

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 3 December 2008

railfuture *Yorkshire*

Yorkshire and Humber Route Utilisation Strategy – Tremendous Opportunity for Rail Expansion says Branch Chair

“It is essential that we seize this tremendous opportunity for rail expansion” said Branch Chair Chris Hyomes, commenting on Railfuture Yorkshire’s response to Network Rail’s consultation on their Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for Yorkshire and Humber*.

Whilst welcoming the report as a useful step forward, the Branch (and many of its affiliated Rail User Groups) feel that the RUS lacks ambition. In particular, it seems to ignore the government’s recently announced climate change agenda and the likelihood of substantial long term increases in the cost of fuel; it also seem to be based on much lower demand forecasts, ignoring the current growth predictions for the Leeds City Region.

As we discovered at *Lines of Enquiry* (the Rail Summit held in June—see YRC Issue 2), there is an urgent need for rail investment to meet the growing demand for commuting into Leeds (and this is also true of Sheffield, Doncaster and Huddersfield). Yet the RUS remedy seems to be “too little, too late”!

Railfuture calls for an extensive programme of investment to raise rail capacity requiring a mix of infrastructure improvements (including a significant extension of electrification across the region, new and reopened stations and lines), new rolling stock and increased services. Without this, the region will slowly grind to a halt through increasing congestion. Only rail—with its independent routes direct to city centres can meet this challenge.



Class 222 Meridian Unit at York (photo Graham Collett)

Congratulations Paul!

At the Northern Rail User Groups event on 18th October (see p.3), we were very pleased to hear that Paul Salveson (Head of Government & Community Strategies at Northern and formerly of ACoRP) had been awarded the MBE for his services to Community Railways. Best wishes from all in Railfuture for a well deserved award!



Forthcoming Railfuture Yorkshire Events

Sat January 17th 2009: Rotherham—Branch Meeting with Guest Speaker on Rail Developments in South Yorkshire (see p. 4)

Sat March 21st 2009: AGM (venue to be announced)

Saturday 9th May 2009: **National AGM** Leeds —all offers of help to Mike Crowhurst please

Press Date for February 2009 issue

Please email (preferred) or post material to:

Graham Collett 16 Wilstrop Farm Rd Copmanthorpe
York YO23 3RY graham@collettgh.plus.com **by Friday 30th January.**

* The RUS sets out the strategic vision for the future of this part of the rail network - see <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/>.

“A Champion for the Passenger” - Yorkshire Rail Users Salute James Towler by Graham Collett

On November 15th Railfuture Yorkshire and the Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield Rail Users Association (HPSRUA) held a special event to commemorate the enormous contribution of former Railfuture Yorkshire President and Chairman James Towler.

Appropriately enough, the event was held at Stockmoor Village Hall, one of the locations used for the closure hearings for the Penistone line.

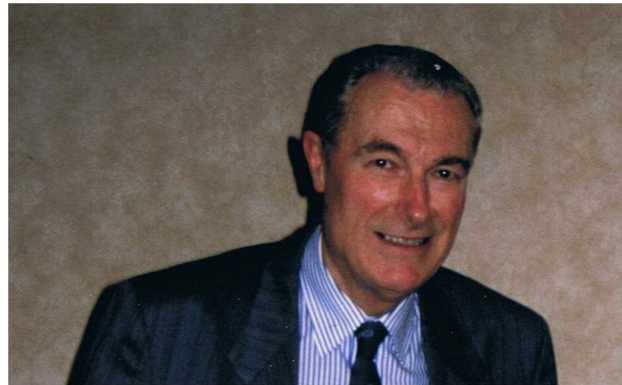
Tributes were paid to James by Alan Whitehouse (BBC Look North Transport Correspondent), John Moorhouse (Company Secretary of Travel Watch North West and former Secretary of the Transport Users' Consultative Committee (TUCC) for Yorkshire/North East), Richard Fieldhouse (Chair of HPSRUA), David Pickersgill (former Railfuture Yorkshire Newsletter Editor), Mark Sullivan (Transport Consultant and Road Campaigner) and Railfuture Yorkshire Chair Chris Hyomes. All acknowledged James' magnificent contribution to the Yorkshire rail campaign and in particular for the firm stand he took against British Rail at the time of the closure proposals for the Settle to Carlisle (S&C)

Branch Visits by Phil Watson Branch Membership Secretary

A very successful visit to Neville Hill Train Care Depot, near Leeds, took place on the 18th September. The visit was fully subscribed and branch members from all over Yorkshire and one member from North West Branch made the considerable effort to be at the Depot for 17.00hrs. Northern Rail (NoR) and East Midlands Trains (EMT) split the group into two and one half toured the EMT portion of the depot whilst the other group toured NR's portion, with both groups then swapping over. The visit involved a full tour around all the maintenance and servicing sheds - including the wheel turning lathe - and both groups were also lucky enough to see the depot turntable being used to turn HST coaches and power cars. Special thanks go to both NoR and EMT for their help in making the visit possible, which was very much appreciated! Future possible venues for Branch visits include Sheffield Supertram Depot/Control Centre, York IECC (Integrated Electronic Control Centre) & Siemens Maintenance Depot York, Corus Steel Works/Appleby Frodingham Railway Preservation Society Scunthorpe, Associated British Ports King George's Dock Coal Handling Terminal Hull.

Please e-mail me watson804@btinternet.com **with ideas for Branch Visits & don't forget to tell me if you change your e-mail address or are new to e-mail. It is a very cost effective way of contacting members and can save the Branch considerable amounts on postage costs over a year.**

Stop Press: New hourly direct Nottingham–Leeds Service starts December 14th. Combined with Northern's existing semi-fast service, this will give a half-hourly frequency between Sheffield, Barnsley, Wakefield and Leeds.



(photo courtesy Muriel Towler) and Penistone lines.

Alan said that the S&C line was a test case “If a case for closure could be made for this line, many other routes would have gone”. John and Mark pointed out that the action by James in delaying closure hearings was crucial in that it bought time for the local authorities and others to step forward and significantly raised the number of closure objections. David reminded the audience that James' ashes were scattered on Ribbleshead Viaduct—the best memorial to a true gentleman.

During his address, John also paid tribute to the late Robin Sissons, a lifelong rail campaigner, Assistant Editor of Today's Railways and former TUCC member. Robin will be remembered in particular for his successful campaign to re-open Frizinghall Station. Robin was a great advocate of public transport; he loved the S&C and used the line a lot. A collection in his memory will be used to buy station seats at S&C stations.

Branch Key Contacts

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Skipton to Colne Shoppers Special Sunday 7th December

This will be the third excursion train organised by the Skipton East Lancs Rail Action Partnership (SELRAP), aimed at raising the profile of its reopening campaign for the Skipton-Colne line. For details/ bookings please see: <http://www.selrap.org.uk/> or call Derek Jennings 01282 690411.

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner on the Web!

Our Branch Newsletter will be available on the Yorkshire pages of the national Railfuture website as soon as possible after publication:

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

BEST WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR TO ALL READERS

Chairman's Column by Chris Hyomes

If we are to believe all we are told on the news, then Great Britain and it would seem the rest of the world are going through the biggest financial crisis in living memory.

The government are helping by bailing out the banks, introducing tax cuts and increased public spending and the price of crude oil has fallen - bringing the price of petrol to less the 90 p a litre in some cases. So why at a time of such economic uncertainty, falling consumer demand and increasing unemployment have train operating companies announced inflation busting January fare increases? The Prime Minister's spokesman said "it is clear passengers do have concerns about the value for money they receive from the train companies, it is a matter for the train companies to explain the decisions they have made, but we want to make sure passengers are getting good value for money". Could the government's decision to reduce rail subsidies by 40% by 2014 have influenced these increases?

While not changing its name Passenger Focus (formerly the Pail Passengers Council/TUCCs) is now to become the bus and coach watchdog - as well as rail - for England except London. I believe this will reduce the effectiveness of Passenger Focus in tackling rail issues, leaving Railfuture as the one true voice of the rail passenger.

However, Railfuture can only be effective if its members stay focused on the future and not reminisce about the past.

Northern Rail User Groups Summit by Graham Collett

A very useful update on Northern's future plans for rail services across their franchise was given to Rail Users at the National Railway Museum in York on 18th October. Senior managers (led by Northern's MD Heidi Mottram) outlined their plans for services from December 2008 and beyond, following the major changes required to services in the North West with the introduction of the new West Coast Main Line timetable. Details were also given of new, cascaded and refurbished rolling stock, station improvements and the second phase of the tram-train project, which may involve running from Rotherham on heavy rail then joining the Supertram system into Sheffield. All attendees welcomed these developments, although many were concerned about the length of time that existing rolling stock (especially Class 142 and 1443 diesel units) would need to be kept in service. Our thanks to Northern for hosting this event and providing the rare opportunity for rail users from across the operating area to network and tell others their own success stories, as well as the chance to provide direct feedback "from the coalface"!

Winter Meeting

Saturday 17th January 2009 at 2pm

Central Library Walker Place Rotherham*

with Guest Speaker on Rail Developments in South Yorkshire

The meeting is open to both members and non members of Railfuture – please invite your friends. For further details of this and future meetings, please contact Chris Hyomes, Branch Chairman (see page 3 for contact details)

Why not join us in pressing for improved rail services? Please contact Phil Watson Branch Membership Secretary or any Branch Officer (see page 3).

* To reach the Library from Rotherham Central Station: head northeast on Central Rd toward Bridge St; turn right at Bridge St; continue on Frederick St; at the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto A6021/Drummond St; turn left at Nottingham St; turn left at Norfolk St and the Library will be on your left (with thanks to Google Maps).

Selby Rail Users Report by Reg French

Current issues being pursued include: facilities for the disabled and extra car parking at Selby Station; concessionary rail fares for Selby District Council elderly and disabled residents; car parking and pedestrian access to the south side at South Milford Station, as well as safety concerns here and at other rural stations. The group is also supporting Hull Trains bid for an extension of their open access agreement together with additional services.

Huge Rise in Passengers using Hunmanby Station after Campaign Led by One Man Pays Off! by Graham Collett

Hunmanby Station (on the Hull to Scarborough line) has seen a massive **42% increase** in passengers in just **12** months—one of the highest increases in the whole country. Between 2002 and 2006 Hunmanby had seen just 1.3% growth in 4 years, an average of just 44 extra journeys each year. Yet figures recently released for 2006-7 show that an extra 5,577 journeys were made compared with 2005-6.

This is largely due to the efforts of our member Nick Harvey (also proprietor of Green Express Rail tours), with help from about 100 Hunmanby villagers, in promoting the rail services available and encouraging improvements to make the station a more welcoming, safer, place to wait for your train. As part of his campaign, Nick produced and printed (at his own expense) a newsletter giving details of local bus and rail services, including tips on cheaper rail travel. He and a team of enthusiastic volunteers distributed this to the 1600 homes in Hunmanby and has had some very good feedback from both local people and the media—it was mentioned on local TV, 5 local radio stations and in the local papers! Nick comments “The helpful information about booking on line went down really well and it will also help boost our numbers as by getting them in advance it means the guards have fewer on train fares to collect and fares are not missed.” The rail timetable also shows the direct train to South Yorkshire and that has also increased train use - this is also more convenient for those travelling to London as it only involves one change at Doncaster rather than via Seamer/York with the extra connection. Sample copies of Nick’s newsletter or leaflets are available from: Nick Harvey, 66 Stonegate, Hunmanby, Filey YO14 0PP Tel 01723 890453 www.greenscarborough.org.uk Email: info@greenexpressrailtours.co.uk

Why not produce a leaflet for your local station? Railfuture Lincolnshire Branch have been producing some village rail service leaflets for many years. Funding has often come from Rural Development Funds, Parish Councils etc.

Your free guide to

**Public Transport in Hunmanby Autumn/Winter
08**

Including details of local buses, trains and taxis serving the village.