

railwatch

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE
FOR RAIL USERS No 148

£1.50

July 2016



**Three heroes line up
as Britain's newest
station opens**

SEE PAGE 2

Long wait for a train

There was a party atmosphere in east London when Britain's newest station was opened on 16 May by rail minister Claire Perry.

Many people were involved in campaigning for the reopening but none worked harder than the three in our front page picture.

They are also pictured, right, six years ago when the campaign for the new station was in full swing.

Jennette Arnold, on the left, has been a doughty fighter on behalf of London's public transport users. She is the Greater London Assembly member for north east London.

Railfuture member Peter Woodrow is chairman of the Chingford Line Users Association.

Stella Creasey, MP for Walthamstow, pictured right, said she became involved in the campaign before the primary school children who attended the ceremony were born.

It was a new station but also a

reopening. The original station closed 31 years ago but virtually every part of it had to be rebuilt.

The station allows local people to reach Stratford in just a few minutes by train. Northbound trains go along the Lea Valley line to Tottenham Hale and Bishops Stortford.

The new station was funded by Walthamstow Council and the Government but will be operated by Abellio Greater Anglia.

"Lea Bridge station will really help open Leyton up for growth," said Chris Robbins, the leader of Waltham Forest council, who said 3,000 homes are likely to be built nearby.

Officials at the opening ceremony paid tribute to the Chingford Line Users Association which kept the dream of reopening the station alive.

One thing rail campaigners have to learn is to have patience. Progress is made – but very slowly.

Triumphant return: Page 18-19



Picture: DAVID SHEPHERD

SIX YEARS AGO: Jennette, Peter and Stella on the site of the old (and new) station. Long grass was growing all over the platforms in this picture published in Railwatch December 2010

Win like the Smiths

HAVING the surname Smith may well be lucky... three winners in our March Railfuture Lottery draw share that name!

But you could buck the trend – or add to it if you are a Smith – and help Railfuture fundraising by joining in. It can cost as little as £1 per month.

Half of the entry fees are ploughed back as prizes with the other half going into our funds and it is simple to join, using PayPal at www.railfuture.org.uk/lottery or by sending a cheque for a multiple of

£12, payable to Railfuture Lottery, to 24 Chedworth Place, Tattlingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND.

Recent winners – February: Peter Hillier-Palmer, Peter R Lawrence, Fred Golding, Lianne Woodman, John Fancourt, Roger Blake.

March: Paul Godfrey, Graham Smith, Garth Smith, Roger Goring, David Smith, Michael Breslin.

April: Peter Geall, Michael Breslin, Mark Edgell, Michael Hanson, P J Rowland, Robert Burrows.

Euro sleeper trains at risk

Both Germany and France are cutting sleeper train services this year and the "cheap" airlines are being blamed. The European Union has encouraged the airlines but has not yet created ideal conditions for the environmentally friendly international train service which they should. But maybe there is a way to revive the night train.

A future for night trains: See Pages 10 and 11

Army veteran Steve put Railfuture on the right track

Steve Wilkinson, chairman of the Railway Development Society for 10 years until 2000, died on 3 April after a long illness borne with great fortitude and good humour.

He showed courage and resilience as he faced operation after operation and one hospital appointment after another.

He visited Addenbrooke's Hospital as a patient in 1976 but did not retire because of ill health until 2001.

He joined RDS in 1976, serving on the East Anglian committee and was the founding chair of the freight committee for more than 20 years, building up many invaluable contacts for the society.

He campaigned for the reopening of the St Ives-Cambridge line until 1993 when transport minister Roger Freeman announced it would happen.

The project was however lost with privatisation, the establishment of Railtrack and the building of the busway instead. He was also a member of Transport 2000 and a founder member of the South East Lincolnshire Travellers Association.

But he was a man of many talents. He played the Wurlitzer organ in cinemas, was a passionate footballer in his youth



RESPECT: Steve Wilkinson

and could speak authoritatively about bee keeping, the dulcimer and local history, especially the Littleport and Ely riots of 1816. He was a member of Histon Parish Council for 25 years, 16 of them as

chairman. Steve was born in Cambridge and was happiest in his home county but was proud to be member of the Wiltshire Regiment for his National Service and served at Suez in 1956.

Later he drove lorries from Britain to defence establishments in the Middle East, including Badar Abbas and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. He had a respect for Islam and regularly quoted from the Bible and the Koran.

For a time, he worked for the British Nursing Association as a carer for the elderly and mentally ill. He found it personally fulfilling but he was forced to retire because of his health problems.

Over the years, he rescued many "waif and stray" animals, including ducks, geese, rabbits, chickens, guinea pigs, rats, cats, dogs and even a cockatiel.

Railfuture members put Steve's name forward for an official honour but sadly he did not receive the recognition he deserved. He leaves a widow Janet, a son Norman and two grandchildren Lauren and Jordan.

Steve's funeral at Cambridge was conducted by his friend Hugh McCurdy, the archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech.

Is it really RIP for Old King Coal?

By Lee Davies

lee.davies@railfuture.org.uk

Through winter and into spring it seemed that an announcement about a coal-fired power station closing was happening every month.

Longannet in Fife and Ferrybridge C in Yorkshire closed at the end of March, while Rugeley in Staffordshire was expected to close by the time you read this in June or July.

Fiddlers Ferry in Cheshire was given a stay of execution for 12 months and Eggborough in Yorkshire, which was expected to close in March, was reprieved but "mothballed".

The impact on the rail freight operating companies has resulted in redundancies at DB Cargo (formerly Schenker) and Freightliner Heavy Haul.

Europe's largest coal-fired power station at Drax near Selby has converted three of its six generating units to biomass.

Rail freight is transporting the biomass to Drax from Port of Tyne, Hull docks, Humber (Immingham), Liverpool and Portbury, near Bristol. With at least 20 years life left in it Drax will be a big player for rail freight in the north of England.

One of the arguments for burning biomass is that it is far more environmentally friendly than coal. Some of the environmental advantage is lost when it is imported from the USA and Canada, and requires shipping over the Atlantic with a rail journey at both ends.

A couple of by-products from the burning of coal have been pulverised fly ash and, with limestone used in flue gas desulphurisation, gypsum.

The ash is used to make breeze blocks for the building trade while the gypsum is used in making plaster board.

Gypsum from Gascoigne Wood power station near Selby is being taken by rail to Hotchley Hill at East Leake, Nottinghamshire.

All the above products have utilised rail freight to move them over the years but with the reduction in coal burning these movements are declining. As well as biomass, Drax is taking imported coal from Port of Tyne and Humber Import Terminal at



Picture: DAVE SCUDAMORE

POWER TRAIN: A traditional coal train at West Burton power station on a rainy February day. There are two power stations at West Burton, the coal-fired one built in 1968, and a second combined cycle gas turbine station commissioned in 2011. Both are operated by EDF Energy

Immingham so coal is not quite dead.

Ash kept off the road

A recent case study of Forterra plc (formerly Hanson), shows the merits of using rail.

High-quality, low-carbon ash used to create Thermalite blocks is transported nearly 200 miles from Drax to Appleford-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, three times a week using InBulk Technologies' ISO-Veyor containers.

Each train can carry up to 1,200 tonnes of fly ash to Forterra's railhead, before being transported by road to the Aircrete plant in nearby Newbury where the fly ash is mixed with cement to make Thermalite blocks. Using rail is expected to reduce the firm's carbon footprint by 1,700 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

The fly ash is loaded at the power station in just a few minutes with the containers being sealed for the entire journey, the first stage by rail, and the second stage by road.

The total round trip is 415 miles. The intermodal route using rail for the long leg saves 370 miles of road haulage per trip. At full capacity the project will save more than 3,000 road journeys, which equates to more than 1 million road miles per year.

Longer, heavier road vehicles

The threat to the environment and to rail freight of heavier road vehicles never seems to go away. In the past four years, a trial has been going on to evaluate semi trailers, hauling heavier loads.

The trial allows longer lorries to operate on British roads within the current 44-tonne weight restriction. The trial is ongoing with a 10 year life.

However now we have the road hauliers calling for the weight to be increased to 48 tonnes. The increase to 44 tonnes from 38 tonnes was originally allowed on the basis of running into rail depots.

FREIGHT NEWS IN BRIEF

■ ■ Inefficient

The transport industry is "inefficient, expensive, polluting and living in a pre-internet age". Lorries are empty up to 25% of the time and have been for the past 10 years.

Source: Freight Transport Association 2015 Logistics Report.

■ ■ Pollution

Transport accounts for 20% of total emissions and uniquely is the only industry whose carbon footprint is still increasing.

Source: European Union Commission Transport Pocketbook.

■ ■ Wales to Scotland

With the closure of Longannet power station in Fife, fly ash is being transported by weekly train to the breeze block manufacturer at Longannet from Aberthaw power station in Wales.

■ ■ Channel Tunnel freight

Eurotunnel's freight shuttle trains carried more than 139,200 lorries in April 2016, the sixth month in a row that a record

has been set. Railfuture believes more long-distance rail freight should be using the tunnel and that rail freight operators should offer lorry piggyback services over longer distances than Folkestone-Calais.

However in Britain, rail freight operators have to provide their own terminals, whereas in France the state or the local authority provides the facilities.

That is one reason why a new intermodal flow from southern France to Britain goes only as far as Calais, with lorries delivering to destinations in Britain.

■ ■ Rail potential unrealised

There is considerable suppressed demand for rail freight consumer services, especially out of the ports, according to Philippa Edmunds of Freight on Rail, the group which facilitates the shift from road to rail.

She said: "Every new path out of Felixstowe port which comes on stream can be used by rail immediately and thus reduce road congestion and collisions on the A14 corridor.

"It is vital that the funded and planned branch line enhancements between Felixstowe and Ipswich, to allow another 10 trains out of the port each day, happen as soon as possible."

Rather than investing a few million pounds on doubling the Felixstowe line and the Ely-Soham rail line, the Government is spending £1.5 billion on "upgrading" the A14 road.

East Anglia

By Paul Hollinghurst
paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk

Haverhill study first step to reopening

A step towards reopening Haverhill-Cambridge is the publication of a corridor study draft rail viability technical note. Assuming a reopening date of 2025, an initial estimate of operating costs and benefits concludes that a single track railway with passing place for a half-hourly service would have a benefit to cost ratio of 0.99, below the figure of 2.0 considered desirable. But the figure is only an indicative cost and there may be cheaper alternatives. Railfuture East Anglia has identified where costs could be reduced (from a figure which is twice the cost per mile of the Borders Railway) and benefits increased (through a better appreciation of population growth, commuting demand, wider economic benefits and interaction with the rest of the growing railway system in East Anglia). We believe a BCR of 2.0 is achievable. Railfuture East Anglia is actively working with the Rail Haverhill campaign which is gathering support through a petition, media exposure and working with politicians.

www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Haverhill

Cambridge Connect and light rail

Railfuture East Anglia has promoted rail to meet public transport needs in the Cambridge region for many years, most recently to the Cambridge City Deal, which has been allocated substantial funds to address transport problems. Railfuture suggested a light rail line from west Cambridge, tunnelling under the city centre and the railway station, before heading for Newmarket Road in the east.

We initiated collaboration with *Cambridge Connect*, led by resident Colin Harris, who developed a proposal for a light rail network. *Cambridge Connect* outlines needs (including estimates of demand), benefits, options, technologies and costs on its website. Five line options are suggested, which together would form a network that would bring 95% of Cambridge within a 20-minute walk or eight-minute cycle ride of one of the proposed light rail stops. Much of the network would be less than 10 minutes from the centre, with the underground component essential to achieve rapid journey times and to protect the inner city's heritage. Going underground also avoids city centre congestion which plagues the bus punctuality. The light rail network would connect to rail stations, as well as bus and coach services. A light rail network would transform travel in Cambridge.

www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Cambridge+City+Deal#Cambridge_Connect

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton audit

The Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton community rail partnership is looking at how well these stations cope with current and future traffic (including the arrival of Thameslink in 2018) and how more people can be attracted. The stations have all recorded increases of around 30% over the past five years and 10% in the past year alone. Combined annual passenger numbers are 467,100. Railfuture East Anglia supports the partnership and the rail user group covering the same stations. We helped by carrying out a comprehensive 20-page illustrated audit of the three stations identifying a number of areas where significant improvements could be made, including step-free access to Meldreth, and improvements to car and cycle parking, signposting, shelter

and ticket machines. Other stations in the Cambridge area could benefit from this approach, including Waterbeach, which is now seeing chaotic parking conditions resulting from the popularity of the station.

The importance of bus and rail connections at Halesworth was highlighted at a meeting in Southwold, Suffolk, organised by the East Suffolk Travellers Association in February. ESTA chairman Trevor Garrod told the meeting: "Part of ESTA's job is to work to promote the attractive bus services which also offer an alternative to the private car for many visitors to our area." Trevor later appeared on BBC TV *Look East* to discuss plans to remove the passenger foot crossing at Halesworth.

www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Stations

www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia

Twitter: @RailfutureEA

East Midlands

By Anthony Kay
anthony.kay@railfuture.org.uk

Positive change in attitude from rail strategy

A Leicester and Leicestershire Rail Strategy has been commissioned by the city and county councils and the local enterprise partnership. The draft is out for public consultation until 1 July at <http://bit.ly/1WLWNmu>. It is a very positive document, for example seeking to obtain the best benefit from HS2, especially considering the county council has previously opposed it. Railfuture East Midlands vice-chair Ariadne Tampion was interviewed about the draft strategy on BBC Radio Leicester. She spoke about the need to work with the other cities in the "dynamic triangle" (including Nottingham and Derby) in developing a rail strategy, and highlighted inadequate rail links between the east and west Midlands, and the need to reopen the Leicester-Burton line.

Market Harborough looks to a speedy future

Network Rail held a public information event in Market Harborough in February, to consult about track realignment and station improvements. The realignment will reduce the fastest London-Leicester travel time to under an hour. The station will at last be fully accessible and have platforms suitable for the longest trains on the MML. Harborough Rail Users welcomed these plans and the relocation of the main car park to the east side of the station, but have called for access from the west (town) side to be retained for those not arriving by car. Steve Jones, HRU chair and a committee member of the Railfuture East Midlands, has also made a presentation to a scrutiny review panel of the county council that is examining the scheme.

MP on alert over Leicester's high fares

A survey by travel comparison site Gopili has found Leicester the most expensive city in Britain to travel from. The *Leicester Mercury* then looked at off-peak fares on a Saturday and a weekday, and found that not only was it much cheaper to travel to London from stations at a similar distance on the East and West Coast main lines, but also at certain times it was cheaper to travel from Nottingham or Derby to London on trains passing through Leicester. The *Mercury* spoke to Railfuture East Midlands chairman Terry Holt, who pointed out that the high fares are particularly unreasonable when the Midland main line is still awaiting modernisation. Leicester South MP Jon Ashworth is to raise the matter with the Government and East Midlands Trains.

Line reopening could help non-car families

Reopening Ollerton-Shirebrook was the subject of a meeting between Nottinghamshire County Council leader Alan Rhodes, Sherwood MP Mark Spencer and rail minister Claire Perry in February. The county council has invested £200,000 in a business plan and feasibility study. Ollerton councillor Mike Pringle pointed out that 40% of residents do not have a car.

Making contact with friends and allies

In recent months, members of Railfuture East Midlands committee have met Railfuture London and South-East branch, to discuss Midland main line issues, Railfuture West Midlands to discuss Midlands Connect, and Peak Rail to discuss reopening Matlock-Buxton.

www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Midlands+Branch

Twitter: @RailfutureEMids

Yorkshire

By Chris Hyomes
chris.hyomes@railfuture.org.uk

New staff move into unstaffed stations

Railfuture Yorkshire members were told after Arriva Rail North took over the Northern franchise that 45 unstaffed stations will be staffed in future. Alex Hynes, who was managing director Northern Trains, is now managing director of Arriva Rail North.

Brighouse demands a better train service

The campaign for better train services through Brighouse in the Calder Valley is being stepped up, the Halifax and District Rail Action Group's AGM decided in May, following improvements to other areas in the new Northern franchise. The group wants the Leeds-Brighouse-Manchester service to be made "semi-fast" instead of calling at all stations into Manchester, and says capacity improvements around Mirfield and Huddersfield would allow more trains along the Brighouse corridor linking upper Calderdale with faster journeys to Huddersfield, Leeds and beyond. Peter Davies, secretary of HADRAG, said: "Over the past few years we have been seeing a lot more people using Brighouse station on a regular basis. Brighouse is a sizeable town with huge potential for even more people to use the train for work, business and leisure if only we had a better service. We are asking for a fair deal for our part of the railway."

Pontefract loses battle against isolation

Pontefract Civic Society is also disappointed that the new franchise has not delivered improvements in its area which remains "isolated" even though the society made several suggestions of how to improve services in its consultation response.

Esk Valley line in need of improvement

The Esk Valley line to Whitby also failed to achieve many of its improvements in the new franchise, upsetting the community rail partnership which now wants section 106 money to be used for infrastructure improvements on the line to clear the way for extra trains. The partnership is also calling for further investigation into the possibility of reopening the nine miles of line from Battersby Junction through Stokesley to near Yarm on the Middlesbrough-Northallerton line.

Hull station gateway to city of culture

Train operator TransPennine Express (run by First Group) is to spend £1.4 million upgrading Hull Paragon station in time for the 2017 City of Culture events.

Making progress towards a bigger and better railway

By Ian Brown

ian.brown@railfuture.org.uk

A casual observer might think the railways of Britain have achieved political recognition as key to the development of the British economy, given such announcements as the Northern Powerhouse, a resumption of "paused" electrification schemes, HS2 and, at last, franchises being awarded incorporating the need for new diesel and dual mode trains.

This is very encouraging, particularly where funding goes with political announcements as in the case of the recent franchise announcements in the north – Northern and TransPennine Express both including new diesel and electric trains, and in the latter case dual-mode trains designed to continue through operation north of York to Scarborough and Middlesbrough.

This does not mean we should forget electrification. Manchester-Leeds electrification is still essential, as is far more infill electrification in the North West and in Yorkshire.

The bigger railway

Resumption of electrification on the Midland main line and continuation of Great Western electrification after massive cost and time overruns is also important.

Project mistakes have been made. Education can be expensive but lessons have been learned and a more realistic project plan has evolved. Railfuture supports continuation of these flagship projects but our members have not been slow to realise how this investment can form the backbone of other regional schemes.

The Welsh Government is going ahead with a mixed heavy/light rail development based on electrification of the Welsh Valley lines, potentially transforming regional travel in South Wales.

GW electrification presents similar opportunities around Bristol as does Midland electrification in South Yorkshire, particularly if properly integrated with HS2 where joined-up thinking is required. We will be seeking your views on the criteria for supporting electrification schemes.

This is one example of where investment in rail is being recognised, yet we are far from seeing an integrated solution and long-term strategy maximising the regional and national economies.

On HS2, many Railfuture members, including me, are not sure we have the most integrated solution in London. The maximum benefits and lowest impact would have been achieved with the Euston Cross scheme directly connecting to East London, HS1 and through the Channel Tunnel.



EUSTON CROSS: The best HS2 solution for London

Strong campaigning has seen more improvements in relocating Leeds HS2 station next to Leeds (City) station with a view to better serve West Yorkshire. Similarly in Manchester, regional distribution is at last being considered with the just released plan to reroute Metrolink to run between Piccadilly and the HS2 station. Only a cynic would say this is to increase the space for retail.

I quote these two examples as illustrations of where a clear strategy, supported by stakeholders, can result in lasting improvements particularly in areas where the Government proposes a general scheme without thinking through the detail.

Realising that HS2 is about capacity and regional distribution and economies is hardly a detail and all Railfuture branches were there from the start.

The Northern Powerhouse, if it is to be a powerhouse, needs a very careful coordinated approach, partly on electrification but also on HS3 and city distribution including seeing light rail as in Manchester's Metrolink as part of the regional transport system. These are opportunities for us to campaign, but this time we intend to be more proactive as ideas soon get set in stone.

Freight

Freight is another issue where few organisations can take a balanced view. Freight on the rail network is clearly under threat from a growing passenger network which needs infrastructure to grow in capacity too.

Railfuture hit the spot with the Shaw Report consultation and is pleased that Nicola Shaw (former HS1 boss) has recognised the need for a single rail network.



tion staff are best deployed. We are also concerned about connection policy and the provision of affordable parking.

We are regularly asked for informed opinion on train layout design such as seating layouts and provision of toilets. Suppliers do listen. Railfuture branch chairs are routinely contacted by the media to comment on the annual fares increase.

Railfuture therefore aims to broaden our collective knowledge of best practice in these areas with a view to strengthening our arguments, using evidence of how other railways worldwide respond to passenger needs, including access to stations and trains for people who are mobility impaired, or not familiar with using our railways. It is surprising how differently these issues are being tackled in different places. We have therefore introduced the *Go and Compare* campaign. See: www.railfuture.org.uk/Go+and+Compare

Many members travel abroad so the aim is to capture impressions of systems in other countries from the viewpoint of the user, possibly unused to the system or the language.

We are not looking for technical descriptions. Our aim is to develop a knowledge bank for our members to use to strengthen our campaigning arguments. We are in a stronger position to argue our case if we can quote comparisons. Please send in your own impressions when you travel abroad to show on the *Go and Compare* web page. Please send to feedback@railfuture.org.uk

Innovation

Another area where we can apply *Go and Compare* is innovation. So much of our industry practice is about "compliance" with standards resulting in high cost and hideous structures, for example with providing access. We want to see cost-effective innovative solutions applied to our railways so they can cater for everybody's needs using best practice.

We are increasingly listened to as an organisation but we must use our strengths, particularly through our members and branches, with strong geographic coverage and local contacts. We need consistent, relevant and sustainable policies to communicate with stakeholders and service providers. The time has never been better to campaign for a bigger and a better railway in Britain. It is also much more enjoyable as we share successes.

■ Ian Brown CBE FCILT is Railfuture's director of policy

Graphic: ELLIE KING

Scotland

By Jane Ann Liston
secretary@railfuture.scotland.org.uk

Positive manifesto for rail but what reality?

The Scottish Parliament elections resulted in a third term of office for the Scottish National Party, albeit without an overall majority. It is perhaps worth noting what the party manifesto said regarding rail:

"Our investment plan will include £5 billion in rail improvements – including upgrades to the Aberdeen/Inverness line and the Highland main line and modernisation of the Glasgow Subway. We will also examine the feasibility of extending the Borders Railway to Hawick and Carlisle...

"By the end of 2016, we will have electrified the Edinburgh to Glasgow route and redeveloped Queen Street station and created the Edinburgh Gateway rail-tram interchange. We will also invest in electrifying the Stirling-Dunblane-Alloa line, the Glasgow-Edinburgh-Shotts route, complete the redevelopment of Dundee station, support shorter and more frequent journeys between Aberdeen and Inverness, improve the Highland and Aberdeen mainlines and invest in redeveloped station hubs at Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth, Stirling and Motherwell...

"We will maintain the rail route to Stranraer, maintaining lower fares on the route, conduct a feasibility study into extending the Waverley route via Hawick to Carlisle and make progress on improvements to the East Coast main line, including examining the case for a station at Reston in Berwickshire. We will also examine the case for an extension of the Stirling-Alloa rail line to Dunfermline by upgrading the existing Longannet freight line."

Despite the apparently pro-rail talk from all parties, we have the absurd situation whereby local councils are prohibited from even medium-term safeguarding of former railway routes in local plans.

This means that Glasgow City Council is forbidden by the Scottish Government from protecting the St John's Link route for Glasgow Crossrail from development. There are already examples of where such short-sightedness has made potential reopenings, such as the Musselburgh-Niddrie West line proposed by Network Rail, well-nigh impossible, because bridges have been removed and houses built on the alignment.

In the meantime, the Beattock Station Action Group has been carrying out a pre-STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance, not Stop These Action Groups!) evaluation. The StARLink (St Andrews Rail Link) campaign has had encouraging meetings with the chief executive of Fife Chamber of Commerce and the head teacher of St Leonard's School, and is now looking forward to discussing with North East Fife's new MSP how best to advance the campaign.

■ ■ Rail Contacts

Rail Action Group, East of Scotland (RAGES)
www.rages.org.uk/
Beattock Station Action Group (BSAG)
www.beattockstationactiongroup.org.uk/
St Andrews Rail Link (StARLink) campaign
www.starlink-campaign.org.uk/
www.facebook.com/StARLinkCampaign
twitter.com/starlinkrail #StARLinkRail
LevenMouth Rail Campaign
www.lmrc-action.org.uk/

www.facebook.com/Levenmouth-Rail-Campaign-432832616900648/
Capital Rail Action Group (CRAG)
www.capitalrail.org.uk/
Newburgh Train Station campaign
newburghtrainstation.org.uk/
Forth Rail Link
www.forthrailink.com
www.facebook.com/forthrailink/

London and South East

By Roger Blake
roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk

Railfuture's station reopening triumph

We were there when it was closed in July 1985, and we were influential in getting Lea Bridge station reopened this year. The new £11 million station on Abellio Greater Anglia's Lea Valley line was officially reopened by Rail Minister Claire Perry on Monday 16 May. Five years earlier, transport officers in neighbouring Hackney Council discovered that Stratford City's Westfield developers had allocated "planning gain" funds to expand their rail catchment northwards, with reopening Lea Bridge station – just a five-minute journey away – one possible target. The station is just the other side of the River Lea from Hackney, which is connected to it by three high-frequency bus routes.

Chingford Line Users' Association saw that if it affiliated to Railfuture it could apply to the Fighting Fund for a grant to hire an independent consultant to report on the case for the station to be reopened. Jonathan Roberts Consulting duly established the case for the station, and for a third Lea Valley line track running north through Tottenham Hale, also just five minutes away, which would enable the service frequency each way to double to four trains an hour. Railfuture provided a substantial grant to pay for the Jonathan Roberts Consulting report.

CLUA's close links with Waltham Forest Council also helped convince their officers and members that the project was both desirable and viable, and the council then sought and secured Department for Transport new stations funding to support it, as well as contributing itself. The council is confident the station will act as a catalyst for the surrounding area's regeneration. CLUA's Roger Gillham said he had been fired up by a 1998 Railfuture leaflet to believe the station could be reopened. Now CLUA is campaigning for the reopening of the Hall Farm curve which would allow trains from Stratford to travel to Chingford via the new Lea Bridge station and Walthamstow.

Mayoral election set to bring big changes

Before the London elections on 5 May, Railfuture published a *Rail Manifesto for London* which we sent to mayoral candidates. The

newly elected Mayor of London Sadiq Khan had 10 priorities for London in his manifesto. The second priority was to freeze London transport fares for four years. The new mayor is also reported to be determined to tackle the pollution problem which is being blamed for a death toll of up to 9,400 a year. He told the *Evening Standard*: "I have been elected with a clear mandate to clean up London's air – our biggest environmental challenge."

He is said to be considering an extension of the ultra low emission zone. Simon Birkett, founder of Clean Air in London, said: "It is fabulous to send a powerful early signal to discourage the most polluting vehicles from entering the most polluted parts of the capital."

The Railfuture manifesto can be downloaded from www.railfuture.org.uk/London+and+South+East

London Riverside developments need rail

Transport for London is pressing on with the extension of the Gospel Oak line to Barking Riverside, with publication of its application for a Transport and Works Act Order and consultation until mid-May. Railfuture has been supporting this at every stage, as a means of enabling development of nearly 11,000 new homes, and looks forward to its opening in 2021.

Lord Adonis endorses Thameslink 2

The National Infrastructure Commission's March report *Review of the case for large scale transport investment in London* declared that "there is currency in the view that there is a case for a third Crossrail scheme and one version of this would be to extend the existing Lea Valley line southwards from its end-point at Stratford to the Isle of Dogs and then southwards across the Thames to connect with the national rail network, possibly connecting with the Brighton main line and providing congestion relief to it." That is a north-to-south view of the London end of our Thameslink 2 proposition, and we are most grateful for the official recognition! See www.railfuture.org.uk/Thameslink+2

Call for eastern extension of Crossrail 2

East London local authorities and Essex have published a promotional brochure advocating an eastern phase for Crossrail 2 to serve the growth of what used to be called the Thames Gateway, now the London Riverside Opportunity Area. Lord Adonis's National Infrastructure Commission report in March *Transport for a World City* advocated investigating the case for this East London Riverside Route in more detail and so does Railfuture. See map below.

Railfuture London and South East's quarterly newsletter railse can be found at www.railfuture.org.uk/London+and+South+East+branch+news



On the track of fare evaders

By William Whiting

william.whiting@railfuture.org.uk
With the agreement of London Midland route manager Brenda Lawrence, I was able to accompany a revenue protection team on Birmingham's Snow Hill lines.

Over a four-hour period on 24 March, I saw 25 penalty fares issued to passengers who failed to produce a valid pass or ticket.

On this occasion, there were no cases where a passenger failed to produce a railcard, which also incurs a penalty fare.

Train operators must comply with the penalty fares rules produced by the Strategic Rail Authority in 2002 if they want to operate a penalty fares scheme.

There are a number of provisions in these rules which relate to the display of warning notices which must state the circumstances when a penalty fare may be charged.

The issue of a £20 penalty was in some cases paid in full and not disputed. If a passenger refuses to pay the penalty or wishes to appeal, the revenue protection officer must issue a written notice and explain the right of appeal within 21 days.

Identification is obtained and I understand that access to council records verifying the identity of a person is obtainable from an application on the London Midland database.

This is the same process as a penalty charge notice or a contravention of a parking restriction or prohibition issued by a local authority which is now civil enforcement.

The appeal system is handled separately and the revenue protection team has no further involvement once the notice is issued.

Train managers are not "authorised collectors" in accordance with the rules and cannot issue penalties.

In all cases where a notice was given, the staff member explained the system in full and gave advice as to how to avoid being charged a penalty fare in future. I felt the attitude of staff was excellent and calm.

It seems that no one category of passenger avoids paying a fare. In the majority of cases, passengers said they had rushed to catch the train and did not have time to purchase a ticket.

They were told they should at the first opportunity find the conductor on the train and purchase a ticket.

The onus is on the passenger to do so even though one woman

◆◆◆◆ You can join the Railfuture lottery at www.railfuture.org.uk/lottery



Birmingham New Street: Birmingham International bound train

said the conductor should have walked through the train to enable her to purchase a ticket. It was explained that a train conductor's prime responsibility is for the punctual departure of a train, safety of passengers and correct alignment of the train at a platform.

So the exercise itself. We started at 07.30 and took the train to Jewellery Quarter where the team checked tickets of passengers leaving and entering the station. Despite having a large number of passengers, the ticket office was closed. I was told it is permanently closed which was a surprise to me. The station has only a card payment machine.

However one member of the revenue protection team had a hand-held ticket issuing machine which could accept cash payments. This was only for the hour or so we were on the concourse.

One passenger, a 15-year-old, said he boarded the train at Acocks Green without a ticket as he said the ticket office was closed. He attempted to provide evidence on his mobile phone with a photo which showed the ticket office closed but the date and time of the photo were not the date of travel. He was not issued a penalty fare but will be prosecuted for fraudulent travel. London Midland staff checked that the ticket office was in fact open that morning.

We then travelled back to Snow Hill where there were spot checks of tickets as passengers reached the top of the stairs. Finally I accompanied the team on a Stourbridge-bound train where a number of penalty fares were issued. At Stourbridge Junction, spot checks were made on the platforms. After a 10-minute gap, we boarded a Stratford-bound train when a full check of tickets was made on the train. After my time with

Rail user awards for 2016

By Roger Blake
roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk

Fancy a visit from a Railfuture vice president? Then get thinking about your Rail User Group award nominations now, and get them in before the 3 September deadline so that our vice-presidents can be notified and possibly arrange to visit you while on their travels.

RUG Awards for 2016 will be given for:

- 1 Best newsletter. Gold and silver awards
- 2 Best website. Gold and silver awards
- 3 Best social media promotion
- 4 Best campaign
- 5 Best Railfuture member campaigner
- 6 Best new rail user group
- 7 Judges' special award

The closing date for submissions is 23.59 on Saturday 3 September 2016. As usual we plan the judging panel to be made up of Railfuture vice-presidents.

The 2016 RUG Awards will be presented at our autumn conference in Birmingham on Saturday 12 November. You can book now to attend the conference at www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences.

A members' early bird discounted fee of £25 (includes Welcome refreshments and buffet lunch) applies until Wednesday 31 August.

Rail user groups that send representatives to Birmingham will be well placed to collect their RUG Award – if selected.

A framed certificate will be signed by Railfuture's president and chairman and the ceremonial occasion can be photographed for local publicity purposes.

Award winners also have their Railfuture membership extended by a year as a bonus.

Full details in Rail User Express at www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Express and on the dedicated website page www.railfuture.org.uk/RUG+Awards

the team, I have a much better understanding of the operation of the penalty fares scheme.

It is clear that the onus is on a passenger to produce a ticket or pass. I was told that where people fail to carry railcards with a discounted ticket, they will be issued a penalty fare. But if within 21 days, a copy of the railcard is sent to the appeals service, the fare may be waived. It might be an improvement if staff had access to the railcard database so they could verify if people had valid cards.

It is the responsibility of a train conductor to check tickets where possible between stations if it does not distract from safety and timekeeping duties. The conductor can issue tickets but not penalty fares.

The enforcement of the penalty fares scheme at Birmingham New Street is virtually non-existent. Virgin Trains staff operate the barriers but cannot issue a penalty fare.

Rule 2f defines an "authorised collector" as a person who is authorised to collect fares on behalf of a train operator.

There are certain stations where fare evasion is more prevalent. Jewellery Quarter and Longbridge were said to be places where revenue protection teams concentrate their resources.

I am told that in Vienna, fares are so cheap there is practically no fare evasion. I believe British operators though need to do more to ensure fares are paid.

I am very grateful to Brenda Lawrence for organising this. Seeing something operating in practice has given me a much better understanding of the scheme.

Team members were very friendly and open with me and I hope my day has strengthened our relationship with London Midland.



East West options

John Davis rightly dismisses a route for East West Rail south of Stevenage, but then in *Railwatch* 147 commends the old Midland route from Bedford to Hitchin "on mainly existing trackbed". However, this alignment has been totally compromised through Shefford, and would also require a tunnel under the Greensand Ridge.

A route north of Sandy to serve Cambourne would entail a new, out-of-town interchange station with the East Coast main line, at least 14 miles of new track, and a convoluted approach into Cambridge.

The Railfuture Route Options paper rules out the use of existing main lines, other than for "the last few miles", on capacity grounds. But this will never apply to the four-track section through Biggleswade, as the number of ECML paths is constrained by the twin-track through Welwyn, less those on the Cambridge branch.

Using the ECML all the way down to the Hitchin flyover would entail only a new chord. However, there is a fairly level and direct route from south of Biggleswade to just east of Ashwell and Morde, which would shorten the route by about seven miles and take the freight out of Letchworth and Baldock. Biggleswade and Royston would serve as interchange stations, boosting their profile, and the route would also allow for a Hitchin-Bedford service, either permanently or as part of a disruption plan.

Roger Smith, High Street, Meppershall, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5LX
rkckmc@btinternet.com

East West via Luton

Unlike a link from Lidlington, a new link from Ridgmont to the Midland main line would not need any tunnel since it would reach a maximum elevation of

100 metres above sea level from a starting point of just over 80 metres at Ridgmont.

It would run for just over four miles in a roughly east-south-east direction from Ridgmont to join the main line just north of Flitwick (elevation about 70 metres).

The first mile would climb at less than 1 in 50, then it would descend at about 1 in 100 to meet the main line, so very little need for embankments or cuttings, and only one major road would have to be crossed.

Benefits would be direct Milton Keynes/West Coast main line (and subsequently Oxford) rail link to Luton and Luton Airport Parkway, potential Thameslink services between south London and Milton Keynes, potential as diversionary West Coast main line route, potential for major park and ride station at Ridgmont (by M1 junction 13), relatively low cost due to short distance and favourable terrain, and little negative environmental impact.

Crucially, it would also be the first stage in the link from Bletchley to Cambridge:

Another new line leaving the main line less than two miles south of Flitwick (slightly to the north of Westoning at 80 metres elevation) could run ESE descending for just over a mile to 70 metres elevation, and then run roughly due east passing just to the north of Barton-le-Clay and Pirton (all over more or less flat terrain at about 70 metres elevation) to join the East Coast main line just north of Hitchin to meet the existing line to Cambridge.

This section would be just over 10 miles long, so the Oxford-Cambridge link would be established with a total of about 15 miles of new line.

By contrast, the route via Bedford would require at least 25 miles of new line between Bedford and Cambridge. Given

Your letters

the circuitous nature of the old Bedford-Cambridge line which is proposed as the basis for the alternative route, this more southerly route would be roughly the same overall distance, but with much greater overall benefits, while requiring considerably less new-built line.

Services could still be run from Bedford to both Oxford & Cambridge, but half or more of the Oxford-Cambridge services would presumably bypass Bedford.

Surely the Milton Keynes-Luton link alone makes this a price worth paying?

Railfuture should also make more mention of the pollution hazards of diesel, which is implicated in thousands of premature deaths in the UK each year.

Michael Rothwell
m.rothwell268@btinternet.com

Words that annoy

I may be old-fashioned, but I too dislike "train station", and I am not too happy about always being called a "customer" rather than a "passenger". However, even worse is the current use of "service" as a synonym for "train". I once heard a station announcer at Paddington say "First class accommodation is at the rear of the service".

Martin Smith, Bath Street, Abingdon OX14 1EA
mrsmith1934@gmail.com

Back at the depot

For the life of me I can't see what the fuss is all about. In the first place I am not at all sure this is an Americanism, not necessarily a bad thing anyhow. On my visits across the Atlantic, stations have variously been described as depots, railroad stations, etc. Might it not be that train station has become common use here to distinguish it from bus station – which, incidentally I have never seen referred to as a roadway station. A station which serves trains is surely a train station. QED.

Michael Baker
michaelhcbaker@yahoo.com

Electric warning

James Knight's letter in *Railwatch* 147 looks forward to an "all-electric railway".

I expect railway electrification will come to a grinding halt after the 2020 General Election, whichever party wins. Paradoxically, it will become a victim of "low carbon" policies.

If the funding arrangements for the proposed Hinkley C nuclear

power station become general, electric trains will be priced out of the market. Their energy cost will be about three times that of diesels.

I don't think the government has joined up the dots on this yet. When it does, it will drop railway electrification like a hot potato.

One solution would be for Network Rail to generate its own electricity, instead of buying it from a massively over-priced public supply. The generators would probably be powered by diesels or gas turbines. This would not please the "low carbon" lobby but what is the alternative?

Rex Hora, Erleigh Court Gardens, Earley, Reading RG6 1EJ
rorw2003@gmail.com

Diesel standbys

I was interested to read, under Local Action East Anglia in *Railwatch* 147, about nearly half of Greater Anglia's diesel multiple unit fleet being out of action.

This reminds me of a visit to Norwich last October where I was surprised to see a Yarmouth train that was not the usual unit but a three-coach train topped and tailed by a class 37 diesel loco. A few questions revealed that this was far from unusual.

I remember the situation on summer weekends a few years ago when if you were travelling on London Midland it was a lottery whether your train turned up because of staff shortages.

Surely when a business bids for a franchise it has to be sure that it has the resources (both in equipment and people) to meet its demands (short of force majeure of course). Or does the quango overseeing this not care?

Peter Fleming, Lovers Walk, Dunstable LU5 4BG
peterff100@gmail.com

Service needed

Most of Railfuture's campaigns are for new lines, stations and freight facilities. But the campaigns will be futile unless the train services provided are reliable, comfortable and convenient.

Passengers have reasonable expectations, trains on time, a clean seat, a place for luggage, heating, toilets and protection from the weather at stations.

The reality is often very different. On some branch lines and some secondary routes there may be no trains for a day or even a week. Some stations are glowing architectural examples,

Flowers are brightening up Scotland's rail stations

Railfuture director Allison Cosgrove has been impressed by the flowers at many Scottish rail stations. She said: "Back in November on a freezing cold, dark day, I spotted a volunteer from the local Rotary Club working in the small garden at Glasgow Exhibition Centre Station. I was delighted to return there recently and see the beautiful result of his labours, right. Well done to that volunteer who brightened up a bleak corner!"



Beautiful tulips in tubs and wall planters at Kirkcaldy station



Lobster pots and a tiny lighthouse at Dunbar's seaside station



Pictures: ALLISON COSGROVE



Daffodils at Newcraighall station, planted by Portobello Rotary

yet others have their porticos boarded up and are dark and grim.

Railfuture looks foolish campaigning for railway expansion if that means more of the same deficient service.

Railfuture has an important role in bringing all rail services up to 21st century standards, particularly as the root causes of many of the problems are national issues.

So when we campaign for new stations and lines, getting the physical railway is not enough. We must emphasise new standards of performance, maintenance, comfort, information, and customer-focus. John Henderson, Caxton End, Eltisley, St Neots PE19 6TJ
john.henderson@railfuture.org.uk

Withered arm

Being a new subscriber to *Railwatch*, I went online to read some past editions looking particularly for my area of interest, the Waterloo-Exeter Central line and beyond on to the "withered arm". I found an item discussing the need for flyovers at Woking and Basingstoke stations.

A flyover at Woking is possible rising on the up Portsmouth line to cross the down slow and up/down fast lines before descending to line up with platform 1 at Woking. The up slow line from Basingstoke

would need to be slewed on to the alignment of the current sidings before joining the up Portsmouth line via the existing crossover just before the station. The engineering for the flyover would be a challenge but not impossible.

At Basingstoke station, a flyover is totally impractical, but there is already a flyover three miles to the south, just beyond Worting Junction at Battledown.

During the day, platform 4 at Basingstoke station has only three up passenger trains per hour, plus some up freight trains. Surely platform 4 could be used more fully in its bi-directional mode with down CrossCountry services calling there as well.

These would then join a new line (third down line) to the north of the existing four lines, the new three-mile line being installed as far as the farm bridge at Worting Junction.

Down trains from this new line could then cross over Battledown Flyover and rejoin the down line to Winchester via a new trailing crossover. This

Send your letters to:

The Editors, 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU
Email: editor@railwatch.org.uk
Railwatch also welcomes articles and pictures
Please use email if possible

would be a cheaper alternative from trying to do the impossible at Basingstoke Station.

Martin James, Egham, Surrey
family@thejamesfamily.fsnet.co.uk

Exeter rail bypass

After reading the promising report in *Railwatch* 146 about improved rail services to Plymouth and Cornwall, it is disappointing to read in *Railwatch* 147 that the Government is now pulling back on the proposals.

I was a frequent user of the former Southern Railway route to Plymouth in the 1950s when I was working in London and my father was station master at Plymouth Friary and Devonport Kings Road.

Over the years I have continued to follow the changing fortunes of the former Okehampton route to Plymouth and I have been encouraged to read that reinstating the line from Meldon to Bere Alston was a strong possibility.

Mention in *Railwatch* 146 of calls for a two-hour 15-minute service from London to Plymouth prompts me to suggest that if the Tavistock route was reopened then it would make sense to insert a short cut-off chord at Cowley Bridge Junction and thus by cutting out Exeter completely, a journey time for some trains of less than two hours to Plymouth would be feasible. That would

not only be good for Plymouth traffic but also (with a reversal) it would be very beneficial for travellers to and from Cornwall.

Edwyn Gilmour, Coopers Hill, Marden Ash, Ongar Essex CMS 9EE
edwylngilmour@gmail.com

Women in key posts

It has been interesting to read the recent correspondence in *Railwatch* regarding how few women attend Railfuture meetings.

We should, however, not forget that there is and has in recent years been a not inconsiderable number of women with significant roles in the management of the UK rail industry.

Furthermore, readers might like to note that both the chair and secretary of the well-respected Rugby Rail Users' Group are women. I am sure that there must be many examples of similarly effective female involvement elsewhere.

Perhaps we might reflect upon the thought that female interest is perhaps less likely to be based on a primal, male "trainspotting" instinct and more likely to focus principally on service quality and improvement.

Tim Hosker, Rugby CV22 6EL
tim.hosker@googlemail.com

More letters:
Pages 13, 18 and 19

A future for night trains

Many Railfuture members love travelling by sleeper train but even they recognise there are some drawbacks.

With some long-term thinking, the basic design of a couchette coach could be improved to make travelling overnight much more attractive over the coming years.

Train designers could abandon the existing alignment of beds across the vehicle and change to a longitudinal design, using double-deck vehicles which are now common in Europe. One provisional design (shown bottom right) provides 64 berths, compared to the

40-60 berths in an existing couchette coach and would do away with the current cramped conditions, allow more luggage storage space close to each individual bed and create a generally more user-friendly environment.

A major business advantage is there for the taking if a rail company used traveller-friendly coaches to get people from London to a wide range of European destinations. Many people are prepared to give up a night's sleep to travel by air and they sacrifice most of a night's sleep to catch an early morning flight. A sleeper train allows people to sleep comfortably and still arrive in time for a leisurely breakfast.

By Simon Hope

s.hope41@btinternet.com

German Railways announced last year that it intended to withdraw all classic overnight sleeper trains (CityNightLine) by December this year.

It is replacing them with high-speed InterCity Express trains which provide seats only. No beds!

Even before Deutsche Bahn's decision doubts were growing about whether this type of train had a future.

Scandinavian links were partly severed last year, despite a powerful and widespread petition campaign to retain them.

This year French Railways plan to axe all but three of the remaining SNCF sleeper trains.

The main problems seem to be operational and maintenance costs, and the cost of refurbishing old rolling-stock or replacing it with new.

In other areas of Europe, in eastern countries for instance, there seems to be a different viewpoint. Perhaps the financial costs are tolerated by some governments and operators who are prepared to subsidise services as part of a wider social interest.

Austrian Railways (ÖBB) are showing interest in taking over some of DB's services and other operators may follow their example.

Interestingly, ÖBB has designed a couchette car giving more privacy for passengers, using the traditional layout but having a movable partition between the bunks.

The design and layout of both couchette and sleeping-cars has changed little since the pioneer vehicles were introduced at the end of the 19th century.

Perhaps the entire concept should be studied further with some "thinking outside the box" and taking more account of the needs of today's passengers.

A major problem is luggage space, even more so than on normal day trains. Often, the only

place for a large suitcase or bag is on an unoccupied bunk, or one has to heave it up to an overhead rack in a six-berth couchette.

Perhaps now is the time to reassess the role of the traditional night train within the broader question of international long-distance transport.

For this to succeed it would be helpful to include non-rail based organisations, including the tourist industry, hotels and hostels, in future discussions on the issue.

Traditionally, rail transport has usually been arranged separately from accommodation, except on rail-based tours.

The airline example could be followed, with special deals and discounts for people with a night train reservation.

Other crucial points:

- Consistent marketing and publicity campaigns, and regular provision of leaflets and posters at main stations, easy to understand information on the internet which is also made available to rail and travel agents.

- New train branding and designation: ECN followed by a train number.

- Convenient evening departure (19.00-21.00) and morning arrival times (07.30-09.30).

- Easy connections to day trains (with good through ticketing), from main stations at home to final destination.

PRINCIPAL INTERNATIONAL NIGHT TRAINS IN EARLY 2016

- Amsterdam-Munich/Zurich
- Berlin-Budapest/Vienna
- Budapest-Belgrade-Sofia
- Budapest-Bucharest
- Dusseldorf-Vienna
- Irun-Lisbon
- Madrid-Lisbon
- Malmö-Berlin
- Munich-Budapest
- Munich-Milan/Rome
- Munich-Villach-Venice
- Munich-Zagreb
- Nice/Paris-Moscow

- A clearer focus on night trains being international in character, transiting two countries or more.

- Despite the vital role of the expanding national high speed networks there should be equal emphasis on the importance of fast day (EuroCity) and night trains, running on both conventional and high speed track.

- Current DB proposals for replacing sleeper trains with seats-only night trains is not a practical solution for a comfortable night's sleep on a long-distance train or bus (eight hours or more), especially for the elderly and families with young children. With a new concept of overnight travel more people could be encouraged to choose environmentally friendly rail as the first choice of transport mode and forsake the more environmentally damaging airlines.

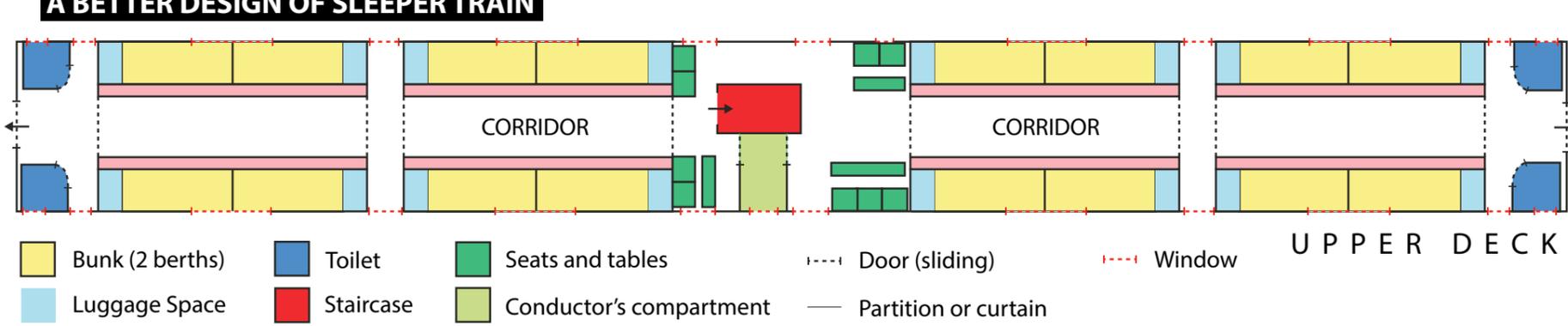
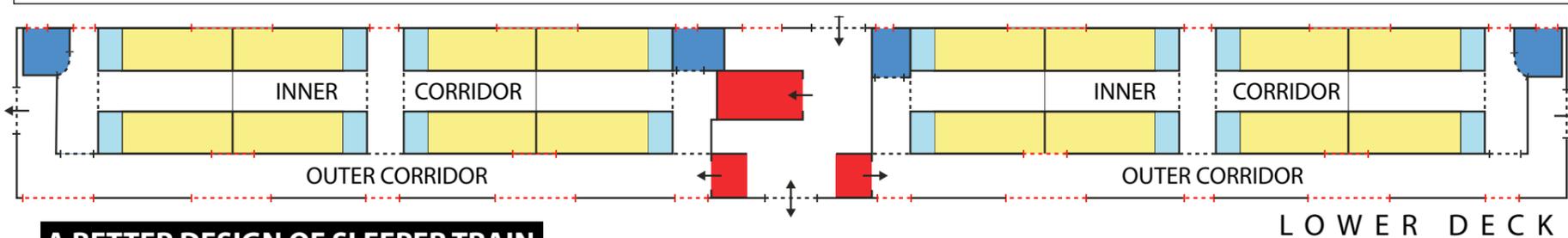
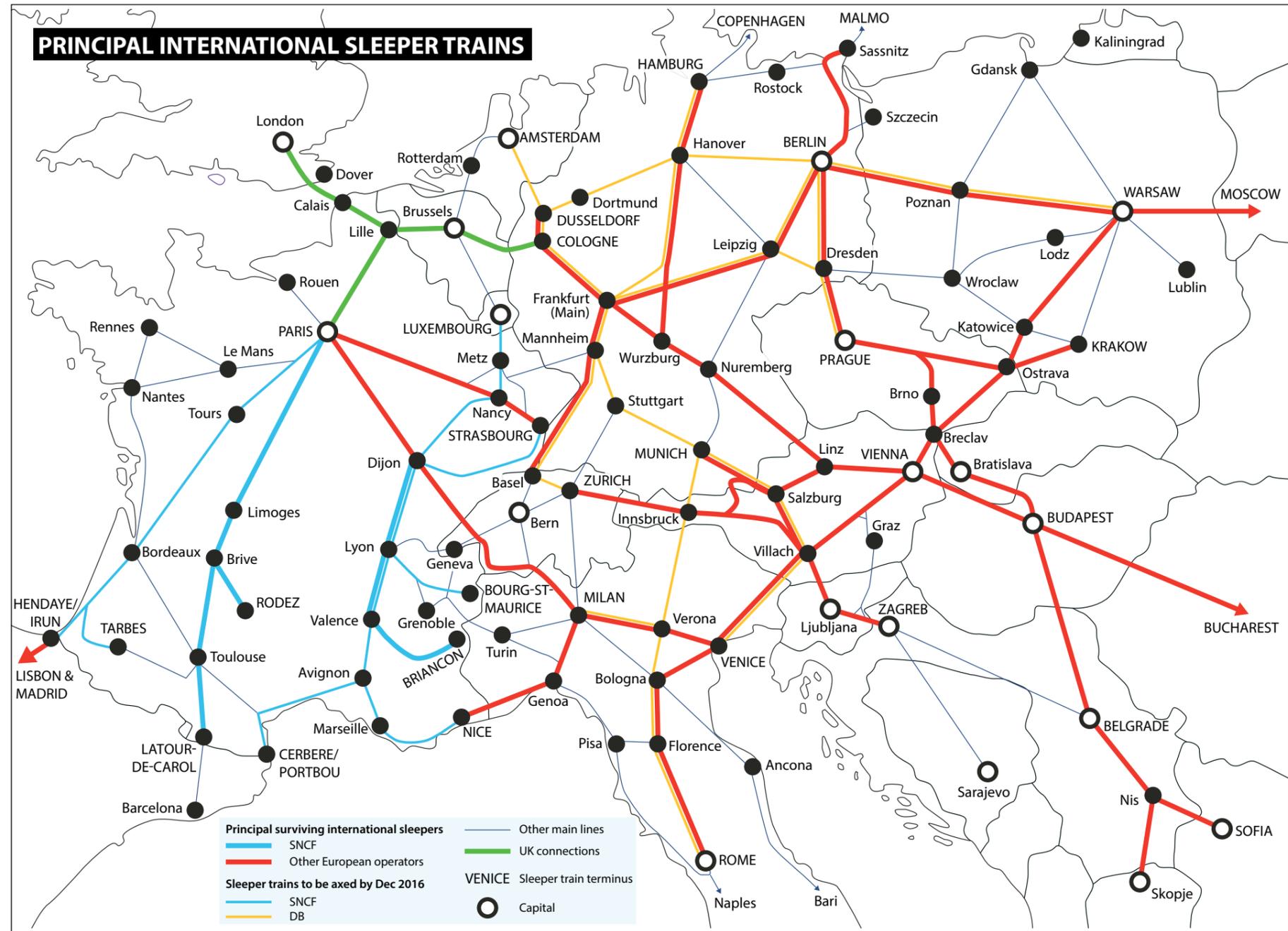
It could be more convenient, comfortable and affordable, giving better value for money, and providing a service the airlines cannot provide in Europe, waking up in the early morning in a new place, with the whole day to reach your destination.

Could passengers soon expect a new trans-European message from the rail industry and governments?

A new economic and financial case needs to be made for night trains, but the ultimate aim should be to help boost the case for rail in Britain and the rest of Europe.

- Paris-Venice
- Prague-Budapest
- Vienna-Milan/Rome
- Vienna-Moscow/St Petersburg
- Vienna-Venice
- Warsaw-Budapest/Prague/Vienna
- Zurich-Berlin/Hamburg/Prague
- Zurich-Budapest
- Zurich-Zagreb

Principal routes are shown on map (right) but other sleeper trains operate in Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania and other countries.



Severnside

By Nigel Bray nigel.bray@railfuture.org.uk

New hope for mothballed Frome-Radstock
A model railway and driving cab simulator was displayed at Railfuture Severnside's January meeting in Frome which was held jointly with North Somerset Railway to promote the campaign to reopen the Frome-Radstock line. NSR is now negotiating with Norton Radstock Regeneration to safeguard the mothballed line.

More backing needed for rail freight
Railfuture Severnside's AGM at Bristol in April heard an authoritative talk by Bernard Kennedy, secretary of ASLEF Bristol branch and a driver with CrossCountry Trains and previously with DB Cargo. He made a number of comparisons between the British network and European railways, calling for more capacity and more joined-up thinking to develop rail freight. Giving examples of distribution centres and warehouses built at Avonmouth and Bridgwater without rail connections, he said that in Germany such premises would be rail-connected by law. He agreed that high start-up costs for private sidings deterred investment and said it needed to be easier to get grants to fund them.

Progress on Portishead line reopening
Reopening of the Portishead line took a significant step forward in April with North Somerset Council's decision to buy the land needed for stations at Portishead and Pill. The *North Somerset Times* for 20 April quoted council leader Nigel Ashton as expecting building work to start in 2017. The article said the council expects the line to be operational by late 2019. The council and Network Rail already own 95% of the land required for the project. In the *Bristol Post* for 22 April, Councillor David Pasley, North Somerset executive member for asset management, described two portions of land as "the final pieces of the jigsaw." This is welcome news because the protracted GRIP procedures for the MetroWest scheme have resulted in little evidence of physical work to date.

Circular bus link improves Yatton station
Financial support from North Somerset Council has reinstated a bus link between Clevedon (population 21,000 in 2011) and Yatton station. Railfuture's response to the recent West of England Joint Transport Study Consultation contrasted the lack of onward bus connections at Yatton with excellent interchanges at Bath Spa and Bristol Parkway. The new bus service replaces one withdrawn in 2015.

MP backs bid for Wellington improvements
Reopening of Wellington station was the subject of a public meeting attended by 140 people at Wellington School on 6 April. It was organised by Rebecca Pow, MP for Taunton Deane, who said there was a Government funding pot of £20 million for feasibility studies for new stations. She said at least £240,000 was required for a GRIP study but Taunton Deane Borough Council had already pledged £40,000. Some concerns were expressed about the siting of a new station at Wellington because the original site is compromised by industrial development. A joint working party of local authorities in Devon and Somerset is developing a case for an extension of the proposed Devon Metro network to serve Wellington and Cullompton stations.

Overnight parking banned at station
Pressure on parking space at Cam & Dursley station appears to have induced Gloucestershire County Council, which owns the car park, to erect notices in March stating that overnight parking was not permitted. The needs of rail users who could not return the same day were ignored. Railfuture Severnside is pursuing the case with the council.

West Midlands

Volunteers count Hereford line passengers
A Railfuture team of volunteers counted passengers on the Hereford to Birmingham New Street line in April with the aim of providing facts to justify improving capacity in the new West Midlands franchise. Our members earlier reported overcrowding. West Midlands Rail, a company set up by local authorities to improve passenger services, will be working with the Department for Transport to manage the franchise which starts in June next year. Govia, MTR and Abellio are on the shortlist of bidders.

Mobile phone tickets tested at 200 stations
More than 200 stations in the West Midlands are involved in an experiment, using mobile phone barcoded tickets. The Rail Delivery Group is also working on a system which allows passengers to buy tickets online and use credit or debit cards to open barriers. Railfuture welcomes ticketing improvements but believes the printed ticket remains essential for many passengers.

Shrewsbury-Chester double track needed
The Shrewsbury to Chester Rail Users Association wants to see Wrexham-Chester fully redoubled, a new Wrexham North Parkway interchange station, and Baschurch station reopened. It is worried by reports of cross-border lines switching franchises when a new Wales and Borders franchise is awarded in 2018.

New station but trains are in short supply
Despite the opening of the new £3.4 million Coventry Arena station in January, the diesel train service which serves the station can carry only 75 people and runs only every hour. Train operator London Midland said there was a shortage of diesel trains but ran two special charter trains on match days. The special trains were reportedly abandoned because of high costs.

Railfuture West Midlands contact:
westmidlands@railfuture.org.uk

Wessex

By Tony Smale tony.smale@railfuture.org.uk

Soar-away growth at South West Trains
South West Trains head of pricing and strategy Chris Loder was guest speaker at the Railfuture Wessex AGM in Winchester. As might be expected, Chris pointed to the impressive growth in passenger numbers and revenues since privatisation. This upward trend, being met in part by longer trains and more frequent services, shows no sign of abating. He believes this soar-away growth should be the basis for much greater investment in infrastructure. Government funding for transport to support business and housing developments is increasingly being channelled through planning authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships. Without a strategic authority to argue the case for rail, Chris finds himself much in demand at planning meetings to explain the current limitations of the rail network and the

opportunities afforded by modest expansion. At the AGM, Bruce Duncan was elected as the new chairman of Railfuture Wessex. Bruce has been busy establishing a rail user group for the Salisbury-Exeter line. Endorsement of his achievement came in March when SWT announced it intended to form a community rail partnership for the six stations from Tisbury to Crewkerne, to be known as the Blackmoor Vale Line CRP. I am Railfuture Wessex's new secretary and spurred on by Bruce's success, I am sounding out local rail users about a support group for the South Dorset line between Poole and Weymouth. We want to ensure that a fair slice of SWT's new community rail fund is earmarked for stations in Dorset.

Swanage railway's network link delayed



Picture: ANDREW P M WRIGHT

It is disappointing that recent setbacks have delayed the launch of the Swanage Railway's regular service between Swanage and Wareham until the summer of 2017 but the railway's huge achievement in preparing track, signalling and heritage diesel units for the start of service is an inspiration. On 20 April, SWT ran a "stakeholders' special" over the four miles of upgraded track between Wareham and Norden. The picture of a class 158 unit (above) illustrates how the Swanage Railway has expanded from a tourist steam railway into the newest extension of Britain's rail network.

Timetable changes welcomed
Railfuture Wessex responded to the May timetable proposals from SWT by broadly supporting the additional services for the West of England. An extra morning train from Yeovil Pen Mill to Waterloo via Yeovil Junction was helpful but we felt more work was needed to achieve a regular, all-day service between the two Yeovil stations. The trial of direct trains between Salisbury and Weymouth on summer Saturdays would no doubt prove popular and we hoped it would strengthen the case for improved infrastructure, including a new south chord at Yeovil Junction.

Isle of Wight rail future still uncertain
The Garnett Report on the future of the railway on the Isle of Wight continues to provoke debate. Meanwhile, Railfuture Wessex remains concerned about the continuing failure to check tickets and collect fares on Island Line.

Railfuture input to South West franchise
Earlier in the year, our former chairman, David Brace, put together Railfuture's response to the South West franchise consultation. David has since been involved in discussions between Railfuture and the two shortlisted bid teams, Stagecoach and First Group. After the meeting with First's team, David remarked that they had clearly read and seemed genuinely impressed by Railfuture's consultation document. The new franchise will start in June next year.
www.railfuture.org.uk/Wessex+Branch



HS2 and Crewe

Michael Bell in his letter to *Railwatch* 147 asks what guided HS2 Ltd in the decision to route HS2 via a new station just outside Crewe. The answer is most probably the cost as HS2 Ltd is spending much more than planned on both the tunnelling under the Chilterns and the rebuilding of Euston.

Certainly no commercially driven private company would accept these high costs without very serious examination of the alternative M1 route and a through Euston Cross type station with the added potential benefits of links to HS1 and connection with Thameslink.

While there can be many options for the route of HS2, the location of a parkway station two miles south of Crewe, without Stoke also being served by HS2 trains from London and Birmingham, could do more harm to the economy of Stoke-on-Trent than is likely to be gained by investment around the new station. For the Stoke economy to maintain its status quo from HS2, additional trains would have to serve Stoke instead of Crewe. What is more, there is little real evidence to support the choice of Crewe other than the suggestion that it is a strategic point in the rail network.

While historically Crewe met the needs of an expanding rail industry around 150 years ago, there is no direct evidence to suggest it is the best choice for the 21st century. Not only is Stoke closer to the intersection of lines drawn on a map between Derby and Liverpool and between Birmingham and Manchester, but with investment in a new faster and more direct line between Stoke and Crewe, serves all the routes that Crewe serves with the sole exception of Shrewsbury-Manchester. Stoke also has the advantage of linking Macclesfield with London which cannot be achieved via Crewe.

The proposed Crewe HS2 parkway is more likely to add to journey times within the North West rather than reduce them. Granted that the Northern Powerhouse is very much about shorter journey times between city centres, extending the Northern Powerhouse benefits south should mean faster journey times between Stoke and Liverpool, without the time

◆◆◆◆ Join Railfuture online at www.railfuture.org.uk/join

Your letters extra



Picture: STEVEN ROBERTSON

SCOTSMAN: Despite a Network Rail 'ban' Flying Scotsman took a special train over the reopened Borders Railway and the Forth Bridge on Sunday 15 May as well as traversing the Royal Border Bridge, above, at Berwick-upon-Tweed the day before en route to Edinburgh

consuming change of train at Crewe. Linking Nottingham, Derby, Stoke and Liverpool by fast trains would greatly improve connectivity between the East Midlands and the North West.
Graham Nalty, Colwell Drive, Boulton Moor, Derby DE24 5AA
graham@grahamnalty.co.uk

Councils' dilemma

Congratulations on a really interesting *Railwatch* 147 and in particular on the article *Unrepentant road lobby back in driving seat*. Local councils cannot use profits from parking for their general funds but they can – and some do – use them to support public transport. It is symptomatic of the dominance of the car lobby that so many have opted instead to subject people without cars to virtual house imprisonment by withdrawing bus subsidies.

New Labour also brought in legislation – unused and apparently forgotten except by Nottingham City Council – allowing workplace parking levies, which in Nottingham have been used partly to extend their tram network and also to subsidise buses. The levies could be used anywhere where the local authority is having difficulty finding the money from its own resources. How about using the railways' own Lower Thames Crossing, on HS1, as an alternative to a road

scheme which the article rightly describes as highly damaging? A new station at Thurrock could act as an interchange between HS1, the Essex Thameside line, and a vastly improved bus service on the existing Dartford Crossing. Add other interchanges on the M25 corridor between Stansted and Gatwick, a new strategic freight route from the Channel Tunnel to the East Coast Main Line and a waterbus for local Thames crossings to make up a strategy that would surely cater for a high proportion of journeys currently made by car or lorry.

Simon Norton, Hertford Street, Cambridge CB4 3AG
simon@maths.cam.ac.uk

Felixstowe cut off

Floods and storms at Workington (2009) and Dawlish (2014) were a dramatic reminder of the disruptive effect that the elements can have on rail services. The elements that caused the suspension of services on the Felixstowe branch for nearly a fortnight in November 2015 were mostly man-made, with the weather playing a relatively benign role. The trigger was a mild and late autumn giving rise to a delayed, and more concentrated, leaf-fall season. Despite the regular presence of rail head treatment trains around the Anglia network, the poor rail conditions resulted in wheel damage to the Abellio

Greater Anglia diesel fleet and their consequent withdrawal for repairs led to a spate of seemingly random cancellations affecting services on the Mid Anglia, East Suffolk, Breckland, Felixstowe and Sudbury lines. As the situation deteriorated Abellio Greater Anglia took the decision to withdraw services altogether on the Felixstowe and Sudbury lines from 11 November, extending to the Yarmouth and Ipswich-Peterborough services on 19 November. This episode begs some awkward questions about who takes the risk in the franchised railway. Is it time to separate train buying from the awarding of franchises?

Why cannot rolling stock companies operate like your local garage which holds enough spare vehicles to lend you one while yours is in for service? Why cannot franchise awards specify sufficient rolling stock to cover for foreseeable events? Will the Department for Transport ensure the next Anglia franchise is adequately resourced, or will it be awarded to the lowest bidder? When will the "paused" electrification programme reach the Felixstowe and mid Anglia lines under the 'Felixstowe to Nuneaton' (F2N) upgrade? As things are, the risk is simply passed on to the long-suffering passenger.

Phil Smart
phil.smart@councillors.ipswich.gov.uk

North East

By Peter Kenyon
peter.kenyon@railfuture.org.uk

Tyne and Wear Metro sacks operator

Work on the Metro infrastructure proceeds along with the refurbishment of Newcastle's subterranean Central station, with closure after 20.00 until the start of service at 05.00 on weekdays and from 08.00 Saturday until Monday morning. However dissatisfaction with operation of the trains by DB Regio has been growing. Despite the levy of nearly £600,000 in penalties for performance failure since its operating contract began in 2010, the failure in September to deliver a service sufficient to take competitors and spectators to the Great North Run and queues which lasted for hours after the end of the race, which coincided with the beginning of the end for DB Regio. In February Nick Forbes, leader of Newcastle City Council and transport lead at the North East Combined Authority, advocated the termination of the operator's contract in March 2017, before the optional extension to 2019. Further train and signal failures, driver shortages and illness have caused periodic confusion on the system. In March Nexus announced that it would be taking over the operation of the trains in 2017 until a new operator was awarded the contract in 2019. However it should be noted that the signalling system has yet to be fully modernised and though the bodywork and interiors of the 30-year-old Metro cars have been refurbished, nothing other than routine maintenance has been done to the running gear and power equipment. Hence any operator can anticipate further train and signal failures. This means that negotiations by the new North East Combined Authority with central Government for the provision of new trains are crucial. It is hoped that these will follow the success of the Manchester Metrolink system which obtained new rolling stock after 21 years of operation.

Coastliners are being vigilant

Like many other rail user groups, Coastliners have been following the development of the proposed devolution of the responsibility for running transport services in the North East. At least six entities concerned with the matter are emerging and the group has had two meetings with planners to put its views forward. Good news is that Arriva Rail Northern intends to route its new Northern Connect services via the Stockton Ferryhill goods route between Tees and Tyne, saving 20 minutes on the Middlesbrough and Newcastle journey. Sunderland Council is also supporting Arriva's intention to double frequencies along the coastal route. Coastliners advocate that the southern end of these services should run from Stockton to Northallerton.

SENUG is becoming alarmed

It was reported erroneously in the last issue that a direct service would link Morpeth with Manchester Airport. Sadly the airport train will terminate at Newcastle. The GRIP 2 (Governance for Railway Investment Projects) study on the reopening of the Ashington Blyth and Tyne line is behind schedule. The local press has quoted the Labour group which controls the county council as saying: "We have progressed the £65 million AB&T line securing £5 million council funding to

develop the scheme" but no attempt has been made to keep the rail user group in the picture. At the post-franchise award presentation in Newcastle, the operator's approach to this reopening was more reactive than pro-active. Future AB&T trains cannot run unless access to the three-mile section of main line from Benton Junction to Newcastle is guaranteed. The South East Northumberland Rail User Group has drawn attention to the danger that future open access Edinburgh-London services could crowd out the projected local service. The series of seven community meetings across South East Northumberland aiming to increase awareness of the role of the group and its campaigns to improve rail services in the area has been concluded successfully.

Morpeth on the rail map from 2021

SENUG is pleased that First Group has listened to arguments that Morpeth has potential to support north-south services on the main line. It welcomed the approval of the group's open access bid which will mean five Edinburgh-London trains a day each way at Morpeth. Negotiations continue with Virgin Trains East Coast to restore the convenient 18.30 departure for London which was replaced by a train an hour later in the May 2016 timetable, giving a very late arrival in London.

Full steam ahead at Alnwick

The very wet winter prevented work on the new embankment which will connect the extensive layout at Lionheart with the track bed of the former branch line, but this has been resumed. A stock of 1,000 used concrete sleepers has been acquired and work on recently acquired rolling stock is progressing. Plans are afoot to start formal discussions for future access to Alnmouth station but more immediately the overhaul of the 1917 Hudswell Clarke steam locomotive Richboro has been completed and she will be active around the station on selected days during the season.

www.alnvalleyrailway.co.uk

Thames Valley

By Martin Smith
martin.smith@railfuture.org.uk

All clear for Oxford North

Oxford City Council has signed off the final planning hurdle needed for work on the line from Oxford Parkway to Oxford station, and preliminary work began on 15 March. The two old parcels vans which have been parked on the Red Star Parcels bay for the past three decades have been removed, so that construction of a new bay platform for Chiltern Railways can begin. Chiltern expects to extend its train service to Oxford with the beginning of the winter timetable on 12 December. In order to placate the North Oxford protestors, the city council has imposed restrictions on the number of trains allowed to use the line, limited to eight trains per hour, and no more than two freight trains per hour in the night.

Counties or unitary councils?

District councils in Oxfordshire have proposed, with the support of Prime Minister David Cameron, that the county council should be abolished, and its functions taken over by four enlarged unitary authorities. Bizarrely, it is suggested that West Oxfordshire be combined with the Cotswold District of Gloucestershire, and Cherwell District with South Northamptonshire. Oxfordshire has always

been very supportive of rail transport, and employed a rail transport officer. The district councils have neither the interest nor expertise to deal with transport matters, and would be too small to develop a county-wide transport strategy. The Vale of White Horse Council has been dismissive of plans for a new Grove-Wantage station. In Berkshire, which is split into six small unitary authorities, there is no one able to develop a rail strategy, apart from the Thames Valley/Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership. District councils as the authorities for development planning usually grant planning permission for new developments without reference to public transport.

Little progress in Buckinghamshire

The local transport plan for Buckinghamshire is a feeble document, with a proposal for a station on HS2 its only reference to rail transport. Otherwise, it is a catalogue of small road improvements, a cycling lane here and a roundabout there. Railfuture Thames Valley has pointed out that there is no strategy for the county as a whole, and no recognition of the importance of High Wycombe-Bourne End as a vital link in a rail route from North Buckinghamshire to Heathrow. We are pleased Marlow-Maidenhead Passengers Association has taken up this issue, and Railfuture now has a member on the MMPA committee.

Progress on East-West Rail

Lord Adonis as chairman of the National Infrastructure Commission has declared East West Rail is his next priority, and it is expected that a decision on the route between Bedford and Cambridge will be announced soon. However the Government, with the support of politicians and local papers, is pressing the commission to consider proposals for a road "Expressway" between Oxford and Cambridge.

Thames Valley lobbying

During the past six months, Railfuture Thames Valley has had meetings with Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire county councils, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire Growth Board (another new quasi-official body looking at transport in the East-West area), and the Witney-Oxford Transport Group.

Devon and Cornwall

By Gerard Duddidge
gerard.duddidge@railfuture.org.uk

Exeter Paris Street bus station development

The proposal to replace Exeter's Paris Street bus station with a smaller one near Cheeke Street, will disadvantage rail passengers making onward journeys by bus to places such as Sidmouth, Chudleigh and Ashburton. Railfuture is concerned that the distance to the bus station from Exeter Central and St David's rail stations will be increased. A new bus station concourse could instead be built in Paris Street, opposite the Civic Centre, with the bus bays behind and through stops in front. This option would maintain the existing distance from the two railway stations and provide safer pedestrian access at night. Bus services include Stagecoach 5 from Crediton to Exeter with Stagecoach 9/9A to Sidmouth and beyond. This would improve links from Exeter St David's station and the University (using the New North Road stop near the Imperial) to Sowton and Sidmouth. Paris Street should remain open for those buses which could be linked across Exeter via the railway stations.

When is it right to support road building?

By Malcom Bulpitt

Editor Swiss Express

editor@swissrailsoc.org.uk

Although not a member of Railfuture, as an interested observer whose transport involvement is with the Swiss transport system, I enjoy reading *Railwatch* and admire the efforts of the organisation. However, I would caution your organisation about commenting upon developments in other countries when perhaps all the relevant issues are not fully known, or understood.

In *Railwatch* 147 an item headed *Road tunnel threat to the Alps* commented critically on the potential for a second road tunnel to be constructed under the Gotthard Pass. May I try to put the record straight on the proposals, which were approved, 57% to 43%, by the Swiss public in a national referendum on 28 February 2016.

The original Gotthard road tunnel was opened in 1980, is a single main bore, and operates with the carriageway carrying a single lane of traffic in each direction. There is a small parallel ventilation and access tunnel. The current tunnel has a poor crash record despite numerous initiatives having been put in place over its life in an attempt to improve its safety.

It also does not meet various international tunnel operational standards, and it is in need of considerable upgrading work. The tunnel is the major all-weather, all-year road link between the Swiss Canton Ticino and the rest of the country. It is important not just in transport terms but also in internal political terms, as for Switzerland's Italian-speaking minority it is their principal road link to the economic heartlands of their country.

There has been a concern south of the Alps that the, generally German-speaking, environmental lobby wished to cut them off from conventional means of communication that the other 25

GOTTHARD BASE TUNNEL OPENS TO AID BIG SWITCH FROM ROAD TO RAIL



Picture: ALP TRANSIT

Switzerland is opening the world's longest railway tunnel in June 2016. The new Gotthard Base Tunnel is 35.5 miles long and has cost £7 billion.

It was first approved in 1992 in a national referendum and work began in 1996. Trains through the tunnel will be able to reach speeds of 150 miles per hour, cutting the journey time between Zurich and Milan to two hours and 30 minutes from four hours and 40 minutes.

The tunnel's real role is to streamline freight transport across Europe, with the aim of switching freight from road to rail and cutting pollution. Europe's busiest port, Rotterdam, will be efficiently linked to Genoa on the

cantons enjoy. In peak times the traffic queues on its approaches (comprising mainly of Swiss nationals in private vehicles) can be many kilometres long.

Many of these hold-ups are as a result of the inevitable breakdowns that immediately bring the two-way flow to a halt, and also a reduction in capacity resulting from the long spacing required between freight vehicles. An alternative road tunnel, the San Bernardino, does exist

but it is far to the east of the country and off the axis of popular demand. This tunnel and its road approaches also have restricted peak capacity and safety issues. The referendum result has now made construction of the new tunnel non-negotiable under Swiss law. Work is expected to start on the £2 billion project in 2020, with a 2027 completion date. The new tunnel will be capable of carrying two lanes of traffic, however the intention for

Mediterranean coast, Italy's busiest port by tonnage, thanks to the Gotthard.

Two other rail tunnels are being constructed in Austria, the Semmering Base Tunnel and the Koralm Tunnel. They should open in 2024. These will cut times between Vienna and Graz, but also provide a faster rail corridor, eventually from the Baltic port of Gdansk to Bologna and on to Rome.

Work has also begun on a 34-mile-long new tunnel under the Brenner Pass. This will provide a faster route between Italy and the German cities of Munich and Berlin and possibly on to Scandinavia.

its long-term operation is that it should carry only one lane of traffic in one direction with the original tunnel carrying the opposing flow on just one lane.

The spare space will allow a safety margin and also enable disabled vehicles to be passed. In the short term, the new tunnel will carry two lanes of opposing traffic during the period when work takes place to refurbish and put in place essential safety systems on the original tunnel.

The Swiss have a robust legislative system in place to discourage major increases in through movements of international freight vehicle traffic, so the concerns some groups have expressed should not come to fruition once the new operating regime is in place.

I hope that this response will go some way to allay fears that Switzerland has 'sold-out' to a road lobby. The second Gotthard tunnel is as essential a part of that country's future national transport infrastructure as is the rail Gotthard Base Tunnel. It is also probably a Swiss political necessity, something that may not be understood outside the country.

BULGARIAN VALLEY AT RISK FROM EUROPEAN UNION ROAD BUILDING

By Richard Townend

richard@stjulians.co.uk

I am a Railfuture member who visits Bulgaria from time to time, and am concerned about the tragedy about to unfold in the Kresna valley (on the route to Greece) where a major road threatens an important European nature reserve and local villages.

The European Union has offered €1 billion of grants for the motorway if a long underground road tunnel is constructed.

But there is already an electrified, single-track railway through the Kresna valley, and for this money it could be doubled, certainly through the Kresna valley and probably most of the

way between Sofia and the Greek border at Kulata with less damage and great benefits all round. I have contacted the Bulgarian Railway Company (www.brc-bg.com) which is actually not the rail infrastructure/operator, but a freight rail-lobby organisation, the only Bulgarian pro-rail body I can find out about. It is a member of CER.

Please can you suggest any other ways to raise this issue? I am suggest that my Bulgarian friends start a pro-rail organisation like Railfuture, but this will take a long time. There is a good article at <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/feb/17/bulgarian-motorway-poised-to-carve-up-wildlife-haven>

North West

By Arthur Thomson
arthur.thomson@railfuture.org.uk

Station cost disparities flagged up

A rare glimpse into the murky world of railway finance has been made possible following research by the Furness Line Action Group. FLAG has found there is a large disparity between the annual charges Network Rail makes to train operators to use stations and the varied facilities provided at stations.

The table (right) shows the charges made by Network Rail to the train operator, the train services that call and the facilities. Three Furness line stations, Kents Bank, Silverdale and Cark, are shown and compared to Bishop Auckland, Cathays and Sandy, with similar charges but varied facilities. Passengers on the Furness line are paying the same price to access stations as ones with far superior facilities. There is a link which shows this at www.networkrail.co.uk/using-our-network/cp5-access-charges, scroll down to "Price lists updated for RPI".

FLAG is also challenging the new franchise holder Arriva to ensure it gets the rolling stock necessary to operate services over the next two to three years until delivery of the new units. The May 2016 timetable shows a reduction in through trains between Barrow/Windermere and Manchester, and loss of some of the class 185 100 mph units which currently work those services. Currently a class 185 runs the 08.50 Barrow to Manchester Airport service which will be replaced by a 156 Sprinter at 09.17 to Preston only in May, requiring passengers to change at Lancaster. This service is very popular and often overcrowded with three coaches, and is likely to be much worse unless it is doubled up to a four-coach 156. These units are 30 years old with a 75 mph main line restriction, and it is unlikely seat reservations will be available.

Two other services are no longer through services to Manchester Airport, although there is an additional through service leaving at 09.29. The new services will leave intermediate stations Ulverston, Grange and Arnside with no through service after the 06.48 ex Barrow.

Railfuture NW pursues ticket anomalies

Railfuture North West has found that some stations outside the Greater Manchester area are wrongly applying the peak evening ticket price to what are marked on their maps as off-peak journeys. Journeys from Alderley Edge to Wilmslow/Handforth/Styal, New Mills Newtown to Disley, New Mills Central to Strines, Birchwood to Warrington Central, Newton-le-Willows to Earlestown, and Burscough Bridge to Parbold are outside the peak area marked on the map published by Northern, but the ticket price charged at some stations and on the National Rail website show only the peak fare for travel during the evening peak time. Railfuture is raising the issue with the new franchise holder Arriva.

New lighting at Glossop station

An old photograph of Glossop station was the inspiration to replace the globe light fittings there with more historically appropriate lantern designs. Visits to other stations suggested that this could be allied to a change to LED technology, giving a much better lighting level and a saving in electrical consumption. Northern Rail and Network Rail worked with the specialist lighting firm DW Windsor to

Station	Operator	Charge per year	Services in each direction	Facilities
Bishop Auckland	Northern	£6,466	2 hourly clockface	Daytime ticket office, CCTV
Kents Bank	Northern	£6,756	Mainly hourly, but some 2 hourly	Nothing
Cathays	Arriva Wales	£14,982	6 trains per hour	Ticket offices am and pm, ticket machine, help points, CCTV
Silverdale	First TransPennine	£14,811	Mainly hourly, but some 2 hourly	Will soon have customer information system
Sandy	Great Northern	£24,745	2 trains per hour clockface	Half-day (am), ticket office, customer information system, help points, CCTV
Cark	Northern	£24,238	Hourly	Customer information system

bring the project to fruition within one day of the end of the old Northern's franchise, with funding and help provided by the Railway Heritage Trust. The contribution of Northern Rail's Theo McLauchlan, line manager, and chair of Friends of Glossop Station, Neil Williams, was invaluable. The Friends group was encouraged that Northern's MD, Alex Hynes, took a personal interest in the project. The result is very pleasing, and represents excellent co-operation between the operator, Network Rail and a local community rail group.

Wales

By Rowland Pittard
rowland.pittard@railfuturewales.org.uk

Business and enterprise committee

Railfuture gave evidence at the public hearings of the Future of Welsh rail infrastructure inquiry. The report of the inquiry was published in March with 15 recommendations, most of which had been identified by Railfuture in its evidence. The Government response that followed accepted all of the recommendations. The committee also published its Fourth Legacy Report in March and this covered 21 inquiries. Railfuture submitted responses to six of these inquiries and attended three.

The committee identified a possible programme of work for the new committee. It expects further scrutiny of the South Wales Metro project, Welsh Government preparations for the next Welsh rail franchise, and steps to reduce transport's carbon dioxide emissions, such as the Active Travel agenda. Also to be considered is the impact of the purchase of Cardiff airport and the value of improved connectivity and economic benefits. Public transport integration will be scrutinised, as well as the effect of road building on people, business and the environment. Whether North Wales can benefit from the Northern powerhouse initiative will be examined, as well as the potential of city regions. Railfuture will be preparing responses to consultation by the committee as they arise.

Railfuture supports innovative campaign

Railfuture Wales has helped a local pressure group, Magor Action Group On Rail, with its campaign to open a new station east of Newport, serving Magor and Undy. The station would be designed to encourage access by foot, bicycle, bus and taxi, leaving nearby Severn Tunnel Junction to cater for car users. The station would also form part of a community hub for the villages. The idea is that it will be managed by the community, and commission from rail ticket sales will go back into the community. No other station operates like this, and Railfuture is very interested to see if it is a viable model for other new stations. Therefore, MAGOR has been offered matched

funding up to £10,000 from Railfuture's Fighting Fund (made possible by members buying Annual Draw tickets, joining the monthly lottery and leaving Railfuture a legacy). The award will help finance a GRIP 3 (Governance for Railway Investment Projects) study, following the recently published GRIP 2 report that found the station proposals to be technically feasible. The resulting publicity will also help raise Railfuture's profile in South Wales. For more information, see www.magorstation.co.uk

Great Western main line electrification

The Great Western main line electrification will be state of the art, according to Dr Dave Hewings of Network Rail. He pronounced this at a lecture in Cardiff in March, attended by several members of Railfuture Wales. He explained how the system could recover from faults in the electrification infrastructure much faster than happens conventionally. This is possible because a snapshot taken just before the fault can be analysed and used to quickly restore working lines to operation. As an electrical engineer, Dr Hewings' talk was technical and all but ignored the cost overruns and delays that have plagued the project. He stated that all substations and connections to the National Grid had been completed on time and that there was passive provision for the Marches line north of Newport.

Great Western Railway

Timetable changes from May 2016 provide no improvement in rail services between South Wales and Paddington. Services previously withdrawn are not reinstated. On Saturdays the Didcot stop is withdrawn from most services from Swansea to Paddington, resulting in an additional change to reach Oxford. There will be faster journey times on Saturdays from South Wales to Paddington but only when they are not disrupted and diverted by electrification and engineering work. Unlike Arriva Trains Wales, GWR does not consult with stakeholders in advance of service changes. However we welcomed the opportunity to discuss revised transport arrangements during the closure of the Severn Tunnel for electrification work between 12 September and 21 October 2016 with members of GWR staff, but it appears that not all lessons learnt from the previous closure in 2009 will be implemented. The weekday service from Cardiff to Paddington will be halved during this period and journey times extended by up to 40 minutes. There will be no replacement train service between Cardiff, Newport and Severn Tunnel Junction where GWR at present provides a half-hourly service. Road transport will be provided between Newport and Bristol Parkway. Arriva CrossCountry will make additional stops at Severn Tunnel Junction to provide an hourly service to and from Newport and Cardiff.

Welcome to Berlin

By Trevor Garrod

trevor.garrod@railfuture.org.uk

Seven Railfuture members were among 90 representatives from 16 public transport users' organisations in 11 countries who attended this year's conference of the European Passengers Federation held in Berlin in April.

Cross-border links, the case for regional services, passenger satisfaction, long-term investment and the positive and negative aspects of the European Commission's fourth railway package, passenger rights in all transport modes and the current challenges posed by security were discussed.

Peter Buchner of S-bahn Berlin, who arranged for all delegates to have a free pass on the city's public transport network during the conference weekend, explained how disruption caused by engineering work was dealt with and how passengers were kept informed.

Dieter-Lebrecht Koch MEP, who has produced a report on multimodal information, said mobility should be a basic right for all citizens and today's technology should be making it easier to plan and book a journey.

Michael Cramer MEP said that a modal shift to rail and other environmentally friendly modes



POLISH VISIT: European Passengers Federation delegates on a study visit to Gorzow

was needed if climate change goals were to be met. He added: "I am not asking for more money, but for different spending priorities." Further speakers dealt with the plans of Talgo GmbH to develop new night and day trains and cross-border co-operation between the Czech Railways and their German partners.

The 2017 EPF conference is planned for 18 March in the Netherlands. The illustrated report of this year's conference is available from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ, or trevor-garrod2000@yahoo.co.uk. It can also be viewed at www.epf.eu/wp/conference-reports/ along with the full presentations.

■ Trevor Garrod is president of EPF and a director of Railfuture

■ Railfuture members enjoyed an April visit to Lyon which has been linked by TGV to Paris since 1981 and Nice which has the highest car ownership in France but is now improving its public transport. You can read a longer report on this visit at www.railfuture.org.uk/article1679-Nice-to-see-you

ADVERTISEMENT

VISIT TO NANTES



RDS Group Travel

Visit to Nantes on the Loire in western France
Monday 26 to Thursday 29 September 2016

Full details from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ
trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk

◆◆◆◆ Please remember Railfuture in your will: <http://tinyurl.com/3qtdzj7>

MILTON KEYNES AGM 2016

Diversity challenge

Railfuture president Christian Wolmar reminded Railfuture members that we must attract more women and ethnic minority members if Railfuture is to remain relevant.

"The railway has massive political support," he told the annual general meeting at Milton Keynes on 21 May.

"But we need to engage people from the wider community. Diversity is very important."

Chris Page was elected unopposed as chairman of Railfuture. Allison Cosgrove, Chris Hyomes and Roger Blake were re-elected as directors.

Allison gave an upbeat presentation about the "greatest grassroots campaign" for the Borders Railway. She was looking forward to the line from

Edinburgh to Galashiels and Tweedbank being extended to Hawick and Carlisle. Members were welcomed to Milton Keynes by Mayor Steve Coventry, a former train driver. He said he was excited over the prospect of the Milton Keynes to Oxford line being reopened as part of East West Rail.

MP Iain Stewart, the MP for Milton Keynes, paid tribute to Railfuture campaigner Chris Wright who had been influential in the campaign for East West Rail.

The MP added: "Rail has an exciting future. The case for East West Rail is overwhelming but we have to remember that those who shout the loudest often succeed." Scarce resources could easily be diverted to other projects.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ The Government has recognised the importance of railways to tourists by introducing rail tourism awards. Grants up to £75,000 have been made to 17 railway organisations. One of the winners was the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway in Derbyshire and its heritage railcar visitor experience.

■ Alstom is to build a new £19 million rail maintenance and training depot at Widnes, Cheshire. It will open in 2017.

■ Rail journeys increased by 3.7% in the year to March with journeys in the south-east going up 4.2%. Passenger revenue grew by more than 5%, according to the Rail Delivery Group.

■ The London Overground line from Barking to South Tottenham is closed for eight months until February while the line

is electrified. The Gospel Oak-South Tottenham section will close from September. The Barking-Gospel Oak Rail User Group is in talks with Transport for London in an attempt to keep disruption to the minimum. When the line reopens TfL plans to use diesel trains for nearly a year but BGORUG wants TfL to re-deploy displaced Shenfield electric units.

■ BGORUG campaigner Graham Larkbey is also calling for better Chiltern line services at Sudbury & Harrow Road and Sudbury Hill Harrow which have no trains for hours on end. London TravelWatch has helped to gain some improvements but Graham said: "The campaign will continue however - Railfuture members do not give up that easily!" For further details, contact graham.larkbey@gmail.com



Ticket office threat

I was disappointed to see nothing in *Railwatch* 147 about Govia-Thameslink's plans to close or restrict the opening hours of ticket offices at the majority of its stations and the protest campaign.

Surely it should be of the utmost concern to Railfuture, not just in itself but also for its implications for deterring and maybe reducing rail travel to destinations beyond the company's territory?

M J Leppard, St George's Court, East Grinstead RH19 1QP

Save our routes

I urge Railfuture to be more active in seeking the long-term preservation of former rail routes.

At this moment, I am thinking about the closure of Longannet power station, leaving no freight on the recently reopened Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine line.

People are saying: "Let's run trains between Stirling and Dunfermline!"

Politicians jump on board. Something must be done!

The point often missed is that the coastal route is single track, slow and winding. It lost its passenger services in 1930. In contrast, the straight main line between Stirling and Dunfermline closed to passengers in 1968. A

30-minute train run became an hour in the bus. Like the main line from Edinburgh to Perth via Dunfermline and Kinross, it was not even on the Beeching list. Track remained in place east of Alloa until 1980. The track from Oakley through Dunfermline Upper station was lifted as recently as 1993, only 12 years before work started on restoring

the west end of the line as the SAK! Sadly, in those 12 years, the track bed of the former main line through Dunfermline was utterly destroyed. It is a particularly bad example of the short-sighted thinking that we see up and down the country.

All is not lost. The route of the main line is intact from Alloa to the outskirts of Dunfermline. In principle, a route could probably be found for a new-build chord of about 2.5 miles to skirt round the west of Dunfermline and link the former main line route to the coastal route near Charlestown Junction. This could be near where an east-south chord has also been proposed to allow running towards the Forth Bridge.

The contrast between rail aspirations (let's reuse a slow, old freight line) and actual road expenditure (the new Upper Forth Road crossing and roads linking to the M9) is striking.

Railfuture should place greater emphasis on preserving former rail routes, especially in built-up areas where it would be difficult ever again to find a way through. Legislation?

It should also highlight the contrast between road and rail

aspiration and spending. Rail should not be trapped into the cheap (vis a vis roads) and second rate by 'reusing sidings' and the like.

A final thought on reopenings. It is noticeable that the single track SAK line was built 'down the middle' of the old double track formation. Despite all that was said, it seems that the lesson was not learned on the Borders line, where the same thing happened. Come the time, it will be a good contract to fix it, of course, but needless expense too.

Bill Riggs, Station Road, Church Village, Mid Glamorgan CF38 1AH wriggs2006@aol.com

Double track

I have to disagree with David Dixon in *Railwatch* 147. Double track is essential for reliability. The formerly woeful reliability of the Cotswolds line has been transformed by redoubling. Any residual problems are usually down to late-running trains occupying the remaining single sections at each end.

I recently sat on a punctual London-bound train which was delayed at Charlbury for a late-running Worcester train which had not yet even entered



1985: Simon, left, Graham, Dave and John Mannel on the day the station closed. Out of shot is band founder John Simms

Triumphant return

Aunt Fortescue's Bluesrockers reunited to celebrate the reopening on 16 May 2016, of Lea Bridge station in east London. The band last played there the day it closed 31 years ago. Rail Minister Claire Perry arrived by train from Tottenham Hale to open Britain's newest railway station, Lea Bridge. As she spoke a freight train rumbled through the station. There was a party atmosphere as the band celebrated the reopening with children from nearby Sybourn primary school who sang alongside the band. Also present was Dave Newall MBE who drove the last train in July 1985.

Railfuture director Roger Blake played a key role in the reopening by identifying funding and organising a consultant's report. The new station allows local people to reach Stratford, the Olympic park and Westfield shopping centre in just a few minutes by train. Northbound trains go along the Lea Valley line to Tottenham Hale and Bishops Stortford. "Lea Bridge station will help open Leyton up for growth," said Chris Robbins, the leader of Waltham Forest council who said 3,000 homes are likely to be built nearby.

the single section. Spain may indeed have high-speed single lines, but how frequent are their services?

Secondly, I strongly condemn the plan to remove toilets from West Midlands trains. The Cross-City train service conveys late-night revellers homewards, and it must provide a toilet. Station facilities, if any, are locked when the ticket office closes. This is asking for trouble, just for the sake of 4 extra seats. Mike Bond, Studley, Warwickshire. mikebond64@yahoo.co.uk

Thames link

I am very much opposed to the proposed road tunnel for the lower Thames crossing. Our local MPs need to put the case for rail to the Department for Transport.

Railways old and new are able to reduce congestion, pollution, noise and accidents. I long to see the c2c line connect Essex with Kent as it would make it

easy to get to Kent and also to Sussex.

I sincerely hope the Government sees sense and opts for rail.

Timothy Christopher, Grapnellis, Vange, Basildon, Essex SS16 4LT

Political jealousy?

From far off Grimsby, your *Railwatch* 147 correspondent Tim Mickleburgh describes Nicola Sturgeon as 'one of the most divisive politicians in Britain today'. We question upon what grounds he makes such an assertion.

Given that Mr Mickleburgh is a Labour councillor in England, we suspect his knowledge of Scottish politics is rather limited. Surely Mr Mickleburgh could not possibly be jealous of Ms Sturgeon's high popularity ratings?

Railfuture Scotland represents a range of political views, by no means all of them in favour of independence. Nevertheless, we recognise Ms Sturgeon

◆◆◆ European Rail Timetable available at <http://www.europeanrailtimetable.eu>

represents Scotland at public events.

We suggest Mr Mickleburgh would do better to restrict his comments to his own kailyard.

Allison Cosgrove, Chair Jane Ann Liston, Secretary Railfuture Scotland

Making a stand

I was bemused to see the *Railwatch* 147 caption referring to "plenty of handrails for standing passengers". If people are expected to stand on a train, they are not going to be weaned out of their cars and persuaded to use public transport.

Tim Mickleburgh, Boulevard Avenue, Grimsby DN31 2JP. Tim.Mickleburgh@Nelincs.gov.uk

Wind power

The Dutch railway network aims to run its train fleet entirely on

ISSN 0267-5943 www.railwatch.org.uk

railwatch

is edited by Robert Stevens and Ray King, 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU Tel: 020 8985 8548 editor@railwatch.org.uk robert.stevens@railwatch.org.uk Printed by Print-Out, High Street, Histon, Cambridge CB4 4JD Tel: 01223 232709. Railfuture members receive *Railwatch* free.

Non-members can subscribe online at www.railfuture.org.uk/shop or by sending £8 (cheque payable to Railfuture) to: Alan Cocker, 11 Derwent Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 0QR.

Copy deadlines: For the next issue, published in October, copy must be emailed to editor@railwatch.org.uk by 1 September. Paper copy can be sent to 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU but must arrive earlier.

Advertising: Full page: £190. Half page: £95. Quarter page: £45. Small ads are free to members. Otherwise: 30p per word.

Please report any problems with the delivery or condition of your copy of *Railwatch* to editor@railwatch.org.uk or to the E9 7HU address above.

Railfuture

is independent and voluntary. It is the campaigning name of the Railway Development Society Ltd, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No 5011634. Registered Office: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND.

Media enquiries

Bruce Williamson, 29 Granby Hill, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4LT. Tel: 0117 9272954 Mobile: 07759 557389

Email: media@railfuture.org.uk

JOIN RAILFUTURE Membership £18 per year (special offer).

Pensioners, students and unemployed: £14.

User groups, community and parish councils: Please apply for rates. You can join using PayPal via www.railfuture.org.uk or by post, please contact Railfuture Membership, 1 Queens Road, Barnetby le Wold, North Lincolnshire DN38 6JH. Email: membership@railfuture.org.uk

RENEW MEMBERSHIP Renewals and other membership queries:

Use PayPal on the website or send a cheque to Railfuture Renewals, 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND. Email: renewals@railfuture.org.uk

Elections Board elections held annually. Nomination forms can be obtained from www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Elections

Who's Who Many other useful contact details can be found on the Railfuture website: www.railfuture.org.uk

electricity generated from wind power within two years, advises *Railwatch* 147.

If Dutch wind power produces the same risible proportion of installed capacity as that in the UK in calm high pressure periods, Dutch rail passengers can presumably look forward to a new excuse for their train being cancelled – the wind is not blowing hard enough. G P Brown, Fieldview, Bowthorpe Road, Norwich NR5 8AQ brown.gerald@ntlworld.com

Editors' note: Dutch Railways has signed contracts to acquire electricity from specific wind farms. For more information: <http://www.railway-technology.com/features/featuremichelkerkhof-of-eneco-discusses-the-dutch-rail-networks-renewable-revolution-4647194/>

Join Railfuture

You get four copies of *Railwatch* magazine a year and the chance to help make Britain's railways great again

Membership is £18 per year for an individual (special offer price)

■ Pensioners, students and unemployed £14

■ User groups, community and parish councils: Please use this form to ask for group rates

Name

Address

Postcode

Email

Send to Railfuture, 1 Queens Road, Barnetby le Wold, North Lincolnshire DN38 6JH

Please make cheques payable to Railfuture Email: membership@railfuture.org.uk

OR JOIN ONLINE USING PAYPAL AT www.railfuture.org.uk

Light rail solutions for the main line railway

By Ian Brown

ian.brown@railfuture.org.uk

Railfuture aims to support its members who want to see railways developing in Britain. The launch of Railfuture's *Go and Compare* campaign should help our branches keep abreast of innovation around the world.

We also need to know what other organisations are doing in terms of best practice. We are not here to tell other railways abroad how it should be done, nor do we campaign for things which are not sustainable any more.

Rail is part of a transport solution, and transport is part of an economic, social and environmental equation.

Rail can rarely stand alone. Investment in big schemes such as Crossrail (Europe's largest rail scheme) was justified on the basis of its ability to deliver quantifiable economic, social and environmental benefits.

To prove that rail can produce real results on a big scale, we need to be smart. We need more feedback and member involvement to address the imbalance between a bigger railway in Britain and a better one.

Britain's railways are certainly growing in terms of ridership, if not fast enough in terms of capacity and resilience.

Our railways are also getting safer, but not necessarily better in many ways, hence the inclusion of the word "better" in Railfuture's campaign slogan – Campaigning for a bigger and better railway..

As an example, many members will be aware of the Government's "Access for All" scheme. If carefully examined it is really "Access for Some" because there is a strictly controlled budget that limits the number of new schemes each year – and therefore the number of people who can be helped.

By 2020, legislation will ensure there is good access on to trains. But what about the station itself?

Amazingly, even Crossrail was promoted on the basis of no level access at surface stations (those on the National Rail network) compared to Crossrail's new underground stations which are all properly accessible.

It was local pressure that changed this, a point not lost on Railfuture. The industry, with its standards and legislation, is its own worst enemy resulting in over-engineering, over-specification, high cost and quite often hideous structures such as ramps for mobility-impaired access which are seemingly built to a specification to accommodate a Roman



Picture: PAUL ABELL

A special tram run on 11 May for the Light Rail Transit Association at Bull Street, Birmingham

Birmingham New Street station ready for its tram link

By Paul Abell

paul.abell@railfuture.org.uk

The expected opening of the Midland Metro link to Birmingham New Street station from Bull Street was delayed by a couple of weeks in May.

Last-minute safety checks held up completion of the Metro line from Wolverhampton to New Street through the centre of Birmingham. However, trams are already making a big impact on Birmingham city centre and public awareness.

The latest extension will provide a useful link between Snow Hill and New Street stations, with an intermediate stop at Corporation Street serving the city centre shops and offices.

An enlarged fleet of 21 new CAF Urbos 3 trams, and the expansion of the Wednesbury depot necessary to house them, was included in the £130 million programme, which is expected to add an annual £50 million to the local economy.

A further extension, to be constructed between 2017 and 2019, will continue from New Street station for 800 metres to Victoria Square and Centenary Square. Because this section passes Birmingham's impressive civic buildings, the

city council has insisted on wire-free operation, and it is intended to run the 800 metres on battery power. The Urbos 3 trams have been developed to the point that they are expected to have a 22 kilometre range, though the trams will be back under the wires and able to recharge their batteries long before then. Battery trams last ran in Birmingham along Bristol Road to Bournbrook between 1890 and 1901.

Two more extensions are currently awaiting final approval by the Department for Transport, and will take advantage of battery power to save the cost of erecting wires at locations where overhead clearances are problematic. A link from the present Wolverhampton terminus at St Georges to a new transport interchange at Wolverhampton station is expected to open by 2018. In Birmingham a 1.3 kilometre extension to Edgbaston via Broad Street and Hagley Road should open by 2021, at which time it is planned to run a service of 10 trams per hour between Edgbaston and Wolverhampton.

Of course Birmingham plans to take advantage of HS2 by building a 1.7 km tramway extension to serve the HS2 station at Curzon Street.

invasion. The danger is concentration of investment on the core railway with far less attention paid to the local railway which feeds the core railway.

The local railway is strangled by common "main line" standards, a situation unlikely to encourage innovation. We in Railfuture want modern, sustainable, thriving local railways and we want to make strong economic and social arguments for the development of the entire network.

Can we learn from Metro and light rail systems in Britain and Ireland? Light rail is growing. Besides London Underground there are three light metro systems, London's Docklands Light Railway, Glasgow's Subway and Tyne & Wear's Metro, all of which have development plans.

There are also eight modern light rail systems in Edinburgh, Blackpool and Fylde Coast, Greater Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, the West Midlands,

Croydon and Dublin. All have growing ridership and plans to expand without a national funding structure as applies to our national railways. All are under scrutiny in terms of cost so innovation and the passenger experience have been a focus.

The question is whether these varied experiences of different, often local control, different management and different financing regimes and the availability of funds can help in the cost effective provision of our local rail services, particularly with regard to the passenger experience.

Many of these light or metro railways have focused on attracting and retaining passengers in such areas as use of social media, good signage, information, good access, and a keen attention to passenger safety and security despite sharing space with road users, as well as the provision of attractive vehicles to travel on. All these systems have, or

are planned to have in the case of Blackpool, direct interchange with the National Rail system so are reasonably easy to reach from many parts of Britain, and from Northern Ireland in the case of a trip to Dublin.

So please *Go and Compare – Light*. Next time you get a chance to travel on one of these developing systems just look, and take photographs of good and bad practice. We are looking to use your feedback on best practice to strengthen our campaigning.

You can send in your feedback to feedback@railfuture.org.uk

■ Ian Brown CBE FCILT is Railfuture's director of policy

ISSN 0267-5943



9 770267 594000



48 >