



Railfuture Wales campaigner John Rogers has used his knowledge of the Welsh rail network for his novel *The Prince and the Patriot*.

The book's main character, Geraint, is a regular user of the Cambrian Coast line.

Aberdyfi, Tywyn, Morfa Mawddach, Barmouth and Machynlleth stations feature in the novel.

At one stage, the reader walks with Geraint and Mel across the Barmouth viaduct in a winter gale.

John lived in the area in the 1970s and founded the local rail action group in 1971.

The book is published by Lolfa, and set in 1968-9, turbulent years in Wales, because of the July 1969 investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales.

The event was widely believed in Wales to have been concocted merely to split and damage the

nationalist movements seen to be threatening the future of the UK. Geraint, who lives in Tywyn is at first not interested in politics, but an incident in school makes him re-evaluate what it is to be Welsh-speaking and he joins Plaid Cymru.

A bit bored with political meetings and door-knocking, he accepts an invitation to join the Free Wales Army.

He gets involved with a plot to kidnap Prince Charles (there was such a plot), but his English girlfriend Melanie comes to his rescue when she learns about the plot.

The adventure-love story deals with the tensions between English Melanie and Welsh-speaking Geraint.

The book is available via Amazon or direct from Lolfa: www.ylolfacom/dangos.php?ISBN=9781847711656

Opposition to possible rail cuts

Railfuture resolves to oppose future cuts in public investment in rail projects, especially where significant sums have been spent in planning or early implementation. We refer particularly to projects such as East West Rail (Oxford to Cambridge), part of which has already progressed into the GRIP 4 Network Rail planning stage and has a high benefit-cost ratio.

Resolution at the Railfuture AGM 2010. Proposed by John Henderson and seconded by Jerry Alderson. Carried overwhelmingly.

LOCAL ACTION

Thames Valley

By Chris Wright

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West Coast main line blues

Milton Keynes Rail User Group met Chris Mole at the Department for Transport to highlight the limited number of destinations served direct from Milton Keynes and other intermediate stations on the West Coast main line. MKRUG presented proposals for improvements. Passenger Focus was also informed. The DfT and Passenger Focus pointed out that there is a balance in serving the needs of long-distance travellers and intermediate stations, which is met by the present arrangements. It seems that long-distance passengers do not wish to get off at Milton Keynes and the DfT is happy for half-empty trains to run along the WCML with taxpayers' subsidy!

East West rail link

Railfuture and the Oxon and Bucks Rail Action Committee received an update in March on the East West rail link. John Elvin represented both organisations on the special train from Marylebone to Bicester Town taking delegates to a presentation at Quainton Road. Funding issues, including the slump in house building, are likely to delay reopening until 2017 which is a big disappointment. Further study work is being undertaken on the eastern section, including Bedford-Sandy. The Evergreen iii proposal of Chiltern Railways continues to make progress with objections being considered and a public inquiry expected in late 2010. Three EWRL supporters, Milton Keynes South MP Phyllis Starkey, Bedford MP Patrick Hall and Oxford West MP Evan Harris, lost their seats at the general election and Railfuture will need to establish links with the new MPs.

New "open access" services proposed

Proposals for new "open access" services, in addition to those prescribed by the franchise system, have emerged for a Windsor-Wycombe-Aylesbury-Milton Keynes service and a Weymouth-Swindon-Oxford-Banbury-Birmingham service. Funding will clearly be an issue to be resolved.

High-speed rail plans provoke reaction

High Speed 2 proposals are generating serious opposition in the Chilterns which will suffer major environmental impacts. Some residents do not recognise the benefits that a high-speed rail link could bring, including rail capacity freed up on the West Coast main line. The main benefit of high-speed rail however would be an overall reduction in air pollution in Britain and more efficient use of energy – if it encourages modal shift from road and air to rail.

Crisis transport planning

Railfuture voices concern at the way passengers have been treated during recent disruptions to services in all modes, both domestic and international, because of weather conditions or other factors.

In such emergencies, all modes of transport should co-operate. There is a strong need for effective risk management, contingency planning, and crisis management. This should be overseen by the Department for Transport in co-operation with counterparts in other relevant Governments where appropriate, co-ordinating the efforts of all public transport operators.

Particular attention must be given to training and informing staff, clear and reliable information to passengers, and implementation of passengers' rights to compensation in the event of serious delays and legitimate expenses incurred.

Railfuture AGM 2010 resolution. Proposed by Ian McDonald and seconded by Ronald Schwarz. Carried overwhelmingly.