

From truck to train

Rail freight in Germany is going through an impressive renaissance. Since 2001, this mode of freight transport has been continually recovering its market share.

The reasons for this reversal in trends are diverse, as are the examples given in the booklet *From Truck to Train*, which shows how 12 companies have shifted the equivalent of around 200,000 lorry journeys on to the railways.

In the booklet, managers from differing sectors of industry explain why their companies have given preference to rail freight in the past few years.

Often rail transport is cheaper than transport by truck, or companies are simply fed up with traffic jams and trucks arriving late.

Some on the other hand prefer rail transport for environmental reasons. In almost all cases, the autobahn toll, imposed on heavy goods vehicles in Germany since 2005, played an important role in the decision to switch to rail freight.

12 Examples Of Successful Modal Shifts in Freight Transport

Booklet in English, by the German Pro-Rail Alliance, which can be downloaded free from <http://www.allianz-pro-schiene.de/english/Brochures/>



www.allianz-pro-schiene.de/english/Brochures/

The Pro-Rail Alliance

Allianz pro Schiene is the German alliance for the promotion of environmentally friendly and safe rail transport.

It unites 16 non-profit organisations: environmental organisations, consumer groups, automobile clubs, rail unions and other rail organisations.

Its member associations represent more than two million individual members.

Allianz pro Schiene is supported by 76 companies that operate in the rail sector.

More info: <http://www.allianz-pro-schiene.de/english/>

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West Midlands

By Peter Cousins

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Following the start of new franchises for CrossCountry and West Midlands, the branch responded to separate consultations on their draft 2009 timetable proposals.

■ ■ CrossCountry

In our response to Arriva CrossCountry we welcomed the return of the iconic Aberdeen-Penzance service but challenged the stopping patterns proposed, apparently, by the Department for Transport on several other routes. The branch's response also stressed the need to retain train staff's route knowledge over diversionary routes so that the use of buses could be minimised. We mentioned the need for better facilities at interchange stations, especially where passengers changed operators. We also called for more East Coast destinations, such as Hull or Middlesbrough, to be added to the basic CrossCountry network.

■ ■ West Coast

In our response to London Midland and Virgin West Coast we highlighted the poor connections that would be available at Nuneaton if the present hourly stops by fast West Coast services were removed. In particular, journeys from all the Trent Valley stations to Preston would generally take over two hours and all journeys to destinations north of there would be heavily delayed if only one fast train per hour stopped at Crewe. There is a strong sense that Virgin is sometimes running the West Coast for its own benefit rather than as part of a national network.

We also said the proposals to route the planned new Trent Valley semi-fast services via Stone and Stoke-on-Trent to Crewe was illogical and did not match existing patterns of travel from the Potteries to Birmingham and Manchester. In other respects the new London Midland franchise has a lot to offer the West Midlands region and we look forward to new commuter trains in just over a year's time.

■ ■ Autumn colloquium

The branch held a very successful half-day Colloquium in Birmingham. Almost 60 delegates heard presentations from Arriva and Govia on their plans for the new franchises, from Chiltern on its plans for this long franchise, from West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive/Centro on its emerging rail strategy and from the Association of Train Operators on the challenge of meeting the European Union emission regulations for rail diesel engines.

■ ■ Bromsgrove station

Worcestershire County Council supports plans to relocate Bromsgrove station to a site half a mile to the south. Passenger numbers have risen dramatically at Bromsgrove in recent years, averaging over 14% per annum, but the existing station is constrained by having only three-car length platforms. The new station, which appears to have a strong business case, would have two island platforms and a much larger car park.

■ ■ New West Midlands strategy

In November WMPTE/Centro published its long awaited Rail Strategy for consultation. It includes plans to reopen three stations on the Camp Hill line at Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazlewell with a local service into the unused terminal platforms at Moor Street. This service would require a new south-western chord at Bordesley between the former Midland and Great Western lines. However, proposals to re-direct trains from the Tamworth line into Moor Street via a second, north-western, chord may be more controversial.

The WMPTE strategy also supports the relocation of Bromsgrove station and suggests extending the Cross City electrification to the new station with services being extended from their present terminus at Longbridge.

