

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 10 September 2010

railfuture Yorkshire

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

Rolling Stock Crisis: More Trains needed NOW!

by Graham Collett

Passengers up by 34% since 2004

526 carriages approved but only 8 supplied!

LONDON



One of London Overground's newest trains seen at Crystal Palace Station
(photo Graham Collett)

YORKSHIRE



Pacer units like this built 25 years ago still form many local and stopping services across the region (photo: Paul Colbeck)

Large amounts of money are being spent on rail schemes in London, yet precious little here - ask your MP why!

Extra carriages are urgently needed if overcrowding is to be prevented on Yorkshire's rail network.

Commuter services are already at full capacity in the peak periods and are set to continue to attract more passengers. Chris Hyomes, Railfuture Yorkshire Branch Chair said "We cannot continue with the present situation. The region's economic growth will be seriously impaired unless we get more and newer trains soon."

West Yorkshire Metro Chairman Councillor Chris Greaves shares our concern "ATOC's research has come to the same conclusion as Northern Rail's own passenger counts carried out in West Yorkshire, which show a 6% increase in peak rail patronage in West Yorkshire in the last year". Mr Greaves has written to the Transport Secretary, Philip Hammond, inviting him to come to West Yorkshire "to travel on some rush hour trains and to see for himself the effects of rolling stock shortages." Let's hope Mr Hammond accepts and his visit has some effect!

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 18th September: **Railfuture Yorkshire Branch Meeting in Wakefield** – see page 4 for details

Saturday 2nd October: **Minsters Rail Campaign Meeting in Cottingham** – details at www.minstersrail.org.uk

Saturday 13th November: **Railfuture Rail Reopenings Conference London** - details at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=London+2010+conference> or see Railwatch

Saturday 20th November: **Huddersfield Penistone & Sheffield Rail Users Association Meeting 2pm Stocks Moor Village Hall**

Saturday 22nd January 2011: **Railfuture Yorkshire Branch Meeting in Saltaire** - details in next YRC

Press Date for December 2010 issue

Please email (preferred) or post material to: Graham Collett (YRC 11) 16 Wilstrop Farm Rd Copmanthorpe York YO23 3RY
collettgh.@talktalk.net by **Saturday 27th November**.

Normanton and its Rail Services

by Gary Croft & Graham Collett

THEN



Normanton Station seen in 1961 - then still a major junction (photo Ben Brooksbank - Creative Commons Attribution Share-alike license 2.0)

NOW



Normanton in 2006 - reduced to a 'basic' station (photo Ian Kirk - Creative Commons CC-BY 2.5)

Normanton - one of the longest continuously serving passenger railway stations in West Yorkshire – has been much reduced in status since the heady days of 1961 and now has only an hourly stopping service to Leeds, Wakefield and Sheffield. Yet don't the residents deserve something better?

Gary Croft, a local rail user, is keen to see some improvements:

"Priority for Normanton is still to gain better linkages to Leeds/Sheffield, however this provides possibilities for the Hallam line "stopper" to go direct to Leeds rather than by Castleford for example, (they could even replace a Castleford service with a Leeds-Castleford-Selby-Hull or a Sheffield "express" could continue to York not Leeds) which would then gain connectivity to York and it would make travel to Leeds more attractive to Darton, Wombwell, Elsecar and Chapeltown (which appears to be designed this way to keep South Yorkshire people confined to commuting to Sheffield only). These are all possibilities, but **the current design for Hallam services is fundamentally broken and needs urgent attention, particularly if/when the Castleford Interchange gets built.**

Barnsley Council commented (with support of the Yorkshire Rail Utilisation Study) that the proposed fifth York-Manchester service should take this route (even though this would involve a change at Wakefield Kirkgate). I'm really surprised Wakefield Council isn't pushing more vocally for this, in view of the obvious benefits for the area."

Around the Region

West Yorkshire Metro's Plans for New and Improved Stations are included in a useful table on their website which shows the estimated completion date for each of their current projects (both bus and rail), with a link to give more details. Several of these (eg the new stations at Apperley Bridge and Kirkstall Forge) are awaiting the outcome of the Government's Spending Review, due in October. The table is at <http://www.wymetro.com/news/projects> Work is progressing on the improvements at **Huddersfield station**, with lifts now installed.

South Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority and the four South Yorkshire district councils are running a public consultation on their **Transport Strategy for the next 15 years**. Responses are required by Monday 18 October. The finalised Transport Strategy is due to be released in April 2011. For more information see <http://www.southyorks.gov.uk/> The project to provide **a new station at Rotherham Central** is moving along apace following the opening of the temporary station in July – see <http://www.aplatformforchange.co.uk>.

Penistone Line commuters continue to experience difficulty in paying their fares at busy times – especially at the Huddersfield end of the line, leading to queues at Huddersfield and Leeds stations (HPSRUA Newsletter Summer 2010)

Sheffield Gates Plan Dropped – The Department for Transport has released East Midlands Trains from its franchise obligation to install ticket gates at Sheffield station (as they did for East Coast at York). Manual checks are to be introduced, but allowing anyone with a valid rail or tram ticket to cross through the station footbridge (a victory for common sense – Ed).

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Yorkshire Rail Campaigner on the Web

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Yorkshire%20Branch>

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Chairman's Column by Chris Hyomes

A couple of weeks ago I was interviewed by a local South Yorkshire based radio station. I used the interview to press home the need for an electrified Midland Main Line, not just to Sheffield, but beyond to Leeds. I also stressed the need for the reopening of the Woodhead route, along with the need for extra rolling stock to combat the regions' chronic overcrowding (see front page Ed).

Several days later via the radio station, I received a letter from a listener complaining that I had not mentioned high speed rail and that a high speed line to London was more important than either an electrified MML or a reopened Woodhead route. Sorry, but I disagree.

Why? While I am not opposed to a high speed line to London, and I am happy to support any campaign Railfuture nationally run, **the building of a high speed line will not solve the many problems the region's network is facing or indeed suffering from.** These include poor stations (Wakefield Kirkgate), inadequate services (Leeds-Goole), poor rolling stock, and a number of urgently needed re-openings of both lines and stations. **I believe that by focusing attention on high speed rail, there is a danger that the real issues we are facing will be forgotten.** To repeat the message I made in my very first chairman's piece, I want Railfuture Yorkshire to be the passenger's champion for the rail users of Yorkshire, but not forgetting they travel out of the region too.

I had hoped to hold the September meeting in Saltaire to discuss the cross Bradford rail link proposals (see YRC 9), but unfortunately trying to secure a meeting venue in either Saltaire or Ilkley for our chosen date proved impossible. However, I hope that we will be able to hold our January meeting in Saltaire where I plan to have either Andrew Mason or John Pennington - the two business men behind the proposal - in attendance.

Finally I look forward to seeing as many members as possible in Wakefield on 18th September.

Community Rail Humber

David Walford is leaving Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council (HWRCC) at the end of September. His knowledge and understanding of the rail industry has been a great asset to both the two Community Rail Partnerships and rail development across the Humber sub region and beyond. With his departure, future strategic work will have to take a back seat, unless there are discrete pieces of work which can be separately financed. Fortunately, Dave intends to stay in the area, and will be available to undertake further rail development work on a consultancy basis. We send him every good wish for the future **Angela Wilkinson Delivery & Development Manager HWRCC** www.hwrcc.org.uk (our thanks and best wishes to Dave - a splendid effort that will be difficult to beat! Ed)

Stop Press: A study of the **Harrogate District's Transport Network** has identified a need for a comprehensive overhaul of local rail services, with a new interchange in Harrogate and a potential rail halt east of Knaresborough. It says that there is an urgent need for more rail services to London, as well as improving connections to York to take advantage of the East Coast Main Line service to the capital. A review of town centre parking could also see increased charges to dissuade travellers from using their own cars, while a need has been pinpointed for a series of park and ride sites for both bus and rail services (our thanks to the Yorkshire Post www.yorkshirepost.co.uk)

Railfuture Yorkshire Autumn Meeting Saturday 18th September at 2pm

Everyone welcome

Westgate Studios, 55 Westgate Wakefield WF1 1BW (2 minutes walk from Westgate Station towards the city centre, opposite the HSBC - please ring buzzer for access)

Rail User Groups are asked to bring copies of reports or newsletters etc for distribution at the meeting or to send to the Secretary in advance

New Study offers renewed hope for Stocksbridge Reopening



A train of empty steel wagons leaves the Stocksbridge Railway in 2005. Deepcar Station building can be seen in the middle distance.

(Photo: Andrew.M.Hurrell - GNU Free Documentation License)

An engineering feasibility study by Ove Arup & Partners issued in July says that reopening the Stocksbridge to Sheffield route for passenger services is feasible in engineering terms.

<http://www.donvalleyrailway.org/downloads/DVRF1.pdf>

The key findings are that:

- The Network Rail owned section from Deepcar to Victoria appears to be in good condition and suitable for the introduction of a DMU shuttle.
- The station sites at Deepcar and Victoria appear suitable for the modest station layouts described.
- The capital cost for infrastructure is estimated at £4.3million; the annual running costs are estimated at £1.8million.

The consultants recommend that further study is conducted into the following areas in particular: operational arrangements; type and cost of rolling stock; station layout arrangements; track gauge and weight restrictions; sources of funding and patronage estimates.

They consider that the most cost effective train service option is a simple Victoria to Deepcar shuttle. They say that "this could operate on a 2tph basis with no intermediate stops, utilising a single unit. This option is also potentially the easiest to get into operation. Enhancements could be made in the future as funds allow, with additional stations at Oughtibridge and Wadsley Bridge, and an extension to Stocksbridge." Plans for a station have been included in a new supermarket complex in Stocksbridge.

The quoted cost of reopening is a huge reduction on an earlier estimate of £20million and is born out by their comments on the state of the infrastructure "the permanent way currently installed appears to be well built and well maintained. From our line inspection, the line does not appear to require a great deal of work to return the line to passenger operation."

The Don Valley Railway (a charity) plans to run a diesel service for commuters and a heritage steam operation at weekends. The Ove Arup study will now be considered by Don Valley and its other two partners in the reopening plans - Sheffield Council and the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (with thanks to HPSRUA).

Around the Region (continued from page 2)

Trouble on Trains – a recent incident involving troublesome drunks on a Scarborough-bound train, who were seen on to the train at York by BT Police, but not accompanied on the journey, has highlighted the need for staff to bar entry of such travellers to stations and trains. One of our members had the misfortune to be on the train in question. He has since had a call from BT Police to re-assure him that they do take such matters seriously.

The first stage of a series of improvements at **Wakefield Kirkgate** (once dubbed the 'worst station in Britain') has now been completed. Work on the canopies, subway roof and spine wall is planned for next year (our thanks to Garforth Today www.garforthtoday.co.uk). A bid for government funding for improvements to **Wakefield Westgate** station is expected to be made later this year.