

Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.

As always, feel free to forward RUG 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 source material.

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

Unfortunately, I have to start this month's editorial with an apology to both Railfuture North West and TravelWatch North West, and to any member of either organisation who was misled by the January issue. When TravelWatch informed me of a new date and venue for their Conference in Manchester, by mistake I moved the Railfuture AGM event in Blackpool instead. Fortunately, the error was spotted immediately, and members were advised accordingly.

One further clarification: the growth in footfall at Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations in last month's edition related to figures provided by the rail user group, not those from the Office of Rail and Road. As alluded to, the user group counts show much greater use of the stations than the ORR figures.

Many Government announcements this month: does this herald a new interest in promoting rail travel?

It has been suggested that RUG would benefit from a Contents list, as there is rather a lot to scan. Also, could I indicate the whereabouts of each group, where this wasn't self-evident? I'd hoped that ordering the items from North to South would suffice to address both issues, but what do other readers think?

Roger Smith

We continue with the usual roundup of news items from groups around the UK. Please keep your contributions coming: they are all gratefully received.

Friends of the Far North Line – getting the basics right

Whereas franchises in England are required to keep the Cancellations and Seriously Late (CaSL) figures below a certain level, Transport Scotland makes no such demands. After an uninspiring start, Abellio Scotrail are getting their act in gear, and seem responsive to suggestions for improvement. But the plea from the FNL is simply to deliver on the timetable – all day, every day. The line seems to be permanently crippled for lack of spending on track capacity. Whatever needs to be done to make an asset work properly should not then be subject to cost-benefit analysis. All lines serving Inverness suffer from a lack of capacity, in particular the 12 miles of single-track between there and Muir of Ord, which is shared by both the Wick and Kyle of Lochalsh services.

Levenmouth Rail Campaign – overlooked in consultation document

Assisted by its colleagues in Transform Scotland, LMRC has published a two-page Briefing Paper that makes the case for reopening the rail link to Leven. However, although Network Rail's Scotland Route Study consultation document shows the line on its maps, there is no option to reopen it, despite the Study's claim to "make the best use of the existing network wherever possible". Campaigns for other rail reconnections in Fife have featured prominently over the past month, including the opening up to passenger traffic of the Forth Circle line between Dunfermline and Alloa, and building a station at Newburgh, on the Tay between Perth and Ladybank. A case is emerging for early investment to bring rail connectivity in Fife up to the standard of the rest of the central belt.

Campaign for Borders Rail – *the campaign goes on!*

Any idea that the reopening of the Borders Railway would mark the end of the line for CBR has been comprehensively dismissed by recent events. Strong and sustained passenger traffic has dispelled any doubts regarding the business case for an extension from Tweedbank, first to Hawick and then on to Carlisle. Moreover, the three-month closure of the West Coast Main Line following storm damage to the Lamington Viaduct could be no better illustration of the added resilience that a reinstated Borders through route would deliver.

Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership – *fleshing out the new franchise*

The Hexham based CRP welcomes Fiona Forsyth to the team, and also the new Northern franchise, with greater resources, new trains and an expanded service. It is campaigning for improved services from Blaydon and Dunston, reopening Gilsland station, and developing links between the line and Hadrian's Wall. The Partnership has also been awarded funding to develop an education and young people's project.

Copeland Rail User Group – *welcome improvements*

CRUG is recognised as the voice of rail users in West Cumbria. They too welcome the new franchise, which will bring: up to six extra services per day to stations on the Cumbria Coast route between Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness, with more capacity on the busiest services, and a better timetable for employees at Sellafield and Whitehaven; Sunday services from Carlisle to Whitehaven extended to Barrow, and frequency enhanced, providing a Sunday service on the full length of the route; refurbishment of the loco-hauled carriages, and the replacement by 2019 of the unloved Class 142 Pacers.

Harrogate Line Supporters Group – *the case for a Parkway station*

HLSG believes that the most cost-effective and economically viable option to enhance road and rail links to Leeds Bradford Airport would be a new Parkway Station north of Horsforth on the line between Leeds, Harrogate and York. Significant enhancements to this corridor have already been committed during the next 4 years and beyond. By comparison, a new branch from this line to the Airport Terminal and on to Bradford would have a very high capital and operating cost, and be technically challenging both to construct and operate due to the elevations. It would not be commercially viable for the passenger volumes likely to use it.

Aire Valley Rail Users Group – *reflecting on the past and the future*

AVRUG reflects on the 25 years since its foundation. The line from Leeds to Skipton, and on to Morecambe has been electrified and re-signalled. There are many more services, mostly operated by modern, high capacity, air-conditioned trains, and the level of comfort is a world away from the old Pacers – although there is overcrowding at peak times. There's a new station at Apperley Bridge, with Kirkstall Forge to follow shortly. And all of these benefits are matched - and more - by the increase in passenger numbers. The railway has become absolutely vital to the local economy, and to many peoples' lives. Whereas government policy used to be that franchises were run for the minimum subsidy, the new one requires the Airedale transformation be extended throughout the north of England.

Skipton–East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership – *support for reopening*

Skipton Building Society is supporting the SELRAP campaign to reopen the line from Skipton to Colne as part of the national rail network for passenger and freight. Improved links between East Lancashire and Leeds would bring economic and social benefits to its heartland.

Support the Oldham Rochdale Manchester Lines (STORM) – greetings and grumbles

Arriva has signed a deal for 281 carriages to replace the 30-year old Pacers by 2020. They will boast air conditioning, audio and visual announcements, power sockets, tables, cycle racks, toilets, digital CCTV systems and free Wifi; the first will be rolled out by October 2018. However, STORM laments the repeated cancellation of the 0714 from Blackburn to Accrington, and the refusal of Northern Rail to compensate for the ensuing hour's delay, or to provide a taxi service. Rochdale station park-and-ride needs to be expanded to prevent overflow into the surrounding streets. They also note the timetable changes caused by two major pieces of work being undertaken as part of the Northern Hub: the installation of the Manchester-facing bay platform at Rochdale, and the remodelling at the west end of Manchester Victoria prior to the installation of the Ordsall Chord, that is needed to accommodate the service pattern from December 2017.

North Cheshire Rail User Group – connecting the North...

NCRUG hails the new franchise proposals, which herald some of the most far-reaching changes for many years, with through services from Chester to Leeds for the first time since the 1980s. The refurbishment of Manchester Victoria has enhanced the whole area, and greatly improved the ambience for passengers, with more natural light and under-cover access to both rail and Metrolink services. Many heritage features have been restored, and are clearly visible, whilst separating the arena and platforms allows better crowd control. However, passengers still have to negotiate many steps to access the through platforms. There are lifts, but they are not easy to locate on crowded platforms; escalators would move passengers quicker.

Arriva Trains Wales' aspiration to run through to Manchester Airport has taken a step forward: timings for a number of services appear in the consultation timetable for May 2016. Turn-round times at the airport would be about 16 minutes, much less than the time spent in a siding outside Manchester Piccadilly.

Monday, 14 December saw the inauguration of "Northern Electric" services from Liverpool (Lime Street) to Warrington (Bank Quay) via Huyton and Earlstown, with Class 319s taking over most of the services. Halton Borough Council has been proactive in promoting Runcorn East, providing advice and guidance on funding, initiating a "Litter Bug" competition for local schools, and installing new signage, that certainly contributed to the station winning the Cheshire Best Kept Station award.

Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passenger Association – ...and fighting a disconnection

SARPA have launched a campaign to keep direct services on the Cambrian mainline from Aberystwyth and Pwllheli to Birmingham, following the Welsh Government's refusal to back the retention of through trains in the specification for the new Wales and Border franchises. Running separate services to and from Shrewsbury would be a disaster: three quarters of usage on the line is cross-border, with half of that carrying forward to Birmingham and beyond. Any such proposal would seriously inconvenience many long distance travellers, and affect both tourism and the Mid Wales economy.

Friends of the Barton Line – infrastructure and service upgrades

During the Christmas blockade, two signal boxes were demolished, and two more decommissioned; trains are now signalled from York Rail Operating Centre. A new footbridge was also installed at Brigg station.

The new Northern and Trans-Pennine franchises will bring station improvements at Cleethorpes and Grimsby Town, and a seven-day/week service operated by fully refurbished Class 185 trains. Hull will benefit from hourly services to Scarborough and to York, Sheffield services extended to Chesterfield, and a new Bridlington – Leeds service.

Coventry Rail Action Group – sign here, please!

CRAG is now "on track". Enquiries to info@covrag.org.uk, phone Michael Tombs, Railfuture West Midlands, on 07761 937788, or on Facebook.

Stourbridge Line User Group – *more to do*

Responsibility for local rail planning and budgets is being transferred to a Local Enterprise Partnership working alongside West Midlands Rail, successor to the existing DfT franchisee, The Chairman of SLUG wonders how this will affect the Stourbridge Line. He hopes that the Camp Hill Chords and Metro Line Two projects will still both come to fruition.

The Group is working with London Midland to improve services on the Birmingham Snow Hill lines, but is disappointed by the lack of benefits to Stourbridge Line passengers that were conditional or optional in attaining the Direct Award. The earlier Sunday services on the lines into Snow Hill via Tyseley are of no use to Worcestershire passengers who wish to make early inter-city connections in Birmingham. In many cases, a backward facing journey to Birmingham is necessary to reach southern destinations because of the scarcity of connections at Worcester in the natural direction of travel. The fourteen-week long consultation being run by West Midland Rail will provide a vehicle to propose the necessary remedial measures.

On the Birmingham to Cheltenham line, work is proceeding on the new Bromsgrove station, which is expected to open during Spring 2016, with the cross-city service starting in May 2017. Electrification of the line from Barnt Green to Bromsgrove will entail a twelve-day blockade during autumn 2016. Initial work has also started on Kidderminster station, with a review of the 2010 designs, to ensure that they still meet current design standards and legal requirements.

Peterborough-Ely-Norwich Rail Users – *overcrowding in the peak (when the trains are running)*

PENRUG laments “the casual disregard of the needs of Norwich-Cambridge passengers last autumn”, when services were cancelled at short notice, even though the damaged rolling stock at the heart of the problem was out of service for an extended period. Temporary timetables - including any special stops and buses – need to be posted at affected stations, and on line for printing at home.

The 0519 Birmingham to Stansted Airport is now full from Peterborough. As a result, a young couple with a baby, pushchair and luggage, who had seat reservations from March to the airport, were denied access to the train. If you try to make a seat reservation during the morning peak, you are turned away and told to return later in the day - which of course is not possible for those returning when the office is closed, so people are booking a whole week's reservations even if they do not intend to travel every day. Declassifying First class would mitigate the problem.

East Norfolk Transport Users' Association – *What will the New Franchise Hold?*

ENTUA awaits the announcement of the Greater Anglia franchise holder from October with some trepidation. Whichever company wins will face a tremendous task to improve everything about the local rail experience. The main line to London suffers constantly with overrunning engineering works, overhead line problems, and the breakdown of aged rolling stock; replacement trains are sorely needed. Also, some of the services from Stansted Airport, Cambridge and Peterborough should run through to Great Yarmouth, where the station needs to be refurbished.

The waiting room at Reedham station, between Norwich and Lowestoft, is being converted into a museum. On the first line to be built in Norfolk, the station was among the first in the county when it opened in 1844. The refurbishment began last July, and it is hoped to complete it by this summer. The museum will display memorabilia from the railway past, as well as artefacts linked with station's history. Any donations related to either the station or the line would be gratefully received.

Felixstowe Travelwatch – *A roasting for AGA*

Felixstowe Travelwatch laments the abysmal service provided by Abellio Greater Anglia (AGA): for twelve days in November, it plumbed a new low, with passenger services withdrawn entirely. Rapid leaf fall over a short period caused extensive wheel damage. At one point, no fewer than 10 units out of AGA's 26 were out of traffic. The problem was compounded by the lack of a wheel lathe in the Norwich depot. Units had to be sent as far afield as Derby for repair.

The Group is looking forward to the start of the new East Anglia rail franchise in October, although it recognises that, whichever bidder is selected, it will take time for major improvements to happen. Chiltern Railways is held up as an example of how a railway should be run, and they cite its most constructive and positive presentation at the Suffolk Rail Conference.

Windsor Lines Passengers Association – *room for improvement, but not under TfL*

WLPA is aware of the proposal to transfer to Transport for London the suburban services out of Waterloo, as far as Windsor and Weybridge, but believes that any such change mid-way through the franchise period would impose uncertainty and complexity both on the bid process, and the operation of the railway. The franchise should not exclude the West of England Line beyond Basingstoke, and consideration should be given to extending its ambit to include the North Downs Line from Reading to Redhill and Gatwick.

More trains should run throughout the day, and up to 00.30. All trains should be to the existing full-length configuration; half-length trains at weekends can be impossible to board. More use could be made of the rolling stock by tightening schedules, and reducing dwell times and terminal turn-round times. WLPA also calls for Boxing Day services; train diversions and shuttle services, rather than replacement buses; timely advance notice of planned disruption, with revised timetables; accurate and honest information regarding unplanned disruption; cycling to be encouraged and facilitated; access for all; a simpler ticketing structure; help buttons on stations, and more and staff visible to passengers.

WLPA was delighted with the special award that Modern Railways gave to Christian Roth and John Denyer, respectively Chief Engineer of South West Trains (SWT), and manager of its Wimbledon depot. In the first five years of its life, from 2001-2006, the Class 458 was hopelessly unreliable, and might well have been scrapped. However, with the help of on-site technical support from the manufacturer, over the next nine years, there was an almost 18-fold increase, making the fleet the most reliable in the country. Unfortunately, their conversion to 458/5s has caused reliability to plummet once again, although it is showing signs of improvement. The Salisbury depot is also commended for keeping the Class 159 Diesel Multiple Units ten to twenty times more reliable than those of any other train operating company (TOC).

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group – *a useful extension*

GWR have announced that, on weekdays from 15 February, the Network Railcard will now be valid on the 0939 service; previously it was not valid until the 1039; the 16-25, Senior and Disabled Persons Railcards are all still valid from the 0843 onwards. At weekends, railcards are valid all day.

The Group commends the report on a rail accident at Froxfield, west of Hungerford, when an HGV reversed into a bridge parapet, which fell onto the line below and was hit by a train at 75mph:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/493315/R022016_160120_Froxfield.pdf

East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership – *spreading the word*

The Partnership is reviewing the patronage of two rail-bus links operated on behalf of the South Downs National Park Authority; there is concern over how future services could be funded. The group was also seeking outlets for its line guides. Work on the Petersfield Rail Station forecourt was welcomed, whilst the station café franchisee had offered to open a café and tourist information point in the old parcels office on platform 2. SWT were investigating the possible decking of the car park. Ways to improve access at Liphook were discussed, whilst the group was seeking volunteers/sponsors to provide hanging baskets at all of its stations. A SWT promotion 'The Great Indoors' offers off-peak return tickets priced at just £15 for adults and £5 for children. These fares are available from 26 Jan-30 Apr, except 15-21 Feb and 24-28 Mar. Tickets can be booked up to midnight the day before travelling, but not on the day of travel.

Avocet Line Rail Users Group – encouraging communication (or absence of)

The new Chairman laments the conflicting information on public displays when things go wrong: “Passengers need to know what’s going on when there’s a cancellation, especially if there’s a bus substitution”. At Exmouth, trains that had been cancelled were shown as “delayed”, whilst the display at Topsham had no intimation of the alternative scheduled bus service, just that a service was “On time” for up to half an hour after should have arrived! [It seems to be a universal problem: at our station the up fast has a four-minute headway on the slow. When the fast is running four minutes late, both trains are shown as arriving at the same time, with the Next Train indicator flip-flopping between the two! – Ed.]

At its AGM in October, the GWR Commercial Development Director described the new direct franchise. DfT had agreed to new trains for the Paddington – Penzance service, and from May 2017, the South West high speed and the Bristol & Wales services would be separated, allowing more direct trains to the region, and freeing stock to move to the South West for local services. He would like to improve Sunday services next year, whilst new stations and lines could transform an area, eg the number of journeys at Newcourt station, on the south side of Exeter, rose from 3000/month initially to 5500 in just 4 months. The Director would also like to re-open the Tavistock to Okehampton line. He hoped that the new ALRUG Manifesto would be out of date in two and a half years’ time, with many of its aspirations having been met.

The Project Officer for the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership is promoting the Avocet Line, in partnership with ALRUG. Initiatives included extra Sunday trains for Christmas shopping, Avocet Ambles 2 for walkers, a dedicated social media line, taster trips for local schools, and special offers at restaurants and gastro pubs for diners who arrive by train.

...news from Railfuture follows...

SOUTH WESTERN REFRANCHISING

Many groups have got together to draft a response to the consultation paper on the new South Western franchise currently operated by SWT. The Railfuture Passenger Group meeting in December placed the action to coordinate responses on David Brace, its TOC Liaison Officer for the South West (david.brace@outlook.com). As well as the groups mentioned in the last issue of Rail User Express, the following groups have been involved: the Railfuture Wessex Branch, the South Hampshire and Salisbury to Exeter Rail User Groups; East Hampshire, Three Rivers and Trans-Wilts Community Rail Partnerships, and the Alton Line Users’ Association.

NATIONAL LIST OF RAIL USER GROUPS

With time on his hands, Tony Smale has got around to updating the lists of Rail User Groups and Reopening Campaign Groups on Railfuture's website: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Groups>. There are several new or revised entries, so please take a look, and check the details of any local groups you know of. Please advise Tony of any errors or omissions via his new email address: tony.smale@railfuture.org.uk.

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

DfT and TfL invite comment a prospectus offering a new era of rail travel for London and the south east: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/493754/dft-tfl-rail-prospectus.pdf.

The new agreement will examine the potential for a wide range of improvements, including:

- more frequent services, more reliable trains, better interchanges and increased capacity
- the creation of a London Suburban Metro service with the potential for over 80% of stations to have a train every 15 minutes, up from 67% today, and for more regular services via Clapham Junction, south east London and Kent
- new rail lines to connect poorly serviced areas, and to support new homes and jobs
- a better travel environment, and improvements to accessibility and staffing
- a seamless and integrated service with joined up travel information.

Comments may be submitted to railprospectus@tfl.gov.uk.

DfT has updated its Franchise competition process guide to include the pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) passport that will save companies bidding for multiple franchises from having to repeat reams of background information. Meanwhile, First South Western Trains Ltd and Stagecoach South West Ltd have been shortlisted to bid for the South Western rail franchise from June 2017.

Sir Peter Hendy's report on putting the rail upgrade programme on a more realistic and sustainable footing: <http://networkrail.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/hendy-report.pdf>. Comments should be addressed to hendyconsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

The DfT and GWR have announced a new study, funded and commissioned by GWR, and to be carried out by Network Rail, to examine what more can be done to existing track, signalling and other railway infrastructure between London and Devon and Cornwall to improve line speed and realise the full benefits of the new trains arriving in 2018.

The DfT has also announced a consultation on the creation of a TransWilts Community Rail Partnership, for the line between Swindon and Westbury via Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transwilts-line-community-rail-designation>

The ORR has launched the following consultation: <http://orr.gov.uk/consultations/open-consultations/consultation-on-our-approach-to-the-enforcement-of-competition-law-in-the-railways-sector>. The consultation closes on 14 March; the ORR will then propose new guidance to help businesses and individuals self-assess their compliance with competition law by giving practical advice on:

- The scope of its jurisdiction to enforce competition prohibitions
- Factors it will take into account when opening an investigation under the Competition Act
- How it expects to conduct investigations under the Act

From 16 January 2016, Joanna Whittington will take over as the new Chief Executive of the ORR. She has been its Director of Railway Markets and Economics, as well as a Board member, since March 2014. Joanna's appointment is on an interim basis. Recruitment for a permanent Chief Executive is expected to begin in the summer with an appointment to be made for 1 January 2017.

The ORR also reports that the number of rail passenger journeys in Great Britain has more than doubled since 1995-96, and averaged 4.5% over the previous year.

"The death of the tangerine ticket" was the title of a presentation given by rail minister Claire Perry MP at the Transport Ticketing and Passenger Information Conference 2016. Rail customers in the Midlands could now download tickets directly to their mobile phones, and have them scanned on-board and at station gatelines. In the North, the government was facilitating a single smart ticketing and travel information system that would make travel by rail, bus, Metro and tram as simple and convenient as possible. Meanwhile, the South East Flexible Ticketing programme was also making good progress, whilst bidders for the Southwestern and West Midlands franchise competitions were being encouraged to increase significantly the use of smart ticketing.

"If smart ticketing is to become established on our railways, it will mean the death of the tangerine ticket. There's nothing wrong with a big bang introduction of new technology, but some people will benefit from a staged approach." Many people like [or need – Ed] to interact with others when buying tickets, or wish to carry proof of their purchase. And of course, smart devices need electrons. [So an obituary for ticket offices and ticket machines on stations would seem to be premature, at least for now – Ed].

...and finally

From the Avocet Line Newsletter: “Grimy Windows? – ‘We’re looking into them!’”

Similarly, from a Gov.UK briefing: “Guidance: UK national maritime single window: launch of pilot” – which I took to mean that they’d ejected him through the porthole!

Charting the establishment of standard British time, Paul Humphreys in the SLUG Newsletter cites a railway director who refused to supply his train times for the 1839 edition of Bradshaw, stating: ‘I believe it would tend to make punctuality a sort of obligation!’

EVENTS

Events that may be of interest to RUG members are listed below.

See also the [Events listing on the Railfuture website](#)

Coloured blobs indicate the various types of event...

- National & regional rail events.
- Railfuture (Rf) events (rail user group representatives are welcome to attend).
- Local Group events.

February

- 16. Tuesday. Felixstowe Travelwatch, Salvation Army Church, Cobbold Road, **Felixstowe**, 1430.
- 16. Tuesday. Chesham & District Transport Users Group, **Chesham** Town Hall from 1930. <http://www.cdtug.org/>. Also 5 April, 17 May, 21 June, 9 August, 20 September, 25 October and 13 December.
- 18. Thursday. TravelWatch NorthWest Conference in conjunction with Rail North, Mechanics Centre, Princess Street, **Manchester** M1 6DD, 1000 for 1030 – 1530. admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk
- 18. Thursday. West Midlands rail franchise consultation, public meetings: **Stafford** station, 1530-1800; 24 Feb, **Northampton**, 1000-1230 and **Worcester** Foregate, 1530-1800; 1 Mar, **Walsall**, 1530-1800; and 9 Mar, **Liverpool** Lime Street, 1500-1730.
- 20. Saturday. East Suffolk Travellers’ Association, Methodist Church Hall, East Green, **Southwold**, 1400. Also 14 May (AGM), **Saxmundham**, and 15 October in **Woodbridge**.
- 20. Saturday. London and South East Region, Kent division, 1800. londonsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk
- 24. Wednesday. Levenmouth Rail Campaign, FRICs, **Methil** Docks, 1830 (Also last Wednesday of every month)
- 26. Friday. Rail Summit: upgrade of rail network in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. **Downham Market**
- 27. Saturday. Copeland Rail User Group, **Seascale** Methodist Hall, 1300. Also 26 March (AGM).
- 27. Saturday. East Anglia Branch AGM, Friends Meeting House in **Bury St Edmunds** from 1400. eastanglia@railfuture.org.uk

March

- 1. Tuesday. Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers’ Assn meets at the Unicorn, **Caersws** from 1830. sarpa@sarpa.info.
- 5. Saturday. TravelWatch SouthWest AGM, Somerset College of Arts and Technology, Wellington Road, Taunton. 1030 for 1100 – 1500.
- 9. Wednesday. London and South East Region, Eastern division meeting, **Stratford**. 1830. londonsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk. Also 11 May.
- 10. Thursday. London and South East Region, Sussex & Coastway and Surrey divisions, **Haywards Heath**, 1800.
- 12. Saturday. Wessex Branch AGM in **Winchester**. wessex@railfuture.org.uk
- 12. Saturday. North East Branch AGM, Newcastle Art Centre, 67 Westgate Road, **Newcastle**. 1400.
- 14. Monday. Bexhill Rail Action Group, Hastings Direct, **Collington**. 1900-2100. Also 11 Apr, 9 May, 13 Jun, 11 Jul, 8 Aug, 12 Sep, 10 Oct, 12 Nov. December in a local hostelry. <http://www.bexhillrailaction.org.uk/>.
- 14 & 15. Association of Community Rail Partnerships, DfT Designated Line Seminar, **Norwich**. Also 11 May, Community Rail in the City; 1 Jun, Station Adoption Seminar; 13 Jul, Members’ Seminars North; 20 Jul, Members’ Seminars South; 29 Sep, Community Rail Awards, **Southport**. <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>
- 15. Tuesday, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton RUG, 1930-2100, Elin Way Sheltered Housing Room, **Meldreth**. Also 15 June at **Foxton** Village Hall.

- 16. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton line, the Sloop, **Barton-u-Humber** from 1800 for 2000. enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk. (Also 18 May, and 21 September at the No 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes** from 1900.)
- 19. Saturday. Lincolnshire Branch AGM, at **Saxilby** Methodist Church. lincolnshire@railfuture.org.uk

April

- 2. Saturday. Passenger Group Meeting, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, **Birmingham**, B4 7SX, 1315-1700. **NB.** Change of date from 9 April confirmed. Also 24 September.
- 7. Thursday. London and South East Branch, Sussex & Coastway division meeting. 1800. Also 5 May, 2 June.
- 16. Saturday. Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line AGM, Hallmark Hotel, **Carlisle**, 1115 for 1145. Guest speakers pm from Northern Rail and the Campaign for Borders Rail <http://www.foscl.org.uk>
- 16. Saturday. Devon & Cornwall AGM at Unitarian Church, Notte Street, **Plymouth** PL1 2AQ, 1330-1615. devon-cornwall@railfuture.org.uk
- 18. Monday. Avocet Line, Malthouse, The Globe, **Topsham**, 1900. Also 3 Jul (Outing – TBC), 17 Oct (AGM) and 12 Dec (Christmas Social, The Globe, **Lympstone**)
- 19. Tuesday. Bedford-Bletchley Rail Users Association AGM, St John's Church Hall, St John's Street, **Bedford**, 1930.
- 23. Saturday. London and South East Branch AGM, International Hall, University of London, Lansdowne Terrace, Bloomsbury, London, WC1N 1AS, 1400. Doors open at 1030 for open meeting at 1100 with guest speakers.

May

- 10. Tuesday. Stourbridge Line User Group public meeting / AGM, **Kidderminster** Town Station (SVR) Railway, 1930.
- 21 May. Saturday. Railfuture AGM, **Milton Keynes** from 1000 for 1045. Guest speaker on East West Rail. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

Further Ahead

- 18 June. Saturday. Summer Conference at the Scottish Mining Museum, **Newtongrange**, 1000 for 1045-1700. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>
- 12 November. Saturday. Rail User Conference at the Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, **Birmingham**, 1000 for 1045. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

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 by...

Roger Smith, Railfuture Rail User Group Liaison Officer
e-mail: ruglink@railfuture.org.uk phone: 01462 815992

Follow us on Twitter @Railfuture

The Railway Development Society Limited is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 5011634.

Registered Office:- 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingsstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND