

# **EUROSTAR A SNAPSHOT SURVEY**

REPORT OF A CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRE AND MYSTERY SHOPPER EXERCISE  
JUNE TO SEPTEMBER 2011

Published November 2011

Prepared by three members of the Railfuture International Committee:  
Christopher Brown, Simon Hope and Trevor Garrod.

Input is also acknowledged from:  
H Trevor Jones, Ian McDonald, Hugh McLintock, Michael Hardy, Les Fawcett and Peter Walker.

**[www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)**

Railfuture is the campaigning name for The Railway Development Society which is a not for profit Company Limited by Guarantee  
Website: <http://railfuture.org.uk>

Registered in England and Wales no 5011634. Registered Office: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND



## INTRODUCTION

The Railway Development Society Ltd., campaigning as Railfuture, is an independent voluntary body for rail users which campaigned for many years for a Channel Tunnel.

Since the opening of the Tunnel and inauguration of Eurostar trains in 1994, we have actively promoted these services and the new environmentally friendly journey opportunities they have introduced.

As founder members of the European Passengers' Federation we have worked with similar organisations in France, Belgium and fifteen other European countries to promote the services and identify possible improvements.

Between December 2007 and March 2008 we undertook a snapshot survey of customers' experiences and issued a report.

We undertook a second survey of journeys made between June and September 2011. We changed some of the questions in the light of developments since 2008 but our aim has remained to identify good and bad points and see what progress has been made in the customer experience since 2007/8.

This time we also conducted a Mystery Shopper exercise to see how well promoted the Eurostar service is elsewhere on the British network; how helpful and informative are the call centres that customers might phone; and how easy or helpful are the websites they might visit.

179 replies were received to our questionnaire, which was distributed with our journal Railwatch, posted on our website and distributed by some local rail users' associations.

## RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

**1. GENERAL:** As this survey was in the summer, and our previous one was in the winter and early spring, it is reasonable to expect a high proportion of the journeys made in 2011 were for holiday and leisure rather than business purposes. In fact, 95% of our respondents said they made the journey for pleasure, 4% for business and 1% answered "other reasons". The average length of trip abroad was 8.5 days and 80% travelled Standard class, with 20% Standard Premier. Only one respondent travelled Business Premier.

### 2. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE EUROSTAR?

This question was open-ended and the responses can be classified thus:

Ease, convenience, comfort, pleasure .....	23%
Preferred to air travel/driving;enjoy train travel .....	18%
Speed, straight to city centres .....	16%
Most practical route;best connections/cross-Channel option; only rail operator to the Continent .....	11%
Part of group booking/package/rail holiday .....	9%
Environmentally friendly .....	8%
Cheapest cost option/best value .....	6%
Curiosity/ a bit special/stylish/"a real journey" .....	3%
Past experience .....	2%

Miscellaneous replies - flexibility/efficiency; no driving required; sea crossing too long; view from window. These percentage responses did not vary greatly from those in our 2008 survey.

### WHAT IS YOUR HOME STATION?

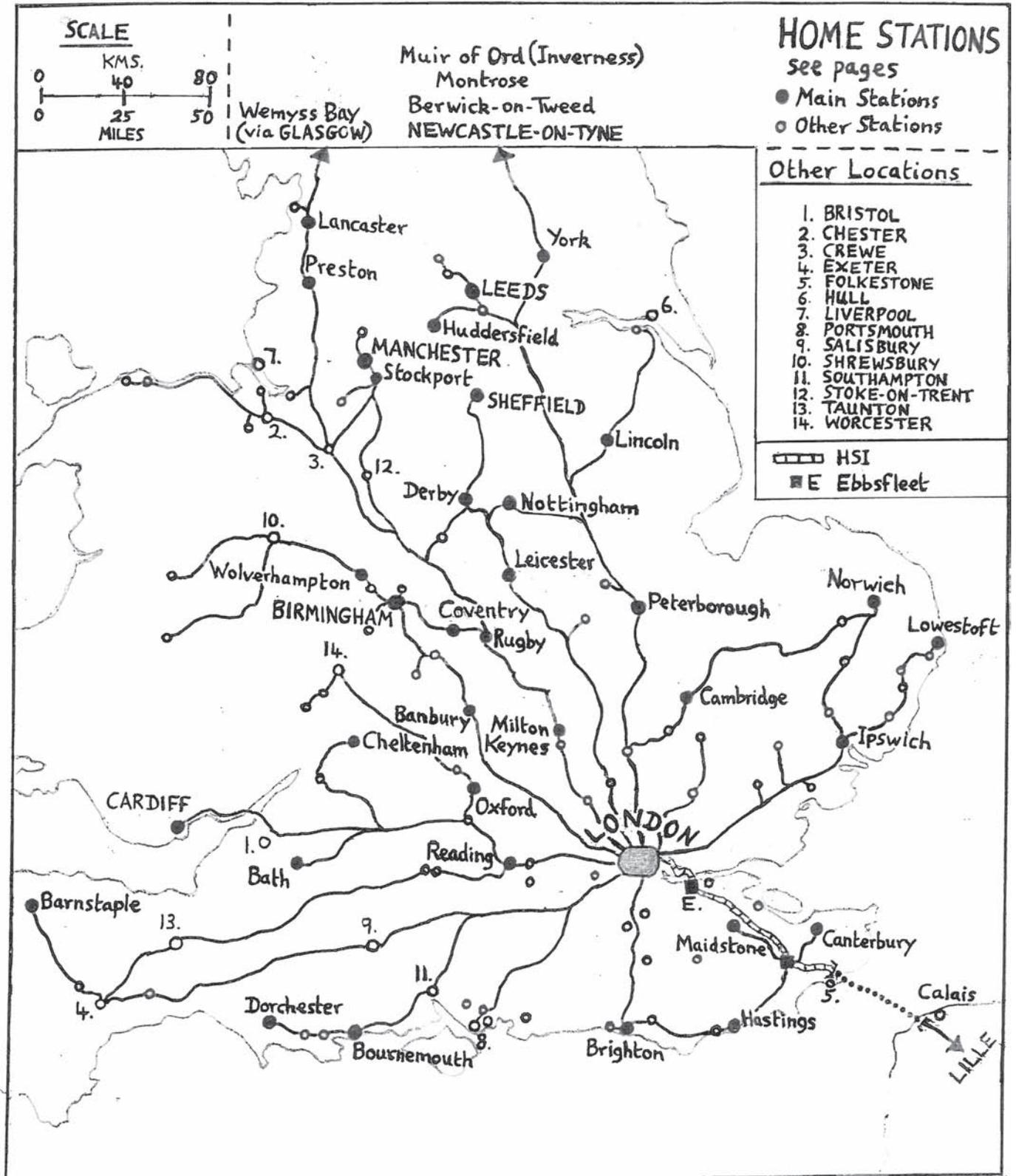
Customers had 127 different home stations, which was slightly more than in our 2008 survey.

18% travelled from 26 different Southern Region stations as follows:

Ashford International, Bexhill, Bournemouth, Brighton, Canterbury West, Caterham, Chichester, Cosham, Dorchester South, East Grinstead, Fareham, Fratton, Gravesend, Hastings, Honiton, Hove, Lewes, Maidstone East, Milford, Reigate, Sittingbourne, Sunbury-on-Thames, Tunbridge Wells, Wareham, Wokingham, Wool.

30% travelled from 33 different Eastern Region stations as follows:

Audley End, Barton-on-Humber, Berwick-on-Tweed, Braintree, Cambridge, Darsham, Diss, East Garforth, Grantham, Halesworth, Harlow Town, Harrogate, Hitchin, Huddersfield, Hythe (Essex), Ilkley, Ipswich, Leeds, Lincoln, Lowestoft, Needham Market, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norwich, Oulton Broad South, Peterborough, Royston, Shipley, Stamford, Sudbury (Suffolk), Wakefield, Wickham Market, Wymondham, York.



A further 22% came from 29 Midland Region stations as follows:

Bare Lane, Birmingham New Street, Bletchley, Burton-on-Trent, Bury (Lancs), Corby, Coventry, Derby, Erdington, Frodsham, Harpenden, Hemel Hempstead, Hooton, Knutsford, Lancaster, Leamington Spa, Leicester, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Northfield, Nottingham, Preston, Rugby, Sheffield, Stockport, Tipton, Urmston, Warwick Parkway, Wolverhampton.

The Western Region accounted for a further 12% of respondents, from 16 stations:

Banbury, Barnstaple, Bath, Cheltenham, Crediton, Didcot, Great Malvern, Hanborough, Hungerford, Kintbury, Ledbury, Oxford, Reading, Stonehouse (Glos), Stratford-on-Avon, Twyford.

Greater London accounted for 12% of respondents using 13 stations as follows:

Acton Town, Cambridge Heath, Crystal Palace, Dalston Kingsland, Euston, Kentish Town West, Norbiton, Palmers Green, Peckham Rye, St Pancras, Sutton (Surrey), Walthamstow Central, Worcester Park.

4% of customers in the survey were from Wales, using 6 stations

Caersws, Cardiff Central, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, Llandrindod, Penyffordd.

2% of customers started their journeys at stations in Scotland:

Leuchars, Montrose, Muir of Ord, Wemyss Bay

### **WHERE DID YOU BOARD THE EUROSTAR TRAIN?**

St Pancras International 90%

Ebbsfleet International 3%

Ashford International 7%

It is interesting to note that although Ashford has fewer Eurostar stops than Ebbsfleet, more passengers in our survey used it.

### **HOW DID YOU REACH THIS INTERNATIONAL STATION?**

The majority of passengers made a journey involving one, two or three modes of transport to reach the Eurostar station. For 86%, train was the main part of their journey to the international station, however, and this was a higher percentage than in our 2007/8 survey.

The figures below indicate actual trips made by a specific mode, rather than percentages:

Train .....	154
Foot .....	52
Underground .....	52
Taxi .....	29
Bus .....	25
Car .....	23
Bicycle .....	4
Coach .....	3
Ferry .....	1

### **DID YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS GETTING TO THE STATION?**

It was encouraging to learn that 94% of respondents had no problems getting to the station; and only 6% did.

### **WHERE DID YOU LEAVE EUROSTAR?**

Paris .....	43%
Brussels.....	41%
Lille .....	14%
Calais-Frethun .....	1%
Avignon Centre.....	1%

It is interesting to note that, even though Paris has considerably more trains from London than Brussels does, there was only 2% difference in the numbers going to each.

### **WHAT WAS YOUR ULTIMATE DESTINATION?**

71% of customers in our survey were going to destinations beyond Paris, Lille or Brussels. This was a considerable increase on the results of our 2007/8 survey. This may be partly explained by a higher proportion of holiday journeys, but can also be a result of passengers being more adventurous and more willing to use rail for longer journeys to the Continent. The work of RailTeam could well be a factor, in encouraging more use of the high speed network. Certainly the continued growth of that network means that more towns and cities on the Continent are within easier reach of London. The opening of the Liege - Aachen and Nuremberg - Ingolstadt high speed lines, for example, have occurred since our previous survey. The high-speed network is continuing to grow and so we can expect more such journeys in the future..

The opening of such lines also brings London within easier reach for Continental visitors to our country. Is our own tourist and railway industry taking advantage of that?

#### **FRANCE**

In our previous survey, 17 passengers continued their journey to one of 16 different stations.

This time 36 of them made journeys to 27 different stations in France -

Agde, Agen(2), Albert, Angouleme, Arras, Avignon(5), Bayonne, Bordeaux, Calais Ville, Compiègne, Le Creusot, Limoges, Lourdes(3), Lyon(2), Le Mans, Meribel, Nevers, Nice, Orange, Perpignan(2), Rang-de-Fliers(Picardy), Rennes, Rouen, Strasbourg, Toulouse, Troyes, Valence.

#### **BELGIUM**

16 customers went to 6 different stations in Belgium

Antwerp(2), Bruges (8), Liege(2), Leuven, Ypres(2)

#### **LUXEMBOURG**

2 passengers in our survey went to Luxembourg city.

#### **NETHERLANDS**

7 passengers went to one of five destinations in the Netherlands:

Amsterdam (3), Bodegraven, The Hague, Eindhoven, Utrecht.

#### **GERMANY**

In our previous survey, 19 journeys were made to 8 destinations in Germany. This time, 35 journeys were made to 22 destinations:

Aachen, Augsburg, Berlin (4), Bremen, Cologne(3), Dortmund, Dresden, Dusseldorf, Essen, Frankfurt(Main), Gutersloh, Hannover, "Harz Mountains", Karlsruhe, Munich (8), Nuremberg, Remagen, Rostock, Stralsund, Trier, Wernigerode, Wurzburg.

#### **SWITZERLAND**

7 journeys were made to 5 stations:

Davos, Kandersteg, Meiringen, Wengen, Zurich(3). In addition, two passengers were making a rail tour of Switzerland.

#### **AUSTRIA**

In our previous survey only one passenger went to Austria. This time 6 journeys were made to 4 stations:

Linz, Seefeld (near Innsbruck)(2), Vienna(2), Zell am See.

#### **CZECH REPUBLIC**

1 journey made to Prague.

#### **ITALY**

A threefold increase compared to our previous survey with one respondent going on a tour and 11 others travelling to 10 stations:

Como, Florence, "Lake Garda", Milan, Padua, Rimini, Rome(2), Stresa, Turin, Venice.

#### **SPAIN**

2 journeys, one to Madrid and one a tour of the north coast.

#### **PORTUGAL**

One journey to Tunes.

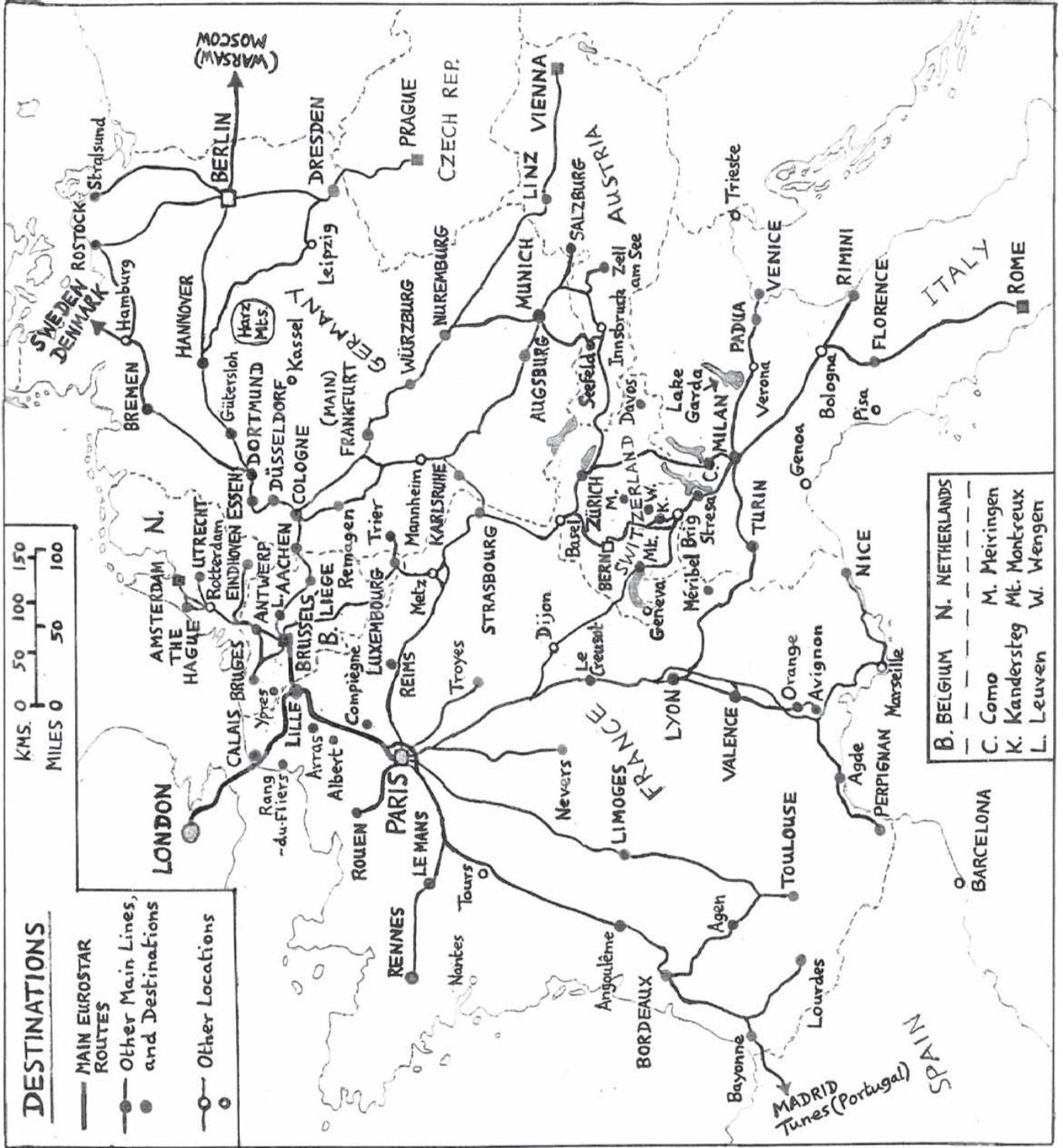
#### **SWEDEN**

One journey

#### **RUSSIA**

One journey to Moscow.

At least a third of the destinations were not served by high-speed trains, showing that a considerable number of passengers completed their journey on a classic, regional or local train.



**HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR ONWARD JOURNEY?**

This question was not asked in our previous survey, but we wanted to ascertain the means used by customers to find out about the increasing numbers of journeys made beyond Lille, Paris or Brussels, 30% said they used a website; 19% a tour operator; 14% a travel agent ;5% enquired at a station and 3% phoned a call centre. The remaining 29% answered "other" and it is likely that this included specialist agencies such as Raileurope or sources such as Thomas Cook's European Rail Timetable. Some more experienced travellers probably already knew or may have used personal contacts.

**HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU USED EUROSTAR IN THE PAST YEAR?**

None	21%
Once	27%
Twice	22%
Three times	6%
Four times	13%
More	11%

**IF YOU HAD A PROBLEM ON THE JOURNEY, HOW WAS IT HANDLED?**

Only 3% of respondents said they had a problem during the journey. This is encouraging, and it would appear that Eurostar staff have been generally very helpful this past summer. See also answers to our final question, about improving the Eurostar experience.

**HOW DID YOU BOOK YOUR TICKET?**

Website	30%
Travel agent	28%
Tour operator	24%
Telephone	9%
Station	5%
Other	4%

Compared to our 2008 survey there has been a decrease in numbers of passengers booking by phone (15% in 2008) and at stations (19% in 2008) but a small increase in those using traditional travel agents (previously 23%). This may also reflect the fact that the 2011 survey included the summer holidays and received fewer responses from business travellers. The fact that nearly a quarter used a tour operator is also significant here.

**HOW WAS THE BOOKING EXPERIENCE?**

Excellent	40%
Good	48%
Acceptable	9%
Bad	3%

These are very encouraging figures - but 79% of our sample had used Eurostar at least once in the past year and so already had some knowledge of how to book.

**NAME THE ONE IMPROVEMENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE TO EUROSTAR SERVICES**

Our final question was open-ended and we received 206 specific suggestions, with a few respondents naming more than one.

We have grouped the responses to help identify the main areas for possible improvement.

**1. BEFORE BOARDING:**

- 30 responses were received.
- 17 cited flexibility of ticketing, through ticketing,an integrated system between more UK and Continental stations and add-ons at both ends for local destinations.
- 13 cited more low-price and affordable walk-on fares, special fares, a simplified fares structure, a zonal system, discounts for pensioners, return of Leisure Select and more certainty about prices before booking.

**2. AT THE STATIONS**

**(a). GENERAL:** There were 4 requests for easier check-in with shorter times and earlier access to platforms after check-in; improvements to announcements (especially when things go wrong or in emergencies); and measures to ease overcrowding in waiting areas. Respondents also requested more help available on the platform and better signage and direction to coaches (for example, with train lay-out plans).

### **(b) ST PANCRAS INTERNATIONAL**

- 5 cited the long walking distances from Euston, the taxi rank or Underground platforms; the fact that there is only one lift to the Underground; poor and inadequate signage at entrance and exit.
- 2 cited easier exit from the arrivals area with more space for meeters and greeters, comparing St Pancras unfavourably with Waterloo.
- One respondent requested a bureau de change in the departure area (There are currently two which you check in).
- It was also pointed out that some passengers are unaware of the ticket-collection machines near the barriers.

### **(c) LILLE EUROPE**

- 3 respondents called for connections to the rest of France to be better exploited at this station.
- One called for better signage on the platforms to show the boarding positions of coaches.

### **(d) BRUSSELS MIDI**

- 4 respondents called for better connections to the Netherlands and Germany, saying that 1-hour intervals should be the norm.
- 3 complained of problems with tight connections, particularly if a Thalys or ICE was running late. Better explanation is needed of the role of RailTeam in enabling passengers to travel by the next available service at no extra charge if a connection is missed. It is good to see the RailTeam logo, and hear the clear suffix "member of RailTeam" added to Eurostar announcements - but people need to know how it can help them.

### **(e) PARIS NORD**

- 8 respondents called for the passenger area to be expanded, with more seats - possibly by removing shops.
- 2 called for more information on changing trains or stations in Paris and metro connections. (Perhaps this could be addressed by more on-train information)

### **(f) OTHER STATIONS**

- One respondent called for Eurostar to call at Stratford International and two commented that Ebbsfleet was not a good alternative for passengers in East Kent.
- 12 asked for more Eurostars to call at Ashford International, complaining about lengthy waits there when arriving by domestic trains to catch a Eurostar. There was a call for better integration with domestic services.

## **3. ON BOARD**

- 29 comments were made about the trains themselves. We appreciate that some of these issues may not be addressed until new trains are delivered, but they are all relevant to the travelling experience.
- 10 respondents urged that more luggage space be provided, especially by large wheeled cases, in Standard Class.
- 8 called for more legroom in Standard Class
- 5 called for all seats to be aligned next to windows.
- 3 called for trains to be refurbished.
- There was one call for more table seats (for groups of 4 people) and two commented that Standard Premier was not suitable for families with children.

## **4. CATERING**

- There were 21 calls for improved on-board catering.
- 13 respondents requested more choice and/or better quality in the buffet.
- 2 called for cheaper food and drink
- 4 urged introduction of an at-seat trolley service
- There was one call for an improved lay-out in the buffet and one person asked, "Is there too much recycling?"

**5. DESTINATIONS:** There were 11 calls for expansion of through services from North Of London (both England and Scotland) and 19 calls for through services to more places on the Continent. Mention was made of Cologne, Berlin, Frankfurt(M), Munich, Nice, Amsterdam and Switzerland.

**6. CYCLING:** 5 respondents raised the question of bicycles on trains. Some had been refused entry on to a TGV at Lille as a cycle-box was required and the bicycles could not be dismantled. It was suggested that SNCF regulations be clearly displayed on the Eurostar website and elsewhere.

**7. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS:** 3 respondents commented that it was difficult to cross Paris for the elderly, disabled and families with children, or with heavy luggage. It was also commented that changing trains might encourage more people to choose air travel ; but also that train operators should make their product "as different from flying as possible."

## **RAILFUTURE 2011 EUROSTAR MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORT**

In addition to surveying passengers experience of travelling on Eurostar we considered it would be useful to see how easy it is to find out what Eurostar has to offer.

We divided the survey into three separate strands although we realise that none of these can be totally separated from the other. The three strands we looked at were

1. Publicity. On or at stations in UK such as posters, timetable booklets and any other literature. Any other advert in any other medium.
2. The ease of booking tickets that included travel by Eurostar using the telephone to contact TOC's, Eurostar and Travel Agencies from stations in the UK to stations in Europe.
3. The ease of booking tickets on line from UK stations to stations in Europe.

To this end we asked Railfuture members to send in their observations at National Rail stations and in the Media, as well as asking a number of volunteers to act as mystery shoppers both on the telephone and the Web.

PUBLICITY. There were 82 observations sent in covering 60 different stations in England, Scotland and Wales, 12 different TOC timetable booklets and both versions of the National Rail Timetable.

There were no posters provided by either Eurostar or TOC's (about Eurostar services) at any of the stations surveyed nor were there any Eurostar leaflets. At Leicester there was a large poster on platform 3 advertising Trainseurope and stating that tickets to Europe could be obtained from their ticket at London St. Pancras but not mentioning their office at Leicester Station! There were small signs at 3 of the 5 ticket windows at Leicester saying "European Tickets sold here". On stations on the East Suffolk Line there were adverts on The East Suffolk Travellers Association notice boards giving details of how to book tickets to Europe.

A small number of stations displayed a Network Map showing HS1 and the Channel Tunnel. NXEA display a general information poster at each station but it says nothing about international travel.

East Midlands Trains stations and trains have an EMT Network Map which shows St. Pancras with a note underneath it saying change for Eurostar services.

Of the 12 timetable booklets looked at, only East Coast had a section telling you how to book combined East Coast and Eurostar tickets. They also have a ticket guide with a large section on tickets to Europe which are available by logging on to [www.eastcoast.co.uk/eurostar](http://www.eastcoast.co.uk/eurostar). On many stations there is a leaflet produced by National Rail headed National Rail Guide to Tickets. This has a section on Through Tickets to Europe and advises passengers to go to [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com).

East Midlands Trains London timetable booklet has a section London St. Pancras International Eurostar Connections which asks passengers to go to [www.eastmidlandstrains.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandstrains.co.uk) to buy through tickets from East Midlands Trains stations to destinations in France and Belgium. No other EMT timetable booklets contain this information as far as we can see.

Both versions of the National Rail Timetable gave Eurostar information, the Mitchell/Bradshaw version being the easier to find.

The staff at the Northern Rail enquiry office at Leeds station had on their own initiative produced a list of contacts for people asking about Eurostar or European travel.

TELEPHONE. Our mystery shopper volunteers sought information from their local TOC's on through bookings from their local stations to Paris and Interlaken. None of the TOC's contacted was able to do through bookings but were able to give contact numbers/ websites for either Eurostar or in one case [www.internationalrail.com](http://www.internationalrail.com) . This at least was encouraging.

Eurostar 08432186186 Was able to book tickets from St Pancras, Ebbsfleet and Ashford to their European destinations, but by no means all of Europe, basically only stations served by Eurostar, TGV, Thalys and Lyria. They could book you to Paris but our other destination of Interlaken could not be done. Our mystery shopper was offered a booking to Basel then rebook with Swiss Railways to Interlaken from there. Anyone who wanted a through ticket from a UK station to connect with Eurostar had to be transferred to the Eurostar Domestic Department.

Deutsche Bahn They could book tickets to anywhere in Europe from St. Pancras, Ebbsfleet or Ashford but not the UK leg of the journey.

Ffestiniog Travel 01766772957. Fantastic! Helpful operator who took details and said she would email back as they were very busy. Was able to offer prices and times of trains from Nottingham to both Paris and Interlaken (not on Eurostar's radar). If required she could obtain Paris Visite Cards as well. Excellent service says our shopper as Ffestiniog would have rung back if the customer was not on email.

National Rail Enquires gave Eurostar number.

The only one stop shop using the telephone for tickets from the UK to all of Europe would seem to be Ffestiniog Travel although we have not sampled International Rail 08712310790.

Web Based Surveys. First bit of advice, if in a hurry don't try this if you have a dial up connection.

The report coordinator visited 20 TOC websites with the following results.

First Great Western Click on tickets on Home Page gives direct link to Eurostar website.

East Midlands Trains Link on Home Page under tickets to Eurostar website.

Virgin Trains Good link from Home Page to Eurostar website.

Chiltern Railways Good link from Home Page to Eurostar website.

First Capital Connect Link via Airports and International to Eurostar website.

East Coast Link via Special Offers on Home Page gives sample prices to Paris, click on buy tickets puts you on Eurostar website.

London Midland            Link via Tickets and Trains on Home Page select Eurostar link. You get a page giving sample fares from LM stations to Paris then a section on how to book by Phone and then Eurostar website. It then tells you how to collect your ticket(s) and even how to get from Euston to St. Pancras. Excellent.

On the other 13 TOC websites there were no **obvious** links to Eurostar even though some had Airport and ferry links. We may have missed a link but looked very hard at each site to try and find one.

One Mystery Shopper googled London to Lucerne with the following results.

1. National Rail Enquires            Not followed as UK tickets only.

2 Getting to Lucerne by rail        <http://insurance.essential/travel.co.uk/tg-europe/Switzerland/lucerne-getting-there.asp> suggests flying as quicker. For rail says you can get there by rail with many changes but gives no more details .

3 [www.tripadvisor.co.uk](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk)            Gives the following links

a.        Destination Expert gives you Geneva, says you need to book 90 days in advance to get best prices and suggests the following [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com) for London – Paris and [www.voyages-sncf.com](http://www.voyages-sncf.com) or [www.rail.ch](http://www.rail.ch) for Paris – Lucerne

3a1        [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com). Put in London-Lucerne but came back as could not match destinations. Shopper then replaced Lucerne with Basle and the details of trains and fares came up.

3a2        [www.voyages-sncf.com](http://www.voyages-sncf.com) comes up in French but there is an English option, when you find it. Type in Paris – Lucerne but be prepared to change date and/or times if it tells you it can't find what you want.

3a3        [www.sbb.ch/en/home.html](http://www.sbb.ch/en/home.html) In English>>>online timetable>>>with buy and fare/buy options. Asked for London-Lucerne and given 4 options dependent on dates. Shopper could not find out how to progress booking however.

b.        [www.seat.61.com/railshop.htm](http://www.seat.61.com/railshop.htm) Buy train tickets menu of links including European Train Tickets (4.1) and European rail Passes (4.2)

4.1 puts you through to [www.Raileurope.co.uk](http://www.Raileurope.co.uk) but shopper never managed to connect to website.

4.2 puts you through to <http://tradedoubler.com> not pursued as not looking for a pass.

We tried the Eurostar website with the following results. You can book through from any UK station via Eurostar to the following destinations only.

France            Most major towns and regional centres.

Belgium            All destinations if you select the Any Belgian Station option as a destination.

Netherlands        Amsterdam, Schiphol or Rotterdam.

Germany            Aachen, Cologne or Frankfurt.

Switzerland Basle, Zurich, Berne, Lausanne or Geneva.

It is a simple booking procedure but you will need to be flexible with dates and times and look at the various options offered to get best prices. Best to book 90 days in advance.

Ffestiniog Travel Tells you to telephone them for information as they prefer to talk you through the options owing to the complexities of connections and station changes.

Rail Europe Tried to book Nottingham – Limoges but came up that I had to book the UK part of the journey with The Trainline.com their partner and then book the Ticket from London with them.

The Trainline If you choose Eurostar on Home Page it gives you Eurostar.com and if you choose European tickets it gives you Rail Europe.

International Rail [www.internationalrail.com](http://www.internationalrail.com) Comprehensive site covering rail travel throughout the world. Sells tickets for Eurostar and the rest of Europe including single and multi country rail passes. They also do hotels and buses.

[www.directrail.com](http://www.directrail.com) This site offers to sell you UK, Eurostar and European rail tickets as well as European ferry tickets and Eurotunnel shuttle tickets. Will also book hotels and city guides. No phone number given.

CIV TICKETS These are tickets that can be purchased from UK stations to London International at a special discounted price for use with Eurostar tickets. As well as the good prices they have the advantage of all TOC's and Eurostar being obliged to find you a seat on the next available train if you miss your connection through late running or cancellation of the incoming train.

There is no mention of these tickets on any of the websites looked at except Seat.61 which describes them as "the best kept secret in the rail industry." Why?

Is it because some customers have abused the facility, using it as a flexible ticket to London when they had no intention of travelling with Eurostar? TOC's are within their rights to ask to see the Eurostar ticket before issuing a London CIV ticket and on train staff are also within their rights to ask to see the Eurostar ticket of any passenger travelling with a London CIV ticket.

MEDIA Eurostar places adverts in arrange of media such as newspapers, magazines, commercial radio and television. The fact that these adverts appear does not however absolve the rest of the railway industry from giving basic information about Eurostar services or at least clearly signposting passengers to where the information can be found.

## CONCLUSION

We have provided a snapshot of what help is available to passengers wanting to make an International rail journey. We have identified some instances of good practice but also shown that Train Operating Companies could do more to promote such journeys (most of which start with a local train journey) at little cost to themselves.

Our members may not always have been able to work out the best ways of using the websites and yet most of them are experienced rail travellers. What hope is there, then, for the less experienced?

Railfuture has always considered the train services through the Channel Tunnel as a great technical achievement and they open up so many journey possibilities. There does however remain much to be done, often by the Train Operating Companies, to promote international rail travel through better information and easier booking. We hope this report will contribute to that process.

To end on a positive note, here were three general comments:

“It was a very good experience”

“I was impressed by the whole experience”

“It is a pity no one emphasises how easy it is”

November 2011