

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 15 January 2012

railfuture Yorkshire

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

TransPennine Electrification and New Stations – an early Christmas Present from the Chancellor!

by Graham Collett



Electric trains could be running on Northern Hub services from late 2016 (photo Paul Colbeck)

Santa arrived early this year – on November 29th to be exact.

In his Autumn Statement, George Osbourne surprised rail users – and many in the rail industry – by announcing not only his approval for two new stations in West Yorkshire (see page 2) but the go-ahead for the electrification of the TransPennine route between Manchester and York. He actually said Manchester to Leeds but the new Transport Secretary - Justine Greening - has since confirmed that he meant York.

Her confirmation was given – following much speculation and concern – on 14th December at a meeting of the Transport Select Committee in response to a question from Julian Sturdy, MP for York Outer.

The Chancellor said that work on this £290m scheme would start next year and that before July 2012, the Government would consider further

investment in the Northern Hub (NH). In her appearance on 14th December, Justine Greening said that implementation will be from "late 2016 to 2018 with electric trains being phased in during this period." Network Rail are "recasting and rethinking" the NH as a result of the electrification approval. Several Committee Members were keen to clarify what this meant and the Committee Chair asked for a note from the Minister on this.

The published NH plan seems to treat the Liverpool to Manchester electrification as a separate entity from the NH and contains no other specific proposals for electrification. In their latest update on the NH, Network Rail say "The Ordsall Chord, a new piece of railway in Manchester connecting Piccadilly and Victoria stations, could see all fast TransPennine services going via Manchester Victoria station – a much quicker route – as soon as 2016. It would also mean more fast trains could run – as many as six trains per hour between Leeds and Manchester." (continued page 4)

Railfuture Branch and National Events Diary

Saturday 28th January 2012: **Branch Meeting, Priory Street Centre, York** (for details see page 4) **Please note the amended date for this meeting**

Saturday 17th March 2012: **Branch AGM and Lunch, Kellingley (Knottingley) Miners' Welfare Scheme Social Club, Knottingley** (full details and booking form will be in YRC 16)

Saturday 12th May 2012: **Railfuture National, Worcester Guildhall, Worcester** - details at

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk> or see Railwatch

Saturday 16 June 2012: **Railfuture Summer Conference, Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling** - details at

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Stirling+2012+Conference> or see Railwatch

Green Light for Kirkstall Forge and Apperley Bridge and a new station building at Wakefield Westgate

by Graham Collett

The Autumn Statement (see page 1) included £290 million to improve the railway network. On the 14 December, the Transport Secretary announced that the Leeds Rail Growth Package at a cost of £ 16.9m, formed part of these improvements. The package includes both these new stations which have a planned start date of July 2013, with completion by November 2014. **Metro Chairman Cllr James Lewis** has welcomed the announcement, “*Metro has pushed for the building of these two new stations which will support new jobs, reduce traffic on busy routes between Leeds and Bradford and ease congestion in Leeds city centre.*”

“A new rail station with 125 car parking spaces is a key element of the **Kirkstall Forge** development site, which will support 2,400 new jobs and lever £350m of new investment into the area,” he said. Two trains per hour each way from the station will provide a forecast 400,000 passengers each year with a six -minute link to Leeds city centre and a 18-minute link to Bradford Forster Square.

“Designed with a 300-space car park - the largest at a West Yorkshire station after Wakefield Westgate - the new station at **Apperley Bridge** will be used by around ¼ million passengers each year and will remove 200,000 car journeys from busy local roads annually. With a new station at Low Moor going ahead as well this means two new rail stations for the Bradford District. Journey times to Leeds and Bradford Forster Square will be about 12 minutes.”

In a separate announcement, the redevelopment of **Wakefield Westgate Station** - involving £6.6m of new investment - has finally been given the go-ahead. Submitted by Network Rail and East Coast, which manages the station, the scheme includes a new station building, a new customer reception, travel centre, First Class lounge and information screens, and better retail outlets.

It is a pity that its “poor relation” at **Wakefield Kirkgate** still awaits major investment befitting an historic (Grade 2 listed) structure. Notwithstanding the limited improvements carried out in 2009, the station remains in a poor state of repair with virtually no passenger facilities – an unwelcoming introduction for visitors to the city, including those to the recently opened Hepworth Gallery nearby. However, Metro announced in November that they are working together with Network Rail, Northern Rail, Grand Central, Wakefield Council, Railway Heritage Trust and Groundwork Wakefield to secure funding to bring much needed improvements to the station. Metro say that “*the thousands of rail passengers who pass through Wakefield Kirkgate will begin to see major improvement works starting early 2012.*” (continued on page 4)

More Carriages Means More Trains from December



Surplus Class 150 diesel units from other areas are now being use to provide much-needed extra capacity on Yorkshire routes (photo: Green Lane via Wikimedia Commons)

From the December timetable change Northern are introducing an additional 50 carriages. These - together with 10 carriages that are already in service - will enable them to offer an extra two million extra seats on peak services every year. The extra capacity is aimed at reducing overcrowding in the five main urban centres Northern serves (Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle, Manchester and Sheffield) and the additional trains have been planned to serve the busiest train services as a first priority. Northern say that “On some services we will be doubling the capacity, providing four carriages where previously there have been two. To accommodate longer trains some stations, for example Cottingley near Leeds, have had platform extensions.” Routes which will particularly benefit include: Lincoln – Sheffield; Knaresborough and Harrogate – Leeds; Leeds – Sheffield; Leeds – Manchester; Huddersfield – Stalybridge – Manchester.

Whilst we welcome these increased services, they rely on “recycled” trains transferred from the Midlands, who have received shiny new ones to replace them. **Branch Chair Chris Hyomes** – speaking on BBC **Look North** - underlined the urgent need for new trains for Yorkshire and drew a comparison with the vast sums being spent on rail in the London area. The new Northern/TransPennine franchise(s) **must** include new rolling stock – the Pacers in particular can’t last much longer!

Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all our Readers

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Chairman's Column by Chris Hyomes

Well as usual, as I draft my Chairman's piece, I find that two breaking news stories make a re-write necessary! Firstly Mary Portas and her report to the government on the state of the high street and secondly the announcement of the York to Manchester electrification (see lead story Ed).

You may ask what does Mary "Queen of Shops" Portas and her report have to do with Railfuture. Well the fact that there was no mention of rail travel into our towns, yet she identified the need for more, better and cheaper car parking, which was predictably picked up by the media. The report was featured on local radio where listeners were invited to phone in with their views. I managed to voice my opinions on two local radio stations. Despite being called an idiot by subsequent callers, I stand by my request for a year-on-year increase in car parking charges in line with inflation. The money would be used to improve links between town centres and their railway stations - many of which have now been separated from the towns they serve by bypasses aimed at taking cars away from the town centres where Mary Portas wishes to attract them!

More important to rail users was the approval for the Manchester to York electrification. But where does that leave the York to Scarborough service? Is it to be relegated to a local service or are we going to see the ridiculous situation of diesel trains running most of the way from Scarborough to Manchester under the wires?

As there is no user group for the York – Scarborough line, Railfuture Yorkshire must take the lead in pressing for the electrification of the line. I understand that Network Rail are currently examining the business case for this.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their continued support during 2011 and to wish you all the best for 2012.

A Quick Message from our Membership Secretary Designate – Paul Colbeck

For those of you who have Internet access, Railfuture Yorkshire is now on Facebook. Please visit our new page and click the "like" button:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Railfuture-Yorkshire/101299753320076>

A reminder that if you have any ideas for visits next Spring or Summer, please contact Phil Watson at 8 Millfield Close, Wilberfoss, York YO41 5PP Email: watson804@btinternet.com

Stop Press: Minsters' Rail Campaign comes to Beverley

From 15th December to 6th January, within Beverley Minster there will be a large display depicting the route of the Minsters' Rail, with models of York and Beverley Minsters along with a model of Market Weighton railway station. **Campaign Chairman George McManus** said "This is a great opportunity for Minsters' Rail Campaign. We will get lots of publicity, enabling us to spread our message. We hope that as many members as possible will come along and help us give out leaflets" The display was due to be officially opened at 6pm on Thursday 15th December by the Mayor of Beverley.

Press Date for March 2012 issue

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

Graham Collett (YRC 16), 16 Wilstrop Farm Rd Copmanthorpe York YO23 3RY collettgl@gmail.com
to arrive by Saturday 28 January 2012.

Railfuture Winter Meeting Saturday 28th January 2012 starting at 2 pm

Everyone welcome

Priory Street Centre 15 Priory Street York, YO1 6ET 01904 621133

Guest Speaker: Neil Smith - Head of Communications, East Coast

Directions from York Station: Turn right out of the station into Station Road and continue into Queen Street. Turn left at the traffic lights into Micklegate and continue until you reach Priory Street (the first turning on the right hand side). Turn right into Priory Street and then continue until you see the Priory Street Centre buildings on the left hand side of the street. For a map and advice on reaching the site please see <http://www.priorystreetcentre.org.uk/location.html>

News from Rail User Groups

Would all groups please come along to the meeting if possible and give us an update on the developments which are taking place on your line (please send a written report to the Secretary if you are unable to send a representative to the meeting). Reports from the East Riding and South Yorkshire would be particularly appreciated.

TransPennine Electrification (continued from Page 1)

The assumption must be that these would be diesel trains, operating to broadly the present service pattern, but at increased frequencies. So the electrification from Manchester to York must be a game changer, with the through electric services from Newcastle to Liverpool taking the Chat Moss route west of Manchester and questions raised over the future of the Middlesbrough and Scarborough through services to Manchester via Diggle.

This issue is already causing concern to people in these areas and **Tom Blenkinsop - MP for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland** – tabled a question in the House of Commons. **The Minister of State (Theresa Villiers)** replied on 13th December that she would ask Network Rail “to establish the cost and whether there is a business case for electrification of the line from Northallerton to Middlesbrough.” (see also the Chair’s column re Scarborough services).

Harrogate Line Update

The campaign to electrify this route and bring in new or more modern rolling stock continues.

Metro, Harrogate Borough Council, North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council are working together to produce a Development Plan for the line. Overhead electrification at 25kv is the ideal solution, to provide compatibility with the other electrified routes in West Yorkshire and on the main line to London. But if this doesn’t prove possible, the option remains for ‘third rail’ electrification using ex-London Underground rolling stock, as proposed by Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce (see YRC 14). On 8th December, they announced that the need to electrify the line between Leeds, Harrogate and York had now been fully endorsed by all of the Local Authorities concerned. More details at: http://www.harrogatechamber.org/harrogateline_news2

Some of the Class 150 units transferred from the Midlands (see page 2) are now finding their way onto the Harrogate line and the extra capacity is very welcome!



Wakefield Kirkgate Planned Improvements (continued from page 2)

Network Rail will be carrying out major works to refurbish the canopy over the Leeds bound platform and remove all life expired and unused canopies. Proposals also include the removal of the island platform spine wall (subject to Listed Building Consent) which remains in place following the removal of the station roof during the 1970s. New subway entrances will be created using reclaimed material from the platform spine wall and modern glazing.

Plans to restore the Grade II listed station building are continuing to be developed, subject to funding. The £4.2 million scheme driven by Groundwork Wakefield and multiple funding partners will see the building brought back to life with numerous uses including: Groundwork office space; conference/meeting room facilities for community use; small business enterprise units; passenger facilities with cafe, retail facility including ticket selling and exhibition area to promote green technologies, heritage and public transport; increased car parking and improvements to the station frontage including resurfacing and landscaping.