

# Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 22 September 2013

**railfuture** *Yorkshire*

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

## HS2 Proposals in West Yorkshire

by Mike Crowhurst



Photo by Paul Colbeck – Current “High Speed” Train at Harrogate

There is much to criticise in the proposals for all sections of HS2. Most of the running has inevitably been made by objectors whose property is affected, but Railfuture too has tended to focus on the route, rather than looking more closely at aspects of concern to potential *users* of the line in the future. I believe this is a serious mistake. We need to focus more on the location of stations and the provisions for interchange with the rest of the

rail network. Sadly the proposals are seriously deficient in direct connectivity with the classic network and seem designed to be as self-contained as possible with the emphasis on line speed above all else.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the proposals for the Leeds terminus at **New Lane**, in the middle of a traffic gyratory some way south of the present station. This is despite the fact that, as even HS2 Ltd recognise, one in five East Coast passengers using Leeds are using local rail services to feed into the intercity service here. As at Birmingham, passengers will be faced with the need to connect on foot between the old and new stations, negotiate two ticket barriers, often with luggage and so on, losing much of the much-vaunted time saving in the process. Nobody who actually uses the railways would suggest such an arrangement, and our friends in Europe would think it laughable. In passing, the out-of-town stations are even worse, and none of the so-called airport stations are actually *at* the airports in question!

Indeed in one respect Leeds is even worse than Birmingham. Curzon St is at least alongside the line approaching New St, so a physical connection to permit some through running to Wolverhampton etc is at least possible although apparently not planned. Not so at Leeds, so no continuing to/from York in the east or (more likely) Bradford etc. in the west.

A decade or two ago things might have been rather different. The line could have pushed on past New Lane to a terminus in the undercroft of the present station, which would at least have given an integrated interchange although not through running, but Bridgewater Place, Granary Wharf and the rest have put paid to that option. Indeed even the promised pedestrian link is likely to prove difficult and controversial as it will need to be squeezed between a hotel and a residential block, and may have to be built over the river. Expect howls of protest!

Alternatively a western approach to the station, either alongside the Hunslet line or on the old viaduct (and following the M1 west of Wakefield) could have been possible, and may theoretically still be, but most of the land north of the station has now been built on. So the terminus would probably now need the car park and/or some of the present platforms as well as building over (a different bit of) the river Aire, Probably no longer a practical proposition-

But there is another alternative, which while not ideal does seem to me to be better than what is on offer. On the east side of the centre, tucked away behind Quarry Hill, lies an area of unused railway land clearly visible

from trains on the East Leeds line. Old Yorkshire hands will immediately recognise it as the site of the first station in Leeds at Marsh Lane, original terminus of the line from Selby, abandoned when the line was pushed through to the main station and disused ever since. The location is not quite as central as the present station, but would serve the fast changing east side of the centre, including Quarry Hill, the Markets area and the bus station just a block away, and balance the westward pull of the present station.

For this site to be a workable proposition it must include a new local station on the East Leeds line. There is ample room to incorporate a 4-track double-island station here on a bend in the line, and of course a physical connection. Indeed it is an easier site than that often suggested nearby at the Leeds Minster. (Although better located right by the Central Bus station, this is on a 2-track embankment that would need to be built out even to fit in two platforms, and being closer to the main station with no prospect of platform loops, pathing problems would be inevitable.) Marsh Lane offers the possibility of allowing some (eg Cross-country) services to pass without stopping while most local and regional services calling to serve the High Speed terminus and the east end of the city centre and nearby St. James' hospital (which is becoming more important than the Leeds General Infirmary on the west side of the city centre).

[In theory a similar solution might be possible at Curzon St in Birmingham, with a local station beside the high speed terminus, but I suspect that the complexity of the area, intensity of services and proximity to New Street would make it impractical. Better to move New Street!]

If full-length high speed platforms are needed, then some widening out of the approach to the Marsh Lane site will be necessary. This would involve mostly fairly low-grade industrial premises, unlike those in the New Lane area which are mostly fairly recent and good quality. The approach to the High Speed line terminal would be via the existing Richmond Hill tunnel & cutting. At present there are five tracks through here, only two of which are generally used for service trains, the others for empty stock, relief, or the occasional freight. I suggest the two current passenger tracks remain, the two others on the north side cater for high speed and the fifth, on the south, becomes reversible for empty stock, relief and freight. Or perhaps better would be a reversible line between the two local passenger lines. Overhead clearance even in the tunnel seems ample, but could be opened out if necessary, which seems unlikely.

As the high speed line emerges from the cutting and approaches the depot at Neville Hill, it would need to cross over (or possibly under) the local lines. Being clear of any housing in the immediate area, this should not cause a problem. It then runs south of the existing sidings towards the elbow of Halton Moor Road and Newmarket Lane. Until recently it would have been into open country as soon as it crossed this road and passed between Cross Green Industrial area and Halton Moor / Osmondthorpe estates, having used almost entirely existing railway or vacant land except for the rear of the terminal. But the Aire Valley Enterprise Zone has now begun to expand into this gap. Fortunately so far only one or two buildings have gone up in the path of the line, and ample space exists within the zone to relocate these. No doubt planning permissions may already exist for others, or soon will, so urgent action is needed, but at present the scale of the task would be comparable to clearing the route of the Windsor Link in Manchester some years ago.

Once clear of the industrial zone and past Skelton Moor farm, the line crosses Pontefract Lane and heads for junction 45 of the M1 which it would cross just south of the junction. From then on it is into open country - mostly old quarry land which presents no obstacle, as it resumes the line of the official proposal on the approach to Woodlesford. It seems to me that this approach and terminus is infinitely better than the current proposal both for passengers and from the planning point of view for the City of Leeds. This option is compatible with both the main route south of Woodlesford and the north east extension towards York.

Looking at the latter, whilst I have no particular problem with the proposed route north of Garforth (and I should declare an interest that I live on that side of Garforth) nevertheless it does strike me as an odd choice to cross the existing line beside the M1 and then come in on the wrong side of the York line past Church Fenton & Ulleskelf, bearing in mind that HS trains will need to join the tracks now carrying the Doncaster and London services. It would be just as easy to pass between Garforth and Kippax, south of Micklegate, then alongside the existing line from Huddleston Grange, east of Church Fenton station (there is still a small gap), possibly using the present Sheffield tracks from then on, subject to replacing the platforms at Ulleskelf on the Leeds lines. Throw in a north curve at Swillington/Woodlesford (no problem) and you get a potential fast alternative Leeds-York route for little extra expense!

Regarding the route south of Woodlesford as far as Goosehill near Normanton, there is a possible alternative strategy which would give a far better route towards York, but again there is a recent industrial estate that would need to be penetrated. It would run from Goosehill in the gap between Altofts and Normanton, to the north of the present line, then over the M62 where it comes up against the recently developed industrial zone at "Tuscany Park" north of Pope Street. Whilst again only one or two buildings would need relocating, this may prove more difficult than at Aire Valley because most of the site seems to have been taken up. However once clear of this hurdle, the way is clear in an almost straight line south east of Allerton Bywater and Ledston, north west of Ledsham and skirting Ledston Park to pick up the existing York line as before at Huddleston Grange. [I also looked at an option which would have joined the old Lancashire & Yorkshire main line at New Fryston, but concluded that whilst physically possible this would cause problems at Sherburn in Elmet and New Fryston in addition to those at Church Fenton common to all.]

This route is compatible with the Leeds route as currently proposed south of Woodlesford, and either the New Lane or Marsh Lane options in Leeds. But to minimise total route length, if the problem at Altofts can be resolved, the Leeds branch could split off there and run west of Methley, past Methley Park Hospital and cross the Woodlesford line between the Marina and the sewage works. This alignment offers the possibility of moving the route a little further away from recent development at Woodlesford (which would no doubt be appreciated by residents including some of our members) but would not be conducive to a north curve fast route linking Leeds and York. Apart from that there is little in it from the Leeds point of view but much to be said for the direct route to York. I suspect however that unlike the Aire Valley route into Leeds, which looks well worth the trouble of dealing with the obstacles, the advantages to the York branch may well not be enough to merit dealing with those at Altofts.

I have walked all these options myself this summer, and know most of the territory well, so I can be confident that there are no other unexpected hurdles - for now at least! I would appreciate feedback from members on these suggestions. As I write, consultation for phase 2 has just been announced, and runs to 31 January, so we have little time if we want to persuade the powers-that-be of the merits of the Marsh Lane option to *real* passengers, instead of the pig's ear represented by New Lane!

## Selby & District's Rail User Group

By Reg & Terry French

Discussions are on-going with First Transpennine Express and Northern Rail regarding the May 2014 timetable. The changes proposed give some marginal benefits to the District on TransPennine services, but there are a number of adverse factors for users of Northern services. These include changes to some return commuter services from York to Selby and a big downside in local services to Leeds. Instead of having an almost half hourly service to and from Leeds, the mix of fast and stopping services results in some trains arriving within two minutes of each other. Connections to Hull will also be badly affected.

An immediate problem is the decision of the District Council to change the procedure for the renewal of discounted Senior and Disabled tickets. This has been done without any consultation with us and Transpennine Express, the Company concerned. It is hoped a solution will be found soon.

We were invited to a major business meeting organized by the Yorkshire and Humber Development Board. The theme was the Future of Transport Policy, the principal contributor being the Shadow Secretary of State. A considerable amount of time was spent on rail issues including HS2, the future of Franchising, and the devolution of local services. The future of the East Coast Directly Operated Rail Company was given a considerable airing and Maria Eagle stated if there is a change of government it will be kept in the public sector.

This is the position taken by our user group. We met the Constituency MP to inform him of our reasons. These include reports received from residents who use East Coast in the main for services to the North who have been particularly impressed by the 1st Class refreshment offer but also the overall improvement in standard of service since November 2009. The Group were impressed by an "Awayday" arranged to Wabtec at Doncaster where the Director of Engineering took members on a conducted tour to explain the steps being taken to keep HST's, Class 91's and Mark 4's running efficiently despite their age.

There will be weekend closures to Selby Bridge in October before the major refurbishment takes place next July. The Bridge was heavily used during the Hatfield blockade, and a 10mph speed limit applies for freight traffic. This has also resulted in problems both for Staff and the Disabled when the barrow crossing has to be used. Our group is continuing to press Transpennine Express, Network Rail and the DfT that lifts are an essential priority in making sure the Disabled are not disadvantaged.

It is pleasing to note that the signal boxes at Hensall and Hebden Bridge have been given grade 2 listed status. On a personal note the Derwent Valley light railway has celebrated its centenary on July 19th. Although this was never nationalized, as a young cleaner I was one of those who fired trains on that branch to remove armaments stored during World War 2.

Our group mounted a vigorous campaign with Northern Rail during the spring following a decision to impose a £50 fine for any car parked outside marked bays at all Stations. Without consultation notices were put up simultaneously with parking tickets being put on vehicles. A massive media campaign was launched and for some time the Company were adamant that there would be no change. However we continued to provide adverse publicity for Northern and eventually a meeting was held at South Milford Station followed by a meeting in Leeds. Wiser counsel then prevailed, Northern gave us a written apology withdrew the prohibition, returned all the parking fines and stated this decision would apply to all rural Stations and that they would be more customer friendly in the future! Sherburn-in-Elmet Parish Council decided to make a grant of £300 to us for our efforts.

Hull Trains recently lost their temporary Managing Director. During his short spell he has been pro-active making many improvements, and he arranged for a group of our members to enjoy the Hull Trains experience followed by a meeting with him and the Engineering Director at which an update was given regarding the possibility of private capital being available to electrify the line from Selby to Hull and from Selby to Templehirst Junction, as well as providing the electric trains needed.

Station footfall continues to increase at 6 of the 7 Stations within the Selby District. At Selby the half a million mark will soon be reached and at Sherburn-in-Elmet an additional 10,000 people have accessed trains since we were able to get Northern Rail agreement that more services on the York to Hull line should call there. A campaign will now take place calling for further improvements.

## **Minster Line Campaign**

**by Tony Ross**

Back in May the campaign received some bad news and as a result we issued a press statement, an extract from which follows:

*"Campaigners working to re-open the Beverley to York railway have said they're devastated by a policy change at East Riding Council. News that the proposed route will no longer be protected from development may have sounded the death knell for a campaign which was set up 10 years ago to re-open the line, closed as a result of the Beeching axe.*

George McManus, Chairman of the Minsters' Rail Campaign, said: 'This is a truly devastating blow to our campaign to develop a modern infrastructure which would have given East Yorkshire real economic advantage. Re-opening this line could have given Hull and Bridlington direct connections to the East Coast main line. This is a serious blow to the area's economic development. The Council has as much vision as a blind man who has lost his guide dog.'

"He went on 'Securing route protection from development pressure was the reason we set up the campaign. In achieving that we were successful but with its withdrawal, the raison d'etre for the campaign has disappeared.'

"The Campaign is trying to arrange a meeting with East Riding of Yorkshire Council to see if we can get this decision reversed. Should we fail it is unlikely the Campaign will continue.

Then on the 14 June George McManus was able to report the following:

Today I've enjoyed constructive discussions with Planning and Transport officers at East Riding Council on our proposals for re-opening the Beverley to York railway. I made the key point that their proposals to allow allocations on land adjacent to our preferred route in Pocklington would be a body blow to the campaign.

They accept that they should re-visit the allocations situation in the Local Development Framework and that their wording regarding the line is not as supportive as it should be. The consultation on the Local Development Framework is half way through and they will be reporting to elected members again in the Autumn.

I've agreed to make a further submission advocating the case and highlighting the change of heart at central government regarding potential funding streams. I've indicated that we will support their efforts to raise the issue up the agenda and will do whatever we can to further promote our case.

In the meantime I intend to do further research on the background to the east west rail consortium proposals which have won government backing and identify whatever parallels may exist to help advocate our case. Given that this line of communication is open I would recommend that we endeavour to continue our efforts and should anybody have any further information I will be happy to feed this through.

## **Hull Trains' "Electrification Project"**

**by Tony Ross**

At their Annual General Meeting in Hull on 9th July, members of the Hull & East Riding Rail Users' Association received a fascinating insight into First Hull Trains' proposed 'Electrification Project', under which 'the wires' would possibly be extended from Temple Hirst Junction, on the East Coast Main Line south of Selby, through to Selby and on to Hull.

Mike Jones, a director and co-founder of Hull Trains, made a concise presentation of the project to members at the start of the meeting. He drew attention to the growth in Hull Trains' passenger numbers, from 80,000 in the first year of operations from September 2000, to almost 800,000 in the last year. Additionally Hull Trains had recently been rated at 95% for overall customer satisfaction by the rail industry passenger champion watchdog Passenger Focus – the best rating in the country.

Mr Jones acknowledged the poor reliability issues concerning the current four five-car Class 180 'Adelante' trains introduced from 2008 and outlined measures that had been since undertaken to combat these problems. Nevertheless, the company had decided to look at the economic case for electrifying the 70 miles of track from the ECML at Temple Hirst Junction to Selby and to Hull in conjunction with the possibility of private sector investors.

Mr Jones said that Hull Trains were currently in talks with the infrastructure company Amey, with Network Rail and with private sector investors, plus the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) and the Department of Transport (DfT). He said: "The electrification plans are still in the development stage but a financial closure is possible by the end of the year." He said that a new electric train fleet and a new maintenance depot at Hull would be required, that the existing Botanic Gardens depot was too small, but that some additional land could be acquired to accommodate 6-car electric multiple units. Mr Jones emphasised that Hull Trains' track access rights would need to be extended from 2016 (probably at least to 2031) and explained that, within the proposals, the new electrified infrastructure would eventually be purchased by Network Rail, to whose specifications it would be built.

Mr Jones also said that there had been assurances from Government that Hull Trains would not be absorbed into a new East Coast Franchise. He referred to the possibility of other operators running electric services between Hull, Leeds and Manchester and Hull and York. Mr Jones said: "The proposals are not yet a 'done deal'" and requested members and other stakeholders to support the 'Electrification Project' by publicly backing it (for example, by seeking the support of the local MPs).

## **A Brighter Future for Rail in the North**

**by Michael Penney**

If the Coalition Government is serious about bridging the North/South divide then the proposed devolution of the control and funding of railways to a new body 'Rail North' would be a critical stimulus to economic development in the northern half of the country. So says Hugh Chaplain, Rail Development and Franchising Manager: Rail in the North, guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Dronfield Station on the 7<sup>th</sup> June.

Mr Chaplain explained that the North of England covered 5 core cities, a population of 15 million, had 26 universities, 5 national parks and contributed 25% gross value added to the UK economy. The improvement and integration of transport services, especially rail, to meet passenger needs was vital to the economic development of the region. He went on to say that devolution had already taken place in London, Scotland, Wales and Merseyside where the result was significant enhancements to the quality of rail services and passenger numbers.

If the government gives the 'go ahead' to devolution to Rail North it would involve partnership and close cooperation between 33 local transport authorities (including 4 Passenger transport executives covering the North of England) plus the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, over a 7 year period. As well as devising a strategy for rail improvements the new body will have the responsibility for £560m already earmarked for capital programme infrastructure projects. These would include electrification, better rolling stock, 'smart' ticketing, plus refurbishment of stations and improvement of their facilities. He added that it would also be vital to link the enhancement of transport services closely to regional developments in manufacturing, retail and leisure facilities.

Hugh Chaplain concluded his talk by stressing that although the devolution proposals were complicated and required cooperation between local authorities, transport authorities, and Northern and TransPennine rail companies across the whole of the North of England, the involvement of station adoption groups and community rail partnerships was also vital in the consultation process to ensure that the needs of local communities were met.

## **Harrogate Line Latest**

**by Mark Parry**

The following news about the project to convert the Harrogate line into a frequent electrified line is from extracts supplied by Brian Dunsby, the Chief Executive of the Harrogate Chamber of Trade and Commerce, who leads the Harrogate Line Supporters Group.

On Tuesday 28th May the North Yorkshire County Council Executive approved the recommendation to submit a bid to the North Yorkshire Local Transport Body for funding the double-tracking of the 10km of railway line between Knaresborough and Cattal. The total value of the bid is £12.5m.

This is a very significant step towards upgrading services on the existing Harrogate to York line which currently suffer from recurring delays due to two sections of single track, where one line was removed in the Beeching era. Knaresborough to Cattal is the longest section where as a safety measure at each end the driver and the

signalman have to hand over a token, which gives a train the authority to occupy the single track. This enables the signalman to change the double to single line points at each end every time a train passes through the single track section in either direction.

Reinstating this section of double track will not only save the time taken for this procedure, thus reducing train journey times, it will also reduce the consequential delay that occurs if one train is late, making it impossible for the next train in the other direction to proceed over the single track until the points are changed again.

On 22 July Brian reported that the WSP Consultants have nearly completed the Business Case for submission to the Department for Transport. Whilst the final draft is still confidential and capital costs estimates are being finalised, the key conclusions and recommendations have been published by Metro in a report to the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority due to be considered by their Executive Board on 26th July.

Clearly there is now strong support for our long-standing campaign within North Yorkshire County Council, Metro, Harrogate Borough Council and City of York Council who have jointly funded the preparation of the Business Case, as requested by the Department for Transport last year. In summary the following improvements are now in the pipeline seeking funding from different sources:

- Electrification of the whole line between Leeds, Harrogate, Knaresborough and York - bid for funding from the Department for Transport.
- Re-signalling of the line between Harrogate and York - matching the Leeds-Harrogate section completed in 2012 - part of Network Rail Control Period 5 Plan
- Restoration of the double track between Knaresborough and Cattal - bid for funding from North Yorkshire Local Transport Board

We are also pressing for additional developments to maximise the benefits of electrification of the Harrogate Line and connectivity to the planned HS2 services from Leeds and York:

- Additional car parking capacity at most of the existing Stations along the line to enable more car owners to take the train - needs local District Council and Train Operating Company funding
- New Platform 0 at Leeds City Station behind the existing Platform 1 to increase capacity for extra Harrogate and Airedale Line services - part of Network Rail project
- New Platform 12 at York Station to enable Harrogate Trains to avoid crossing the East Coast Main Line at Skelton Junction - part of East Coast Main Line upgrade project
- Improve Starbeck Level Crossing on the A59 - investigate options to minimise delay to road traffic caused by additional trains - part of North Yorkshire County Council & Network Rail study
- Creation of a new Flaxby Parkway Station within a new Green Business Park near Junction 47 of the A1(M) - with developer funding promised
- Creation of a new Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway Station where the Harrogate Line runs very close to the long-stay car park - needs Airport and Leeds Council funding

## Branch Key Contacts

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Apart from HS2 the other great debate raging in the rail industry at the moment is the future of the East Coast Main Line and whether it should stay in public ownership.

I will make no secret of the fact that, and this is my personal view, I want to see it back in private ownership ASAP.

That said I will admit the current privatisation system is deeply flawed, but as an organisation would we not be better fighting to change the way our railways are managed rather than who manages them.

While the whole subject of privatisation is far too detailed and complex to discuss here it is interesting to see how campaigners on both sides of the argument are using and miss-using figures to fuel their argument.

Caroline Lucas is on record as claiming that renationalisation of the railways would save £1.2bn per year because Franchise Operators would no longer have to pay dividends to shareholders. Last year the profits earned by the 18 franchises came to a combined total of just £91m, that's an average of £5.05m each, with East Midlands trains making a thumping great loss.

Most importantly, supporters of nationalisation seem to forget that without privatisation the massive investment in the rail network enjoyed over the past 10 to 15 years would not have happened and future investment would be put at risk by renationalisation, two retired, but highly respected senior rail managers, both say they would not go back to a nationalised railway because of the investment risk.

**Timetabling, Boundaries and Comfort****by Nina Smith**

In previous issues I have focused on connectivity between train services, and between train and bus services. This issue's column is something of a *pot pourri*. I'd like to touch on three issues.

The first is timetabling. As most readers will be aware, Northern Rail is having to modify some of its timetables from May 2014 to make room for the fifth First trans-Pennine service between Manchester and Leeds. My local lines are the Caldervale routes, and the proposals are a mixture of the good, the neutral and the downright daft. The best change is that there will now be sensible interchange times between the Colne branch trains and the Blackpool-York service at Accrington, a problem I highlighted in the last issue. The plain daft concerns the station of Walsden. Walsden is a large village to the south of Todmorden which is home to many who commute to the larger towns and cities. Its current service is not good – basically one an hour in each direction- but this does mean an hourly service to the major employment destinations of Manchester, Rochdale, Halifax, Bradford and Leeds; Halifax is also the principle town in Calderdale, and thus is often visited for other purposes. The draft consultation timetable issued by Northern Rail proposes that Walsden's hourly service will be the one train an hour between Manchester Victoria and Leeds that serves Brighouse and Dewsbury rather than Halifax and Bradford. If this is not changed, Walsden commuters to Halifax and Bradford will no longer have a through service, yet their numbers greatly exceed those who commute to Brighouse and Dewsbury – of which there may well be none! A further issue is that Walsden station is, unlike Todmorden and Hebden Bridge, accessible on both platforms to people with serious mobility problems, and is thus used by disabled travellers living in the Todmorden area. Strong objections have been raised by the local residents and action groups, and by Railfuture affiliates the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group and HADRAG (the Halifax Rail User Group). It is to be sincerely hoped that common sense prevails in Northern's Head Quarters.

Walsden is one of the very few stations in the region whose recorded footfall has been declining, and some local people fear that the authorities would like to close it. Yet when Walsden's situation is examined, several features emerge:

- Its service has been reduced in recent years.
- It is unstaffed and therefore it is likely that many free journeys to intermediate stations are made.
- It lies four miles from Littleborough, which is in Greater Manchester, and from where fares within Greater Manchester are much cheaper; hence many residents drive to Littleborough, which increases traffic congestion and the carbon footprint along the road. Littleborough to Manchester is £4.10 off-peak, Walsden to Manchester £7.30!

This brings me nicely on to my next topic – cross boundary fares. Whereas fares with particular PTE (Integrated Transport Authority) areas are reasonable, fares across county boundaries are disproportionately high and deter many people from using the train. Take the example of Hebden Bridge to Burnley – 12 miles each way – say £3.50

worth of fuel. The peak time return fare is £7.60 and the off-peak fare £7.50. Another effect of this is that some Burnley residents who commute to Leeds or Bradford or Halifax drive to Hebden Bridge or Todmorden to take advantage of the cheaper West Yorkshire fares. Hebden Bridge to Leeds is £9.10 peak or £6.40 off-peak; from Burnley, it is £15.90 peak or £15.40 off-peak. These ridiculously high fares merely encourage car use, and suggest that the Government's "green agenda" has not yet been adopted when setting rail fares! Not sensible from an environmental or road safety perspective.

Thirdly, train comfort. Northern's 158s are their best trains for passenger comfort, and yet have a number of failings including poor air conditioning and non-alignment of seats with windows. I recently travelled on the Cambrian Coast Line on Arriva Trains Wales's (ATW) refurbished 158s, and what a revelation they were compared to ours! They have been re-seated with similar seats to ATW's excellent 175s, and I'm sure there was more legroom. Airline tables were larger, the lighting brighter and I'm sure the air-conditioning was more efficient. So come on Northern (or your successor), when our 158s are refurbished, emulate ATW: – and don't just stop with the 158s. At their last refurbishment, the 155s were re-seated with an additional row, and they are very cramped. Let's hope they receive an ATW 158 style interior at their next refurbishment. If ATW realises the importance of passenger comfort, why don't some other operators – including Northern, Arriva Cross-Country and First Trans-Pennine?

### **Hello from your editor – Mark Parry**

I've been overwhelmed with good quality articles for this edition so thank you and apologies to those articles I could not include. Please keep these pieces coming so we can record what we achieve and share good practice. I'm happy to accept rough drafts, so any notes on your work will be gratefully accepted.

### **Welcome to**

**Paul Colbeck – Membership Secretary**

...two new members Mr Philip F Johnston of Long Preston & Mr Peter Allin of Scarborough.

### **Press Date for January 2013 issue**

Please email (preferred) or post material, news and feedback to: Mark Parry (YRC 23),  
[Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com](mailto:Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com) to arrive by **Saturday 30th November 2013**.

## ***Railfuture Yorkshire Our Next Branch Meeting Halifax Central Library Saturday 21 September 2013***

This meeting will start at 14:00 hours and everyone is welcome.

"Halifax Central Library is a ten minute walk from the station. Turn right outside the station, and then left at the far side of the Royal Mail sorting depot (the bus station is on your right). Walk to the top of that street, and turn left. You come almost immediately to the Library. There are alternative routes, the nicest being through the Piece Hall; this is recommended if you can download a map of central Halifax, as this is the only building of its type in Britain."

### **Railfuture Branch and National Events Diary**

- Saturday 21 September: **Branch Meeting** – Halifax Central Library, please see above for more details.
- Saturday 5 October 2013: **Branch & Groups' Representatives Meeting** – Friends Meeting House 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS.
- Saturday 2 November 2013: **Railfuture Rail Users Conference 2013** – Oxford Town Hall, St. Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BX.
- Saturday 18 January 2014: **Branch Meeting** – Doncaster Priory Place Methodist Church, Printing Office Street.
- Saturday 10 May 2014: **National Annual General Meeting** – being hosted by our branch in Sheffield.