

Railfuture goes to Cardiff

The 2003 Railfuture annual general meeting was held at the Holiday Inn, Cardiff, close to the Millennium Stadium and the Cardiff Arms Park rugby ground.

Because of a Wales v Barbarians "friendly" rugby match the AGM had to be shortened to enable members to get to their train before the fans!

Bob Crossfield of First Great Western, who is its integration and partnership manager, spoke about the company's high level of bus-rail integration.

Paul Harley, chairman of the Rail Passengers Committee for Wales, gave a presentation on current issues affecting railways in South Wales, such as the reopening of the Barry-Bridgend Vale of Glamorgan route to passengers and the Cardiff-Newport to Ebbw Vale line.

The afternoon featured society business. Both chairman Peter Lawrence, and president Michael Caton, have indicated their wish to step down from their respective roles in a year's time.

Dr Caton reminded members of how important it was to keep up the campaigning pressure. The Labour Government had a responsibility to deliver on its promised transport policy.

It came to power promising to expand public transport but did very little for several years.

The present problems of the railways were to a large extent the fault of politicians who for decades have failed to provide adequate investment.

Now the Strategic Rail Authority is doing a good job but is in danger of holding back initiatives.

Dr Caton added: "The problems are not railways. Surely with modern technology, Britain can run an efficient and expanding network to meet the needs of the 21st century."

In his report, chairman Peter Lawrence said internal Railfuture communications were improving all the time.

Tony Smale has been appointed rail user group co-ordinator and has been developing contacts with affiliated user groups.

He has also launched a Rail Users Express newsletter.

Peter added: "I hope Tony will report his progress at the rail user conference on 1 November. We already have two speakers lined up for the conference. Chris Austin from the Strategic



COLOUR: Malcolm Wood, left, and Rob Turner at Cardiff

Station mosaics

A unique series of four mosaics, all based on a railway theme, has been completed and is now on display at Cardiff Central station.

The mosaics are in four panels on the external wall of the former Red Dragon Bar facing the Millennium Stadium and bus station, and were part of Network Rail's £12million station regeneration programme.

They are the work of Kent-based mosaics specialist, Rob Turner, who was commissioned after winning a competition organised in conjunction with Cardiff County Council and Cywaith Cymru/Artworks Wales.

The colours are understated to fit in with the classical style of the station.

The mosaics were constructed in a workshop in Kent, dismantled and then installed on site.

Malcolm Wood, Network Rail's regional architect said:

"These mosaics greatly enhance the view of the station."

A second artwork project at Cardiff station concourse will be a "pigeon clock" designed by Martin Smith.

Martin Smith based his idea on characters that inhabit stations. Ten pigeons sitting in a row above a great clock will rise, flapping their wings, as a small toy train runs by, resulting in a pigeon wave machine.

Platforms, canopies, station facilities and concourse areas. have also been upgraded.

Rail Authority and Theo Steel from First Great Eastern." He explained how we have repeatedly and unsuccessfully tried to register a Railway Development Trust with the Charity Commissioners.

In accordance with the wishes of members we have been continuing with our investigations into making the Railway Development Society a company limited by guarantee and this could possibly take effect from 1 January 2004.

The European Rail Federation has been established and Trevor Garrod was at a meeting in Brussels on the day of the AGM.

He added: "We have also been collaborating with Friends of the Earth on a new publication entitled *How to win Guide for*

rail campaigners. Alan Bevan is currently compiling a new edition of our A to Z Book on Re-openings.

"I have felt for a long time that we need to get those branches not represented on the national executive more involved with the organisation at national level.

"At the national executive meeting on 10 May, I invited Nick Dibben, East Anglia branch secretary to give a 15-minute presentation.

"This proved a useful exchange of views between branch and national executive.

"I propose to continue with this idea and have asked Stuart Walker from Devon and Cornwall branch to give a presentation at the national execu-

tive meeting on 5 July. Railfuture was not selected to have a seat on the new Network Rail board but that is probably a good thing as we can criticise freely if need be.

"The national executive has given authority for stage 2 of the National Railcard project to go ahead - on international comparisons.

"You will be aware that at the moment we do not have a full time member of staff at head office since Kate Tudor-Pole took a career change."

He said that no-one will yet be appointed to replace Kate as marketing and campaigns director until the question of office accommodation for Railfuture is settled.

At present, the Railfuture office at Colourworks in London is shared with Dial a Ride Transport.

He explained: "Robert Stevens has temporarily taken over day to day activities backed up by volunteers.

"We have a new volunteer Nigel Gansell who has just started at head office. We expect volunteer fund raiser Owen Simon to start on 1 July."

Certificates recognising loyal service to Railfuture were announced for Clara Zilahi, Trevor Jones, Peter Davies and Edgar Locke.

Election results

In the elections for the national executive, the following were elected:

Andrew MacFarlane 526 votes

Mike Crowhurst 505 votes

Ian MacDonald 465 votes

David Redgewell 452 votes

Richard Pout 442 votes

David Harby 423 votes

Peter Kenyon 412 votes

Guy Hardy 396 votes

Norman Bradbury 391 votes

Keith Dyal 356 votes

The following were not elected:

Trevor Garrod 346 votes

Rowland Pittard 333 votes

Lyndon Elias 297 votes

Alan Bevan 277 votes

The counting of votes was supervised by returning officer John Lee, assisted by chairman Peter Lawrence and Mrs Wendy Lawrence.