 station would be better placed at the existing East Midlands Parkway station



TOTON: As it was in the 1960s with a class 37 diesel locomotive



TOTON: How HS2 Ltd expects the high speed station to look

its selection process recorded in *Options for phase two of the high speed rail network* that it considered the needs of passengers as having high priority.

Businesses that do not consider the needs of customers seldom succeed, so the HS2 process is seriously lacking in that area.

Third the choice of Toton was derived from a highly unrealistic estimate of interchange times between HS2 trains and the connecting services to Nottingham

and Derby. A study of the figures shown by HS2 show glaring errors in the way they calculate the time to interchange between an HS2 train and a connecting service at Toton. HS2 figures allow a five-minute gap only. In the real railway, interchange times are usually much longer.

The Leeds interchange times for a London-Bradford journey are probably most representative of possible interchange times at Toton. Ticket selling websites

show variations from 14 minutes to 23. So a proper estimate of likely interchange times at Toton is about 18 minutes.

If these interchange times at Toton had been applied, the resulting calculations would have shown that placing the hub at Derby would have generated much greater benefits than Toton.

The London-Derby journey time via HS2 would be 86 minutes, one minute slower than today's classic service.

In section 5.4.28 of *Options for phase two of the high speed rail network*, HS2 Ltd suggests that "Toton could be made to work if comparable classic connectivity was provided".

While it might seem reasonable to assume that Toton could be connected to the local network, it is poor project management to proceed without proving it conclusively.

Indeed it is likely to prove very difficult to add Toton connecting services to the already busy Derby-Nottingham corridor:

■ Current aspirations for the new East Midlands franchise show a big increase in the number of trains between Derby and Nottingham

■ Running Derby-Nottingham services via Toton would add 50% to the journey time between the two cities which is not going to be acceptable

■ To be attractive to passengers there need to be at least four trains an hour from both Derby and Nottingham to Toton

■ Most passengers using Toton would be more likely to drive or take a taxi to Toton than use Derby and Nottingham stations, so train loadings would be very low

■ Toton-Derby and Nottingham-Toton services would conflict on the level with fast-moving services to London and Cardiff, adding the potential for unacceptable levels of delay

■ If grade-separated junctions were considered for these services, this would be almost as expensive as linking the classic lines to HS2, which would have much greater benefits

So the implementation of connecting services to Toton is not likely to be easy.

The process of choosing Toton has not been democratic. It has not been a case of open public discussion, but one of HS2 Ltd promoting its choice of location and manipulating local authorities to agree with it.

It is time to cancel Toton before it is too late.

railwatch July 2017 7

Map: ELLIE KING

Picture: BILL DAVIES

Picture: HS2 Ltd

Room for bikes

I am very pleased that Great Western has found the heart to allow us "lesser mortals beyond electrification" to retain our direct service from Bedwyn and Hungerford to Reading and London Paddington.

GW has also had the foresight to enable us to have bi-mode trains, thus sparing us the inconvenience of having to change at Newbury.

But one thing appears to have been disregarded – the environmental and pleasurable benefit of being able to easily combine cycling with train travel.

Sadly, it seems that modern trains have illogically been allowed to be designed without taking into consideration the need for adequate cycle-carrying space for pannier-loaded touring cycles.

This surely does not encourage environmentally friendly methods of travelling?

I know that on modern trains there are what are supposed to be spaces in which to put a bike.

But what the decision makers and designers appear to have ignored is that these spaces are virtually unusable for serious cyclists.

Not every cyclist, myself included, is physically strong enough to be able to lift up their bike, to hang it on a designated "meat hook" as is required on some trains.

Some people will react by just going back to using their cars.

I, for one, would be happy to pay extra to be able to put my loaded touring bike into a guaranteed space on the train and not to have to endure the inconvenience and stress of having to unload panniers.

I wrote to GW with these points and was told the "relevant department" would consider what could be done.

Catherine Barber, Hungerford, Berkshire
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Parkway for HS2

The article on East Midlands Parkway (*Railwatch* 151) and the suggestion to make it the East Midlands HS2 hub finally gave at least some hope that this station may ultimately prove to have been a worthwhile creation, something which has never appeared convincing.

Since opening eight years ago it has failed to meet "expected" passenger numbers.

The withdrawal of flights from East Midlands Airport by a budget airline, the subsequent



A crow carrying off a railway carriage was cartoonist John Sadler's comment on rail franchising which first appeared in the *New Camden Journal*

closing down of BMI Baby, and the withdrawal of the regular bus service to the airport made the station less than attractive to get to the airport.

The taxi service costs around £15 for a four-mile journey.

Parkway station passenger facilities are woeful. The main waiting area is cold and draughty, the platform shelters are standard railway-issue "sheds" and the coffee shop does not have long opening hours.

I could not get a hot drink at 18.15.

Many locals believe the station was "built in the wrong place".

Standing, as I regularly do, on a permanently deserted station where some 50% of trains do not stop, makes me feel that if HS2 is going to have any benefit to the East Midlands at all, siting the "hub" at Parkway could just be the catalyst for this station to finally earn and justify its continuing existence. It certainly makes 100% more sense than using Toton.

Martin Garvey
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Gobowen-Oswestry

The article by Chris Austin in *Railwatch* 151 is both timely and relevant to the development of today's railway. One strategic issue which has to be addressed relates to the bringing of the railway to those members of the public who cannot access modern metros or improved heavy rail services. The *Rail Industry Capability Delivery Plan* published by the RSSB recognises that a "low cost railway" solution will be appropriate to fill in

those gaps in an all-embracing network. A small but important railway in Shropshire can demonstrate how an "intermediate" mode can fill one of those gaps. Well done to Railfuture in recognising that potential.

One further specific point is the role of the private sector. I can confirm that any Government financial support for this specific development will result in this company also investing in the proposed service. As operators of the "Stourbridge Shuttle" we wish to bring a similar service to Gobowen and any Department for Transport grants will lever in an element of private sector finance.

Phil Evans, Director, Pre Metro Operations Ltd
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Case for reopening

My own experience has been different from that of Chris Austin in his "Expanding the railway" article in *Railwatch* 151.

I have been campaigning for many years for the reopening of the Didcot, Newbury & Southampton Railway but my requests for support have been rejected by Railfuture at both national and regional level.

There is a strong case for reopening the DNSR because the Reading-Basingstoke-Winchester-Southampton line is already operating at full capacity.

Rex Hora, chairman, Didcot, Newbury & Southampton Railway Revival, Erleigh Court Gardens, Earley, Reading RG6 1EJ

Rail for Scotland

Thank you for showing the Forth Bridge on the cover of *Railwatch* 151. This railway bridge is one of

Scotland's most iconic structures and has stood the test of time, attracting countless tourists to Edinburgh and its environs.

However Transport Scotland is almost completely ignoring a highly important, strategic railway bridge across Central Glasgow. The St Enoch's Bridge is no longer used for scheduled passenger workings across Glasgow's very busy, congested city but could be crucial in linking communities on either side of the Clyde.

If this Crossrail route was reopened, it could readily see through trains operating between Ayr, Gourock and Wemyss Bay to Edinburgh, Stirling, Perth and beyond, all via central Glasgow.

New stations would allow easy access to central Glasgow, interchanging with other railway and subway services.

It also has potential as a through route for example from Edinburgh to Glasgow and Ardrossan for the Arran ferry.

It is shameful the way this valuable project continues to be pervertedly excluded from Transport Scotland's plans

The atrocious service on the Dumfries and Stranraer line on Sundays also needs attention.

Travelling from the Lake District to Girvan, as I do, is expensive, circuitous, requires bus transfers and takes forever.

More frequent trains are necessary and reopening the Dumfries-Castle Douglas-Stranraer "Paddy" line, costed at £600 million, would be well worth the money.

More info: @ReopenTheDumfriesStranraerRailway

Graham Lund, Girvan, Ayrshire
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Saltire card blues

I am over 60 and made good use of the Saltire card on regular journeys from Kilmarnock to Glasgow and other destinations within Strathclyde, attracting a 50% reduction, with certain restrictions on weekdays.

Travel by bus is free, while rail is the more convenient option.

After two years of trouble-free travel I was stopped at Glasgow Central while on a through journey from Paisley Canal to Kilmarnock even though I had left Paisley before the 16.30 cut-off. I was informed that through journeys were not permitted and Saltire card holders have to



PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS ALL LONG DISTANCE RAIL SERVICE

Stand UP for your trains!
CLICK HERE

States in BLACK would have no trains

The American National Association of Railroad Passengers launched a recruitment campaign in April to fight the Trump administration's threat to axe all funding for Amtrak's national network trains. Two months later President Trump also withdrew America from the Paris climate accord

depart Glasgow Central itself before 16.30, not the departure station.

This does not apply to the Senior Railcard and the only reason I was given was that it is designed to prevent pensioners from deliberately breaking their journeys and enjoying some shopping, etc. in Glasgow as the ticket does not carry a time stamp. Apart from being insulting, this forced me to either wait an hour and a half for the first train after 18.00 or buy a single fare ticket.

This rarely enforced rule further complicates the use of the Saltire card as you have to factor in the need to reach Glasgow before 16.30, greatly reducing the time spent at your destination and further reducing the convenience of the card.

Most staff seem unaware of this restriction. However it does once again show how confusing, discriminatory and arguably unfair ticketing practices often are.

But at least I then had time to go shopping in Glasgow!

Roger Griffith
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Glasgow needs more

I was surprised to read about the paucity of public transport in the Glasgow region (*Railwatch* 151). A city with a metropolitan area that has a population of over 1.8 million people deserves more than a handful of miles of underground. After all Manchester and Birmingham are served by extensive and growing light rail systems, so why should not Scotland's biggest city? What with £1.35 billion spent on a new

Forth road crossing, it makes one realise that some who control transport expenditure are still in hock to the motor car.

Tim Mickleburgh, Boulevard Avenue, Grimsby DN31 2JP
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Ireland opportunity

I completed the whole Irish rail network in about 10 days using an Irish Explorer five-day pass for €160 (£140) and a day pass from Translink in Northern Ireland for £15 (zone 4 card). Modern trains provided good on-time service in the south, where a small system survives after widespread closures from 1922 to 2008. Now rail in Dublin is booming with a new service via the Phoenix Park tunnel. There is a good motorway network and high car ownership, so attention to public transport provision is a real issue for the future.

John O'Sullivan, Hickory Close, London N9 7PY
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Station canopies

Not the least irritating of current events on the railway is the cheeseparating where canopies on station platforms is concerned.

The tendency seems to be to provide either no canopies at all or canopies of such a (doubtless very artistic) design that the poor passenger is not protected at all from rain because the canopy is too high or wrongly angled – useless for its primary purpose of sheltering the traveller from the rain, especially when it is angled by a strong wind.

With regard to absent canopies, I note two recent cases. Bromsgrove has been given a splendid new station with no less than four platforms where not so many years ago there was but one.

To reach these platforms the traveller must, obviously, cross a footbridge or use a lift. The bridge has been provided with a canopy. Fine. However the passenger descends to platform

level and finds no canopy at all. A dash through the rain is necessary to one of those silly little bus shelters.

A canopy should at least have been provided between the foot of the steps and the bus shelter.

Second, I note that the new platforms for the Chiltern line services at Oxford are likewise bereft of any canopy.

This is totally ridiculous. Does not the railway realise that it does actually rain occasionally in the UK?

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john@ejgilbert10.plus.com

Toilets are essential

I was interested to read about the unavailability of toilets on trains in *Railwatch* 151.

Toilets on trains are essential whether for disabled people or others.

In the 21st century it seems totally unacceptable for trains to be without toilets.

South West Trains are depriving passengers of toilets in their new class 707s on the grounds of cost. This is a ridiculous excuse.

But this attitude also applies to other train operating companies whose main priority is to put profits before service standards.

I believe some train operating companies do not pay their share of tax levied on their profits, and their directors undoubtedly take vast pay rises annually on their salaries, plus bonuses.

If service standards slip, directors should have their salaries frozen and be stripped of their bonuses and other benefits.

Many suburban stations do not have toilets at all and at Richmond there are no toilets for the disabled. It is essential that all railway stations have toilets, which should be open 24 hours, possibly provided in conjunction with local authorities at smaller stations.

Simon Barber, Richmond, Surrey
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Rail user awards for 2017

By Roger Blake

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Fancy a Railfuture vice-president paying you a visit? Now is the time to start thinking about your nominations for this year's Rail User Group Awards, and get them in before the 2 September deadline so that our V-Ps can arrange to visit you.

RUG Awards for 2017 will be given for:

- 1 Best newsletter – gold and silver awards
- 2 Best website – gold and silver awards
- 3 Best social media promotion
- 4 Best campaign
- 5 Best campaigner (Railfuture members only)
- 6 Best new group
- 7 Judges' Special Award

The closing date for submissions is 23.59 on Saturday 2 September 2017. As usual we plan the judging panel to comprise Railfuture vice-presidents.

The 2017 RUG Awards will be presented at our autumn conference in Leicester on Saturday 4 November.

You can book now at www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

A Railfuture members' early-bird discounted conference fee of just £25 (includes refreshments and buffet lunch) applies until Thursday 31 August.

Rail user groups that send representatives to Leicester will be well placed to collect their 2017 RUG Award, if selected.

A framed certificate will be signed by Railfuture's honorary president and national chairman and the ceremonial occasion can be photographed for your local publicity purposes.

Award winners also have their next year's Railfuture membership subscription as a bonus.

If you are not a winner or even entrant this year, be there anyway to learn from others and be inspired for next year. Confirmed entrants will also receive an early bonus to assist them in coming to Leicester!

Full details in the monthly Rail User Express at www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Express and on the dedicated website page www.railfuture.org.uk/RUG+Awards which includes the rules for 2017.

Railfuture's vision: A railway system that provides services which travellers and freight forwarders want to use, and which offers more journey opportunities to more people and more freight.

Promises, promises! Can we trust the parties to stay on track?

By Paul Abell

paul.abell@railfuture.org.uk

Always read the small print. Most of us did not realise this advice would be relevant when it came to the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011.

Because the timing of the unexpected general election is not co-ordinated the production schedule of *Railwatch*, you will be reading this when it should be clear which party has won.

I am, however, writing in mid-May just as the manifestos are being published.

Before looking at the 2017 Conservative manifesto we should perhaps look back at the fate of promises made in 2015 – and it is not entirely encouraging.

Promises to complete Crossrail and progress HS2 are clearly on the way to delivery, though HS3 and Crossrail 2 are naturally further in the future.

The pledge to “keep commuter rail fares frozen in real terms for the whole of the next Parliament” has been kept by dint of using the retail price index measure of inflation (currently 3.5%) rather than the consumer price index (currently 2.7%).

However the statement “Electrification of the railways is a key part of our investment programme” was followed the month after the 2015 general election by the Midland main line and North TransPennine electrifications being “paused”. As things stand, the Stalybridge-Leeds section will be served by diesel traction for years to come, while for electrification purposes the MML has apparently been redefined as reaching north as



Picture: PAUL ABELL

NOW DIESELS WILL HAVE TO SOLDIER ON: Delaying Midland main line electrification to Leicester, Nottingham and Derby means that this Nottingham-St Pancras train passing Syston will remain diesel-powered through the East Midlands. Network Rail does however plan to have electric trains running as far as Kettering and Corby from December 2019

far as Kettering then branching off to Corby.

Conservatives in 2017

There are fewer hostages to fortune in the 2017 manifesto, which highlights transport improvements in general, mentioning only High Speed 2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail by name as far as railway projects are concerned. Increased services are promised in general terms for both main lines and commuter routes, while there is also a promise to “launch new services to places which are poorly served or host major new housing projects.”

Cyclists can look forward to upgraded facilities at railway stations.

Rail campaigners in Wales were disappointed that there was no commitment in the Welsh Conservative manifesto to electrify the Great Western line as far as Swansea.

Labour

The 2017 Labour manifesto has some significant promises about railways. Particular commitments are to complete HS2 through to Scotland, and to build Crossrail 2 and a new Brighton

main line, using a £250 billion national transformation fund to invest in infrastructure. A Crossrail of the North will link the great Northern cities.

More generally, as part of a programme to take key utilities back into public ownership, Labour will “bring private rail companies back into public ownership as their franchises expire,” and “introduce a Public Ownership of the Railways Bill to repeal the Railways Act 1993 under which the Conservatives privatised our railways.” Improvements promised under public ownership

include fares being capped, free wi-fi across the network, and ending the expansion of driver-only operations.

Network Rail will be retained whole, while new rolling stock will be publicly owned, and the expansion of public freight services will be encouraged.

Scottish National Party

Noting that 54% of ScotRail delays are caused by issues connected to Network Rail the SNP manifesto calls for a full devolution of Network Rail.

It promises that SNP MPs will press the UK Government for better cross-border rail links, including extending the Borders Railway to Carlisle, and (as in 2015) it wants a high-speed connection between Glasgow, Edinburgh and the north of England as part of the HS rail network.

One part of the 2015 SNP manifesto has already been accomplished now that its call for public sector organisations to be allowed to bid to operate rail services has been realised by the provisions of the Scotland Act 2016.

Liberal Democrats

In their 2017 manifesto the Liberal Democrats confirm a continued commitment to HS2, HS3, Crossrail 2 and rail electrification, in addition to a promise to complete East West Rail to connect Oxford and Cambridge.

They would want new rail franchises to include a stronger focus on customers, but meanwhile intend “to establish government-run companies to take over the running of Southern Rail and Govia Thameslink, with a long-term plan to find more effective and sustainable ways of managing these franchises involving greater powers for local gov-



Picture: PAUL ABELL

COMPETITION: Grand Central open access services give passengers a choice on the East Coast main line. Here a King's Cross-Sunderland service is heading north at Peterborough

ernment.” A section on local public transport promises the introduction of “a rail ombudsman to enforce passenger rights and improve the provision of compensation with the power to sanction rail companies as appropriate.”

Plaid Cymru

The Plaid Cymru manifesto complains that the Welsh public transport system “is not fit for purpose...while England benefits from next-generation trains and high-speed rail links costing £56 billion.”

It promises “upgraded rail and road links” in general, to be funded by pressing “for our fair share of UK infrastructure spend.” In particular it wants to see improved Valleys line

services, and the Carmarthen-Aberystwyth line reopened.

Green Party

The Green Party's manifesto comes in the form of a Green Guarantee. Part 10 of this is entitled *A People's Transport System*, with calls to “return the railways to public ownership.”

As well as wanting all public transport to be fully accessible and step-free, the Greens issue a radical demand for “a phase-in of free local public transport for young people, students, people with disabilities, and older people.”

A reordering of national priorities is then contained in a policy to invest in regional rail links and electrification of existing

rail lines, especially in the South West and North of England, rather than “wasting” money on HS2 and the national major roads programme.

The Green Party Youth Manifesto adds a little more detail: returning the railways to public ownership is “to improve services and make fares affordable”, while Northern England and mid-Wales are specifically mentioned in the context of stronger regional rail links creating “a better connected transport infrastructure”.

UKIP

The UKIP manifesto also pledges to scrap plans for HS2 but invest in upgrading existing main lines. It would also block any attempt to introduce road tolls.

What was missing from the manifestos? A personal view

By Paul Abell

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How on earth have we got to a position where the railway industry in Britain is subject to centralised micromanagement at the same time as its structure has deliberately been fragmented into more than a hundred different companies, linked by contractual obligations rather than an overwhelming concern for the good of the passenger?

This fragmentation is perhaps most strikingly illustrated by the fact that there are hundreds of staff (some people put the figure at 300, others put it at nearer 600) engaged on “delay attribution” – pinning the blame for delays to trains on a specific organisation in this fragmented whole. These are talented people, who by definition have to know how the railway operates. Surely there are tasks more worthy of their expertise? It is a truism that

a railway has to involve teamwork. If I am getting a rough ride at 125mph I do not particularly care whether the fault lies in the track or in the rolling stock. I expect them both to be maintained to the necessary standards. And, if a line has to be shut for a period to allow track maintenance to take place, I do not see why there should be financial compensation to the operator.

Regardless of whether a vertically integrated railway is in public or private ownership, the closer the relationship between the managers of the infrastructure and the managers of the rolling stock, the better. Removing the legalistic and financial barriers between them is surely something which would attract votes from long-suffering commuters.

The franchise system has fostered government concerns that the introduction of open access services on a route is a bad thing because they will tend to reduce the

potential revenue of the franchisee, making the franchise less financially attractive to operators and future bidders and hence reducing the premium payments to the government. Never mind the fact that there is considerable evidence that the presence of open access on a route is good for passengers.

At this point the answer to Christian Wolmar's famous question “What are franchises for?” has become “To raise money for the government.” Clearly this is something not in the interests of commuters whose votes may well have decided the fate of many MPs.

■ Railfuture vice-president Paul Abell (a former editor of *Today's Railways UK*) is raising these points in a purely personal capacity, without wishing to portray them as being in any way official Railfuture policy. Readers may want to contact *Railwatch* with their comments.

A MESSAGE TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT FROM RAILFUTURE CHAIRMAN CHRIS PAGE

Railfuture wants a bigger, better railway. The railways were built to create economic wealth, and our message to the new government is that a continued high level of investment in rail is essential to promote economic growth and make life easier for passengers. Britain's railways are the best in the world for safety and passenger growth (despite increasing fares), but for that to continue the new government must incentivise the rail

operators to provide excellent customer service and value-for-money fares, direct Network Rail to get a grip on its costs and expand rail capacity effectively, and plan for rail traffic growth, building realistic business cases for expansion. For our message to be heard, Railfuture must earn respect by defining a realistic position on the key rail issues, engage with stakeholders to build our influence, and promote our campaigns effectively to attract



Chris Page

more members – all in a professional way. Railfuture members elect

the directors to the Board to act as Railfuture's leadership team. Their role is to ensure that our message will be heard by setting the direction for Railfuture, motivating our active members in the branches and groups, and ensuring that we act and communicate consistently and professionally. The role of Railfuture's policy groups is to define our position on key rail issues, coordinate consultation responses, and campaign on national issues such as fares.

Meanwhile our branches should campaign on local issues, engage local stakeholders, attract members and align local rail user groups to common goals. To help our branches and groups develop these roles, Branches and Groups Day this year will focus on what we must do to attract more members and campaign more effectively. Our mission statement: ‘Our mission is to be the number one advocate for the railway and rail users.’

Costs wrangle over MetroWest plans

A massive rise in the projected cost of MetroWest Phase 1, which includes reopening the Portishead line and half-hourly services on two other routes in the Bristol area, was revealed by regional TV on 8 March. The previous estimate of £58 million has risen to between £145 million and £175 million because Network Rail was claiming that upgrading line speed on the Portishead branch to 50 mph would require complex engineering work in the Avon Gorge, where site access is restricted. At its quarterly meeting on 21 March, our affiliated member Portishead Railway Group was told by chairman Alan Matthews that the facts behind the revised estimates appeared to be extremely thin.

Some non-rail costs had been identified, such as a new access road for Ashton Vale trading estate and widening of a local road in Pill to bring materials to the station site, but it was difficult to challenge the potential three-fold increase of the scheme without seeing the recently completed GRIP (Governance for Rail Investment Projects) Stage 3 report for Phase 1. The West of England Partnership, which has been developing MetroWest for several years, is now proposing a staged delivery of Phase 1, with improvements to Severn Beach and Bristol-Bath services being introduced first as Stage A. Stage B, rescheduled for 2021, would see an hourly service on the Portishead line at a lower speed than the half-hourly 50 mph specified in the GRIP process.

The view of Portishead Railway Group's meeting was summed up by Mr Matthews who said a 30 mph railway was better than no railway. During discussion about how the scheme should progress, there was criticism of the "glass palace" design for Portishead station, but also concern that something better than a basic halt with bus shelters was needed to attract people from their cars. Railfuture Severnside has written to Network Rail and WEP, supporting Portishead Railway Group's call for Stages A and B of the revised Phase 1 to be progressed at the same time to minimise further delay to Portishead reopening. We have pointed out that a 30 mph passenger service would still be competitive with road transport, especially in the peak. Our message is that the longer the delay, the harder it will be to persuade people moving into new housing developments to leave their cars at home.

Business case for new stations

John Groves and Nigel Bray had a useful meeting with Councillor Nigel Moor, lead councillor for local transport, and Rob Niblett, rail officer for Gloucestershire, at Shire Hall on 1 March. We were encouraged that the business cases for new stations at Hunts Grove, Stonehouse Bristol Road and Charfield have been re-examined following our response to the Gloucestershire Rail Study Report of 2015. These now show very favourable cost-benefit ratios, especially in the event of MetroWest being extended to Gloucester. A further study into the feasibility of stopping at the stations was expected in May.

Onward travel

Bridgwater now has an Onward Travel poster giving accurate information about bus stops and services. It is sited outside the main station building and so is visible when the ticket office is closed. This follows a long campaign by Railfuture and Friends of Bridgwater Station.

The extended ticket office hours promised by GWR (*Railwatch* 151) have yet to be introduced.

Taunton rail link hopes

Elsewhere in Somerset, our affiliated member Minehead Rail Link Group met the West Somerset Railway General Manager on 6 April to discuss a possible link between the WSR and Taunton from 2018.

www.railfuture.org.uk/SevernsideBranch
[Twitter @RailfutureSSide](https://twitter.com/RailfutureSSide)

West Midlands



Railfuture vice president Lorna Slade chaired the election debate

Railfuture's election debate

Railfuture West Midlands staged a public debate in the run-up to the 4 May election for West Midlands mayor. The five major parties were represented at the event, which was jointly staged with Friends of the Earth. The consensus of the debate – a month before the election – was that the region is badly underfunded for transport. "The lack of money is something that every candidate raised," said Steve Wright, secretary of Railfuture West Midlands. "There were many topics that came up, including buses, pollution, congestion and HS2, but the key issue was how does the West Midlands get its fair share of funding to make the transport improvements that the region desperately needs."

The man who eventually won the election and is now mayor is Andy Street for the Conservatives. At the Railfuture debate, he said: "The West Midlands needs to spend more than the funding it has been given by government. We need to think laterally about new funding models. The Mayor's job is about how we do something more than what we do." He said he wanted to invest £10 per head per year in cycling.

Beverley Nielsen for the Liberal Democrats said that the West Midlands needs £1 billion a year for transport. She said: "It could manage with £700 million per year but it is only getting £300 million, which is insufficient."

She added: "The West Midlands economy is the size of the Czech Republic and New Zealand." She proposed offering free transport to all young people aged 16-25.

"We must invest in getting them to use public transport so that they do not buy cars later on." James Burn for the Green Party said: "People are dying prematurely because of air quality." He added: "Crowded trains and high fares are a

problem." Labour candidate Siôn Simon said he wanted to expand Birmingham International Airport, and that roads must work better, becoming more effective. Pete Durnell, for UKIP, is the son of a founding member of Severn Valley Railway. He said: "HS2 is not justifiable, but we must make it work to best effect." Each candidate was given a three-minute opening and closing presentation. Candidates drew lots on the order of speaking. This also dictated their position on the table. The meeting was chaired by Railfuture vice president Lorna Slade, editor of *Rail Professional* magazine. She was assisted by Roger King, a Railfuture member who is a former MP for Birmingham Northfield.

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Flying start for Salisbury-Exeter users

The Salisbury to Exeter Line Rail User Group got off to a flying start for its "official" launch event at the Yeovil Railway Centre on 6 April, although learning of Stagecoach Rail's loss of the South Western franchise to First/MTR provoked lots of questions, but alas no answers. Railfuture Wessex was instrumental in setting up the new group, and branch chairman Bruce Duncan also chairs SERUG.

Together with SERUG's secretary Nick Hurrell, Bruce outlined the group's aims to an audience of more than 70 guests and members. This was followed by an excellent talk with illustrations by Railfuture director and author Chris Austin on the history of the Salisbury-Exeter line and where he thought its future may lie. His book *Disconnected* has a reference to this "Missing Main Line" which reminded us all that it is a book well worth reading.

Chris Loder from South West Trains updated and informed the audience about the transformation of Waterloo station this summer. He illustrated the talk in detail to ensure the complicated picture was understood, along with the variations to train journeys over the summer, especially during August. Questions flowed, tea and cakes were provided – all in a great event.

Now SERUG will engage with First and has written to the Department for Transport on a number of issues where there are seemingly no answers. From what has been read so far, there are no tangible benefits for the Salisbury-Exeter line from the new franchise, and it is hoped that the unregulated First fare structure will not disadvantage SERUG passengers.

Busy day for Railfuture Wessex

By happy coincidence, the first meeting of the Wessex branch committee for 2017-18 was arranged for the morning of Saturday 13 May in Eastleigh, the same day as a charter train was booked to run over the Waterside line from Southampton to Fawley and back. The trip, on a vintage Hastings diesel unit, was organised by the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership to highlight the potential of the line for regular passenger services. Reopening the line is high on the agenda for Railfuture Wessex, so the committee (all bar one) decanted to Southampton to join the afternoon run to Fawley, armed with publicity material which included a reprint of the Railfuture website entitled *Tide Turns for the Waterside Line*.

www.railfuture.org.uk/Wessex+Branch
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Good Samaritan idea for 'delay repay'

By Phil Smart

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The issue of mental health has been rising up the national agenda in recent months, even to the point where the members of the royal family feel able to talk about it in public.

Those of us who are fortunate not to suffer mental health problems (or think we do not) probably think it is an issue that only affects someone else.

As members of the community of rail users and workers, however, we are all too often witnesses to those sad occasions when mental breakdown manifests itself most dramatically.

I refer to those instances when trains are delayed by "a person being hit by a train" or "an incident involving the emergency services". Such incidents,

although mercifully rare, tend to shut down the affected route for at least an hour and often two or more.

These delays, erroneously attributed to Network Rail, are on the increase and when they occur they bring distress to family, friends, users and rail staff.

Rather than shrug our shoulders at something we think is outside our control, is there something we can do to help turn this tide of human misery?

Opinions differ about "delay repay". For my part, I never claim for delays on the basis that there is not enough money going into the system, rather than too little being sucked out in compensation.

For me the railway is something of a deity and "delay repay" feels like stealing from the church

plate. Even if you are a regular claimer, I expect few of us feel comfortable claiming for suspected suicides which put our own problems into perspective and which are clearly outside the industry's control.

Under new franchise agreements, operators are introducing automated "delay repay" for season ticket holders.

Under this system, I will be invited to nominate my usual train(s) and if one is delayed I get an automatic message asking if I was on the train and would I like to claim.

East Midlands Trains are offering people the chance to donate their "delay repay" compensation to charity. I propose this is taken a stage further. In the case of suicides, we should be given the option of donating our

repayments to a mental health fund that could be split between mental health charities such as Mind or the Samaritans.

These charities would be the first to point out that very few of the people they have contact with ever contemplate taking their own lives, but when this does happen it represents a failure in society for which we should all feel responsible.

There are many, including those in the industry, who see this as a "win-win" proposal. Besides being a good public relations gesture, it would increase awareness that delays are often not the fault of the railway and, by focusing resources into mental health work, hopefully lead to an eventual reduction in delays to services caused by these unfortunate events. Let us turn tragedy into opportunity.

Convertible space could work wonders for the railway

The Government and train operators have conspired together to jam so many seats into new trains that there is not enough space for luggage, bikes or children's buggies.

Railfuture campaigners have asked train operators and the Government to ensure that there are more areas of convertible space on trains.

One of the simple ways to provide space is to fit some seats which can be tipped up to provide extra space.

Small areas with tip-up seats can be found in British trains, but they are much more generous in some European countries, particularly in Germany.

However, there are other many inventive ways to make trains more adaptable. An innovative and automated seating system from 42 Technology was a winner in the *Tomorrow's Train Design Today* competition in 2015.

It has been developed to the point that it is ready for industrial trials. A working demonstration module was on show at the Railtex exhibition in Birmingham in May.

It should enable train operators to configure specific carriages to carry either passengers or high-value cargo as required.

The system allows the seats and tables within a passenger train carriage to be automatically stowed to create space. It is estimated that 20 rows of seats are equal to the capacity of an articulated lorry.



42 TECHNOLOGY TEAM: (from left) Simon Copley, Jon Spratley and Zane Van Romunde with, standing, Duncan Wales and Freya Cunningham



The system allows seats and tables within the carriage to be automatically stowed to create space for high value cargo including deliveries from online retailers or fresh foods



The system has been designed to work on running rails that are fitted to the existing seat rails. All the mechanisms are fitted within the void between the rails



The mechanism allows any rubbish left on seats to be tipped on to the floor for easier cleaning after the seats have been stowed and without compromising passenger comfort

Great Western diversions could do better
 Railfuture Thames Valley believes passengers are being inconvenienced during engineering work with services being cut short and buses replacing trains, when alternative rail options could be made available. The new Chiltern link from London to Oxford has the added bonus that Great Western Bristol-London trains no longer have to be diverted via Banbury. On Sunday morning 26 March, because of engineering works between Reading and Hayes, the hourly service from Bristol Temple Meads to London was diverted to Oxford, allowing passengers to switch to Chiltern trains for the final leg of their journey to London. Trains from South Wales were terminated at Reading with London-bound passengers changing trains at Swindon. Trains from the North Cotswold line were also terminated at Reading with London-bound passengers changing at Oxford. Trains from the West of England were also terminated at Reading, with London-bound passengers being bussed to Heathrow, where they switched to Heathrow Express for the journey to Paddington. Railfuture is asking why trains from Bristol diverted to Oxford could not run through to Paddington over the Chiltern line to save passengers the need to change. We also want to know why the passengers decanted at Reading (for a bus journey) were not told they could use the South Western train service to London Waterloo. Most people would prefer to travel by an alternative, even if slower, train rather than by a rail replacement bus.

Hanborough fiasco
 A planning inspector overturned West Oxfordshire District Council's refusal of planning permission for a housing development at Hanborough. At the appeal hearing, the planning inspector declared that he could see no reason for refusal, and granted unconditional permission. With no conditions attached, the developers withdrew their previous offer to give land for a 400-place car park adjoining the railway station. Neither the council officer attending the hearing nor Great Western raised the issue of expanding the use of Hanborough as the railhead for Witney. This is another example of the disconnection between land use planning and transport planning. Railfuture Thames Valley submitted comments on the original planning application, supporting the car park proposal, and was disappointed that the council did not seem to appreciate its importance.

Railfuture descends on High Wycombe
 For the first time, Railfuture Thames Valley held a meeting at High Wycombe. The extension of Chiltern services to Oxford made the meeting viable. Guest speaker was Stephen Barker, strategic development engineer of Chiltern Railways, who explained how the 40 mph single-track railway between Bicester and Oxford was transformed into a 100 mph double-track line with half-hourly services to London. About half of the line was virtually reconstructed where it traversed the unstable

marshland of Otmoor, with bridges rebuilt and the track lowered through Wolvercote tunnel to allow clearances for international containers. This explains why reopening closed railway lines can often turn out to be more difficult and more costly than originally estimated. Mr Barker, who has been seconded for two or three days a week to work with Rob Brighouse on East West Rail, believes there will be fewer problems reopening Bicester-Bletchley. Looking to the future, in order to solve the capacity problem of increasing traffic at Marylebone, Chiltern Railways is proposing to run some trains to the planned rail hub at Old Oak Common.

Bourne End-High Wycombe
 One of our members recently walked the old railway track between Bourne End and High Wycombe. He found that although the box under the M40 at Loudwater is unobstructed, the track has been encroached upon in several places by new houses and a trading estate, not to mention the two level crossings at Bourne End. Restoration as a heavy rail line would be difficult and costly. A light rail line, with conversion of the Marlow-Maidenhead branch, might be feasible, but this would not provide a convenient link for through traffic between Milton Keynes/Aylesbury and Heathrow. In the long term, extension of Chiltern services to Old Oak Common would be a more convenient route, leaving High Wycombe-Bourne End-Maidenhead as the link for local traffic to the Thames Valley. Railfuture's welcome of Buckinghamshire County Council's enlightenment (in *Railwatch* 151) was premature. The new transport officer has moved on.

£3 to join Oxford-Bicester campaign
 The Oxford-Bicester Rail Action Group is inviting would-be rail campaigners to join it. You can join for £3 via the OBAG website. OBAG has been crucial in the continuing battle to secure East West Rail.

www.railfuture.org.uk/Thames Valley Branch
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North East

Surprise mayor for Tees Valley
 Conservative mayoral candidate Ben Houchen unexpectedly won the May election in the Tees Valley, with a plan to "buy back" Durham Tees Valley Airport. As he is a Stockton local councillor in the Yarm and Kirkclevington ward, Coastliners reminded him that annual passenger figures for the airport are 10,000 fewer than those for Yarm rail station – despite Yarm's poor local rail links!

Return of Tees-side's station usage figures
 Tees Valley combined authority has resumed publication of passenger figures at rail stations in its area. One of the surprising facts is that Darlington Bank Top, though top of the Tees Valley list at 2,276,238, does not see as many people as Durham (not in Tees Valley), which claims 2,595,000 annually.

You win some, you lose some – NEXUS
 Nexus (the passenger transport department in

Tyne and Wear) has relieved DB Regio, German Railway's subsidiary, of control of Metro operation, because of poor performance. This has come two years before the DB contract was meant to expire, and Nexus has taken operations in-house, at least for the foreseeable future – but, as new Metro rolling-stock will be needed before very long, it will be interesting to see if and how this arrangement is later modified.

Horden station – the latest
 By the time you read this, we should all know if Durham County Council has been lucky enough to be granted more funding from the New Stations fund to build Horden station.

More Northumbrian negotiations
 Northumberland County Council has, in effect, changed political hands in May, with Conservatives taking 33 seats, against 24 for Labour. It is too early to say how this will affect the many rail projects in the county, but question marks now hang over the intended relocation of County Hall from Morpeth to Ashington, and the plan to revive both Seaton Delaval and Seghill stations on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line (if indeed this whole project still goes ahead). More positively, South-East Northumberland Rail User Group (SENUG) is working with the Rail Action Group, East of Scotland to obtain a feasibility study on reopening up to four stations on the East Coast route between Newcastle and Edinburgh, and then, based on the existing local rail service between the MetroCentre, Newcastle and Morpeth, running on to Berwick and possibly into Scotland as well. This will involve the co-operation of Northern Rail and Transport Scotland.

Predicting the future, part 1
Draft May 2018 timetables
 Northern Rail has circulated its proposed summer timetable for the North-East's lines, including a doubled frequency between Hexham and Carlisle, some late-night services on the Newcastle-Hartlepool-Middlesbrough line (at last!), and a full Sunday service south of Middlesbrough to James Cook Hospital halt and Nunthorpe. Comments are invited by early July. Users are also being asked for suggestions on "saving time" on local operations. Not surprisingly, Saltburn Line User Group and Coastliners will be reiterating their advocacy of much quicker Tees-Tyne links via the Stockton-Ferryhill route.

Predicting the future, part 2
Newcastle students and a rail group app
 The computer science department of Newcastle University recently organised a trade fair, where displays included a gadget enabling its user to identify the nearest rail station, check scheduled train departures from it and/or its "live departure board", and even exchange unwanted advance purchase tickets. Initially conceived with SENRUG in mind, it can be adapted for use by any other rail user group or train operating company. This is a development well worth watching for more news, not least about how (and for how much) others may acquire this very enterprising application.

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joins the rail network

By Peter Wakefield
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The new £50 million station at Cambridge North opened on 21 May amid huge local interest.

It is between Cambridge and Waterbeach on the Ely main line, on the site of the former engineering depot at Chesterton Junction.

There are three 12-car platforms, covered parking for 1,000 bikes, a bus interchange and parking for 450 cars.

Its very distinctive silver cladding is based on the computer model Game of Life, created by mathematician John Conway when he was a lecturer at Cambridge University.

The building will soon have a coffee shop and convenience store in addition to the ticket hall that currently has three modern ticket machines where staff are available to help passengers. There are also train dispatchers on each platform.

The station is close to the city's northern business and science parks and large residential areas, and has already generated plans for an hotel, pub-restaurant and a huge office block development.

Cycleway and footpath extensions connect it to adjacent parts of the city. The guided busway has been extended to serve the new station and, as well as some existing diverted services, a new service from Long Stanton park and ride has been introduced. City bus route 2 also terminates at the station.

The new station is served by King's Cross fast and stopping and Liverpool Street stopping trains plus regular Ely and Norwich services.

King's Lynn trains will call when platform extensions at Waterbeach and Littleport are completed, enabling eight-car trains to run all day without joining and splitting at Cambridge, as now.

The time saved will enable a stop at North station and still make the crucial crossing of trains at Downham Market off the single line from Littleport.

The current stops at North station are interim, as new timetables will be introduced in 2018-19 when, for example, two trains an hour to Gatwick Airport and Brighton will start from its bay platform. Stansted Airport services will be introduced in 2019. In the meantime, users from



CAMBRIDGE NORTH STATION: There are 1,000 cycle parking spaces and 450 for cars



MUNDANE: An onward connection from Chesterton Junction would once have been a train to St Ives and Huntingdon. These days all you get is a guided bus that runs over the former railway

CONNECTED: The first train to serve the new station was the 08.50 Cambridge to Norwich. There are also trains to London, King's Lynn and Ely. In 2019, a direct service will also run to Stansted Airport

the north can double back from Cambridge station at no extra charge. The fares from North station are the same as from Cambridge station. It is encouraging to see traffic building up quite rapidly as evidenced by the number of bikes in the storage areas and people joining and alighting from trains.

The opening of the station demonstrates how much the railway is already digitalised. New class 387 electric multiple units, as well as older class 369s, did not "recognise" the station, as GPS data downloads

required to stop the train in the correct place for door opening have not been completed. That meant there were delays in opening the doors, as the driver has to override the system. The huge downloads in data needed for ticket machines and a new station are indeed an eye opener too.

Plans for a new Cambridge South station, that will service the adjacent 25,000 hi-tech jobs, is moving rapidly through the planning processes so watch this space. Having three stations will allow Cambridge to be polycentric.



STAIRS: Sun and shadow

Our vision for Railfuture:
An independent organisation whose views are respected by the rail industry, to which decision makers come for advice, and which rail users are proud to join



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£48m benefit every year from Skipton-Colne

Campaign group SELRAP has welcomed the publication of the 93-page *Central Trans-Pennine Corridor East West Connectivity: an Economic Study* by the Lancashire local enterprise partnership, in partnership with two other Yorkshire local authorities.

The report showed that there would be massive economic and social benefit resulting from the proposal by the Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership to extend successful Airedale Line services from Leeds and Bradford all the way into Pendle and Burnley, via a new rail link built between Skipton and Colne. The independent report, prepared by economic and transportation experts Cushman Wakefield and Systra, studied improving all transport links across the North of England. The expert's new report has shown that building the Skipton-Colne "missing link" would have massive economic and social benefits:

- Give residents of East Lancashire much improved access to high-value jobs in Yorkshire
- Boost many key existing advanced manufacturing and aerospace industries, including the biggest local employer, Rolls-Royce at Barnoldswick
- Attract new many businesses into the region.
- Provide a new trans-Pennine rail freight link, as a viable alternative to the M62
- Open up many educational opportunities and also improve access for tourism
- If built early, it will benefit other rail schemes, including other proposed trans-Pennine upgrades

The total economic benefits of this scheme are estimated at £43.5 million per annum and the report concludes by noting that there will be more "economic bang" from investing in the Skipton-Colne "missing link" than from investing in any other road or rail scheme.

Flex trains can save Southport direct service

Electric trains with a back-up diesel engine could be the answer to retaining through trains from Southport to the south side of Manchester even after the timetable is revised next year. The Ormskirk-Preston-Southport Travellers Association wants train operator Northern to increase the number of class 319 electric

trains being converted to bi-mode operation. OPSTA says that modifying just two more class 319s for Flex train operations would mean through services could be retained all day every day of the week. Rail Minister Paul Maynard met five MPs along the route in March and indicated his support, but said Rail North and the Department for Transport Partnership would have to provide the solution. Currently Northern is proposing that from May 2018, a direct service would run only between Wigan and Manchester Piccadilly via Bolton, with stations west of Wigan to Southport getting just two inbound morning and outbound evening peak commuter trains to the south side of Manchester. OPSTA has welcomed plans by Northern and Porterbrook Leasing to add auxiliary diesel engines to former Thameslink class 319 electric units to allow their operation to destinations which have not been electrified. OPSTA campaigners met Northern and Rail North on 8 May as part of the consultation for the 2018 timetable change. Northern agreed to work with OPSTA to develop the business case for two more class 319 Flex trains, although they have already warned that more through services might not be deliverable before October 2018. OPSTA plans to conduct further passenger surveys and data analysis to show the revenue and general economic benefits of a full seven-day service. An added bonus is that if more Flex trains are made available, more diesel trains would be displaced for use elsewhere. OPSTA has the backing of local councils as well as the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. In the meantime Northern has invited OPSTA to make a formal response to the timetable consultation that will reflect passengers' needs and concerns.

New hope for one-train-a-week stations

Hopes are rising of getting more than the present one train a week on the line through Reddish South and Denton. Friends of the two stations met executives from Transport for Greater Manchester, after help from Reddish South & Denton MP Andrew Gwynne. A further meeting has been arranged by the MP and Jason Prince from TfGM to involve both Northern and Network Rail and, with luck, the new mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham.

Speedier trains could result in extra station

The prospects for a new station being built on the Wirral at Town Meadow (Moreton) on Merseyrail's West Kirby line have improved. The Wirral Transport Users Association reports that the plan is being re-examined, partly because improved performance of new rolling stock to be introduced from 2020 will create sufficient extra time within the existing timetable to accommodate an additional stop. Rail Minister Paul Maynard visited the site in April with local councillors backing calls for the station.

MP Trudy's questions on Keswick-Penrith

New MP Trudy Harrison, who won the Copeland by-election in February, has met CKP Railways to discuss plans to reopen the Keswick-Penrith rail line.

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Cymru

Wales

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New stations for Wales

The Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary Ken Skates announced on 28 April that he

had selected, from a list of 48 proposed sites for stations, 12 for further study. The sites are Cardiff Ely Mill/Victoria Park, Cardiff Newport Road/Rover Way, Cardiff St Mellons, Newport Llanwern, Swansea Cockett, Swansea Landore, St Clears, Deeside Industrial Park/Northern Gateway, North Wrexham, South Wrexham, Llangefní and Bow Street. Five of these stations are on the South Wales main line to Swansea. Llangefní in Anglesey is the only site on a disused railway line. In his letter, Mr Skates said: "Producing detailed cost estimates for a new station and timetable modelling is only carried out on the highest priorities. The stage two assessment will look in more detail at the strength of the financial and economic case for a new railway station, including advice from Network Rail on deliverability."

Railfuture and the new 2018 franchise

Railfuture Cymru Wales has had meetings with the four bidders for the new Wales and Borders franchise which is expected to be awarded later this year and to start in October next year. Each of the bidders has a rail operator and also a development partner.

The four bidders are:

Abellio Rail Cymru and Carillion

Arriva Rail Wales and Costain

Keolis and Amey

MTR Corporation Cymru and BAM

Much of Railfuture's discussion with the various bidders included the possibility of light rail for the core Cardiff Valley lines.

The Welsh Government has announced its intention to deliver a new "not for profit" rail model similar to the way in which Transport for London manages public transport services. In future, the rail network will be managed by Transport for Wales.

Transport for Wales franchise consultation

Members of Railfuture Cymru Wales attended Transport for Wales regional consultation meetings. Railfuture Cymru Wales also responded to the online consultation which was in a format suitable for individual responses but not suitable for responses from member organisations. Railfuture Cymru/Wales has expressed its concern to Transport for Wales about the standard of its consultations.

Fishguard Harbour to Rosslare ferry services

Stena services were retimed from the start of the summer timetable on 21 May 2017. Departures from Fishguard are now earlier at 13.10 and 23.45, involving an early start for the afternoon service and an inconvenient 04.00 arrival in Rosslare from the evening service. Sailings from Rosslare are at 08.00 and 18.10 with earlier arrivals in Fishguard. There is now no overnight train service from Fishguard Harbour to Paddington except involving a long wait at Carmarthen. The changes to the Stena ferry sailing times were made to avoid road traffic clashing with that to and from Pembroke Dock/Rosslare for Irish Ferries.

Arriva Trains Wales

Despite the limitations of rolling stock ATW made several service improvements from 21 May which Railfuture welcomed. Later connections have been provided to Pwllheli and Blaenau Ffestiniog and additional services have been provided in the Cardiff Valleys, thus providing 200,000 additional seats. ATW class 175,158 and 150 units have been fitted with wi-fi and further funding has been made available to fit the remainder of its fleet. Following comments from passengers, ATW is to reduce the size of its paper tickets.

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HERITAGE RAIL

By Chris Austin

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How many can survive?

Back in June 1961, a letter in *Railway Magazine* called for a halt to railway preservation. The writer thought that two standard gauge and three narrow gauge preserved lines represented the limit of what could be achieved with scarce volunteer labour. Now – 56 years later – there are more than 100 heritage railways and others continue to be developed or extended.

Back then, the doomsayers foresaw the end of steam on preserved railways with the final retirement of the last BR staff who provided the backbone of expertise in the early days.

But a new generation of younger engineers acquired the skills and even improved on them, and kept steam alive. On my own railway (West Somerset), the third generation of young apprentices has passed out and is working with steam, and they are just as keen and much more knowledgeable than I was at their age.

The spate of early retirements is over, and it is harder to find volunteers in their fifties with money and time to devote to the railways. Youngsters are just as keen to be involved as we were 60 years ago, but the higher duty of care and tighter safety rules make it hard to allow them to be involved under the age of 16. There is another problem

too, in finding competent managers prepared to take on the demanding responsibilities involved in running a railway on a voluntary basis. Many smaller railways are run entirely by volunteers, and even the larger ones with a core of paid staff usually rely on volunteer directors, trainers and mentors.

Increasing legislation, many more regulations and higher public expectations, coupled with a compensation culture, have made the task of heritage railway directors pretty tough.

Of course, directors have to take their duties seriously, and they do, but when involvement ceases to be rewarding or enjoyable, then we will have real trouble in carrying on.

Funding bodies too are much more demanding, and their processes become ever more byzantine as they seek to demonstrate value for money.

This too deters many volunteer supporters, for whom life is too short to spend it completing the compendious forms involved and drafting the supporting financial statements, project plans, accounts, and equality policies needed to support applications today. A few railways will expand to provide a public service too, and while the franchise payments required will provide welcome income,

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STAR ATTRACTION: Flying Scotsman pulls in the crowds on the Bluebell Railway, but such events are a major management and safety challenge for the railways concerned

it will involve an even greater management effort to enable it to be delivered consistently.

And then, from time to time, something inspirational happens. The spectacle of the four trains approaching York from the North which was on every television bulletin on 23 April shows that trains can still grip the imagination and the emotions. And the pulling power of Flying Scotsman, even with a generation that never knew main line steam, is just amazing.

Thousands of people flocked to the Bluebell Railway when she visited the line in April. The locomotive will be coming to the West Somerset in September and by the end of March the 10,000 seats available were sold out, six months in advance.

All this means that heritage railways will need to become more commercial over the next few years, and more professional. This will change the character of some of them, but the British love affair with steam trains will ensure they survive and that some will even prosper.

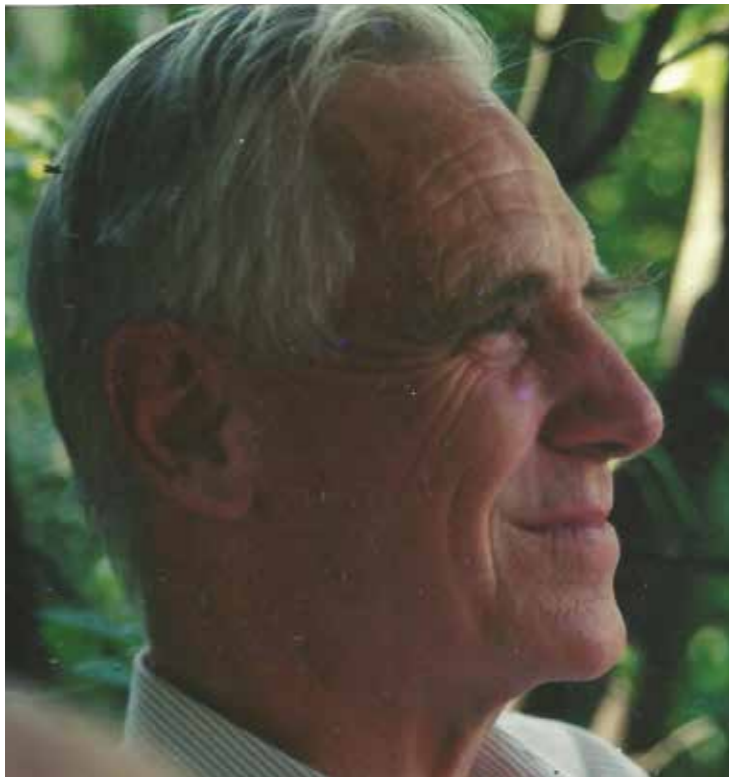
NEWS IN BRIEF

■ ■ ■ After 17 months, the Swedish government has decided to drop a new rule which required rail passengers had to get off trains to have their passports checked. The rule meant timetables had to be changed and cost Danish Railways £80 million. Many rail commuters switched to cars and 12% of passengers were lost to other forms of transport.

■ ■ ■ A new rail user group has been set up to campaign for a better service at London's worst-served station, Sudbury and Harrow Road. Contact Renu Kaul at RKaul@asp-ships.com

■ ■ ■ Dutch Railways are now powered entirely by wind energy, provided by energy company Enerco, which says more than a million train trips per day are completed without any carbon dioxide emissions.

■ ■ ■ A campaign to encourage people to explore scenic Britain by rail was launched in May by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships. The associated website is scenicbritain.com



Ronald Schwarz, who died in May, was a key member of Railfuture North West and the international group. "He was a gentleman who was always lucid, courteous, helpful, and good-spirited," said Ian McDonald. "I had many interesting and enjoyable conversations with him over many years. "A fascinating story he told was of his life as a child and teenager in Berlin before and during the war, with an English mother, and his German father employed doing important cartographic work for the German military. "At age 14 (I think), near war's end, Ronald was drafted into the Hitler youth movement though

never saw military duty. Both he and his mother moved to Potsdam just in time, before the massive bombing of Berlin by the allies in early 1945. "When liberated by the Soviet troops in Potsdam they had a union jack on their home and a notice in English, and they were duly left alone. "On return to the UK after the war he was later drafted into the British army, and he used to ponder on whether he was the only person ever to have served in both the Hitler Youth and the British Army, which he almost certainly was!" The funeral was in June at Radcliffe Crematorium overlooking Bury and the Pennines.

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Rail allies get together

Lonely campaigners struggled bravely for years to get rail travel the recognition it deserves.

But now they have some valuable professional allies.

Kaye Robinson started work in April as the community rail partnership officer on the Nottingham-Skegness line which is dubbed the Poacher line.

After working as membership coordinator with Lincolnshire Co-op she moved to rail and is now busy organising events.

Her job is to work with East Midlands Trains and bring together rail partners and community groups from across the county to help build closer relations and improve the rail environment for all.

Partners include the cycling organisation Sustrans, local schools and community station adopters.

Kaye says her highlight so far has been meeting station adopter Carolyn Sharpe and her pet dogs at Skegness station. She said: "Carolyn is a very popular local station adopter who

gives up a lot of her spare time to look after Skegness station voluntarily. She has green fingers and takes great care of the flowers and plants around the station that so many visitors have complimented us on.

"Her two beautiful pet dogs Rupert and Charlie are well-known by all who use the station.

"We are now looking at extending the station adoption scheme so that every area has a dedicated community group."

Paul Sanders, matrix transport manager at Lincolnshire County Council, said: "We want to make rail a more attractive option, encouraging as many people as possible to leave the car at home and take the train.

"Kaye will not only drive forward improvements along the Poacher line, but will help put these stations at the heart of their community."

For more information about EMT's station adopter scheme you should visit eastmidlandstrains.co.uk and search for "station adopter".



RAIL ALLIANCE: Alastair Morley, CRP officer on the Derwent Valley Line, Kaye Robinson, CRP officer on the Poacher line, Paul Sanders, Lincolnshire County Council and Marika Latham, CRP officer on the North Staffordshire line

European connections

By Trevor Garrod

trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk

Six members of Railfuture were among nearly 90 participants from many European countries at the 15th annual conference of the European Passengers Federation, held in Rotterdam on 17-18 March.

Reports were given by several of the member associations, followed by presentations by the city transport operator RET on innovations to increase usage, including a loyalty card, and other representatives of the transport industry, universities and companies such as Trainline who seek to increase overall rail usage through new channels of ticket distribution.

The presentations can be found on www.epf.eu and an eight-page report of the conference is available from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ. trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk

Harwich to the Hook

Railfuture has worked closely with its Dutch sister organisation ROVER to ensure the passengers using this rail-sea-rail connection still have an easy journey.

The line from Hoek van Holland to Schiedam (in the western part of Rotterdam) is currently closed and being converted to metro operation.

It should reopen in September, and there is currently a replacement bus service.

It will then be operated by the urban transport operator RET, not by Dutch Railways.

We are pleased to report that a day ticket has been introduced for ferry passengers, giving unlimited travel on RET and NS (Dutch Railways) services. Tickets can be obtained on the ferry and indeed passengers using the handy *Dutch Flyer* offer receive theirs when they check in at Harwich.

Railfuture member Simon Hope has written in more detail about these changes for the magazine *Today's Railways Europe*.

The final mile

What do London and the Czech city of Ostrava have in common?

In each case, visitors can arrive by train and then go "contactless" on their journey from the main line station to their final destination by public transport.

This is one of the very many useful facts and pieces of advice in the new EPF report *The Final Mile - and the Mile in the Middle*.

It is intended to spread good practice. One example of this is the PlusBus add-on for rail tick-

ets in the UK and another is the fact that a ticket from, say, York to Southampton includes the London Underground fare. Such handy facilities are not available in all countries.

The report is available, in English, French and German, on the EPF website www.epf.eu or as a pdf or on paper from Trevor Garrod (address above).

International survey

Also available on the EPF website is a 10-question survey form which you are encouraged to fill in if you make an international journey which could be from London to Paris or Amsterdam, or further afield in Europe.

The questions are in English and we need to know passengers' experiences with booking a journey, punctuality, connections and customer care or compensation if things go wrong. Regular quarterly reports will be produced.

Eurotunnel shuttles

Eurotunnel launched three new 800-metre freight shuttle trains in April as part of its objective to carry two million lorries between Folkestone and Calais in 2020. Railfuture would like to see more of that traffic going on freight trains for the whole of the journey, rather than bringing pollution and traffic congestion to Kent and northern France.

European night trains

Night train services have been cut back significantly in recent years, but they still contribute to the mobility needs of European citizens.

That was the verdict of a report commissioned by the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism by Steer Davies Gleave with support from Politecnico di Milano.

Measures could be taken to help ensure their survival.

It considers the reasons behind decisions to operate them, the scope to respond to future challenges including deregulation of the coach market, and the case for subsidy. The report follows *A brighter future at night* about Austrian Federal Railways' Nightjet network.

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

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

Email: editor@railwatch.org.uk
 Please use email if possible but include your postal address



EDINBURGH WAVERLEY

Escalators and a glass roof have transformed what used to be one of the coldest and windiest places in Edinburgh. The old stairway, right, from Waverley to Princes Street, used to be a 72-step nightmare, especially in rain



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

Pictures: ALLISON COSGROVE



DIVE-UNDER: Network Rail is planning to build a new chord for the East Coast main line near Werrington Junction, Peterborough

A bright future for the East and railways in general

By Ray King

Railfuture's AGM was held in May in Peterborough where deputy mayor Keith Sharp said the city was working with Network Rail to improve access to the station.

Two new pedestrian crossings and a new footbridge are being built to link the pedestrianised city centre to the station.

Both train services and capacity on the East Coast main line are being radically improved and four-tracking will be extended six miles north from Huntingdon to Wood Walton.

To reduce conflicting movements between freight and passenger trains, Network Rail is planning to build a two-mile chord and a dive-under at Werrington, four miles north of Peterborough.

A Transport and Works Act order is awaited and the project could be finished by 2020.

"Lots of exciting things are happening on our railway," said Nick Dibben, chair of Railfuture East Anglia.

"But it is vital that work is also done at Ely North Junction, the Spaghetti Junction of our region.

"The demand for rail travel is increasing all the time. In Cambridge, passenger numbers have doubled to 11 million a year.

"On rural routes which were

seen as basket cases a few years ago, passenger numbers have doubled."

But Railfuture can also make a big difference by not forgetting the small things – signs, the streetscape, help for older and disabled people and good information.

The first speaker at the AGM was Jamie Burtles, managing director of Greater Anglia, which has been awarded a nine-year contract until 2025. A new timetable is planned for 2019.

He promised major improvements, a further increase in the number of rail travellers, with capacity increase of more than 50%, and an end to years of under-investment.

One part of the franchise deal was that Greater Anglia had to pay £1.7 billion to the Government over the life of the franchise.

There would be a completely new train fleet with some regional trains coming from Switzerland. There was an option for automated cleaning and the trains would have electrically heated floors.

He aimed to incentivise his 2,900 staff members by introducing bonuses based on achieving targets.

One key reason why the Government agreed to new trains was the unity of the pro-rail lobby,

with Norfolk and Suffolk coming together to campaign for the same things. He also paid tribute to the help of MP Ben Gummer who was very helpful in "making a nuisance of himself".

Ely North improvements were on the top ten list of necessary upgrades.

One of the biggest improvements in services to Peterborough will however come from the new Thameslink timetable when it is introduced next year, with trains from Kent and Sussex running through the new Canal Tunnels at King's Cross.

The complexity of the task was explained by the AGM's second guest speaker, Phil Hutchinson, head of timetable development at Govia Thameslink Railway.

Peterborough would get a direct, through-London train service to Gatwick Airport and Horsham, Sussex.

That would be just one benefit of the £6.5 billion investment into Thameslink.

Cambridge will also have a direct service to Gatwick Airport.

Although it is more than 80 miles away from Peterborough, Windmill Bridge Junction in Croydon is critical.

It is the busiest rail junction in Britain, but cannot accommodate enough 12-car long trains, so planning the best pattern of

trains through the junction is essential until it can be upgraded. Some trains will overhang existing junctions.

A sixth track and more flyovers are needed between East Croydon and Windmill Bridge Junction.

Whether enough investment is agreed in the years to come was one of the cautionary comments by Railfuture president Christian Wolmar.

Railways are in a good place politically but he warned that Brexit is going to have a big impact on all our lives, including the railways.

Funding will be even more crucial with Network Rail having overspent. The next control period (2019-24) would be nothing like as generous as the current one.

"The good times might be coming to an end," he said.

"In America, President Trump has said he will cut all funding to Amtrak. You can be sure that each Congressman will fight to preserve their railway service."

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