

Page One picture

The Doctor Yellow Trains are track and overhead wiring inspection trains used on the high-speed Tokaido and Sanyo line between Tokyo and Shin Osaka and Shin Osaka and Hakata.

Japan Rail East has similar trains which are used on the Tohoku, Joetsu and Hokuriku Shinkansen, north of Tokyo.

The seven-car train entered service in 2001, with a maximum speed of 165mph. It runs on an approximately 10-day cycle. Cars two and six are equipped with single-arm pantographs while cars three and five have rooftop observation cabins for inspecting the overhead wire at high speed.

The train on page one is owned by JR Central. It was carrying out one of its regular runs from Tokyo to Shin Osaka.

For convenience, JR Central generally programmes these trains to run on a holidays-only path not being used for a regular service train on the day of operation.

In Britain, Network Rail launched its 125mph new measurement train, pictured below, last year. Using high-speed train power cars, the NMT "provides valuable information to our engineers on asset condition".

It is said to be key to the delivery of NR's objective to replace manual inspection with mechanised measurement.

Network Rail said: "The train, as well as producing video recordings of the infrastructure and the wheel/rail interface, provides six foot gauging data and information on track geometry. On board there is also a fully equipped conference facility for up to 12 delegates."

Picture: Network Rail



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Elections The board is elected annually. Nomination forms can be obtained from Returning Officer, PO Box 7690, Hinckley LE10 9WJ. You can also download a form from www.railfuture.org.uk

LOCAL ACTION

Railfuture has regional groups which are involved in local issues and come together to support Railfuture on national campaigns. Here we give news of local action in the Railfuture regions.

Lincolnshire

By Brian Hastings

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■ ■ Jobs on the line

Major work has begun to upgrade the Brigg line between Wrawby junction, Barnetby and Gainsborough but will entail closure of the route from February to May, with buses replacing trains. Embankments and bridges are being strengthened, tunnel drainage improved, tracks renewed, level crossings upgraded and point heaters fitted. The line will reopen for two-shift six-day working in May but the aim, supported by Railfuture, is for 24-hour working. The resultant 22 extra jobs for signallers and level crossing keepers and other relief staff attracted 300 applications. A new retail park, known as Marshall's Yard, along with new houses near Gainsborough Central station should improve the line's potential revenue.

■ ■ Cold comfort

Railfuture Lincolnshire welcomes the revamp of Scunthorpe station, particularly improved access for the disabled, better signs and new waiting areas. But we are asking for the ceiling heaters in the waiting areas to be improved.

■ ■ Slow

The rail route across north Lincolnshire is beset by a record number of temporary speed restrictions, some as slow as 10mph, causing poor timekeeping. Considerable work is needed on unstable formations and wet spots. The new franchise East Midlands Trains has responded to Railfuture complaints about cancellations, poor timekeeping and short trains, and has pledged to improve many of the problems inherited from Central Trains.

London & South East

By Andrew Long

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■ ■ Mainline cuts

Bedford Commuters Association has been fighting proposed cuts in mainline services to the north, planned by the new East Midlands Trains franchise run by Stagecoach. From December, EMT wanted to axe all the Bedford calls of the London-Sheffield fast services. In addition the current Leicester "semi fasts" will be reduced from two trains per hour to just one. EMT has refused requests to put a Kettering stop into a "fast" Nottingham service, which would restore the half-hourly frequency to and from Leicester (with a change at Kettering). EMT has failed to win a share of the new trains promised by the Department for Transport to ease overcrowding throughout Britain.

■ ■ Branch squeeze

Bedford's surviving branchline to Bletchley has also seen cutbacks. Single-car class 153s have been introduced on the Marston Vale line service in place of some two-car class 150s. This has created problems for both cyclists and disabled users. The single end-doors are more awkward than the pairs of doors on the 150s. The user group is hoping that the service can be extended into the new bay platform at Milton Keynes Central in December but there are reports that Go-Via London Midland is not being very co-operative.

