

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

Number 29 - June 2015

Yorkshire **railfuture**

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

Goole Ghost Train

By Mark Parry



A busy time at Goole Station.

picture by Paul Colbeck

On 29 April, the Yorkshire Post reported on our local ghost train. The service is so poor there are only a few passengers. This is the Leeds to Goole service with just 2 trains a day from Goole and only one from Leeds. There are no trains on Sundays. Needless to say the trains that do run are inconveniently timed.

But there is some confusion over how this poor service has come about.

Northern Rail claimed, according to the article, that they are following the service specified by the Department for Transport. However, it has been alleged that the service was reduced when ARRIVA held the franchise, back in 2001, because of a shortage of drivers. ARRIVA were reported to have replaced the cancelled services with buses. It is suspected that providing such a limited service is a way of avoiding the controversy of closing the line without incurring too many costs.

Nina Smith is making enquiries, on behalf of our branch, to establish the facts and sequence of events behind this story. Tony Ross, one of our members, said this "is entirely down to the west-east local authority boundary at Knottingley, the eastern limit of Metro's services. East of Knottingley, the local authorities are Selby/North Yorkshire and East Riding of Yorkshire. Metro at one time had an 'aspiration' to run a two-hourly service between Leeds and Goole, but that aspiration has long gone. It does seem incredible that the present 'ghost' service could be perpetuated into the next Northern franchise."

Continued overleaf

Our Next Branch Meeting
Guest Speaker: Cllr James Lewis,
Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and a Director of Rail North
Leeds Civic Hall, rooms 6 & 7, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 1UR
Saturday 13 June 13.00 -16.00
15 minutes walk from Leeds station or catch the City Centre Shuttle Bus

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“There could be a business case to have the eastern end of the service at Hull, and to run it via Goole and its intermediate stations to Knottingley, then the two Pontefract stations non-stop to Wakefield Kirkgate, then Wakefield Westgate and non-stop to Leeds, assuming paths could be found.... But who is going to finance and look at such a business case?”

Nina said we should, “focus on the wider issue of Pontefract’s poor train service, and that either the service from Wakefield Kirkgate or the one from Leeds via Castleford should be extended to Doncaster...this has been a victim of routes crossing local authority boundaries. Pontefract being in West Yorkshire, Doncaster in South Yorkshire, the hinterland in-between being partially in North Yorkshire, and the line between Knottingley and Goole passes through North Yorkshire before entering the East Riding of Yorkshire Unitary Authority before Hensall and Snaith.

The sad issue is that this is likely to continue into the next franchise. This whole area needs us to campaign for improved services.

Spotlight on Aire Valley Rail User Group

by Tim Callow

As part of our series on highlighting Rail User Groups, this quarter we are focussing on the Aire Valley.

25 years of the Aire Valley Rail Users Group (AVRUG)

The origins of our group go back to the Spring of 1990. A small group attended a public meeting at the Ferrands Arms pub in Bingley and decided to start a rail users group. Since then a small number of people have kept the group going. Over the quarter century our aim has been to campaign for improvements to train services in our valley.

Publicity has aimed at finding members and also keeping in touch with the large number of rail users (and potential rail users) for our line. We keep in touch with our members, with the local press and with railway management. To this end we produce a newsletter – at least once a year and more often as resources allow. We have a website (<http://www.avrug.org.uk/>) and we try to answer individual questions from all.

The last twenty five years have seen many improvements to the train service and enormous growth in passenger numbers. In 1990 most services were operated by Pacers – two car trains were sufficient for most services. There has been electrification and re-signalling (1995), new trains (2000). There has been privatisation of the railway, with several franchises. Some may remember “MTL” who cut down on staff numbers to save money and were then unable to run the full services. Arriva and Northern Rail (a Serco / Abellio partnership) have done much better.

There has been fun along the way. Alan Bradley organised special trains on the freight branch to Rylstone in 1995 – to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the railway in Skipton. These were a great success. Personally I remember a number of cab rides – including a trip on the stone train to Rylstone when I was picked up from a field near Embsay Junction! Following the example of the Penistone line we started music trains from Skipton to Ribbleshead. I still have a clear memory of the first – when approaching 200 passengers turned up and the train arriving in Skipton was a 2 car Pacer. Thankfully staff at Skipton managed to start up a Sprinter that was parked in the sidings and we left a little late but with everyone on board! We are indeed lucky to have dedicated and professional railway staff, mainly based in Skipton, who keep the service going from day to day.

Recent years have seen the line perform well. However, we continue to be concerned about the limited investment in capacity to transport the ever increasing passenger numbers. Decisions have been postponed as the current franchise has repeatedly been extended. Back in 2008 Network Rail identified the need to extend platforms to take 6 coach trains. This was to be done within 5 years. There has been no progress on this, only the stop gap measure of a couple of additional peak train services.

We wait to see what the next franchise will promise. Additional trains are needed both to reduce current overcrowding and to manage the growing numbers of passengers. Trains either need to be more frequent or longer – and either of these options will be expensive. The benefits are not only for rail passengers. This investment is vital for the Airedale economy. The local road network grinds to a halt whenever there is serious disruption to the railway. There is no way that roads could convey the passengers who currently use our trains. Indeed the excellent train service has become essential for life in Airedale and we will continue to campaign for further improvements.

So the Conservatives have won. On the 8 May, “Passenger Transport” magazine pointed out the promises the party made leading up to the Election. Such as freezing commuter fares in real terms and confirming projects such as electrification and HS2. Will they do these things?

Leeds - Morecambe Community Rail Partnership

Northern Rail has agreed to sponsor prizes for a photographic competition, which is being promoted by the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership (CRP) to give them a range of images that will capture the spirit of the line. The railway joins Leeds to Morecambe line taking in the Aire Valley, and passes near the Forest of Bowland and through the Lune valley onto Lancaster and then the seaside at Morecambe. This will create a range of pictures for use on their website and in publicity.

Pete Myers, the Client & Stakeholder Manager at Northern Rail said "It is not about pictures of trains but about people and places along the line. There are three sections reflecting different sections of the route so wherever people live they can be involved. Leeds - Skipton, Gargrave - Wennington, Carnforth - Morecambe. There will be a prize winner for each section: they will receive a pass giving free travel across the Northern Rail services for two days of their choice."

The competition is open to everyone and images should be sent by e mail to pete.myers@northernrail.org It closes on 30 September 2015 although pictures will still be accepted after that date, they will miss the prize deadline.

The pictures will be available to view on a special Facebook page but this will be signposted from the line's website <http://www.leedslancastermorecambecrp.co.uk/>

For further information please contact Rod Tickner: rod@tickneronline.co.uk or 07902 543797

Harrogate – Wetherby – Cross Gates**by Mark Parry**

One of our members, Adrian Morgan wrote to us to report on his recent campaigning in North Yorkshire. He said, "As part of the Harrogate-Ripon-Northallerton route I am also campaigning for Harrogate-Wetherby-Cross Gates as it improves the business case for Harrogate-Northallerton as a through route..."

Adrian went on, "You will know that work has recently started at Kirkstall Forge station costing the thick end of £9m. This works out at £9,000 per house. I asked Leeds City Council to reinstate the first 1.5 miles of the Cross Gates-Wetherby line to a new development of 5,000 houses each side of the track bed in East Leeds along the A64 where Park & Ride is already planned. Although costing £15-£17m this works out as a comparative cost of only £4,000 per house and would provide a fast non-stop service into Leeds in nine minutes four times an hour by extending North West electric services (probably from Bradford Forster Square and Ilkley) to turn back there instead of Leeds west end bay platforms. Dwell time would be much reduced at Leeds by using through platforms and more efficient use of stock and crew by increasing journey length between turn rounds."

Adrian has not had any interest in his suggestion so far, but intends to put his ideas to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Improved Links for Hull**by Mark Parry**

Tony Ross, of the Hull & East Riding Rail Users Association, brought my attention to an article in the Hull Daily Mail, published on the 9 April 2015.

MPs and business leaders in Hull were to sign a joint letter asking for improved rail links between Hull and Leeds, Manchester and Manchester Airport. The letter was timed to coincide with the renewal of the Trans-Pennine franchise and was to be sent to the three bidders. In particular Hull and East Riding councils want to see trains running hourly to the Airport and half hourly to Leeds. The councils' research predicts a £5.3m increase for the northern economy if the hourly service to Manchester Airport was introduced. Many business leaders want to sign the letter and send it to whoever becomes the next Transport Secretary after the general election.

Wensleydale Railway's Class 121 Project**by Timothy Edwards**

Many of you will know that we have been preparing and submitting a bid for one of the last main line operated first generation Diesel Multiple Unit vehicles. Single car vehicle number 121 032 has recently been with Chiltern trains who have decided to offer it for sale. With the help of a large number of members and supporters, who have been pledging to buy shares and making donations we were able to make a strong financial bid, backed up by a convincing plan for its future use in Wensleydale.

I am delighted to be able to report that we have won the tender process against strong competition from 12 other bidders, including some of the big players in the heritage railway sector. 121 032 will soon be coming home to Wensleydale. It is the first time we have been involved in this sort of purchase, and marks another milestone in the development of the Wensleydale Railway. The unit will find steady employment on Northallerton shuttles, lightly loaded services and charters, where its 60 seats and low running costs will be invaluable.

To say that I am pleased by this is an understatement! I have enjoyed the process and been astonished by the tremendous support I have received. This is a little more than just a rolling stock purchase, it proves that we have survived the trials of the last couple of years and marks the start of a programme of development on the Wensleydale Railway, which is designed to move the business on to a more secure footing.

Railfuture Training Package

by Trevor Garrod

Trevor Garrod is the Deputy Chair of Railfuture's International Group and the Chairman of the European Passengers' Federation. Here he explains the background to our European Union (EU) institutions, lobbying and decision making.

Why do we need to know?

The UK has been part of what is now called the European Union for over 40 years. Policies developed at EU level affect our country, and indeed our international transport links, which are important not only for British people travelling to the rest of Europe, but also for fellow Europeans coming to our country. National Government legislation often originates in directives at EU level - into which British civil servants and politicians also contribute.

THREE KEY EU INSTITUTIONS

1. European Commission

Each of the 28 national governments nominates a Commissioner for a 5-year period. Ours is currently Lord Hill, who is responsible for financial services. The Transport Commissioner is Ms Violeta Bulc of Slovenia. Each Commissioner is assisted in his/her day-to-day work by a cabinet of officials. The Commissioner also heads a General Directorate which, in the case of transport, is called DG-MOVE. This is comparable to a Ministry at national level. There are certain other DGs whose work sometimes impacts on transport and its users, notably those for regional policy (DG-REGIO), Environment (DG-ENVIRO) and consumer affairs (DG-SANCO).

2. European Parliament

The Parliament contains 730 MEPs who are elected for a 5-year period. The UK has 65 MEPs. These represent nations or regions of the UK - which for England means London, South East, South West, Eastern, West Midlands, East Midlands, North West, Yorkshire and North East. This means that each constituency has several MEPs. They are normally on a party list (though occasionally independent candidates also stand) and elected by proportional representation, and so electors choose a party, not a candidate. If an MEP dies or leaves office, there is no by-election; they are simply replaced by the next candidate on their party's list of eight

The national parties are normally grouped together in the European Parliament. Thus Labour MEPs are in the same group as Labour and Social Democrat MEPs from the 27 other countries. The European Peoples' Party comprises the centre-right parties but the Conservative MEPs are not currently part of it.

Decisions are usually reached by consensus because one party does not have an overall majority over the others. The Transport & Tourism Committee of the European Parliament is the most relevant one for us. It is chaired by Michael Cramer MEP (Green) from Berlin and has four British full members: Lucy Anderson (Labour, London), Jacqueline Foster (Conservative, North West), Keith Taylor (Green, South East) and Jill Seymour (UKIP, West Midlands). It is important that such MEPs are kept abreast of Railfuture's thinking, and that is one of the tasks of our International Group.

Other MEPs may be less interested in transport, but should still be cultivated by Railfuture branches and, where appropriate, user groups. For example, they may lobby for EU assistance for their areas. Many MEPs are also on the free list to receive "Railwatch" and some may also like to receive Branch newsletters. Branches should keep the International Group informed of any contacts they have with their MEPs

You may find out about your MEPs from the internet (they have websites) and you can write to them at the European Parliament, rue de Wiertz 60, B1047 Brussels. They should also have an address in their constituency. The MEPs are generally working in Brussels Monday to Thursday but every 4 weeks they have a session in Strasbourg, at the Parliament's other premises.

The European Parliament cannot initiate legislation - but it examines and debates proposals put to it by the Commission and may also do its own studies - currently one of these is under way on ticketing.

21 of the UK MEPs represent UKIP which, of course, wants to withdraw our country from the EU.

3. Council of Ministers

The Heads of Government of the 28 Member States meet regularly in Brussels and take decisions affecting the whole of the EU. Sometimes all the Transport Ministers will meet and take decisions affecting transport. It is similar with the Finance Ministers, Environment Ministers etc. Therefore if a proposal is currently being debated in the European Parliament, it will ultimately go before the Council of Ministers and so lobbying our own Secretary of State for Transport (and opposition spokespersons) is also relevant for Railfuture.

Other Institutions

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COMMITTEE also takes a keen interest in transport matters and conducts its own studies and calls its own conferences on such issues.

EUROPEAN RAILWAY AGENCY based in Valenciennes, was set up by the European Commission to improve interoperability between national rail networks and has done very important work on information and ticketing as well as rolling stock.

LOBBYING ORGANISATIONS - Brussels is full of lobbying organisations seeking to influence the policy of the EU. Railfuture is affiliated to the EUROPEAN PASSENGERS' FEDERATION (EPF) (of which we were a founder member in 2002) which seeks to put the passenger viewpoint. EPF is multi-modal and has 34 member organisations in 20 countries, including in the UK: Railfuture, Bus Users UK, Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch and TravelWatch SouthWest. The Association of European Rail Agents is also an associate member. EPF's website www.epf.eu contains information about the federation and its publications/position papers.

CER - the Community of European Railways represents mainly the operators. ATOC is a member of it. Twice a year EPF representatives attend the Customer Liaison Group of CER.

UITP - the Union International des Transport Publics represents mainly urban and regional public transport operators and EPF has regular dialogue with it.

UNIFE represents the railway manufacturing industry (firms such as Siemens, Bombardier and Alstom)

EIM - represents the European Infrastructure Managers - such as Network Rail.

RFE - Rail Forum Europe was set up by MEPs and holds regular meetings (combined with breakfast or dinner) to hear and discuss presentations on railway issues. Railfuture has taken part in two of these.

ERFA - the European Rail Freight Association does similar work to EPF, on the freight side.

IRU - International Road Transport Union - of interest to EPF because of its campaigning on bus and taxi issues.

Sometimes EPF also has contact or dialogue with other interest groups with whom it shares some common ground such as BEUC (consumer bodies), T&E (Transport & Environment), European Cyclists' Federation and European Disability Forum.

The Railfuture International Group is happy to advise further on these matters and indeed to provide speakers to Branch meetings or material for Branch newsletters. Our work is regularly featured in Railwatch.

Allies of Rail Database

By Mike Troke

Our Parliamentary Officer, Graham Collett has been working hard developing a database of prospective parliamentary candidates, and his interactive map showing the parliamentary constituencies in relation to the rail network was first seen at the last branch meeting in Selby at the end of March. These have been important tools during the recent general election campaign helping us, both directly from Railfuture and through local RUGs, to lobby the candidates on rail and other transport issues. By the time you read this, we will all know who has been elected to represent us in Parliament. We can now keep up the pressure on our new MPs to ensure that the voice of rail in Yorkshire is heard in Westminster.

Railfuture would like to expand the database to include key people in regional, local authorities and regional organisations. This will allow Railfuture nationally and regionally to keep in contact with key people across the political spectrum and at different levels. We can send them a copy of Railaction and, importantly, Yorkshire Rail Campaigner, each time they are published. This keeps us in regular contact with decision-makers and strengthens our efforts to influence their actions within and outside Yorkshire. We are at a time when major changes to our rail network are being advocated across the North of England and so Railfuture's role as an informed and influential campaigning body is more important than ever.

So, if you know of any rail-friendly councillors, senior officers or board members in regional, local authorities or regional organisations with whom we should be keeping in contact please let me or Lloyd Butler, as it says in Railaction, know. Please give us as much detail as you can, so we know we are talking to the right person!

Round the Region

By Mark Parry

The Sheffield Telegraph reported on 10 March that later this year the initial plans for the proposed extension of Sheffield's tram network to Rotherham could begin. The South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive is to review its priorities. They are looking to see how best to connect the exiting tram network to such places as the main line railway station in Sheffield, Meadowhall and the Advanced Manufacturing Park at Catcliffe. The route to Rotherham is expected to cost around £60 million and will be a tram-train pilot. As this would help increase the use of existing heavy rail lines, it is considered to be a priority. On the 4 August, the Sheffield Telegraph reported that an application to the Secretary of State for Transport had been made. The service is now expected to start early in 2017 with three tram trains an hour.

The re-opening of Haxby was raised in the York Press on 11 March. The MP, Julian Sturdy, for York Outer, met with Claire Perry, the former Rail Minister. Haxby is reported to be in the top 4 regional possibilities for re-opening.

Apperley Bridge station's re-opening was reported in Bradford's Telegraph & Argus on 24 March. It is due to open in the Summer and has cost £10millions.

Meanwhile the Yorkshire Post reported on 27 March, that Kirkstall Forge will open in October and has also cost £10millions.

Our member Tony Ross highlights the impact of the Kellingley Colliery closure. He said on 27 March, "Since most, if not all, of the Kellingley coal produced is transported by rail, the closure will have a significant negative impact on the railfreight scene across our region. An NUM delegate for Kellingley said that the colliery was still producing 40,000 tonnes of coal per week, but that delaying the decision on the provision of state aid had meant that crucial work on the development of a new coal seam at Kellingley hadn't started. But with the power stations turning to cleaner coal and biomass technology, it would appear that it's cheaper to import from abroad what coal is required rather than to extract more expensive deep-mined coal from within the UK.

On 10 April, Low Moor was raised by the Telegraph and Argus. It has been found necessary to compulsory purchase some land to allow this new station to be built. Costing £10.5millions this station is expected to open in December 2015.

Doncaster is expecting a new bay platform, according to the Sheffield Star report of 17 April, costing £21millions. Work may begin in May if planning permission is received. The project will include a new access bridge for the platform.

Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group	www.avrug.org.uk
Bradford Rail Users' Group	www.bradfordrail.com
Halifax and District Rail Action Group	
Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group	Email: hlrug@live.co.uk
Harrogate Line Supporters' Group	www.harrogatechamber.org/harrogateline.htm
Hope Valley	www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk
Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association	Email: hpsrua@btinternet.com
Hull and East Riding Rail Users' Association	www.hullrailusers.co.uk
Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group	www.lasrug.btck.co.uk
Minster Rail Campaign	www.minstersrail.net
Selby and District Rail Users' Group	www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/ghost-page/selby-district-rail-users-group/
Settle-Carlisle Line, Friends of the	www.foscl.org.uk
Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership	www.selrap.org.uk
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: nhrawsons@googlemail.com

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Branch Chair's Report

by Nina Smith

By the time you read this, we will know the result of the General Election and, unless negotiations to form a government are very protracted, we will know who the new transport ministers are. Personally, should the Conservatives still be in government, I do hope that they will retain Patrick McLoughlin as Secretary of State for Transport. In my view he has been an excellent Secretary of State, and you cannot say that about many during the past 50 years! Should Labour be in government, I do hope that the excellent Lillian Greenwood will be at least the Rail Minister if not the Secretary of State.

The bidders for both the Northern Rail and TransPennine Express franchises are currently working very hard in developing their final proposals. The minimum base specification outlined in the Invitation to Tenders is better than we had feared when the consultation was announced last summer. It is clear that the Secretary of State took cognizance of some of the representations, not least those to do with the quality of Northern rolling stock and the importance of the franchises being growth ones. Nevertheless, things that we hoped to see were missing and it is to be hoped that the bidders will all be submitting bids that offer substantial proposals above the minimum base specification of the tenders. I have had very good feedback from Northern bidders about how useful were the all day sessions which Railfuture organised for their bid teams to meet with our affiliated user and campaign groups, and also with a couple of non-affiliates. The depth of local knowledge and commitment, and the high level of professionalism showed Railfuture and its affiliates in an excellent light.

There is much going on regarding better transport in the north, and I am delighted that the Chair of the Transport Committee of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Councillor James Lewis, will be speaking at our next branch Meeting on June 13th. Councillor Lewis is also a Board Member of Rail North, so should be able to bring us up to speed on developments there and at Transport for the North (TfN), of which Rail North is expected to be the rail delivery arm. Because TfN is concerned with all forms of transport, Railfuture and its affiliates will have an important role to play in lobbying for rail and integrated public transport to be prioritised over less ecologically sustainable means of transport.

The Electrification Task Force report that came out in early March was very upbeat, and it is to be hoped that funding will be made available for its recommendations to be implemented, although because of slippage in the already agreed electrification programme, it seems unlikely that any of their recommendations can be implemented before the next decade. Hull may be an exception, as in my view it should have been included as part of the Manchester – Leeds - Colton Junction electrification plan. Because Hull is geographically out on a limb, it is easy for it to be forgotten that this is a sizeable city. Early electrification of the Calder Valley lines is also vital, not just

because of their strong independent case, but because they are the diversionary route for TransPennine services when the Diggle route is blocked.

Finally, can I welcome our new Yorkshire Branch Secretary, Dr Michael Troke, who was elected to the post at the Annual General Meeting in January. Mike has a wealth of experience in transport, and is a great addition to our strong team of Branch officers.

Membership News:

Paul Colbeck – Membership Secretary

Please welcome new supporter: Rod Smith of Horton-in-Ribblesdale.

On a sad note, retired member William Kirby died suddenly on 21st April.

Railfuture Yorkshire sends condolences to his widow, Susan and family & friends.

Interested in Joining Railfuture for just £18 a year?

You would receive the national magazines as well as this Yorkshire Rail Campaigner and meet like-minded people at our meetings.

***You can find out more and join by clicking on
<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join/> or by contacting our
membership secretary Paul Colbeck,
14 St Giles Way, Copmanthorpe, York, YO23 3XT
Paul.colbeck@railfuture.org.uk***

If you join online please email Paul to let him know.

Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 30**) will be out in September 2015. If you would like to have your news included please email material, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com to arrive by **Saturday 8 August 2015**. Alternatively call or text 07941 642349.

Would you like your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email? It would save us money and you can enlarge it on your screen to read it more easily. You can always revert back to the post if you decide you don't like it.

Diary

- **4 June 2015:** Thursday. Don Valley Railway drop-in meeting at the Harlequin Pub, Sheffield from 19:00. <http://donvalleyrailway.org/>
- **13 June 2015:** Yorkshire Branch meeting in Leeds from 13:00 to 16:00 hours. The speaker is Cllr James Lewis. See flyer for more details.
- **20 June 2015:** Railfuture's Summer Conference in the Town Hall, Newark, NG24 1DU; from 10:45 to 17:00 with speakers representing train operators and local authorities in the area.
- **27 July 2015:** Campaign for Better Transport Rail Group: held in the Grove Pub in Leeds, next to Bridgewater Place at 19:30.
- **7 November 2015:** Railfuture's Rail User Conference, including Rail User Groups award ceremony, at The Mercure, Holland House Hotel, Redcliff Hill, Bristol BS1 6SQ, from 10:45 to 17:00; just a short walk from Temple Mills station. For further information and list of speakers, see: www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

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