



**PLEA: Cllr Tim Steer**

## Reopening request

I am a newly elected Fremington parish councillor for North Devon and newly elected director of Bideford Railway Heritage Centre. North Devon has been fulfilling its government obligation to housing development, however the area has no relief roads or extra public transport. The volume of road traffic is tailing back for miles between Bideford and Barnstaple, yet ever more housing is approved. I am looking at the Maunsell report that was made in 1999.

My local area needs now more than ever the Barnstaple-Bideford line to be reinstated, not only for commuters but also for tourism. Every high season the area is swamped with holiday makers. I would like to talk to Railfuture and others on how to achieve reopening the line. I have local parish and district councillors who would support me. Please advise me on the best way to proceed and forward my email to persons who could aid in updating the Maunsell Report.

*Councillor Tim Steer  
t.steer@fremingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk*

## Heritage conundrum

The idea of developing the rail network by investing in heritage railways suggested in *Railwatch* 167 by Brian Jones is excellent. The Wensleydale Railway already operates from Leeming Bar to Redmire, and with a little bit of official help would be able to offer a useful east-west public transport link from Northallerton on the East Coast main line to Garsdale on the Settle-Carlisle line. Pre-Covid the railway was planning to extend from Redmire to Bolton Castle. Connecting Malton to Whitby would require the single-track North Yorkshire Moors Railway to be dualled but it would allow trains from Leeds, Manchester and beyond to provide a service to Whitby. The NYMR is very

successful in attracting visitors, but cannot run longer trains and seems reluctant to consider double tracking. I have suggested it.

We owe the NYMR and other preservation organisations an immense debt for the great job they have done.

But the NYMR is a victim of its own success. The bigger it gets, the more passengers it carries, the less it conforms to the initial aspirations of its founder members. It is a conundrum that needs to be solved.

*Michael Paine, Willingham by Stow,  
Gainsborough, Lincs DN21 5LD*

## Covid exclusion

I am concerned that, during the Covid-19 crisis, three inter-city operators have imposed reservation-only services. We have always had and must always have a walk-on railway. When motorists have to book slots on the M1 and M6 motorways, it might make sense for inter-city rail operators. Not before!

*Mike Crowhurst, Station Court,  
Garforth, Leeds LS25 2QQ*

## Lead the way

I am a member of a dozen or so railway-related organisations but I have always avoided Railfuture. However, I read Christian Wolmar's article (*Railwatch* 167) pointing out that franchising has resulted in an expensive railway. Railfuture should have been using the expertise of its members to formulate its own views rather than "waiting for Williams".

*Richard Bowry  
rbowry@hotmail.com*

## Well done, Harry

How refreshing to see the article about young Harry Burr (*Railwatch* 167). He makes an important point about the farcical way to get from Banbury to Northampton, via Coventry. Another farcical journey is Banbury to Aylesbury, via Princes Risborough. Unfortunately Bucks County Council seems indifferent to rail reinstatements, including High Wycombe to Marlow.

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**Railwatch welcomes  
articles/pictures from rail users  
and user groups**

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