

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

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railfuture Yorkshire

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

Overcrowded Leeds Trains prompt Government Action!

by Graham Collett

A Northern Rail refurbished Class 150/2 at Leeds
(photo Peter Skuce, via Wikimedia Commons)



On 11th August, the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) published its latest Peak crowding and passenger demand. On a typical weekday in autumn 2010, the highest percentage of standard class passengers standing (outside of London and the South East) was recorded at Leeds, with 14.0% standing on arrival at the city centre in the morning peak and 12.1% standing on departure in the afternoon peak. **Leeds also has the third highest passenger demand outside London, with 23,800 passengers departing from the city during the afternoon peak.**

On the day before the ORR published its figures, the Rail Minister, Theresa Villiers, announced an extra 22 train

carriages for Northern Rail, to provide extra seats on some of the busiest services from December! These are not new trains but eight Class 150 carriages from London Midland (who have received shiny new air-conditioned diesel units for West Midlands' commuters) and 14 x Class 142 (Pacer) carriages cascaded from First Great Western. Crumbs from the Department of Transport's table you may say, but given the ORR's figures, any trains are better than none!

However, we must commend our region's transport leaders for being more far-sighted. West Yorkshire PTE (Metro), South Yorkshire PTE and Leeds City Region along with other industry stakeholders, will oversee a £100,000 Yorkshire Rail Network Study. In addition to the availability of additional rolling stock for Yorkshire in the future, it will examine capacity in Leeds and Sheffield; Trans-Pennine electrification and journey time, capacity and performance improvements and North-South Connectivity.

Chris Hyomes, Branch Chair, said "Thank goodness our own politicians and transport experts are thinking further ahead to meet the ever-growing need for sustainable transport".

Railfuture Branch and National Events Diary

Saturday 17th September: **Branch Meeting, Priory Place Methodist Church, Doncaster** (for details see page 4)

Saturday 22nd October: **Great Central Railway Society Meeting "The Woodhead Special" (marking 30 years since closure of the Woodhead route), St. John's Community Centre, Church Street, Penistone 1100-1615** - details at <http://www.gcrsociety.co.uk/events.html>

Saturday 5th November: **Rail User Groups National Conference, Mechanics Institute, Manchester** - details at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk> or see Railwatch

Saturday 12th November: **Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield Rail Users/Penistone Line Partnership Meeting 'The Rail in the North Group' Guest Speaker Jason McCartney Colne Valley MP, Stockmoor Village Hall 1400**

Saturday 21st January 2012: **Branch Meeting, York** (details in next YRC)

Branch Line Use Goes Up! Increased numbers of people are using many rural lines, according to figures from the Association of Train Operating Companies. From April 2007 to April 2011, passenger journeys on the Esk Valley and Penistone lines increased by 11.2% and 12.5% respectively. This shows that hard work by the local rail users groups and Community Rail Partnerships has paid off! (our thanks to Neil Buxton, General Manager of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships <http://www.acorp.uk.com/> for supplying the figures above).

New East Coast Franchise Delayed but TransPennine and Northern Extended

by Graham Collett

Below: TPE and Northern services extend across a wide area – A TPE Class 185 and Northern Class 142 'Pacer' are seen at Preston bound for Blackpool North and Ormskirk respectively (photo A-M-Jervis [Creative Commons](#) licence)



First the re-letting of the West Coast Main Line (WCML) franchise had to be restarted and the new franchise will not now start until December 2012. Now the new East Coast Main Line (ECML) franchise has also been put back, to December 2013. At the same time, the Transport Secretary announced (on 4th August) that the TransPennine Express (TPE) franchise had been extended. The extension incorporates the flexibility to “terminate the [TPE] franchise between April 2014 and March 2015”.

This announcement (made in the form of a Stock Market statement) picks up the McNulty Review

recommendations on reviewing the composition of franchises, including consideration of a 'Northern region' franchise. “This flexibility could allow the start dates for the new Northern and TPE franchises to be aligned in April 2014, by also exercising the short extension provision in the current Northern franchise [due to end in September 2013]. Having both existing franchises end at the same date could allow for these franchises to be combined, or split in different ways. I will be considering the optimal configuration and intend to seek views on the optimum structure from local interested parties. The timescales outlined above will allow for proper consultation and consideration of the possibilities of a radical restructuring in the Northern/TPE area”.

On 5th August, the DfT clarified the position and gave a timescale for the re-franchising – in the form of a contract notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). “It is anticipated (subject to discussions on the 7 month franchise extension for Northern and the exercise of the option relating to the TPE), the Northern and TPE Franchise(s) will be let as follows: OJEU notice published December 2012; invitation to tender(s) issued May 2013; award(s) announced end 2013; contract(s) start April 2014.”

Chris Hyomes, Branch Chair, said “If we want to influence the outcome, we need to start thinking **now** about what type of services we want and whether we are better served by one combined operator (with the exception of Scottish TPE services, which seem likely to go to another franchise), or the status quo. Both franchises extend well beyond Yorkshire and we will work with other Branches on a combined response.” (A report published in March by Jacobs Consultancy and commissioned jointly by the DfT and the ORR claims that significant savings could be achieved by merging the two franchises – see <http://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/documents/rvfm-jacobs-franchising-march2011.pdf>)

District Line Trains for Harrogate?

An innovative proposal to electrify and upgrade the Harrogate Line using ex London Transport District Line trains has been put forward by the Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce. A summary - referred to as “a McNulty pilot on the Harrogate Line” was presented to the Minister of State for Transport Theresa Villiers by Chamber Chief Executive Brian Dunsby on 12th July.

The Chamber’s proposal involves the installation of a modern low-cost ground-level electrification system, similar to that used on the Docklands Light Railway. They claim that this should be more reliable and much simpler and quicker to install than the conventional overhead electrical system used on the East and West Coast Main Lines, less technically challenging in Bramhope Tunnel and far less intrusive on the high level viaducts along the route.

Brian Dunsby said “These lighter weight **metro** style trains are a ready-made, tried and tested lower cost variant of the Tram-Trains that have been under consideration for the Yorkshire Region for several years. We would not have to wait several more years for the outcome of the planned trials with electric Tram-Trains on the Rotherham-Sheffield line. As well as higher performance (a 12% improvement should be possible on current schedules), the Chamber say the scheme would enable more frequent services to be run (a 15 minute frequency Leeds-Harrogate-Knaresborough and a 30 minute frequency York-Harrogate) and around 40% higher seating capacity plus significant proper standing room for short journeys. [For more information www.harrogatechamber.org/harrogateline.htm](http://www.harrogatechamber.org/harrogateline.htm)

Branch Key Contacts

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Chairman's Column by Chris Hyomes



As I write, England is recovering from a week of civil unrest, with riots in many of our major towns and cities. **What surprises me is that the riots did not start in Harrogate with the news that commuters in to Leeds may soon be travelling on 35 year old ex tube stock (see page 2)**

But we do seem to be in the silly season when it comes to our railway network.

The pro-HS2 lobby's favourite argument is that high speed rail will cure overcrowding, but will it? I am sure that majority of the peak hour commuters to Leeds will be wondering how a high speed train that will probably not even use Leeds station will make life easier and better for them. If passenger usage continues to grow at its current level by the time high speed rail reaches the north - unless we have some major investment - commuters will be happy to see steam trains from the regions' preserved railways haul their trains let alone London Underground trains.

Back in April, we had Philip Hammond announcing that Yorkshire is to receive 21 new trains and what a major investment this is for the region. When I shared an interview with him on BBC Radio Leeds, I did welcome the additional trains but pointed out they were not new but 3rd hand!

Finally, this week I have received a number of e mails asking for me to support the Campaign to bring back British Rail. My answer to that is, have a look at who is currently the worst performing train operating company and who owns it.

I look forward to seeing as many members as possible at our 17th September meeting in Doncaster.

A Message from our Membership Secretary Designate – Paul Colbeck

I am very pleased to take over the role of Membership Secretary from Phil Watson on an interim basis until the AGM. Phil has done a great job over the last few years and it will be a hard act to follow. Fortunately, he will be continuing as Visits Organiser (if you have any ideas for visits, please contact Phil at 8 Millfield Close, Wilberfoss, York YO41 5PP Email: watson804@btinternet.com)

If you have access to email (and are not already receiving your newsletter by this method) please consider opting to receive your copies of YRC by email. Not only will it save us copying and postage costs, but it will save time with the despatch! Please drop me an email (paulcolbeck@yahoo.com) if you would like to help the Branch in this way.

Closure of the Woodhead Route 30 years ago was celebrated by campaigners on 16th July. The events commemorated the route's closure but also highlighted the real need for its re-opening. It does seem as though the political will may now be there to push for this and campaigners on both sides of the Pennines will keep making the case (see also front page and <http://www.savethewoodheadtunnel.blogspot.com/>)

Press Date for December 2011/January 2012 issue

Please email (preferred) or post material, news, feedback etc to:

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to arrive by Saturday 26th November 2011.

Railfuture Yorkshire Autumn Meeting Saturday 17th September 2 to 4 pm

Everyone welcome

Priory Place Methodist Church Printing Office Street Doncaster DN1 1TR

Directions from Doncaster Station: Turn left out of the station into the Frenchgate Centre. Walk through the centre and leave by the St Sepulchre Gate exit. Turn right into St Sepulchre Gate and continue south. Turn left into Printing Office Street and the Church is on the right opposite the end of Priory Place.

News from our Rail User Groups

Would all groups please come along to this meeting if possible and give us an update on the developments which are taking place or planned on your line (please send a written report to the Secretary if you are unable to send a representative to the meeting).

North Doncaster Chord

Network Rail (NR) plan to build a new line at a cost of £54 million to relieve the bottleneck at Shaftholme Junction, to the north of Doncaster. This will enable freight services running between ports on the Humber to several Aire Valley power stations to avoid the need to run on the East Coast Main Line for up to 14 miles. and we have to get the necessary permissions from the Infrastructure Planning Commission to complete the work.

NR's application to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) has now been accepted for examination and assuming all goes to plan, the work is expected to be completed in 2013/2014.

For more details see <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/6797.aspx>

Through Trains from Leeds to Glasgow Restored

by Peter Scott

On the 22nd May this year, Cross Country (XC) started running through trains from Yorkshire, beyond Edinburgh to Glasgow Central, via Carstairs on a two-hourly basis. The most obvious benefit is the restoration of a regular direct train service between Leeds and Glasgow, only this time via York and Newcastle.

So how has this come about? Answer – because East Coast has ceased regular through running to Glasgow (apart from one train each way per day). Therefore XC has taken on the job of operating the Inter City trains from Newcastle and beyond, to Glasgow Central. So now Sheffield, Wakefield Westgate, Leeds and York, have an hourly train to Edinburgh, plus a two-hourly one to Glasgow. York also has an hourly East Coast train to Edinburgh.

This new routing certainly sends trains via larger centres of population, than those served by the Settle & Carlisle line in steam days. Sheffield only had the day “Thames-Clyde Express” - plus a night Sleeper train - through to Glasgow St. Enoch. However Leeds had two morning northbound trains, with afternoon return services. One went via Appleby and Kilmarnock to St. Enoch, the other through York, Newcastle and Edinburgh, to Queen Street Station – the erstwhile “North Briton”. Wakefield has never been regularly linked to Glasgow.

So Yorkshire is now better connected to Glasgow, than ever before in railway history!

More Trains would mean an Extra Platform at Huddersfield

The six trains per hour between Leeds and Manchester planned under the Northern Hub proposals (see YRC 13) would require a new platform at Huddersfield by 2019. This would be designated platform nine and situated outside platform eight. As a result the fast and stopping services to Leeds would use platforms eight and nine and the services towards Manchester would use platforms one and four. An extended platform two (to take three 23m vehicles – see below) would remain exclusively for the Penistone Line.

Penistone Line users were hoping for an improved service under the Northern Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) announced in May, which predicted increases in peak passenger demand into the major Northern cities of up to 52 per cent by 2024. However, the RUS and a subsequent re-examination by Network Rail planners have concluded that lengthening the high peak service from a two-car Class 150 DMU to the equivalent of a three-car Class 156 DMU (i.e. three 23m vehicles) would provide sufficient capacity. This raises problems of platform length at several stations and – in the short term – the need to lock one coach out of use, thus causing additional problems for passengers! (our thanks to the **Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users Association** for these reports)