



November 2017

Welcome to the Rail User Express.

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The Central section of East-West Rail between Bedford and Cambridge must cross the existing A1 road, which may be re-routed; the East Coast Main Line, with an interchange station; and the River Great Ouse, which is prone to flooding. Meanwhile, Highways England is analyzing feedback from a consultation on the Black Cat roundabout at the junction of the A1 and A421, which may form part of the [Oxford-Cambridge Expressway](#). To co-ordinate the various designs, a [Strategic Transport Forum](#) was formed in 2016 as a Sub-national Transport Body. It includes the DfT, Network Rail (NR), Highways England, local authorities and the Civil Engineering Contractors' Association.

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.

Levenmouth Rail Campaign

In a [Session on Levenmouth Rail](#), MSPs from every party spoke in favour of the Campaign. Responding, Transport Minister Humza Yousaf recognised its determination and effectiveness, the strength of local support, and the persuasiveness of the booklet "A Railway to Regenerate Levenmouth". Subject to the agreement of Fife Council, he was minded to instruct Transport Scotland to collaborate with the Council on a GRIP 4 study, which should look beyond the basic cost/benefit analysis to the wider socioeconomic and regeneration impacts. GRIP 4 is Single Option Development, and the precursor to GRIP 5, Detailed Design.

The Scottish Government will receive more than £3.6 billion from 2019 to 2020, £600 million more than in the previous period, but £600 million short of what it says it needs. Humza Yousaf warned that: "rail enhancement projects might be early victims of this reduced investment". However, LMRC believes that continuing to deny valid and long overdue enhancements is deeply unfair. Maintenance of the existing network must take priority, but there is no logic or equity in improvement at the expense of enhancement. Moreover, after heavy recent investment in roads, there is a strong case for a strategic reallocation of the transport budget from private to public transport, to address the growing emergence of transport poverty.

Campaign for Borders Rail

At the Campaign's AGM in Hawick, guests Alex Hynes (ScotRail MD), Rachel Hamilton MSP, Cllr Colin Glover (Carlisle CC), and Watson McAteer (Provost of Hawick, representing the Scottish Borders Council) were all in favour of creating new rail link across the Scottish Borders by extending the Edinburgh - Tweedbank line through Hawick to Carlisle. Members voted unanimously to give CBR a mandate to extend its remit accordingly. Re-elected as its Chair, Simon Walton said that, with the paid-up membership of over 1000 at an all-time high, the weight of expectation was now firmly on CBR's shoulders; remaining focused, committed and confident were key to achieving their ultimate goal.

Copeland Rail Users' Group

The December 2017 timetable is expected to be virtually identical to the present one. The type of temporary bridge at Sellafield could provide a solution at Seascale or Drigg. Northern's improvements so far include 30 updated trains and 60 new Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs), whilst 111 stations are due to have new and upgraded facilities by this December, although the new ticket barriers at Barrow are swallowing all tickets. To curb misuse of the car park at Whitehaven, passengers parking there now have to show their ticket(s) and leave their registration numbers at the booking office, or risk a fine.

Ribble Valley Rail

The 16-day closure to improve Bolton Station and work on the line from there to Salford Crescent became a 25-day closure when a burst water main caused a road bridge to collapse onto the line below. During the scheduled outage, the signalling system was switched off, so trains had to be accompanied by a pilotman between Bolton and Bromley Cross – who then had to travel on to Darwen to return to Bolton. During the second week, there were fewer late trains, but more unplanned rail replacement buses. Communication was also poor: station posters covered only the weekend service!

RVR would like the 2304 Manchester Victoria – Blackburn service extended to Clitheroe. However, it is not in the Train Service Requirement, and is a non-starter on Monday – Thursday due to possession issues. However, NR will work with stakeholders to determine if there is a business case for a Friday service.

RVR trains were strengthened for the Clitheroe Food Festival, and were well used. Those attending were rewarded with a fly-over by the Red Arrows. About 40 jobs will be created when Blackburn's new train depot enters service in December, and more when Northern moves into its Cathedral Square offices adjacent to Blackburn Station.

On 7 September, the 1303 from Manchester Victoria could not run beyond Bolton, so was rerouted via Todmorden and a stock reversal at Blackburn. It reached Clitheroe in 80mins, or 73mins net of a 4min signal check and 3mins for the reversal, against a booked time of 74mins. RVR commends an excellent example of emergency planning and action. Amazingly, because of a fallen tree, the plan had to be implemented again the following day for the 1103, and once more was activated and operated perfectly.

The Northern Weekly Salvo (Paul Salvesson)

RUEx offers its congratulations to Paul for his well-deserved lifetime achievement award at the ACoRP Community Rail Awards in Derby "for his vision, determination, passion and friendship in the community rail world over the last 30 years". Paul served his apprenticeship at the sharp end of the railway, in Horwich Loco Works, then as a guard and signalman at Blackburn and Bolton. He was never much good with a shunting pole, but did get to know how the railway really worked, not how the Rule Book said it should – see "*...and finally*"! He moved into community development in the inner-urban Brownlow Fold area of Bolton, which was exciting and creative, but has never lost his interest in railways.

Support The Oldham Rochdale Manchester Lines (STORM)

Storm Ophelia disrupted Manchester Victoria services from just after 1630 on 16 October; many were cancelled, and those that did run were terminated at Rochdale. Presumably the problem lay between Rochdale and Todmorden, or they could have terminated there, unless the plan is always to use Rochdale, as it is a staffed station. Or maybe the contingency plan has yet to be updated since reversal at Todmorden became possible. STORM has long suggested remote operation of the Summit West crossover, so trains could terminate at Littleborough. Problems continued the following day, with several trees down between Bradford Interchange and Halifax.

STORM queried the location of a new ticket barrier at Rochdale station. Arriva Rail North responded as follows (abridged): automatic ticket gates at stations must comply with RIS-7701-INS, a rigorous industry standard. A count of the number of people passing through the station, both encumbered and unencumbered, showed how many gates were needed, and how far from the stairs they had to be. If occasionally a cancelled train or a major event increased the flow, further measures would be available: once customers were backed up to the bottom of the staircase, the gates would be opened to allow people to flow through safely. Four ticket vending machines in the subway, and the enhanced retail offering at the booking office window, will mitigate excessive queuing.

Based on NR's latest Enhancements Delivery Plan, the website "North West Sparks" lists the following completion dates for electrification:

- Phase 3, Preston - Blackpool North: May 2018.
- Phase 4, Manchester - Preston (Ordsall Lane Jn to Euxton Jn): "not later than May 2018" - ie December 2017 will not be achieved.
- Phase 5, Manchester Vic - Stalybridge; Ashburys West Jn to Philips Park West Jn and Baguley Fold Jn "by 20 May 2018".
- Also Phase 5, Guide Bridge to Stalybridge (part of trans-Pennine electrification): December 2022.
- Wigan NW to Lostock Jn – some time in CP6, ie by 2024.

Thus the whole Manchester - Blackpool line would seem to be going live at the same time. Is Ashburys - Philips Park just for stock movements? The fourth track through Huyton and Roby is now in use, but there is no date for new platforms at Salford Central - the latest reports say: "being evaluated". The next big event is the opening of Ordsall Chord on 10 December, to link Manchester Victoria and Piccadilly stations.

Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association

Tatton MP Esther McVey arranged for MCRUA and two local businesses to meet Paul Maynard MP, the Rail Minister, regarding the Mid Cheshire Rail Link (Knutsford, Northwich, Middlewich, Sandbach and Crewe) and the proposed Airport Western Link. They discussed the history of each scheme, the stage it had reached, its likely benefits, the work done to date, and the difficulties in their progression, as the benefits flow across local government boundaries. The meeting attracted much favourable publicity.

Based on extensive passenger counts, the new Northern franchise specified many more services on the Mid Cheshire Line, although delays in the cascade of new units put back the new timetable to May 2018; the first draft appeared last June. Whilst the doubling of Sunday services to hourly was as expected, MCRUA and other stakeholders explained to Northern why its weekday proposals were awful! The timetable planner concerned took their views on board, and the revised proposals were a great improvement. However, their formal approval also depends on submissions from other train companies, both passenger (unlikely) and freight (possible).

With the support of MCRUA and other partners, Community Rail Partnership's "Marvellous Days Out" project has really taken off. After an initial poster promoting the Lion Salt Works Museum at Marston in 2016, Lemondrop Creative artist Nicky Thomson was commissioned to produce three more for stations along the Line. MCRUA's John Hulme and his son Ian developed an accompanying booklet and a website. Grants were received from the Northern Seedcorn Fund and the Designated Line Community Rail Development Fund. The formal launch of the art, with Pete Waterman as guest speaker, attracted superb publicity from a [weblink](#) and the media – and a deluge of orders for posters and postcards. With a strapline of "Meander The Mid Cheshire Line for a Marvellous Day Out", the project also involves a touring art exhibition, currently at University of Chester (Warrington Campus) until 27 November. Any [offers of help](#) with onward movement, or packaging and transporting posters and booklets, would be much appreciated.

Friends of Ruabon Station

Ruabon railway station is a rail and bus interchange south of Wrexham. It is the second busiest station in the area after Wrexham General, but is inaccessible to a number of potential users, as the only way to cross between the platforms is via a footbridge. Clwyd South AM and MPs Ken Skates and Susan Elan Jones joined volunteers from the Friends of Ruabon Station to support for the campaign for improved access, ahead of a petition to Parliament. Speaking after her visit, Ms Jones said: "This is an important station, connecting people to our wonderful World Heritage Sites and key local destinations such as Wrexham and Chester, so it needs be more accessible."

Friends of the Barton Line

The AGM in September discussed at length FBL's response to the East Midlands franchise questionnaire. Changes from 4 September to the Humber Fast Cat (350) and Humber Flyer bus services from Hull had improved connections to the train at Barton; details are on the [website](#). The Chairman would again request the creation of a combined bus & train ticket between Cleethorpes and Hull. A new TPE Hull timetable started on 23 October and runs to 9 December.

The approach to the platform at Barton station has been renewed, window frames in the shelter at New Clee station knocked out, and scaffolding erected to inspect the underside of Barrow Haven bridge. Gantries at New Holland Barrow Road crossing that once supported the old wooden gates have been removed. A photographic record of stations and structures along the line is being collated for the FBL archive, whilst the buffet at Grimsby Town station has a new proprietor. *(So look out for Railfuture's best station café awards in 2018! – Ed.)*

Friends of the Brigg Line

The first week in October saw the NR Rail Grinder on the Brigg Line. This scuffs the top of the rails to give trains more grip. Sadly, due to the lightweight design of the railbuses that work the Brigg Line, it was a spectacular failure, and many trains had issues due to lack of grip in the area around Kirton In Lindsey. The blog wonders why the old style semaphore signals at Gainsborough Central are being replaced with...new style semaphore signals, when the old signalling is working fine. Ideas?

Correction, thanks to Mike Savage of Railfuture Lincolnshire: the transfer of the Cleethorpes - Barton line from Northern in the East Midlands franchise consultation was not a proposal: DfT made the decision when it awarded the new Northern franchise in December 2015, but because the start date of the new EM franchise has repeatedly slipped, the line remains with Northern, and will for almost another two years – Ed.

Peterborough-Ely-Norwich Rail Users' Group

A public meeting in Norwich discussed the withdrawal of the hourly express service to Norwich from Liverpool, Manchester and possibly Sheffield, although no decisions had been made and the status quo was still an option. The idea was to reduce the number of operators between Manchester and Sheffield, but simply moving the Liverpool-Norwich route into another franchise was resisted, as "re-mapping costs money." The Peterborough and Cambridgeshire combined authority is fighting to keep these trains, ably assisted by the Hereward CRP, while opposition to the Norwich cuts is led by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and Norfolk County Council, with whom PENRUG works closely. PENRUG thanks those individuals and sister groups who have written in support.

Bedford Commuters Association

In September over 200 people attended a very lively DfT consultation in Bedford on the East Midlands franchise. Many questions were asked regarding the proposed loss of intercity services, the London to Corby journey times, and quality of the electric trains that will be used on that service.

BCA totally rejects the proposal to withdraw inter-city services from Bedford: rather, it wants the hourly service to/from Leicester and the north doubled. Forcing these passengers to change at Kettering and perhaps also at Leicester would lengthen journey times and risk missing connections, and so deter people from travelling by rail. It would make a mockery of Bedford Midland's role as the interchange station between the Midland Main Line and East-West Rail, when that service opens early in the new franchise period. The electrification infrastructure south of Bedford needs to be upgraded to allow trains to run at up to 125 mph.

Abbey Flyer Users' Group

AFUG has launched a crowdfunding appeal to raise the £6,000 it needs to research the enhancement necessary to allow a second train to run on the 6.5 mile line between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey: a passing loop, re-signalling and, potentially, a second platform at Bricket Wood station. Campaign co-ordinator Richard Haywood said: "Although we are asking for money, support is equally important; the more interest we get, the more people will listen to us, and the more we can campaign for real improvements. With the line almost 160 years old, what better way to celebrate than to bring the Abbey Line into the 21st century?"

Barking-Gospel Oak Rail User Group

After a brief (4-week) resumption of services, the Barking-Gospel Oak line closes again from 18 November until 14 January for electrification work to be completed. BGORUG has succeeded in its campaign for improved late-evening services: when services resume, they will increase from two trains per hour to three.

Chesham and District Transport Users' Group

The General Manager post for each LUL line has been abolished, but the new Director of Line Operations, Nick Dent, will still award the prizes at the Group's December meeting. With a Customer Satisfaction score of 88 against a target of 85, and an all-time high of 90, performance in the last quarter had gone well.

Chesham Station Car Park is full every morning before the end of the peak period; a multi storey car park has been mooted. A call for sites in the Chiltern & South Bucks area for potential housing development includes the Old Chesham Coal Yard, and the station car parks at both Chesham and Chalfont & Latimer. Although the development of any site selected would still require planning permission, there is a presumption in favour of such applications. The consultation period ends on 10 November.

Harrow on the Hill will be the next Metropolitan Line station to get step-free access. Its design will be typical of those to be used elsewhere, including Amersham, but has yet to be finalised: the previous design would be too costly, and LUL have rejected the cheaper Birkenhead North template as unsuitable. In the 2017 Railfuture RUG Awards, the Group's campaign for step-free access received a Commendation.

Windsor Lines Passenger Association

WLPA is urging its members to respond to the SWR timetable consultation. There are many improvements, but also some serious concerns, eg the reduced peak capacity from stations between Ascot and Egham, and the loss of through services on the Camberley branch, and from Hounslow loop stations to Weybridge.

The Class 707 trains ordered by the previous operator will replace the 455s, 456s and 458/5s, but will in turn be replaced from mid-2019 by Bombardier Class 701 Aventra trains. These will have 2+2 seating, faster wi-fi, charging points, toilets on all trains, infotainment systems and better on-board customer information. From December 2020, the whole fleet will deliver 52,000 extra seats in the morning and evening peaks.

At a meeting with two SWR station managers, WLPA were advised that Platforms 21-24 at Waterloo will be closed to finish the concourse, but will reopen in time for the 2018 timetable changes. There is no intention to reduce staffed ticket offices still further; stations without one will have Video TVMs known as VTOs (Virtual ticket offices). A member has complained how difficult it is to find comprehensive information regarding line closures for engineering work on the SWR website. 'Check engineering works' should be at or near the top of the first page, above 'Buy train tickets', 'Live Travel Updates', etc.

Sudbury & Harrow Road Station User Group

The need for improved London suburban services was high on the agenda when Chiltern Railways' MD Dave Penney met the London TravelWatch board in October. With just four weekday morning trains to London, and four back in the evening, Sudbury & Harrow Road Station is the worst served in London. LTW Deputy Chair John Stewart met members of the User Group at the station to discuss the issue, and listen to local concerns and aspirations, given the station's town-centre location and local housing development.

Rail & Bus for Herefordshire

On 29 September, the Welsh Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, confirmed that Abellio Rail Cymru, Arriva Rail Wales, Keolis Amey and MTR Corporation (Cymru) Ltd have been invited to submit final tenders for the next Wales & Borders Rail Service. He also reported on progress with the UK Government on fair funding: 'There is a will on both sides to ensure that the settlement works for Wales and the Border and, following positive talks, a resolution is near. It's great news for rail users that this ensures the services modern Wales expects and have been promised will be fully delivered'.

However, despite requests under the Freedom of Information Act, the long awaited Invitation to Tender (ITT) remains a closed document which no one outside of the Welsh Government, the DfT and the four bidders has so far been allowed to see, ostensibly for reasons of confidentiality and sensitivity. Such secrecy fosters the concern that the anticipated service levels fall short of expectations, particularly with regard to the Marches Line service, which operates mostly in England.

In regard to the new Great Western Franchise, RBfH also expressed concern that the Worcestershire County Council Rail Strategy Report fails to mention the Hereford end of the line in the development of London services. John Ellis, Chairman of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group, sought to reassure RBfH that the CLPG actively supports the service through to Hereford and its development as part of the franchise.

East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership

At the "Hampshire and Isle of Wight Village of the Year 2017" competition, Liss won no fewer than five awards including "Hampshire Village of the Year 2017" and "Community Engagement". At the station, the judges could only peer through the ticket office windows at the murals and model railway, but did see the planting, and the notice boards produced with the support of the South Downs National Park Authority about walks and the history of the railway. The station was an important part of the story.

Alton Line Users' Association

ALUA is generally pleased with the proposed December 2018 timetable, especially the faster off-peak services to and from Alton. And almost all off-peak trains will stop at Clapham Junction, rather than every other train - but not the first evening off-peak train departing Waterloo at 1904. ALUA will ask SWR to consider reinstating this stop. The new half-hourly service from Farnham to Guildford is also welcome. It won't result in noticeably quicker journeys, but will save the change of trains at Aldershot, with the possibility of missing the connection. However, there will be a longer connection time for those travelling onwards to Alton. Had the line not been singled, these trains could have run through to Alton, so the case for redoubling is even stronger.

ALUA is disappointed with the 3.6% rise in regulated rail fares in January 2018, in line with July's Retail Price Index (RPI), rather than the lower Consumer Price Index (CPI). Commuters do not score value for money very highly. HMG should follow the Scottish Government, and limit regulated increases to RPI minus 1%. ALUA also disagrees with claims by the Rail Delivery Group that companies are simplifying fares and ticket buying: the introduction in its area of a super off-peak fare onto the range of off-peak and standard fares for the many different types of tickets used at various times of the day has made the fare structure even more complex.

Friends of Alton Station

Built in 1892, the fully enclosed footbridge at Alton station across to the Mid Hants Railway platform is the only one of its kind to survive. Following the construction of a modern bridge with lifts, a "Friends of the Station" group was formed with the aim of ensuring that the old bridge was retained in situ as part of the town's heritage. However, NR surveys of its structure concluded that essential repairs would be hugely expensive, so they closed the bridge and recommended that it be removed altogether. The group has until next April to come up with a viable plan [*listed building? – Ed.*] and the necessary funds, or it will be demolished. See the Friends' [website](#) for the full story with photos and links to petitions, and whether there is any way you could help with their project.

Pilning Station User Group

A song, a video and Footbridge Campaign T-shirts, marked the anniversary on 5 Nov of the demolition of the footbridge at Pilning station, close to the Severn Tunnel, to allow electrification, thereby reducing its already-sparse service to one-direction-only. Controversially, full and meaningful consultation was avoided by using the Minor Modification procedure. Even so, station usage is already well up on last year's figure thanks to vigorous promotion by the User Group, which is now campaigning to improve the twice-weekly service, and retain the lunchtime train, that GWR is threatening to withdraw.

RAILFUTURE

Railfuture welcomes new members, both individual and groups: the more we are, the more effective our campaigns. Join Railfuture [here](#). From the "Membership Types" menu top right, select either the appropriate category of individual or, to affiliate, select "RUG or similar". Read the latest from Railfuture and its Campaign updates by clicking on [News and views](#), [Press releases](#), [Railfuture in the news](#), and [Railfuture submissions](#).



RAIL USER GROUP AWARDS FOR 2017

Honorary President Christian Wolmar presented the 2017 awards at the autumn conference in Leicester. Seven Vice-Presidents assisted in the adjudication between the 18 nominations across 6 award categories and 8 Railfuture branch areas. Between them, Paul Abell, Ian Brown, Roger Ford, Chris Green, Stewart Palmer, Lorna Slade, and Stewart Stevenson MSP were able to visit almost every nominee. Every branch area with a nomination, from Scotland to Devon and Cornwall, saw at least one entrant awarded a gold, silver or black-framed certificate! RUG congratulates the following winners:

- **Best Newsletter.** Friends of the Far North Line and the Tarka Rail Association both won a Gold Award for their magazines.
- **Best Website.** The Gold Award went to Stourbridge Line User Group; Marlow-Maidenhead Passengers' Association were awarded Silver, and South East Northumberland Rail User Group a Commendation.
- **Best New Group.** Chinley & Buxworth Transport Group won the Oliver Lovell Award, while Hadley Wood Rail User Group received a Commendation.
- **Best Campaign.** The Gold Award went to the Melksham Rail User Group, a Silver Award to Hadley Wood RUG, while Chesham & District Transport Users' Group and Chinley & Buxworth Transport Group each received a Commendation. The last three campaigns all focused on step-free access.
- **Best Campaigner.** The Clara Zilahi Award was awarded to Francesca Caine, from the Hadley Wood RUG.
- **Judges' Special Award:** The New Stations Fund, that enabled ten stations to be added to the national network, bringing access to rail services closer to local communities.

RAILFUTURE WESSEX

Wessex branch is developing its response to the SWR timetable consultation. This trumpets a new Weymouth - Portsmouth stopping service - but at the expense of the semi-fast service beyond Poole, effectively halving the London service. And the fast service just misses the rail-air bus link to Heathrow at Woking. Branksome and Parkstone passengers are particularly unhappy. London trains in the morning would take up to 19mins longer; returning in the evening, all of their fast trains are withdrawn, and the semi-fast takes 9 mins longer. Stewart Palmer suggests retaining the semi-fast service to London, and terminating the Portsmouth service at Southampton, Bournemouth or Wareham [*Or Swanage?!!! – Ed.*]

A London & South East Branch meeting in Woking on 16 November open only to Railfuture members will discuss the proposed timetable; see Events below for details. Those wishing to attend must let [Chris Page](#) know by 10 November, either by email or by telephoning 07928 299288. A Wessex Branch meeting in Basingstoke a week later will coordinate the various views to inform Railfuture's response, for submission by 22 December. Please let [Bruce Duncan](#) or [Tony Smale](#) have any thoughts as soon as possible.

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS

At the 2017 ACoRP Annual Awards, co-hosted by Chief Executive Jools Townsend and Jake Kelly, MD of East Midlands Trains, Community Rail Cumbria won the 'Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail Award'. See the [awards brochure](#) for details of all of the winning projects. DfT's passenger services MD, Peter Wilkinson, spoke of the importance of community rail in the UK rail strategy. A game hosted by Richard Salkeld of Great Western Railway raised over £900 for Samaritans.

Community Rail Lancashire has entered the [Burscough Junction Project](#) into the Aviva Community Fund. Awards will be based on the number of votes each project receives. CRL is engaging with primary schools in Burscough and in Erkrath, Germany, to teach each set of children about the other's way of life, and the contribution they can make to their local community. Artwork created by the children will be printed onto several large panels for display at Burscough Junction station, and in Erkrath, either at the station (subject to agreement) or in the school. CRL hopes to arrange a launch event with a video link to the children in Burscough.

Gerald Townson and Catherine Huddleston from the Leeds-Morecambe CRP, and Jack Warbrick from the Lancaster and Skipton RUG, have created an activity pack to entertain and educate children under 12 on their journey along the Bentham Line, which runs from Leeds through the Aire Valley, then alongside the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Forest of Bowland AONB before crossing the Lune Valley to reach Carnforth, Lancaster and the seaside at Morecambe. The free pack is available to family groups at the staffed ticket and information offices at Leeds, Bradford Forster Square, Shipley, Bingley, Keighley, Skipton and Morecambe, and from volunteers on Bentham Line services. It is also available by post from the Partnership at Bentham Station Building, Station Road, Bentham, Lancaster, LA2 7LF, by telephoning 015242 98940, or by [email](#).

The Leeds-Morecambe CRP is also working with Northern and the Alzheimer's Society on a project to develop the Bentham Line as a 'dementia friendly' route. On 21 September, Simon Clarke, an employee of Community Rail Lancashire Ltd, set out to travel on all seven of its lines in just one day. First he had to get from Preston to Leeds in time to make the Isle of Man Boat Train to Heysham Port. This train was 8mins late into Leeds, so Simon had just one minute to get from platform 15b to platform 11b. He threw himself on just as the doors were about to close - and duly succeeded in travelling the 433 miles in 17hrs 50mins. Further contributions to add to the £700 already raised will be accepted [online](#) until 21 December 2017.

CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT

CBT would like the Budget to make it easier and cheaper to travel by bus, train and bike, and encourage the movement of freight from road to rail. Its top 9 ideas are set out at the bottom of its [webpage](#). However, to make its case, it needs some examples of the impact they would have on real people, so if any of these would affect you personally, please tell them how.

TRANSPORT FOCUS

A Wales Route Supervisory Board comprised of Transport Focus (TF), NR, Arriva Trains Wales and the Welsh Government will drive improvements and hold the rail industry to account. TF research helps NR and the train companies deliver what rail passengers really want: new trains with more seats and more space to deal with overcrowding, and a more punctual and reliable service. The Board first met in September, and now meets monthly during the crucial twelve months ahead of the new train service.

Case study: Mr M was travelling from Glasgow Queen Street to Peterborough with two other passengers. He intended to catch the 0945 service, due into Edinburgh Waverley at 1050, and then the 1100 to Peterborough. The customer information board showed the 0945 service as departing from Platform 9, which a guard confirmed when they showed their tickets. However, once onboard they discovered that they would not reach Edinburgh until 1100. It transpired that two trains depart for Edinburgh from Glasgow Queen Street at 0945: the one they meant to catch from the higher level, and a slower service from the lower level. As the Mr M's tickets were advance singles valid only for a specific train, he had to purchase three new tickets at a total cost of £366. Neither Scotrail nor Virgin felt obliged to offer a refund, but TF felt both should accept some responsibility: the Scotrail guard could have been more alert, and Virgin could have shown more discretion in allowing them to travel on an alternative service. It suggested they split the cost, and each agreed to pay £183 as a gesture of goodwill.

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

The 2017 Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) for the rail industry in England and Wales in Control Period 6 from 2019-2024 includes a direct grant of up to £34.7 billion, plus £13 billion or so from NR's expected income. These sums are subject to refinement by the Office of Rail & Road (ORR), which is due to publish its final determination in October 2018. Funding to develop new rail schemes is included, but that for major upgrades will follow a new process to be set out in more detail later this year. In March 2016, the DfT published a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with NR to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities in the delivery of Government funded rail enhancement projects. A shared lifecycle covering development, design and delivery "moves away from an overly rigid 5-year cycle linked to Railway Control Periods". Scotland is covered under a separate process administered by the devolved government.

The DfT has also published the third of its annual [Rolling Stock Perspectives](#), including its key priorities for future specifications, and a review by service group, class and franchised operator. It explains the thinking behind the policies that underpin franchise competitions, and its objectives and approach to improving journeys for passengers all over the country.

The Transport Secretary has made an Order under the Transport & Works Act authorising NR to extend the railway sidings in the Hogshaw area of Buxton, and the public footbridge over the railway works, as part of the Peak Forest to London Freight Programme: longer trains serving the Peak District quarries at Dowlow and Hindlow will increase freight capacity between the Peak District and London.

The Transport Secretary of State has also [approved](#) NR's application to: close the level crossing over the East Coast Main Line south west of Abbots Ripton in Cambridgeshire, extinguish the bridleway over that crossing, and provide an alternative bridleway route to cross the line via an existing underbridge.

On 23 October, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) ratified the proposed closure of Norton Bridge station, northwest of Stafford, subject to DfT maintaining part funding of rail replacement bus services until the end of March 2019. Meanwhile, Staffordshire County Council will review bus service levels in line with other local services in the area.

TravelWatch SouthWest has passed on a DfT invitation to a free workshop on the Accessibility Action Plan consultation to be held at the Novotel Hotel, Victoria Street, Bristol, BS1 6HY, on 13 November from 1100-1500. It aims to raise awareness of the AAP, and seeks feedback on the DfT proposals to improve the travel experience for people with disabilities. If you are planning to attend, please book with [Eventbrite](#), and also advise [Bryony Chetwode](#) of TWSW.

RTM reports that NR have awarded the contract to generate options to upgrade the TransPennine route between York and Manchester to an alliance of Amey, BAM Nuttall and Arup. Together with NR, they will submit development proposals to the DfT in December, as part of the Great North Rail Project.

According to [England's Economic Heartland's Strategic Transport Forum](#), the East Midlands Rail Franchise consultation proposals to reduce rail services in Luton, Bedford and Wellingborough are 'utterly at odds' with the region's focus on long-term growth. Its Chairman, Councillor Heather Smith, is 'deeply concerned': "The consultation document lacks detail, and the questions posed in it are highly selective, [so] it is difficult to fully understand the nature of the proposals. In our view, a second round of consultation must be undertaken which includes greater detail."

In its response to the East Midlands franchise consultation, East Midlands Councils seeks improvements to: Intercity services across the UK; Regional Hub links between Derby, Leicester, Lincoln and Nottingham, and local services connecting outlying communities to the Hubs and other key towns. EMC recommends the following service enhancements as a minimum:

- Restoring two trains per hour between Lincoln and Nottingham, and faster journeys from Lincoln and Newark to Leicester with limited stops south of Nottingham.
- A new Nottingham to Grantham peak hour stopping service, but ideally also throughout the day. Existing services could then be accelerated to become semi-fast limited stop trains.
- Derby and Ambergate - possibly by extending the Crewe to Derby trains.
- Frequency enhancements to Sunday services to/from London
- Longer trains on other services, especially replacement of single-car Class 153 trains

A [report](#) in the Times claims that the Rail Delivery Group, a pan-industry trade body representing the train operating companies, NR, and other businesses in the supply chain, wants a new independent railway ombudsman to address passenger grievances and rule on unresolved complaints, and by have passenger representation on joint supervisory boards to oversee the provision of services.

The Times also reports that Nicola Sturgeon's high-profile pledge to make Scotland the first part of the UK to embrace electric travel will be undermined by the lack of a coherent plan to phase out diesel trains. She wants to eradicate petrol and diesel vehicles from Scotland's roads by 2032, eight years before the rest of the UK, but even if she succeeds in persuading Scots motorists to go electric, hundreds of diesel trains will continue to pollute long after that deadline.

Railfuture member Simon Barber has responded to the plea from Sara Furness for a group to support reopening the line from Guildford and Cranleigh. Both the English Regional Transport Association (ERTA) and the Campaign for Better Transport (CbT) have the whole line from Guildford to Horsham on their list for rail re-openings (as well as Horsham to Shoreham). A study by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) has shown that both the business and environmental cases are strong. It refutes the 1997 report by Surrey County Council and Waverley Council, that concluded the line would not be financially viable. Local groups such as Cranleigh Chamber of Commerce and Guildford and Waverley Friends of the Earth are also campaigning to reopen the line, and are jointly promoting a [petition](#).

ERTA also noted the lack of a chord for freight traffic between the Central section of East-West Rail and the West Coast Main Line to Nuneaton. EWR advise that such a link at Bletchley would require the acquisition of 3rd party land and costly new infrastructure, not supported by the remit or the DfT business case. EWR is working with the DfT are to identify future freight flows; infrastructure to support Felixstowe would likely wait until the Central and Eastern Sections of the EWR programme were progressed.

Professor Mark Barry of Cardiff University has mooted a [Swansea Bay metro](#), including a new coastal route for the main line between Swansea and Baglan that would slash the journey time from Swansea to Cardiff from 55min to just 30min, and shorten journeys from West Wales to Cardiff by 30min. CBI Wales director, Ian Price, supports the idea, and AMs Lee Waters (Llanelli) and Jeremy Miles (Neath) have called on the First Minister to launch a more detailed study into the scheme.

Further to last month's report on Alstom's Coradia iLint, Peter Robins notes that [Alstom also hopes to run tests in this country](#), and has suggested Liverpool – Chester via the Halton curve as a suitable route, whilst [other articles](#) indicate that they do eliminate harmful emissions, and can be retrofitted.

Like the Borders Railway in Scotland, the trial link between the Swanage Railway and the main line at Wareham exceeded expectation. The projected footfall was 12,000; it actually achieved 13,020.

CONSULTATIONS

- DfT: [Accessibility Action Plan Consultation](#), closes 22 November.
- South Western Trains: [December 2018 Timetable Consultation](#), closes 22 December.
- Hertfordshire County Council: [Local Transport Plan](#), closes 23 January 2018
- DfT: [Future of Community Rail Strategy](#), closes 28 January 2018.

Please advise [Roger Blake](#) of any other consultation, eg that of a County Council or Unitary Authority.

...and finally

Local resident and Brigg Line supporter Phil Hewson reports that passenger numbers at Brigg have already passed last year's figure of 1023. However, the notice board in Station Road is growing mushrooms! Sadly, North Lincolnshire Councils are not very proactive when it comes to promoting the Line.

Whenever ORR Safety Inspectors visit LU worksites underground, they set an example by donning Personal Protective Equipment, including Respiratory Protective Equipment – a modern gas mask. This is fitted for size and shape, and the wearer then performs a series of tasks under controlled conditions. To check that the seal around the mask will remain intact when talking at work, these include reading a poem. [Any suggestions? - Ed.]

Salvo recalls 5 November 1966, the last day of train services at the then semi-rural station of Lostock Junction, west of Bolton. The very last train, a late evening Blackpool to Manchester stopper, was to be given a fitting send-off with a cacophony of detonators and fireworks. At the appointed hour, the signal cleared and detonators were placed. However, the oncoming headlights seemed to be moving rather too fast: it was the late running Glasgow-Manchester express! The detonators inevitably prompted an emergency stop some distance beyond the signal box, and words were exchanged. When the actual 'last train' pulled away from the station a few minutes later, Lostock Junction was no more. Happily, though, in 1989 Lostock station re-opened (but not as a 'junction') and is now a highly successful commuter station.

EVENTS

Do please keep your events coming in, both to me and to [Roger Blake \(Railfuture\)](#), who maintains the [List of Events](#) on the Railfuture website. A Calendar of Events embedded in a pdf document can get discarded, and this is a problem if the venue changes from month to month. A copy of your Calendar as a separate document in Word format would therefore be much appreciated.

Blob colour indicates the various types of event:

- National & regional rail events.
- Railfuture events (rail user group representatives are cordially invited).
- Local Group events.

November

- Saturday 11. West Sussex Rail Users Association AGM, Studio of the Capitol (the **Horsham Arts Centre**), 1000.
- Saturday 11. Copeland Rail Users' Group, **Seascale**, 1350.
- Monday 13. South-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership, Herriot's Hotel, Broughton Road, **Skipton**, 1900.
- Wednesday 15. TravelWatch SouthWest AGM, The Phoenix Arts Centre, Bradninch Place, Gandy Street, **Exeter** EX4 3LS, 1330 (**NB. change of venue**).
- Wednesday 15. Friends of the Barton Line Sloop, Barton, 2000, 1900
- Thursday 16. Railfuture London & South East, United Reform Church, White Rose Lane, **Woking**, GU22 7HA, 1800.
- Saturday 25. Railfuture Herts and Beds, St Paul's Church, Blandford Road, **St Albans**, 1045.
- Thursday 23. Railfuture Wessex, ?, **Basingstoke**, ?
- Tuesday 28. Levenmouth Rail Campaign Action Group, Levenmouth Campus, Fife College, Methilhaven Road, **Buckhaven**, KY8 1EA, 1830. (also 30 January 2018, 27 February, 27 March, 24 April, 29 May, 26 June.)

December

- Saturday 2. Railfuture East Anglia, Tamburlaine Hotel, close to **Cambridge** station, 1400.
- Tuesday 5. Ribble Valley Rail, New Inn, **Clitheroe**, 1430 (Also 2 January 2018).
- Tuesday 12. Chesham and District Transport Users' Group, Town Hall, **Chesham**, 1930 (Also 9 January 2018, 20 February, 3 April, 22 May, 19 June, 7 August, 18 September (followed by the AGM), 23 October, 11 December.)

Further Ahead

- 10 March. Railfuture Wessex AGM, above Bar Church Centre, **Southampton**.

This bulletin has been sent by Roger Smith, e-mail: ruglink@railfuture.org.uk, phone: 01462 815992

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