

**Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.**

As always, feel free to forward RUEX to a colleague, or to reproduce items in your own newsletter (quoting sources). If you want further details of any of the stories mentioned, look on the relevant website or, failing that, get back to me so I can send you the full text.

*For details about group affiliation to Railfuture, see website [here](#) (from the "Membership Type" menu, select "RUG").*

*We continue with the usual roundup of news items from rail user groups around the UK. As always, I'm very grateful to RUGs that send me their magazines and bulletins.*

**Rail Action Group East of Scotland – promised improvements need to be "Kept on Track"**

Some of the RAGES committee met representatives of ScotRail and Network Rail in July. The main topic on the agenda was the progress of design work for East Linton and Reston stations. The interim report with preliminary costings is due out shortly and the detailed designs will be completed by next spring, ready for public consultations and planning applications. The RAGES representatives learnt: that there are various technical problems to overcome, that passing loops at Reston are not currently on the agenda and that station platform lengths are to accommodate 4-car sets.

The final date for implementation of the local service to Dunbar and the re-opened stations at East Linton and Reston is still December 2018, but it was noted that earlier opportunities could arise if the project was completed early.

After the meeting, RAGES looked back at their copy of Network Rail's 2011 Route Study for Scotland which mentioned that 3- and 6-car formations may be an option for the future; this suggests that 4-car platforms may not be long enough unless selective door opening is used. They intend to raise the matter of platform lengths with the project team at a later date.

In the meantime, the group has embarked on another postcard campaign, asking its members and others that might be interested to sign a pre-printed card and return it to the Scottish Transport Minister asking him to ensure that the local service and the station reopenings were "Kept on Track".

The transfer of Dunbar station to ScotRail management on 1 July has not been without teething troubles, mostly to do with buying tickets from the ticket machine. RAGES wrote to the company requesting solutions. ScotRail then replied apologising for the problems and giving a timescale for resolution.

**Campaign for Borders Rail – blueprint for successful campaigning**

In a press release, the CBR urged campaigners lobbying for the re-opening of other rail lines in Scotland to learn the lessons of the 17-year Borders campaign culminating in the return of trains on 6 Sept 2015 – which CBR describes as "one of the greatest achievements of grassroots rail campaigning in British history". Acknowledgment of CBR's pioneering work has come from two campaigns in Fife which are hoping to be the next to put new routes on the Scottish railway map...

Allen Armstrong of the **LevenMouth Rail Campaign**, said: "LMRC has been inspired by the recent wave of rail re-openings, especially the Borders campaign, and the re-imagining of a more rational and inclusive transport network. If we are now in 'a new age of rail', as a recent Scottish Transport Minister claimed, we are very hopeful the 45,000 residents of Levenmouth and the East Neuk will soon be reconnected. The Borders Railway must not be the last. Despite feasibility studies here concluding a very strong case for reinstating the Thornton-Leven line, we also appreciate from the Borders example that ultimately it is politics that exerts greatest sway in these decisions."

Jane Ann Liston, Convenor of the **STARlink campaign**, fighting for reinstatement of five miles of track between the East Coast Main Line and St Andrews, said: “The sheer dogged persistence of the campaigners in the Borders and their refusal to give up for nearly 50 years shows that tenacity pays off in the end. We in St Andrews salute their achievement and hope that it will pave the way for the reconnection to our town, an incredibly important destination and economic hub, through being a top tourist destination and the home of Scotland’s oldest university. Enabling direct rail services from the Home of Golf to Scotland’s capital as well as to Dundee would be a great boost for the whole area.”

In a subsequent announcement, CBR claims to have saved the Scottish Government from embarrassment over their lack of forethought about the tourist potential of the Borders Railway. The Government had been very downbeat about tourism despite the Borders being renowned for Sir Walter Scott’s home at Abbotsford, several historic abbeys and delightful scenery. Campaigners argued long and hard that this potential should be recognised and they successfully persuaded ministers that Tweedbank platforms should be long enough to receive excursion trains. A spokesman added: “through our efforts, the original 1849 station building at Stow was saved - this will be an attraction in itself, and its potential re-use as a community facility could include facilities for rail-based walking and cycling trips in the surrounding hills.”

### **Furness Line Action Group – bouquets and brickbats for DRS loco-hauled service**

Direct Rail Services have begun operating 4-coach passenger trains on the Cumbrian Coast line, top and tailed with Class 37 locomotives. FLAG says the trains bring much-needed comfort but at the expense of longer journey times and poorer connections at Barrow. It’s thought that the slow timings are to allow for longer door opening and closing – FLAG’s suggestion for on-train announcements about door operation has been adopted and should help to reduce the delays. It’s hoped that trials using a single loco at one end and a driving trailer coach at the other will also lead to better performance. The group has made good use of the excellent “RealTimeTrains” website to build up a picture of train punctuality, and has used the data to lobby train operators about the need for better performance.

FLAG has responded positively to the consultation on the proposed Moorside nuclear power station near Sellafield, since a key part of the strategy for delivering the project is the use of rail transport for both logistics and workers. Rail infrastructure enhancement will be needed, and the various options for this will be the subject of a second consultation.

Earlier this year, FLAG had “flagged up” a ticketing problem on First TransPennine Express services, brought about by the introduction of a different type of rolling stock on which seat reservations were not possible – the result was the inability to secure Advance fares on affected trains, meaning much higher fares for certain journeys. To their credit, the operator immediately replied saying this was not their intention, and within days they had resolved the anomaly.

The group has been looking into overcrowding in their area following the replacement of 2-car trains with a single car on certain Northern Rail services. They’ve been assured that a further reshuffle of diesel units in the autumn will solve this particular problem. However, members remain very concerned about rolling stock allocations in the run up to franchise changeover, especially now that the effect of the electrification “pause” on diesel train availability is becoming apparent.

Members reluctantly voted for an increase in subscriptions from £5 to £7/yr at the group’s AGM. However, there was a suggestion that they could apply to community support groups in the future to help fund their voluntary activities.

## **Support the Oldham-Rochdale-Manchester Line (STORM) – subway success**

Issues that have been raised recently by members include: compensation for passengers affected by trains skipping their stops to make up time, and inconsiderate drivers parking across the entrance to the newly reopened subway leading to Rochdale station. STORM had campaigned long and hard for the reopening of the pedestrian subway, consequently several of their members attended the low-key opening event in July.

It seems that rail users at Manchester Victoria are now being bombarded with banal announcements, as suffered previously at Piccadilly: “Is there no escape from this wretched woman’s hectoring tones telling us not to leave our luggage unattended (this is Manchester – it will get nicked long before the security services see it), or to take care as it’s been raining (Lancastrians are used to wet weather) and all the rest of her self-evident banalities. When will Network Rail realise that the travelling public does have a modicum of common sense?”

After the notorious “pause” the Dept. for Transport has now published what it calls “A blueprint for connecting the Northern Powerhouse”. One STORM member remarked “has anyone spotted anything we didn’t know already”. The group is concerned that previously-announced projects have been omitted, asking: “should we be worried or is this just another outpouring of empty hype from the DfT?” They also make the point that “if the so-called Powerhouse means anything for rail it should surely mean developing a wide range of journey opportunities not just having faster trains into, or between, the big cities.”

*Trusted news source Transport Briefing begins its review of the Government’s announcement thus:*

### **OLD PROJECTS RECYCLED FOR NORTHERN POWERHOUSE.**

Road and rail projects dating back to the last Labour government have been repackaged in an attempt to show that the current government is delivering transport improvements required to create a northern powerhouse. ...

## **Skipton - East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership – “Output Definitions Group” get to work**

Lancashire County Council is leading a Working Group which is bringing together and examining the existing evidence for re-opening of the Skipton to Colne Line and the campaign group, SELRAP is playing its part.

During 2014, two senior representatives from the Dept. for Transport spent a day with SELRAP representatives and were shown the Skipton to Colne trackbed and also the contrast in existing rail services in the area. This led to a one day forum in January 2015 which was brokered by the DfT and hosted by SELRAP. Senior representatives from Lancashire and North Yorkshire County Councils, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive attended, alongside those from Network Rail and Northern Rail. This was a crucial meeting for the campaign group as it considered whether there was to be a future for the Skipton to Colne Line.

The forum led to an Output Definitions Group being set up by Lancashire County Council, with other agencies represented in the group, including SELRAP. The group is tasked with considering the best ways of improving connectivity in order to promote economic growth, sustainable tourism, and increased access to employment, together with education and training opportunities. Findings from this in-depth analysis, which must be completed by the end of 2015, will be fed into the North of England rail review to be carried out by Network Rail in 2016.

The outcome from that review could be a crucial factor in determining whether the Skipton – Colne scheme features within the DfT’s long term planning process for construction in Network Rail’s Control Period 6, which would be between 2019 and 2024.

*– from Railfuture North West Branch newsletter*

### **Friends of the Brigg and Lincoln Lines – *volunteers busy, but Council & NR need to play their part***

In an update, the Friends start by thanking Brigg Town Council for a brand new finger-post sign, directing visitors arriving at Brigg Station to the town. The group has been busy each week at Brigg station, clearing up rubbish from the Thursday market – they're calling on the council and Network Rail to play their part in keeping the station area free from intrusive vegetation. Patronage on the line is showing a dramatic increase, thanks in part to the efforts of FoBLL members and others in publicising the train services.

### **Shrewsbury to Chester Rail Users Association – *plenty going on, so why not get involved?***

In the coming months SCRUA will be keeping their eye on the re-franchising of the Wales and Borders services and the possible devolution of transport powers to the West Midlands city region. The group continues to press for further line redoubling in the Wrexham area, believing that the current scheme is inadequate; they also want to see a "parkway" type transport interchange at Wrexham North. Another aspiration is for electrification of the line between Chester and Shrewsbury via Wrexham, although it's realised that electrification for lines in North Wales is at least 10 years away.

Planning permission has been granted for 50 homes on a site off Station Road in Baschurch, raising hopes of reviving the Baschurch station re-opening campaign. Also, SCRUA has recently received notice of a campaign for a new station at Cefn Mawr, central to the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site – the group is keeping an open mind on this one.

Concern has been expressed by SCRUA to Arriva Trains Wales regarding the tight connection times for passengers changing at Shrewsbury, arriving at the island platforms 4-7 but needing to change via the underpass to platform 3. The station interchange allowance is officially seven minutes but SCRUA says that this is inadequate for passengers with limited mobility to reach platform 3.

Friends of Chirk Station have had a 'blooming' and busy year. The funds raised at the Easter Bunny Coffee morning, jointly organised with local branch of NSPCC, have been used to purchase plants, seeds and compost. The Friends have added three large planters on Platform 2, brimming over with vegetables, herbs and salad crops. The station theme this year is Alice in Wonderland, complete with tea party and an iron White Rabbit (well, two rabbits in fact) provided by British Ironworks of Oswestry.

Altogether, there's plenty going on and SCRUA's chairman appeals to members to get more involved with the running of the group.

### **Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association – *count methodology seems flawed***

In June, several SARPA members attended Arriva Trains Wales' annual conference for Cambrian Line station adopters at Portmeirion, and found it a useful event. However, one statistic quoted by the Company in the Q&A session was met with disbelief by some of the delegates: it was claimed that only 3.9% of ATW services suffered with standing passengers, and this was to be expected around big cities at rush hour. Ironically, their train home suffered overcrowding – yet it ran outside peak hours, far from any city! One regular traveller, who kept his own log, explained a possible reason for the false statistic: ATW's conductors regularly make headcounts on all lines, but these appear to be when they've got a quiet moment and can easily walk through the train. *Hmmmm!?!?*

In the July edition of SARPA's newsletter, The Brigadier (who confesses to have "planning ahead for future threats and scenarios in my DNA") warns of dangerous times ahead. Diesel units on the line will be life expired in the next ten years and any replacement units would have to be compatible with the line's experimental signalling system (little chance now of the system being rolled out

nationally given Network Rail's current problems). And if a not-for-profit Welsh franchise does become a reality, will neighbouring English counties allow this somewhat left-wing experiment to filter into their areas – there may be calls to cut back the Welsh operation implying that Cambrian Line trains may no longer run through to Birmingham and passengers might have to change at Shrewsbury.

### **Cotswold Line Promotion Group – “double whammy” of fare rises and time restrictions**

Cotswold Line rail users have been expressing their anger at First Great Western's new “Fare Deal” which has resulted in increases of up to 90% in off-peak walk-on fares coupled with fresh restrictions on times of travel. In the case of return travel to London, the earliest arrival time can be as late as 1230, and Super Off Peak restrictions for the return leg operate between 1500 and 1900. As part of the package, FGW has introduced a raft of new Advance fares in an attempt to bring the route “into line” with other routes on the network (“available only to those who know about it and with the technology to take advantage” comments the CLPG's former Chairman, Derek Potter). The CLPG forcefully expressed the view that the Cotswold Line is a very different animal to FGW's InterCity routes which offer better frequency and faster journey times - the timing restrictions appear to be based on more favoured routes like Bristol-London. The group is not hopeful of FGW reducing the off-peak fare increases but is continuing to press for easement of the time restrictions.

Commenting on the failure of Network Rail to meet its targets for line upgrades, the CLPG's current Chairman, John Ellis, fears that electrification to Oxford will be delayed and the prospect of further redoubling on the Cotswold Line is looking bleak. However, John remains optimistic that minor projects will proceed as normal, such as enhancements to car parking and cycle racks. The group is arguing for additional trains on the Cotswold Line from the December timetable change and an improved service between Worcester and Cheltenham. Further meetings have also been taking place about reopening the line between Stratford and Honeybourne, although it's recognised the project is probably 10 years away from success.

Anyone seeking to understand Network Rail's current woes is advised to read Derek Potter's fable about the wise Prince who set aside 38 bags of gold to improve the provision of camel transport: a camelity waiting to happen! The moral of the tale is: “don't boast to the camel owners how much gold you have because they will always take that as the minimum spend level”.

Organisers of the Moreton-in-Marsh Show (Sat 5 Sept) are keen to encourage travel by train, and will once again be offering a discount to those showing a valid rail ticket. However, staff at the gate at last year's Show were unaware of the arrangement and the CLPG is reminding the organisers so that history does not repeat itself.

This year's charter train, jointly organised between the CLPG and FGW, is to Tenby on 26 Sept. Nearly all the available seats on the HST unit have been snapped up.

### **Peterborough-Ely-Norwich Rail Users' Group – successful campaign for step-free access**

For over 20 years, PENRUG has argued for step-free access to westbound trains at Wymondham then, 2 years ago, the group pointed out that an opportunity to achieve this aim had come about due to the loop line around the back of the platform being locked out-of-use. A temporary walkway across the former siding has now been put in place, complete with proper lighting: “We thank officers of Norfolk County Council for their tenacious pursuit of our shared objective in the face of what seemed insurmountable odds.”

PENRUG's secretary reckons that, far from being “paused”, electrification schemes for the Midland Main Line and Pennines have effectively been killed off. This means that Rail North's operational reason for withdrawing diesel units, and thereby ending the much-valued direct service between Liverpool and Norwich, has evaporated. He concludes that this service should therefore not be withdrawn ... but persuading the Dept. for Transport's Rail Executive to keep it may be far from easy.

In the meantime, PENRUG wants to see improvements to the customer experience on Liverpool-Norwich trains, notably in terms of catering and cleaning.

One member of the group recently experienced a problem booking Advance tickets for a family outing using two separate railcards: one for a disabled person and companion, the other a senior railcard. They found that the booking website could not cope with two different railcards in the same transaction, with the result that the booked seats were at opposite ends of the carriage.

March station volunteers will take part in the Heritage Open Days scheme on the morning of Saturday 12 September. Visitors will be able to see what the Friends of March Railway Station have achieved and learn of their plans for the future. They will also be welcome to call at the Hereward community rail partnership stand.

### **East Suffolk Travellers' Association – celebrating 50 years**

ESTA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations get under way this autumn. First Bus will be providing a vehicle free of charge for a group outing to the East Anglian Railway Museum near Colchester. Then on the actual anniversary in November, there's to be a lunchtime reception at Saxmundham; a 32-page commemorative booklet will be launched at the event and invited guests will be able to view an exhibition about the group's work. The anniversary material will then go on show at local libraries and other venues. [*Can any other user group beat ESTA's 50 years of campaigning? – Ed*]

Abellio Greater Anglia has agreed to stop an early morning train at Westerfield station from the date of the December timetable change. This is welcome news and one of three service changes for which ESTA had pressed. The group is hopeful that further stops at Westerfield can be accommodated once line speeds are increased.

ESTA had cause to complain about Lowestoft booking office being closed due to staff shortages, and has been assured by the train operator that an additional member of staff is to be recruited. The group welcomes actual or projected improvements at various stations, but there's frustration over the lack of progress on plans to improve Saxmundham's dilapidated station.

August is survey month for ESTA, and members are urged to send in their reports about journeys undertaken by train or bus using either the questionnaire attached to the group's newsletter or the survey form on their website: "Your answers will help us in our dialogue with the operators and we shall as usual analyse the results and issue a report."

ESTA's information stall has been deployed at various events over the summer period. In May, two members of the group helped out at the *Community Rail in the City* event at London Liverpool Street station. ESTA members enjoyed a boat trip on the River Alde in May and their late-summer outing is by bus to the Mid Suffolk Light Railway.

### **Hitchin Rail Users' Group – Thameslink and EWRL developments spell uncertainty for rail users**

The group is frustrated that so much of the detail of the full Thameslink timetable from Dec 2018 was still unclear, and there are still unresolved questions about rolling stock allocations - they've asked Govia Thameslink Railway to at least supply them with key dates for user input. The group is also keeping an eye on proposals for extending the East-West Rail Link towards Cambridge – clearly if the route via Hitchin were to be adopted, there would be repercussions for rail services locally.

HRUG says that the Great Northern service is currently running reasonably well, including in the weekday peaks. Loadings on Hitchin peak fast trains continue to be very heavy, causing some passengers to migrate to semi-fast services to be sure of a seat. There are also problems of congestion on platforms at both Finsbury Park and Hitchin, leading to gate lines being locked open at the former and an alternative exit being made available at the latter.

It's reported that there are still some problems with inexperienced Booking Office staff not being able to deal easily with 'unusual' destinations (recent examples included Faversham and Hope) and

not being able to issue several basic types of ticket and book seats effectively - the group will raise these points with the train operator. There's a hint that funding might be available for minor station improvements and this set the group thinking of projects that need doing.

Earlier this month, the group submitted a written response to Hertfordshire County Council's consultation on its draft rail strategy. They expressed surprise that rail user groups were not consulted earlier in the process, and that the draft seems to ignore Hitchin's importance as a key railway centre. Commenting on proposed improvements to Hertford Loop services, they say that capacity and reliability problems are not solely down to rolling stock; better signalling and passing loops are equally important. On East Coast Main Line services, HRUG recommends better connections at Peterborough for people travelling north. The group would like to see the restoration of rail links between Hertford North and Hertford East, and between Hatfield and St Albans.

### **Abbey Flyer Users' Group (ABFLY) - resounding support for rail at packed public meeting**

ABFLY played host to a Public Meeting on 6th July, at which overwhelming and at times vociferous support for the rail link was expressed. The full house of over 65 people at the Bricket Wood Social Club heard guest speakers from London Midland, the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership and Hertfordshire County Council express their views on the future of the line, with the opportunity to ask searching questions.

Several questions to the LM representative concerned the longstanding problem of patchy revenue collection on the branch. It was agreed that current ticket sales figures do not reflect the true usage of the line and as such, this may undermine the case for future investment. ABFLY has long argued that conductors do not always have time to walk through the train issuing tickets between stations because their duties require them to operate the doors - so ticket sales can generally only be done from the back cab with the current rolling stock. The group continues to monitor revenue collection, and passengers are encouraged to log whether they had a ticket inspection on their journey via a simple online form on their website. The group also keeps an eye on train cleanliness and feeds information about this back to LM.

The speakers from HCC explained the background to the County's draft Rail Strategy document and that the Council's philosophy is to "influence not dictate" matters concerning rail service and infrastructure. However, people felt disappointed that HCC were leaving the delivery side of things to rail industry 'partners', without much evidence of leadership. This was in contrast to other County Councils, such as Suffolk and Cornwall, where passing loops have been delivered and local rail services improved. In terms of improving the service frequency, the restoration of the passing-loop at Bricket Wood is a "no-brainer", but the draft Rail Strategy did not read like that - instead it seemed to dismiss the possibility, citing previous studies which are more than 10 years out of date. This air of 'fait accompli' was severely criticised ... but, by the end of the meeting, ABFLY had an assurance that the business and technical case for a passing loop would be re-examined.

Several attendees questioned the inclusion of a Guided Bus option in what was supposed to be a Rail Strategy document - this was thought to be a dangerous irrelevance given the severity of problems with guided bus schemes elsewhere: "What is needed is to concentrate on improving and enhancing the existing rail service."

Direct trains to London Euston in the peaks would be desirable, but the view is that this could only be achieved by splitting and joining trains at Watford Junction due to the lack of spare paths on the main line. After years of feasibility studies and a great deal of taxpayers money, the service on the Abbey Line is still fundamentally no better than it had been since electrification in 1988, and ABFLY has an outstanding Freedom of Information request with HCC to uncover how much has been spent on these studies over the years.

### **Chesham & District Transport Users' Group – *too late now to oppose ticket office closures***

CDTUG has been opposing ticket office closures for the past two years – the group reports that Amersham station ticket office has now closed as part of London Underground's package of so-called "improvements" and the closure of the Chesham ticket office is expected at the end of September. Passengers at Amersham have woken up to the change and have started a petition, but CDTUG says that it's too late and in any case LU seem to be unmoved by petitions.

The recent publication of a table of passenger statistics at LU stations reveals that Chesham had experienced 42% growth since 2010 - the third highest on the network, just behind Heathrow T4 and Stratford (the latter thought to be mainly attributable to the 2012 Olympics).

CDTUG's secretary had been contacted by the local press, and was quoted as saying: "It's encouraging to see such strong growth coming through at Chesham. There's no doubt that the new building that's been going on locally has had a positive effect on passenger numbers." He added "whereas in 2010 we only had two direct trains to London in the morning and again in the evening, they're now all through trains without the necessity to change at Chalfont and Latimer, which has helped to boost numbers. However, the feedback we get is that the numbers would be higher still if LU had left the fast off-peak and weekend services in place, rather than making them stop at all stations about two years ago."

CDTUG has now set up a Facebook page and is looking at having "business cards" printed to promote the work of the group.

### **South Hampshire Rail Users' Group – *group's painstaking research put to good use***

The surprise announcement that the South West Trains franchise would not now be extended to 2019 was seen by SHRUG as a possible new dawn for commuters in Hampshire. The group will be drawing on their "History of South West Trains" in the coming months to argue for a better deal for passengers. The 32-page history, spanning two decades and quoting over 170 information sources, is available on their website [here](#).

Commenting on current Cross-Country services, SHRUG would like to see the Newcastle-Southampton frequency doubled to hourly and argues that this could be achieved with just one additional train unit. The group regrets that the "Electric Spine" proposal for additional wiring from Southampton to Reading and from Oxford to Coventry has been dropped – this would have provided an electric route all the way from Southampton to Scotland.

Earlier this year, SHRUG responded in depth to the Dept. for Transport's consultation on Changes to the Rail Penalty Fares appeals process. They began by saying that there seems to have been little progress on requiring train operators to treat passengers fairly and reasonably since the previous consultation on penalty fares in 2010. The group thinks that current problems stem from the fact that the fares structure has become more complex, and that booking office staff are being replaced by ticket machines which can be unreliable and difficult to use. In backing proposals for a more sympathetic handling of appeals, the group was able to quote many examples of unfair treatment from its own archives. Overall, they thought that the DfT's proposals did not go far enough: "Train operators should be required to put their efforts into face-to-face service and ensuring that passengers can obtain the cheapest available ticket, instead of in wrong-footing them."

### **Isle of Wight Bus and Rail Users' Group – *Keep the Island Line in Franchise!***

IWBRUG has published a policy document which sets out the key requirements for the long term operation of the Island Line, covering: service levels, frequencies and ferry connections as well as track maintenance guarantees and the urgent requirement for rolling stock replacement. The group believes that it is vital that the service remains part of the national rail network within a larger

southern or south western franchise. They say that it's wholly unrealistic and impractical to expect a local community group to take over and run the service, as has been suggested.

A number of individuals and groups, including IWBURUG and several local councillors, have come together to form a campaign partnership known as KILF – "Keep the Island Line in Franchise". Their aim is to secure the future of the Island Line within the next South Western rail franchise (2017 onwards), with a sustainable, reliable and viable service on the existing route for the duration of the next franchise period. Their strategy is to involve the local community in the campaign and to secure the support of the Island MP, councils and other stakeholders.

So far, KILF has issued a press release which provoked further correspondence in the local newspaper. They've also held a public meeting in Shanklin, managing to attract a capacity audience for the event. An assurance that the Island Line would remain in the franchise had been received from the Dept. for Transport in advance of the meeting, but attendees were advised to remain vigilant in view of pressures on the Department to save money.

### **Tarka Rail Association – *Direct Award outcomes mostly positive, but there are some omissions***

The direct award of a franchise extension to First Great Western has resulted in some pretty good outcomes for the Exeter-Barnstaple line, however there were some omissions which the TRA has highlighted in letters to the appropriate authorities. These include: extension of some Tarka Line trains beyond Exeter to Axminster (thus fulfilling Devon Metro aspirations), a late-evening train on Saturdays and an earlier train on Sundays. The TRA has offered to help put together a bid for various station improvements under the Customer and Communities Improvement Fund, recently launched by FGW.

From the May timetable change, there has been a reduction in the number of request-stop calls shown in the Tarka Line timetable. There was to be an even greater cull of request stops, but thanks to strong representations from the TRA and others during a timetable review meeting, the majority did not take place. However, this minor victory did not prevent one member writing in to say that pub visits have become a lot less convenient, especially to the isolated tavern at Portsmouth Arms.

Although the HMRC has imposed complicated rules over the payment for work such as passenger surveys, the TRA is hopeful that this important job can resume from August, once an agreement is reached with FGW about payment in kind; this will take the form of travel tickets that can be used anywhere on the train operator's network. Potential volunteers are asked to contact the TRA's committee.

A feature article in the TRA's summer magazine looks at the variety of rolling stock used on the line to Barnstaple (and beyond) since 1948, from loco-hauled stock to the current "better than nothing" Pacer units and single-car Class 153s. The article concludes with a glimpse of the future when Class 158 units, as currently used on Portsmouth-Cardiff services, will be cascaded to the Tarka Line ... hopefully after a much-needed refurbishment as they will, by then, be over 25 years old.

After trying for several years to persuade bus operator Filers of Ilfracombe to extend their 301 bus service to Barnstaple station, the TRA is pleased that several journeys do now extend from the town centre to the station as from the May timetable change.

...news from Railfuture follows...

### RAILFUTURE'S AUTUMN CONFERENCE - *early bird discount ends soon!*

Railfuture autumn conference and RUG awards ceremony takes place at the Mercure Bristol Holland House Hotel, Redcliff Hill, **Bristol BS1 6SQ**, on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November** from 10:45 to 17:00.

The conference fee is £30, but there's an early bird discount for members booking before **31 Aug 2015**. For further information and full list of speakers, see: [www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences)

### RAILFUTURE'S RUG AWARDS COMPETITION - *closing date is fast approaching!*

Railfuture's *fourth* Rail User Group Awards competition remains open to receive your entries, but hurry up! The closing date for your submissions is **Tuesday 1st September 2015**. Awards will be presented at Railfuture's November conference in Bristol.

The award categories for 2015 are:

1. \*Best Newsletter GOLD
2. \*Best Newsletter SILVER
3. \*Best Website GOLD
4. \*Best Website SILVER
5. Best Campaign
6. Best New Group
7. Best Campaigner – *Railfuture members only*
8. Best Social Media Promotion – *a new category for 2015*
9. Judges' Special Award

\*not available to last year's winners

Full details about how to enter are on the Railfuture website [here](#). You can also read about who won in previous years – and how they did it!

### RAILFUTURE ROLLING STOCK PANEL

In recent months, the Panel had met with Eversholt to discuss refurbishment of Class 321 units and with Vivarail at Long Marston to look at their plans for creating diesel multiple units from former London Underground "D" stock.

Discussion with Transport Focus confirmed the Panel's suspicions that the interiors of the Class 700 Thameslink Units had been specified by the Dept. for Transport with no input at all from passengers' representatives. Given that the DfT appears impervious to criticism of its design specifications for these units, the best course of action may be to bring the matter to the attention of other Government bodies such as the National Audit Office or the Transport Select Committee. The Panel is mindful that the Class 707 units, on order for South West Trains, are to be based on the design for the Class 700s.

### RAILFUTURE NORTH WEST

Railfuture's NW Branch has learned that Network Rail are considering removing the junction at Poulton-le-Fylde with the mothballed line to Fleetwood as part of the works needed to upgrade the signalling for when the line is electrified. It is said this is part of the works necessary to straighten out the section to improve line speeds through the station, but Railfuture believes this can be achieved without severing the junction (works to renew the junction were done as recently as 2007!). The Branch is writing to Network Rail, expressing its concern.

## RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA

In a press release, Railfuture warmly welcomes the announcement released in July by the East West Rail Consortium of Local Authorities, revealing the two preferred corridor options of the Central Section of East West Rail between Cambridge and Bedford (details [here](#)). Either corridor eventually chosen for development will revolutionise the connectivity of East Anglia and the South Midlands.

Peter Wakefield, Chairman of Railfuture East Anglia, particularly welcomes the inclusion of a railway station at Cambridge Addenbrooke's and looks forward for further benefits across Cambridgeshire as plans develop. He added: "this announcement vindicates the group's 25 year campaign to improve connectivity across this important region."

## RAILFUTURE THAMES VALLEY

The Branch announced that consultants have delivered their preliminary findings to Oxfordshire County Council relating to long term public transport options for the Witney-Oxford corridor, covering heavy rail, light rail and buses along the route of the old branch line. Campaigners are now urging action on another scheme in the area which involves additional car parking at Hanborough and re-doubling of the North Cotswold Line. A long-term objective is a cross-City service from Hanborough through Oxford and on to a reopened Cowley branch.

The application to build 22 houses on the disused section of the Bourne End branch has been withdrawn after opposition from Railfuture and others.

*...and now the rest of the news ...*

## NETWORK RAIL "SYSTEM OPERATION" UNDER SCRUTINY – *consultation now open*

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has launched a consultation on system operation. System operation is about how Network Rail operates the rail network and how decisions by Network Rail and others are made about the use of the system and its expansion over time. It covers a range of functions from long term planning, timetabling and allocation of route access, to day to day running activities such as signalling.

The consultation is the start of a conversation with industry and users about how greater focus on system operation can deliver a more efficient and effective rail sector. ORR is hosting a workshop on this topic jointly with Network Rail on Friday 2 October. This consultation closes on Friday 16 October.

To read the full consultation paper and to get in touch with the team, click [here](#).

## COMMUNITY RAIL PLAN FOR LINE BETWEEN PETERBOROUGH AND ELY – *have your say!*

The government is consulting on plans to designate the 29-mile route between Peterborough and Ely - known as the Hereward line - as a community rail service. This would allow the community to design train services according to local needs [*did they really mean to say that? – Ed*], which in turn would help increase passenger numbers, improve connectivity to key destinations and ultimately boost the local economy.

Rail Minister Claire Perry said: "We know how important this line is to local communities in the rural Fenland area, and it's right that passengers have a bigger say in shaping its future. By designating the Hereward line as a community rail service, we can breathe new life into this route, ensure its long term future, and improve connections that will help grow the local economy."

The 8-week consultation runs until 25 September 2015. More details [here](#).

## **COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS – Shortlist just published**

Projects and volunteers shortlisted for an award in ACoRP's 2015 Community Rail Awards competition can be found on the ACoRP [website](#) (on the left-hand panel of the Home page, wait for the appropriate heading to rotate into view then click on it).

The awards ceremony will take place at the Riviera International Centre in Torquay on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015. Advance booking is essential – see website for details and booking form.

## **PARTNERSHIP FUNDING FOR CCTV PROTECTION**

The Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership has put together a funding package that resulted in a new CCTV installation at Bentham Station. Support was given from Bentham Town Council, Northern Rail, British Transport Police, Network Rail, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships and the Department for Transport. The Transport Police provided advice on the system, camera choice and positioning, with the supplier offering detailed information that minimized costs. Volunteer help came from Friends of Bentham Station and Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group. The £2,000 cost of the CCTV system and installation was paid for with grants from organisations involved.

As well as providing added security for passengers, visitors and the volunteer members of the CRP, the system provides protection for the many enhancements to the station, including artwork and floral displays, the station entrance and car park. Anti-social behaviour, vandalism and petty theft are also being discouraged.

Gerald Townson, CRP chairman, said “this is a good example of Community Rail Partnership action at its best. We have a good system provided economically. It will be the subject of a Best Practice Paper for the benefit of other Community Rail Groups.” - *LLMCRP press release*

## **ORR GREEN LIGHTS WEST COAST OPEN ACCESS VENTURE**

Open access passenger train services look set to arrive on the West Coast Main Line after the Office of Rail and Road approved a track access application by Great North Western Railway.

GNWR is part of Alliance Rail Holdings, which is owned by Arriva and in turn Deutsche Bahn, a sister company to Grand Central which is already an open access operator on the East Coast Main Line.

The new West Coast service will provide six return services a day between London Euston and Blackpool. It is scheduled to start in 2018 and will see Arriva buy four new 6-car Alstom Pendolino trains and create around 120 new jobs to operate these services. The track access contract is expected to be valid for a decade.

GNWR has secured firm rights to call at Crewe, Preston and Poulton-le-Fylde with contingent rights to call at Milton Keynes, Nuneaton, Tamworth, Lichfield Trent Valley and Kirkham & Wesham. The rights to run between Queen's Park and Euston are also contingent due to uncertainty about station capacity during works for High Speed 2. - *Transport Briefing*

## **SENIOR DISCOUNTS ON OYSTER**

It is now possible to 'link' a Senior Railcard to an LT Oyster Card to secure discounts for tube travel although a visit to one of the few remaining LT Ticket Offices (eg Piccadilly Circus) was required.

- *from Hitchin Rail Users' Group meeting notes*

### **DELAY REPAY** – *you are now entitled to a cash refund*

Until recently, you were only entitled to compensation and refunds in National Rail vouchers, which meant you could only spend them when making a further journey (and had to use them by a certain date before they expired). But in July this year the rules changed - and you can now demand money.

Amendments made to the National Rail Conditions of Carriage mean you can now ask for monetary compensation if you were delayed or a refund if you were unable to travel. It can be refunded onto your debit or credit card, put in your bank account via BACs or paid as a cheque or cash - but some companies will only do monetary refunds by cheque so always check the company's policy you are claiming from.

The key word with these changes though is “ask” - it is down to you to make it clear that you want money rather than vouchers when you make your claim.

At the moment many train companies are still updating their online delay compensation and refund forms to reflect the change in the rules. So unless you can clearly highlight that you want cash, whether by ticking a box or writing cash or cheque on the form, the best option may be to call customer services or check the firm's website for how to do it.

If you run into any problems, just refer them to points 27 and 42 of the National Rail Conditions of Carriage which say you can request cash for refunds or disruption. – *Moneysavingexpert.com*

### **'CHEAP TICKETS' HAILED BY CLAIRE PERRY ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND**

Rail minister Claire Perry provoked a storm recently when she told passengers facing rising train fares that they could buy a ticket between Manchester and London for as little as £15. In fact tickets at this price do not exist for any journey over the next three months.

The row started when Miss Perry tried to defend the latest 1 per cent rail fare rise from early next year, by saying that for those booking well in advance, there were bargains to be had. She told Radio 4's Today programme: 'You can get travel from Manchester to London for £15.'

But after checks by the Daily Mail and rail watchdog Transport Focus, Virgin West Coast confirmed there were no £15 tickets 'currently' on its system for any day over the next 12 weeks – the period for which advance fares are advertised. By contrast, there was no shortage of £164.50 Anytime open tickets for walk-on passengers, nor the £80.60 standard fare for specific trains.

Critics accused ministers of using 'smoke and mirrors' to bring in higher fares by stealth. And they pointed out that even if the mythical £15 cheap ticket did exist, it would be a sideshow. The real victims as fares continue to soar are commuters forced to travel at peak time who have endured years of inflation-busting fare rises.

Virgin Trains declined to say how many £15 tickets between Manchester and London had ever been available – or when. A spokesman said: 'We are unable to give you a specific number.' He did say that some tickets priced at £20, £25 and £35 were 'current' – though many are for travelling at odd hours.

When pressed for clarification on the minister's comments about £15 tickets, the Department for Transport insisted that they do 'technically exist' but that 'some advance fares sell out very quickly' and that it was 'a matter for the operator'

Transport Focus condemned the 'lack of transparency' surrounding attractive-sounding cheap fares that most passengers could rarely, if ever, find. It said: 'Passengers don't know how many of the cheapest fares are available. Only the rail firms know, and they refuse to say. – *Daily Mail*

## **175 YEARS MAKING BRITAIN'S RAILWAYS SAFER**

August 2015 marks 175 years of service of the Railway Inspectorate (RI). Now part of the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), our safety inspectors have helped bring about huge improvements in health and safety on our railways, and saved countless lives.

In 1840, through the Railway Regulation Act, the Board of Trade appointed the first Railway Inspector to inspect construction and equipment of new railways. From 1871, railway inspectors were given powers to look at accidents and recommend ways to avoid them. Some improvements over the years include continuous brakes, guidance on boilers to avoid explosions, block signalling, rules for lookout men, designing cabs for driver protection in collisions, setting noise level maximums in driver cabs, and rules for emergency evacuation from trains.

Our most recent health and safety report shows our railways are the safest they have ever been, but there is no room for complacency. The vital work of our inspectors and our partners goes on.

We're celebrating this milestone throughout the year and have published a timeline and blog to share some of the history of the last 175 years in railways and there's more to come over the next few months. Find out more [here](#). - ORR press release

## **CONTRACTORS MAKE A START ON LEA BRIDGE STATION**

Construction of Lea Bridge station in north east London has begun - The new station is expected to open in spring 2016. Initially two trains per hour will serve the station, rising to four trains an hour in 2018. Costing £11.6m, the project has secured £5.5m from Waltham Forest Council, £1.1m from the Dept. for Transport's New Stations Fund and £5.5m from Section 106 contributions. According to Transport for London estimates, the new station will be used by 352,000 passengers a year by 2031. It will have two platforms, a footbridge and lifts, station canopy, ticket vending machines, Oyster readers, waiting shelters, help points and cycle storage. -Transport Briefing

## **SWANAGE RAILWAY EDGES TOWARDS WAREHAM**

The Swanage Railway's project to reconnect with the main line at Wareham and run a regular diesel service is moving steadily forwards, but not without delays and complications every step of the way.

With its sights fixed on a service start date of 22 June 2016, SR has drawn up two timetables, one assuming the ramped footbridge at Wareham will be finished on time and the other assuming it will not. The footbridge should have been rebuilt two years ago. This being Dorset, completion by June 2016 is not looking at all likely.

For those of us that cannot imagine why a delay to footbridge alterations prevents SR from running its preferred service pattern, we have to understand that the current step-free route across the line (a pedestrian-only level crossing) sits between Wareham station and the turnback siding for branch-line trains. The nearby signal box has now closed and the safety person who controls the 8-ft-high pedestrian crossing gates (similar to automatic gates for a private mansion) is employed by the Council, not Network Rail. Therefore a safety case for regular shunt moves is out of the question.

All this means that the diesel shuttle will have to nip in and out the station in one quick operation between main line trains – so anyone arriving on those trains will miss the shuttle! It's enough to make grown men weep.

## CHARITABLE STATUS – an appropriate model for RUGs?

A committee member of ABFLY (the Watford - St. Albans line users' group) has written to ask whether any other rail user group has charitable status, saying "It's something that could be a great advantage, eg for tax relief on donations and subscriptions ... but is there a precedent for this?"

I replied citing the one example that I know about: the Friends of Settle Carlisle Line and their separate charitable trust. If your group has charitable status, or if you have looked into going down this path, **please reply** via [ruginlink@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:ruginlink@railfuture.org.uk) and I will pass on your tips.

## EVENTS

**Events for 2015, lifted from newsletters and emails received in recent weeks, are listed below.**

Further events for the year are shown in the [Events listing on Railfuture's website](#)

Coloured blobs differentiate between types of events...

- National & regional rail events.
- Railfuture events (rail user group representatives are welcome to attend).
- Local Rail User Group events.
- **Party conference - a chance to lobby the decision makers !!!**

■ 1 September 2015. Tuesday. Closing date for Railfuture's Rail User Group Awards competition.

■ 1 September 2015. Tuesday. Hitchin Rail Users' Group meet in the Hitchin Initiative Office, Churchyard, **Hitchin** from 20:00.

■ 1 September 2015. Tuesday. Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association meet at The Royal Oak, **Welshpool** from 19:20. <http://sarpa.info>

■ 2 September 2015. Wednesday. AGM of the LevenMouth Rail Campaign at Fife Renewables Innovation Centre, Methil Docks, **Leven** from 18:30.

■ 3 September 2015. Thursday. Railfuture London and South East regional branch, Sussex & Coastway division meeting. 18.00. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Sussex+and+Coastway>

■ 5 September 2015. Saturday. Railfuture North West branch meet at Kendal Town Hall from 13:30. [northwest@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:northwest@railfuture.org.uk)

■ 6 September 2015. Sunday. Borders Railway opens.

■ 7 September 2015. Monday. Ribble Valley Rail meet at the New Inn, **Clitheroe** from 19:30. [www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk](http://www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk)

■ 7 September 2015. Monday. Watford Rail Users' Group open meeting at **Watford** Town Hall (Training Rm 1) from 18:45. Train operator representatives in attendance. [wrug2@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:wrug2@hotmail.co.uk)

■ 9 September 2015. Wednesday. Railfuture London & SE regional branch, Eastern division meeting. 18.30.

■ 9 September 2015. Wednesday. Railfuture Thames Valley Branch members' meeting at Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, **Bicester** OX26 6PS from 19:00. Guest speaker from Chiltern Railways. [thamesvalley@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:thamesvalley@railfuture.org.uk)

■ 14 September 2015. Monday. Lichfield Rail Promotion Group meet at the Kings Head, Bird Street, **Lichfield** from 20:00. [secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk). Representatives of train operators usually attend.

■ 14 September 2015. Monday. Skipton & East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership open members meeting. **Colne**. 19.00. <http://www.selrap.org.uk/>

■ 14 September 2015. Monday. Bexhill Rail Action Group meeting at Hastings Direct, **Collington**, East Sussex. 19.00-21.00. <http://www.bexhillrailaction.org.uk/>

- 16 September 2015. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton Line meet at the No 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes** from 19:00. [enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk)
- 17 September 2015. Thursday. Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group meets in Shepreth Village Hall, **Shepreth** at 19:00 for 19:30. <http://melbourn.org.uk/railusergroup/>
- 18 September 2015. Friday. Lancaster & Skipton Rail User Group AGM at **Bentham** Town Hall LA2 7LH. 19.30. Speaker: Pete Myers of Northern Rail. <http://www.lasrug.btck.co.uk/>

■ 16-22 September 2015. European Mobility Week promoting active travel and public transport. [www.mobilityweek.eu](http://www.mobilityweek.eu). Car free day is on 22 Sept: [www.etatrust.org.uk/2015/05/world-car-free-day-2015/](http://www.etatrust.org.uk/2015/05/world-car-free-day-2015/)

- **19-23 September 2015. Saturday to Wednesday. Liberal Democrat party conference in Bournemouth.**
- 19 September 2015. Saturday. Railfuture East Anglia branch meeting. **Norwich**. 14.00.
- 19 September 2015. Saturday. TransWilts Transport Forum meet at the Cheese Hall, The Town Hall, St John's Street, **Devizes** SN10 1BN from 10:00. [secretary@transwilts.org](mailto:secretary@transwilts.org)
- 20 September 2015. Sunday. Official opening of Birmingham New Street station after major rebuild.
- **25-28 September 2015. Friday to Monday. Green party conference in Bournemouth.**
- **27-30 September 2015. Sunday to Wednesday. Labour party conference. Brighton.**
- 30 September 2015. Wednesday. Rail Action Group East of Scotland (RAGES) AGM will take place at **Reston** Village Hall at 19:30. All are welcome to attend. <http://www.rages.org.uk/>
- 1 October 2015. Thursday. ACoRP Community Rail Awards 2015 competition gala dinner and awards ceremony at the Riviera International Centre, **Torquay**. <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>
- 3 October 2015. Saturday. Branches and Groups Away-day. Priory Rooms, 40 Bull Street, **Birmingham**, B4 6AF. 10.00-17.00. [chris.page@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:chris.page@railfuture.org.uk)
- **4-7 October 2015. Sunday to Wednesday. Conservative party conference, Manchester.**
- 5 October 2015. Monday. Ribble Valley Rail meet at the New Inn, **Clitheroe** from 19:30. [www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk](http://www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk)
- 7 October 2015. Wednesday. Shrewsbury-Chester Rail Users' Assn general meeting at the Booking Office Café, Gobowen station from 19:15. Guest speaker: Sheila Dee. [shrewsbury.chester@gmail.com](mailto:shrewsbury.chester@gmail.com)
- 8 October 2015. Thursday. NorthWest TravelWatch Conference in the Offices of Merseytravel, **Liverpool**, to include AGM. Details: [admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk](mailto:admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk)
- 8 October 2015. Thursday. London and South East branch, Sussex & Coastway division meeting. 18.00.
- 10 October 2015. Saturday. Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association AGM at the White Lion, **Machynlleth** from 11:00. [sarpa@sarpa.info](mailto:sarpa@sarpa.info)
- 10 October 2015. Saturday. East Suffolk Travellers' Association autumn meeting, in the parish church hall, **Aldeburgh** from 14:00. Guest speakers from Abellio & the County Council. [www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk](http://www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk)
- 12 October 2015. Monday. Lichfield Rail Promotion Group meet at the Kings Head, Bird Street, **Lichfield** from 20:00. [secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk). Representatives of train operators usually attend.
- 12 October 2015. Monday. Bexhill Rail Action Group meeting at Hastings Direct, **Collington**, East Sussex. 19.00-21.00. <http://www.bexhillrailaction.org.uk/>
- 16 October 2015. Friday. Lincolnshire Transport Conference at Springfield's event centre, **Spalding**. 10.00-16.00. Booking essential. <http://www.spaldingtransportforum.co.uk/>
- 19 October 2015. Monday. Avocet Line RUG's AGM at Malthouse, The Globe, **Topsham**. [www.avocetline.org.uk](http://www.avocetline.org.uk)
- 21 October 2015. Sustainable Transport Conference, **London**: [www.greeningtransport.co.uk/event-home](http://www.greeningtransport.co.uk/event-home)
- 23 – 25 October 2015. "Revolving Words – the Festival of Railway Literature", part of the 25th Anniversary Celebrations of the Wensleydale Railway Association, takes place at **Bedale** on the Wensleydale Railway. The full programme can be found at [www.revolvingwords.com](http://www.revolvingwords.com). Tickets are on sale now.
- 2 November 2015. Monday. Ribble Valley Rail meet at the New Inn, **Clitheroe** from 19:30. [www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk](http://www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk)
- 3 November 2015. Tuesday. Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association meet at the Sportsman, Severn Street, **Newtown** from 18:45. [sarpa@sarpa.info](mailto:sarpa@sarpa.info)

■ 7 November 2015. Saturday. Railfuture's Rail User Conference at The Mercure Hotel, **Bristol**, just a short walk from Temple Mills station. Details [here](#).

■ 9 November 2015. Monday. Lichfield Rail Promotion Group meet at the Kings Head, Bird Street, **Lichfield** from 20:00. [secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk). Representatives of train operators usually attend.

■ 10 November 2015. Tuesday. ACoRP Members' Seminar North in **Manchester**.  
<http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>

■ 13 November 2015. Friday. East Suffolk Travellers' Assn 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary reception and exhibition at the Market Hall, **Saxmundham**. Booking essential. [www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk](http://www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk)

■ 14 November 2015. Saturday. Railfuture North West branch meet at The Moor Club, Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor, **Stockport** (provisional venue). [northwest@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:northwest@railfuture.org.uk)

■ 17 November 2015. Tuesday. ACoRP Members' Seminar South at the Dept. for Transport offices, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, **London** SW1P 4DR. <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>

■ 18 November 2015. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton Line AGM at the Sloop Inn, **Barton-on-Humber** from 20:00 (food and ale from 18:00). [enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk)

■ 12 December 2015. Saturday. Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association meet at the Cambrian Hotel, **Aberystwyth** from 11:45. [sarpa@sarpa.info](mailto:sarpa@sarpa.info)

■ 14 December 2015. Monday. Lichfield Rail Promotion Group meet at the Kings Head, Bird Street, **Lichfield** from 20:00. [secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk). Representatives of train operators usually attend.

■ 13 January 2016. Wednesday. Harrow Public Transport Users Association rail meeting at Harrow Baptist Church Hall, College Road, **Harrow** from 14:00

Please say if you no longer want to receive Rail User Express, or if someone else in your organisation wishes to be included on the circulation list.

*This bulletin has been sent from Dorset by...*

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