

Timetable alternative

The familiar National Rail timetable is being killed off by the Association of Train Operators this year.

It says the May-December 2007 "supplement" will be the last ever printed version.

In future, people will be forced to use a computer to look up information on the worldwide web or to download timetable information which they can print at home.

ATOC says the online timetable is "free" and "contains the complete details of the more than 20,000 passenger train services operated by Britain's 23 train operating companies across 11,500 miles of track".

ATOC says it will be easier to update the online version and there will be no need to reproduce a large number of supplements.

The one-volume all-lines timetable was published for the first time in 1974. BR published regional volumes up to that time.

The printed version included rail and shipping connections with Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Isle of Wight, the Channel Islands and certain European destinations.

Of course it is still possible to check times on the National Rail telephone enquiry line 08457 494950.

ATOC says the telephone line provides impartial advice on all aspects of train travel – timetables, fares and buying tickets, live train running updates and other useful information.

ATOC obviously believes that the computer and telephone can replace the printed timetable completely.

Many Railfuture members will miss the all-lines timetable and its loss may have more far-reaching effects than ATOC is prepared to acknowledge.

It is possible to access the web-based timetable from either of the following URLs.

http://nationalrail.co.uk/times_fares/download_tt.htm

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/3829.aspx>

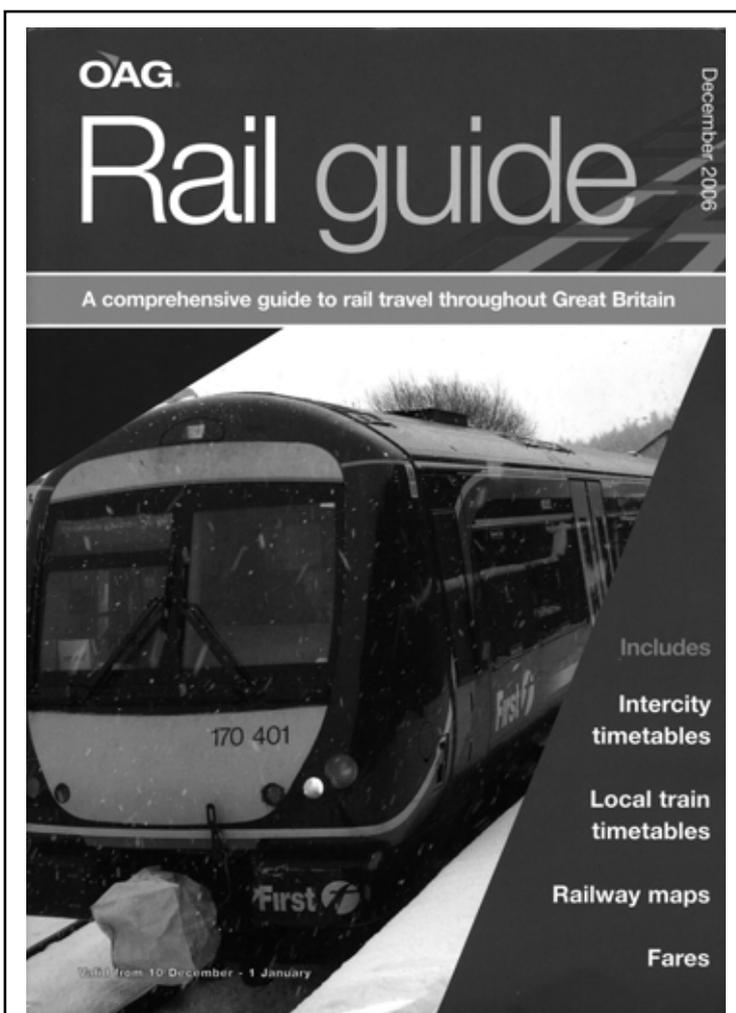
It will be interesting to hear how Railfuture members cope with the new set-up.

National fares manual

As it is increasingly difficult to understand the railway fares structure, Railfuture members may consider asking their local libraries to obtain copies of the National Fares Manual or the relevant regional manual for the reference library.

The manual is probably too expensive for an individual to buy but it should be available to the public.

When asked about the manual, Tony Ewers, customer relations manager of the Association of Train Operators said: "Members of the public can purchase an individual



SURVIVOR: The former ABC Rail Guide is still available as a printed edition, although now called the OAG Rail Guide

The world of print

For years the *ABC Rail Guide* has been available in many London offices to help people plan their business journeys.

Now a new marketing initiative has been launched to make it – under its current name the *OAG Rail Guide* – available more easily to individual rail travellers.

Its big advantage over the all-lines timetable has always been that it includes detailed information about the various fares on offer for individual journeys.

The *Rail Guide* is being offered to Railfuture members for £16, post free.

Many Railfuture members will find the *Rail Guide* more useful than the all-lines timetable.

Suburban services for cities outside London are not shown but frequencies are.

There are a series of 21 maps in the book rather

than a pull-out map as in the all-lines timetable. Heritage railways are included along with information about bus connections to towns without a rail station, as well as tram, metro and underground diagrams for the UK.

The 964-page *Rail Guide* is certainly easier to carry. It weighs well under 1lb and is 2lbs lighter than the all-lines. The pages are about the same size but thinner.

If you would like a copy, please send £16 to Middleton Press, Easebourne Lane, Midhurst, West Sussex GU29 9AZ.

The idea of making the *Rail Guide* more readily available comes from Dr JCV Mitchell of Middleton Press.

He said: "It is a very valuable publication but many people have found it difficult to obtain and some are completely unaware of it."

regional manual or the whole set of seven volumes from The Stationery Office. The current cost is £15 per manual or £107.35 for the complete set including postage and packing.

"The information in the manual is copyright of Rail Settlement Plan Ltd which is part of ATOC.

"The manual, since privatisation, has always been published by a third party on behalf of ATOC."

To obtain the manual, you can contact the Stationery Office at 0870 850 2149 or www.tsoshop.co.uk.

Mr Ewers added: "It should be noted that the manual is an internal industry publication primarily intended for use by staff and agents of the passenger train companies.

"Members of the public can only consult the manual if they purchase a copy. Otherwise the text pages can be found on the National Rail website www.nationalrail.co.uk and fares information can be obtained from National Rail Enquiries Journey Planner on the same website."

Tickets inquiry

The House of Commons Transport Committee is conducting an inquiry into ticketing arrangements and concessionary travel on public transport. It will cover integrated ticketing and smartcards.

Virgin tickets

Virgin Trains has published a 10-page leaflet *Your Ticket - Everything you need to know about buying your ticket*. They also produce another leaflet along the lines of "Which trains is my Virgin Saver ticket valid on?" A Railfuture campaigner commented: "If one company makes it so complicated, what hope for integrated ticketing?"

Transport Direct

Some Railfuture members report that the Government's Transport Direct journey planner has improved. <http://www.transportdirect.info/>

Railfuture tips

The Railfuture website includes a Go By Rail section which gives tips and links to help you plan your rail and bus journey. We would also like to hear from members if they know of rail bargains or tips that we can pass on. Please contact the editors preferably by email: editor@railwatch.org.uk

Plusbus

There are now 195 towns and cities involved in Plusbus which allows rail travellers to buy a bus add-on to their rail tickets. In Nottingham Plusbus tickets are valid on local trams. Cambridge and Liverpool joined the scheme in January.

Traveline

Just when some of us had got used to using 0870 608 2 608 for Traveline, we are told the Traveline number will change to 0871 200 22 33 and calls will be charged at 10p per minute.