

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

Number 59

Winter 2022-3



Curse of interesting times

Well, the new timetable started, the weather was freezing, and then the most intensive period of recent strikes started. Amid record inflation workers want a decent pay rise. Not just rail workers. We write this on the first day of action by NHS nurses. We don't all agree on the rail dispute: see Nina's column on page 4 as well the editor's on page 8.

Our picture here is a Middlesbrough train at Whitby. Whitby got it's early morning train to Middlesbrough back in the new timetable but it was cancelled on the first day. Lots of us use the bus from York or Malton to get to Whitby. Now the bus route, effectively part of the rail timetable since the 1965 line closure, is threatened (page 7).

Rail booking offices are under threat, along with train guards. Who wants a railway without friendly staff? – JSW (19 Dec'2022)

All opinions in this magazine are views of the writer (initialled or by-lined) not necessarily of Railfuture or its Yorkshire branch.

railfuture

Yorkshire branch

President:

Alan Whitehouse:

Vice-Presidents:

Mike Crowhurst,
Alan Williams,
Chris Hyomes

Obituary: Michael Windsor Rose (1949-2022)



RAILFUTURE Yorkshire members were among many who were deeply saddened to learn of the death of our good friend and colleague Mike Rose. Yorkshire branch joint vice chair and Railfuture national board member, Mike died peacefully in Sheffield on 13 October 2022, surrounded by his loving family. Mike had suffered a rare form of cancer which he had tackled for two years with quiet fortitude. Private about his illness until the end, in the final week of his life he summoned up the energy to take one last stroll in his beloved Peak District National Park with his wife and sister by his side.

Mike was born to Marjorie and Arthur in London on 2 December 1949. Mike was very young when his father died, and after this the family moved to Macclesfield where they set down roots and where Mike attended King's School. He recalled fondly the dignity and strength of his mother and grandmother who raised him and his sister lovingly without the support of a father.

Mike read Engineering at Nottingham University and after graduation went on to enjoy a successful career in public services, managing infrastructure projects for local authorities and the National Health

Service. He brought communication systems into the digital age and was particularly proud of leading a multi-million pound project to upgrade the antiquated phone systems at Tower Hamlets Council.

Commitment to public service went beyond his working life, with life-long voluntary work for the Labour Party and a strong belief in social justice. In recent years Mike worked professionally and voluntarily for the transport sector sharing a passion for both modern and heritage railways.

Campaigner and leader

Mike was a staunch campaigner. I was delighted when he agreed to be nominated to become a vice chair of the Yorkshire Branch in 2018. At a national level, he joined the Railfuture Board in 2020, a testament to the esteem in which he was held. As branch vice chair, with membership secretary Andrew Dyson, Mike led Railfuture's work in South Yorkshire.

As campaigner Mike must take significant credit for getting improvements to the Hope Valley route approved. Realising the Hope line could never be sufficiently upgraded to achieve a half-hour journey between Sheffield and Manchester, Mike advocated high speed trains via a reborn Woodhead route. RAIL magazine published his article setting out the case in issue 870. Mike was also heavily involved in promoting the growth of rail freight, and to this end was a very active member of the Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership (MEMRAP). MEMRAP is a leader in the campaign to reopen the former Midland main line between Matlock and Buxton, enabling passenger trains access into the White Peak area, and fast through trains between Manchester, Derby and Leicester.

Mike was interviewed by Yorkshire Live in April 2022 , and set out his ideas on how our railways could be improved. Mike's list included electrification, high speed links between Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield, speeding up Sheffield to London train services, and better communication between the DfT and the regions.

Chris Page, national chair of Railfuture, said that Mike had been taken ill around the time he joined the board, and was clearly frustrated that he was unable to be more involved. He would have had a lot to contribute to the board's work.

I would add that Mike's loss leaves a significant hole in the work of Yorkshire Branch.

Community, country and folk!

Prior to becoming involved in Railfuture, Mike had been the community rail officer for Derbyshire County Council, and was partnership officer for the High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership. Mike had been central to the partnership's relaunch in 2015.

More than just a rail campaigner, Mike was passionate about the Peak District National Park, where he loved to go walking. A lover of folk music, he was involved with the folk train on the Penistone line. He enjoyed good books and good company, and will be remembered for his quiet intelligence, patience and unique optimism.

Mike was a lovely man, and is sorely missed, especially by his wife Mary, sister Janet, his two children Robin and Kat, and step-son John, but also by his many friends and colleagues in the world of railway campaigning and beyond. – **Nina Smith**



Mike loved the Peak District

Near the High Peak: Vincent, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Chair's column

by **Nina Smith**, Chair Railfuture Yorkshire Branch

The state of our railway

IT HAS not been a good quarter for train passengers, nor for the train operating companies (TOCs). We have seen a massive cancellation problem on TransPennine Express (TPE), partly related to staff refusing to work overtime on rest days¹. Many TPE trains have been taken out of the timetable the night before – meaning they don't show in the official “cancelled” figures. It's time either DfT or the regulatory body ORR

sorted out this statistical anomaly. Other TPE issues include short formations on some trains it is actually running; and having to close off broken toilets. How not to encourage people to use trains!

More generally and fundamentally, it is time for TOCs, Network Rail, unions, and government to get to grips with the current crisis. Strikes mean essential workers cannot get to work, others are forking out for taxi fares, family visits are postponed, and retail and leisure destinations are hit hard financially. This is unacceptable. The unions must accept that this



Another of those noisy Nova 3 diesel trains. Good for passengers but not the lineside neighbours. TPE are looking to redeploy them, but they appeared at Scarborough on first day of Dec'22 timetable, before the latest strikes started – JSW (photo from 2021).

is 2022, that the economy is in a mess thanks to Brexit and Liz Truss as well as global factors, and they must accept changes to outdated working practices that are not safety critical when these mean that TOCs cannot run to a full timetable. **But there must not be a mass cull of ticket offices**, which the RMT union stated was part of the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) offer made early in December. In return, the Government should authorise pay rises that are overall below the rate of inflation, but including a flat-rate component to benefit the lowest paid most – similar to the recent settlement at BT.

NPR and HS2

Possibly the only sensible thing that Truss and Kwarteng announced was that Northern Powerhouse Rail would be built in full. We do not yet know whether the Sunak government will agree to this, but the worry is that they won't. Despite rumours, the Chancellor kept the Integrated Rail Plan intact in his Autumn Statement, but most of us in the North consider the IRP to be a flawed document, designed for what it will cost rather than as an **investment** with all the benefits that will bring. Construction will take years, so costs will be spread over a 10 to 15 year period.

There is good news though. The appointment of Hugh Merriman MP as minister of state for rail and HS2 is most welcome. Merriman was an outstanding chair of the transport select committee. That committee called for the IRP to be revisited. We can only hope that the prime minister, the chancellor and

¹ ... raising a complex question about the nature of overtime or rest days! – Ed.

transport secretary Mark Harper MP let Merriman take a positive approach to both current rail performance and future development. Also welcome is the appointment of Iain Stewart as chair of the parliamentary transport select committee – the outstanding candidate according to RAIL magazine editor Nigel Harris.

“RYR”: restoring your railway

At time of writing, there have been no updates on those RYR schemes still in the pipeline, including the Barrow Hill line, the Stocksbridge line and the Askern route.

The success of the recent Okehampton reopening should again emphasise how passenger estimates are usually on the low side. The route through north Devon from Exeter is already carrying double the forecast number of passengers. 500 people a day are travelling from Okehampton station.

Perhaps the long awaited re-opening of Skipton-Colne can now move forward.

Passenger growth

Whilst it has been clear for some time that the recovery in passenger numbers has been strongest amongst leisure travellers, especially at weekends, where pre Covid numbers have been exceeded on many routes, there are strong anecdotal signs that commuting continues to increase.

Passengers have been standing on some both peak and off-peak services on the Calder Valley route, and the station car parks at Hebden Bridge and Todmorden are now full on all or most weekdays.



You may have to stand on Calder Valley services at weekends. Look at this crowd at Brighouse last summer. Some crowding here and elsewhere may be due to TPE trains being cancelled, so let's hope Northern get the revenue! – JSW

West Yorkshire mass transit vision

A second consultation is taking place on the WY proposals. We are currently developing our response, and members in the county are urged to do likewise. **Closing date is 16th January.** Use the link [Have your say on the West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision 2040 | Your Voice \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/have-your-say-on-the-west-yorkshire-mass-transit-vision-2040-your-voice) or navigate via www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/improving-transport/connectivity/. Online, email or postal responses are possible.

Although the vision is very good as far as it goes, it is disappointing that Wetherby and Ossett, which were not included in the original plans, are still missing from the proposed network. Given the volume of road traffic from the Wetherby area to Leeds, and the developmental needs of the Horbury/Ossett area, it is disappointing that they are being ignored.

Mass-transit could mean any one of four options including **advanced bus**, **ultra-light rail** and **tram-train** (which can run on reserved tracks or conventional rail lines with conventional trains). Routes proposed in West Yorkshire's vision as candidate options for Phase 1 appear to be East Leeds, Leeds-Bradford, South Leeds-Heckmondwike-Dewsbury and Bradford-Spen Valley-Dewsbury. **Light rail/tram** is leading option for the first three of these schemes, with the Spen Valley mode not yet to be specified.

The hope is Phase 1 will start construction in mid-late 2020s.

One question Railfuture members might want to ask concerns the conceptual gap between mass-transit and high speed rail. Heavy rail routes need improving in terms of service frequency and places served, something that could be done long before uncertain mass-transit schemes or high speed schemes can be delivered.

West Yorkshire's rail strategy is expected to be out to consultation in spring 2023. – JSW

Protecting communities from heavy vehicles – need to shift goods to rail

It does look as if a proposed gigantic Amazon fulfilment centre – distribution centre to you and me! – at Heckmondwike will be approved. This will result in large number of both white van and HGV movements along already busy roads, partially through residential areas. Trunk access will be from the M62 and Chain Bar intersection – both of which are already over-busy.

I have written before on the need for changes in planning law so that all new mega warehouse/logistics developments must be rail served, but my words have fallen on deaf ears. We need to shift considerable volumes of trunk freight from lorries to trains. This policy will cut greenhouse gas (CO2) emissions, reduce other air pollution, cut traffic congestion (certainly not increase it), and reduce fatal and serious injury road accidents. ***Do contact your MP about this.***

Pete Myers

Pete Myers, east region stakeholder manager, retired from Northern at the end of November, after thirty years of railway service. Pete has joined Railfuture and has accepted an invitation to be co-opted onto our branch committee. Great news!

Pete has been an exceptional ambassador for Northern, a one-off, who will be very greatly missed by all who had the privilege of working with him. Anyone who has read the very many messages on Pete's online Kudoboard will realise just how highly Pete was regarded both within Northern and by stakeholders. Pete's efficiency was astonishing – I have never known anyone reply so promptly to emails. Pete has treated volunteers with the utmost respect. His warmth and good humour, coupled with his professionalism, mean that his replacement Darren Allsopp has a very hard act to follow!

Enjoy your well-deserved retirement, Pete.

Branch matters

Webinars: last winter, Railfuture Yorkshire ran a successful series of webinars, and we propose to run more over the coming months. Members will be emailed when these have been arranged.

My health: Although I feel well, I have, unfortunately, been diagnosed with a cancer. The good news is that it is confined, and is thus treatable with drugs and radiotherapy. I expect to have radiotherapy through March, and apparently it will take perhaps a month to get my energy levels back. I will also need to take special care not to get Covid in the period before treatment, so this will limit my ability to attend in-person meetings.

Your views wanted: Yorkshire Railfuture's branch committee is keen to learn the views of members on issues concerning the operation of the branch, and you will receive a questionnaire on this. I do hope that you will complete and return it, so that we know the views of as many members as possible.

***Best wishes for the new year 2023
to all Yorkshire Railfuture members and friends – Nina***

DIARY (to be confirmed in separate mailings)

Friday 3 Feb 2023	RfY webinar with Northern Trains Tony Baxter (regional director) and Darren Allsopp (stakeholder manager) , 14.30 ONLINE.
Saturday 25 February	Railfuture Yorkshire Branch meeting , York. Starts 13.00 at St Clements Hall , Nunthorpe Road, YO24 1AY. Venue is 10 minutes' walk from York train station. Details to be confirmed; more will follow. Speaker invited: Pete Myers, recently retired stakeholder manager at Northern Trains.
Tue 28 Feb	<i>Copy/words/pictures for YRC60 please!</i>

Let's campaign on this:

Bus service under threat

by **Stephen Waring**

This is personal. How do you get to Whitby from West or South Yorkshire by public transport? By train all the way via Middlesbrough and the Esk Valley line? A bit of a long way round. Train to Scarborough and then on the Arriva bus via Robin Hoods Bay? But the direct route is Transdev's Yorkshire Coastliner service 840. The 840 runs to Whitby 4 times a day and picks up outside York rail station where it is shown on departure screens. Principal stops are Malton bus station (just by the train station), Eden Camp, Pickering, Thornton Dale, Goathland, Sleights and Ruswarp.

Across the Moors the route has been voted the country's most scenic bus ride. It is the only service from Pickering to Whitby, providing both essential trips for locals and sustainable tourism.

A favourite trip from Whitby is a ride on the 840 to Goathland, walk down the former railway path via Beck Hole to Grosmont and back to Whitby on Northern's Esk Valley line.

The Coastliner service between Malton and Whitby is under contract with North Yorkshire County Council. A new unitary authority takes over next April. There will be a new contract – or no contract. Faced by increased costs and cuts in government funding, Coastliner and NYCC are carrying out a joint review of the service and will report back when finished.

The service (formally United Omnibus + West Yorkshire Road Car route 91) has been important for rail passengers since March 1965 when the Malton-Whitby train service closed. This is personal for me. I remember travelling with mum and dad to Yorkshire coast holidays first by train, then by train and bus. (I have a vivid memory of glorious pie and veg for lunch in Malton's station café!) Coastliner's timetable leaflet (yes, they still print them) says rail+bus tickets are available from any station in Great Britain, though I have struggled to find information about them online other than LNER fares from London. But you can find the buses by searching timetable websites for station code WTZ – which means Whitby bus station!

The Esk Valley line Whitby to Middlesbrough remains of course and should now be offering 6 trains a day (4 on Sundays). The "new" early morning service Whitby to Middlesbrough is reinstated but was cancelled on the first day of the new timetable, the rest of the week being affected by strikes.

The 840 bus journey time is 2 hours 20 minutes York-Whitby. Which sounds a long time but on a fine day the time will fly as you enjoy the North Yorkshire Moors. This compares with around 3 hours by rail via Middlesbrough. The bus is cheaper. Via Scarborough you might have to wait for a connection especially in the winter when the Scarborough-Whitby bus (X93) is only hourly. (The North Yorkshire Moors Railway is not particularly helpful other than for quite pricey days out. That's just my opinion.)

Mark Witherington, a Pickering antique dealer, has launched a petition arguing for the 840 to be retained. You can access the petition on Facebook but easier to go straight to this link [Petition · Save The 840 Bus Service From Leeds to Whitby Englands Most Scenic Bus Service · Change.org](https://www.change.org/p/save-the-840-bus-service-from-leeds-to-whitby-englands-most-scenic-bus-service) (www.change.org/p/save-the-840-bus-service-from-leeds-to-whitby-englands-most-scenic-bus-service). Quoted in the York Press, Mark said the bus was needed for shopping and hospital appointments: "It's time to stand up and be heard. The bus route is essential for local residents as well as visitors." (www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/23190287.petition-launched-help-safeguard-britains-most-scenic-bus-route/) **Please sign the petition.**



New timetables start as strikes take hold – fight on for booking offices and train guards

by **Stephen Waring**

COLD WEATHER hit services at the start the new timetable (Monday 12 December). Good news was Harrogate got its 06.07 and 06.33 trains to Leeds reinstated – though there were cancellations later in the morning peak. Strikes hit the following day. **Brian Dunsby OBE** of Harrogate Line Supporters group had already welcomed the anticipated reinstatements, quoted in the Harrogate Advertiser in November (see link: [Harrogate rail timetable 'may be reinstated' shortly despite warnings over investment in north | Harrogate Advertiser](#)). Brian reports that Harrogate's LNER London trains are working well "apart from when there are strikes or engineering work".

TransPennine Express (TPE) services continue to cause concern. **Mark Ashmore** and **David Hagerty** of Stalybridge-Huddersfield Rail Users Group (SHRUG) keep us up to date. SHRUG met TPE in mid-November. Extension of the Piccadilly-Huddersfield services to Castleford, expected May 2023, and later to York, has been postponed. ***That's disappointing for those of us that have observed with keen anticipation the new platform going up at Castleford.***

Evening services show up imperfections – such as gap from 20.58 (ex-Piccadilly) to 22.30 (Victoria) in trains from Manchester back to local SHRUG stations. Other concern include forthcoming £100 fines for ticketless travel, especially when stations such as Marsden have their ticket vending machine (TVM) out of sight on an unused platform. Railfuture Yorkshire raised the issues of "hidden" TVMs with Northern after our September branch meeting. (Yes, Marsden is a Northern-managed station although most of its trains are TPE.)

Good news at the TPE-SHRUG meeting was TPE increasing driver numbers by 70 to 572. Sickness had reduced to 6% (3% long term) but that was still 1% above national average. Issues about information screens – the need to show replacement buses – were being dealt with by Northern. Members were urged to pressure the government's transport secretary to help solve the current industrial disputes.

And elsewhere...

Calder Valley line missing trains have been restored to hourly in the new timetable, though Halifax-Hulls suffered one in four cancelled on the first day. But Huddersfield-Castleford is still a few peak services only – one reason we need the Piccadilly trains extending to Wakefield and York. Sheffield-Gainsborough Central is peak-hours only. And the extra fast services for Harrogate have not materialised, nor the York-Scarborough extras. Franchise promises broken. We blame the government, not Northern.

Meanwhile the strikes go on. Nurses – described as largest strike in NHS history. Ambulance staff. Postal workers. Bus workers. Baggage handlers, National Highways workers. Driving examiners. Border force. As well as rail workers. Can all of them be wrong? With inflation exceeding 10% annually, a legacy of wage restraint over several years, and allegations about the likes of Baroness Mone, can we be surprised that annual percentages in single figures² are not being accepted? Rail union RMT balloted members in early December on a pay offer from Network Rail. 64% of members rejected it on an 83% turnout. That's 52% of the people eligible to vote, as transport secretary Mark Harper pointed out³.

And the government (it seems) has imposed various conditions, including the closure or repurposing of station ticket offices. Wherever we go we see queues of people at ticket offices. People who can't use the cumbersome touch screen ticket vending machines. Or wanting to make sure that they get the best deal. Most travellers are not fully confident in our Kafkaesque ticketing system. How can they be sure that the TVM or their phone is finding the best deal? Will phones and machines really be able to do everything that staff behind a counter can do? There is also a threat that more trains could have to run without guards. We thought that was dealt with several years ago.

The dispute is about conditions, not just about pay. ***There is a fight on to save our railway as a friendly place full of helpful, human staff.*** – JSW

² Don't be fooled by statements about apparently higher offers that are spread over two years.

³ Harper should be careful. The 2016 Brexit referendum result was 52% of 72% turnout = just 37% of voters voting for Leave!

Community update:

Art and flora brighten scene

by **Mike Penney**, Friends of Dronfield Station



The latest exhibition of schools' artwork was unveiled at Dronfield Station in November by town mayor, Councillor Lilian Deighton and Lee Rowley MP (Derbyshire North East). The event was organised by the Friends of Dronfield Station (FoDS), the most recent in a series to promote the work of budding artists from schools in Dronfield and the surrounding villages. This was the turn of 'A' level and year 9 students from Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School who were inspired by the work of noted artist Ian Murphy who specialises in atmospheric and detailed drawings. Ten students from the school took photographs of features of local buildings and, working collaboratively, combined their talents to produce six exceptional textured artworks for display at the station

Local MP Lee Rowley expressed his admiration for the work produced by the students from Henry Fanshawe which "demonstrated a level of maturity way beyond their years", adding "All six paintings were completed with a high level of skill and

imagination and would not be out of place in a professional gallery." Councillor Deighton paid her own compliments to the students who, she felt, had produced a stunning series of artworks – an excellent advert for the school as well as brightening the station for people waiting for trains.

The current exhibition of artworks, which can be seen in the six poster cases situated in the waiting shelters on Platforms 1 and 2, will remain until the spring of 2023 when another three local schools will exhibit their work. One of the artworks is pictured (above).

Brightening up for winter: On a cold October morning a dozen or so members of the Friends of Dronfield Station (FoDS) donned anoraks, armed themselves with trowels, and made their way in the pouring rain to fill the heritage pit tub (pictured right) and planters with winter flowering plants. The flowers, wallflowers, bellis, pansies and violas supplied by Millthorpe Nursery of Holmesfield replaced the summer plants. The intention is to provide a colourful display throughout the winter and spring for people using the station.

We try to keep the station garden and planters filled with brightly coloured flowers throughout the year. It can be hard work maintaining the garden, especially the need for regular lawn mowing and watering during the summer.

It's worthwhile as we receive a lot of appreciative comments from people catching the trains.



We need your input!

Next issue **YRC60** will be out early spring. Please email news, community rail, and opinion pieces – **with pictures!** – to Stephen (js.waring@hotmail.co.uk) to arrive **by end of February**. We would love to hear more from **station and line adoption groups** as well as campaigners.

Having your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email saves us time and money. Please contact Andrew Dyson our membership secretary (andrew.dyson@railfuture.org.uk) to request this.

View from the South Yorkshire and the Peak District

Fragmented, flawed, failed. Commuting potential for Penistone but few friends for Woodhead line

Andrew Oldfield offers his latest perspective and polemic!



Manchester Piccadilly, 1967 electric loco awaits departure with a train for Sheffield, on the Woodhead route. The line from Hadfield to Penistone closed to passengers in 1970 (except for diversions) and to coal traffic in 1981. Class 77 electrics locos were exported to the Netherlands when Woodhead expresses ceased. (Roger Cornfoot /Manchester Piccadilly station/[CC BY-SA](#)2.0

WOODHEAD Tunnel was a modern piece of transport infrastructure structure that once carried express passenger and heavy freight through the Pennines.

Now it is relegated as a conduit for electricity cables. In October BBC Look North confirmed that the last seven electricity pylons at Dunford Bridge had been removed, part of National Grid (NG)'s £500 million environmental funding to enhance the landscape across the UK, in this case the Peak District National Park.

It was congratulations all round involving NG and Barnsley Council. **But pylons remain elsewhere in the upper Don Valley.**

So how is sheer vandalism of what was once and could again be a key cross-Pennine transport route for regional and national passenger and freight justified?

Barnsley council seem to lack rail ambition. Within Barnsley district the growing town of Penistone is now viewed as being within easy

commuting distance, not just of Sheffield but also Manchester. But working in Manchester demands private transport – worsening congestion along road bottlenecks. Even commuting to Sheffield is unattractive due to circuitous routing via Barnsley. (Which is why we need the full route to Sheffield Victoria reopening.)

Penistone expansion has been planned for years, but without any accompanying public transport element. Fragmented, flawed, failed. Fabulous.

National Parks were created to protect areas of natural beauty within their boundaries. The Peak District was the first, in 1951. Today the park seems to have its favourite hotspots which feel confusing, conflicting and contradictory. Bakewell is the prime example,

Opportunity missed?

Railfuture's Yorkshire branch has acted to keep Woodhead on the rail development agenda. What about Railfuture at national board level? To me, the silence is deafening, credibility damaged. Is our board now co-opted to the establishment that ignored the possibilities of what was once, and could be again, a key cross-Pennine artery?

Why was the opportunity squandered? How can we campaign nationally for more electrification but not campaign for restoration of a former electrified route that remains partly open? What sort of signal is this? Surely the Board must have discussed Woodhead. What conclusions were reached? Was there a compelling reason why the route should be abandoned, deemed beyond the comprehension of our members?

Why has the Woodhead ambition been ditched? Even Beeching identified Woodhead for development. Railfuture members surely deserve an explanation. – AO

inevitably perhaps given that the Park is based there. Castleton is another hotspot.

Woodhead – yes, it's a real place at the west end of the tunnel – lies on the park's Northern extremity. National Grid's pylons had become part of the Dunford Bridge (at the east end) by blending in well over the decades in this remote area.⁴

Northern MPs cannot complain. 40 of them were canvassed in 2014 about future use of Woodhead tunnel. Most failed to respond. Angela Smith MP (Penistone & Stocksbridge) was one of just three who did respond.

Matlock to Buxton hope

The Peak park does, however, seem to be consistent. As well as ignoring Woodhead they seem to be lukewarm about reopening Buxton to Matlock. Yet given the will this could again become the premier Peak line heading directly towards High Peak district and Greater Manchester from the East Midlands. It would cater for quarry traffic, which at present takes a circuitous route clogging up the Hope Valley line, to carry stone raw materials and products south. Interviewed in August 2021, the Peak park referred to other possible modes, hardly rail-friendly and raising big questions about the impact on road traffic in this scenic area of hills, dales and tortuous routes. Why not seek to ease A6 traffic by pressing for railway reopening years ago?

For the Manchester-East Midlands Rail Action Partnership (MEMRAP) to succeed with reopening, including passenger restoration along the Derby-Manchester corridor, the campaigners will need to convince the tourist industry that plays a crucial role in the Peak economy.

They will also have to convince the government which, to date, has said no.

Key element of all this is the section between of the Peak route between Bakewell and Millers Dale, which hosts the tourist honeypot that is the Monsal Trail ([Monsal trail: Peak District National Park](#)) Can a restored railway and this highly popular visitor attraction co-

exist?⁵ There are points on this stretch of the trackbed that are extremely narrow – magnificent feats of engineering that offer few options for diverting the trail. Resistance from the tourist sector could be huge and its influence with the Peak park should not be underestimated. Taking a rail-biased view (for that is what we are about) the record of the Peak park is not a cause for optimism.

The Peak railway might just rise from the ashes one day. ***Which takes us back to the scandalous abandonment of Woodhead, for which some of us should hold our heads in shame.***

Finished with this newsletter? Please pass it on to a friend or colleague who might be interested in campaigning for better transport or even joining Railfuture. Or you could leave with other second-hand books and magazines where these are left e.g. in station waiting rooms – please ask for permission if appropriate.



The Peak District National Park website does give access information for both public transport users and active travellers. See for example: <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/planning-your-visit/publictransport> This tunnel is on the Monsal Trail.

⁴ The idea of modern features blending with or complementing the more ancient may be alien to some environmental activists! – Ed.

⁵ In other words, as rail campaigners, can we justify taking this piece of infrastructure, including half a dozen tunnels, away from active travellers – walkers, wheelers and cyclists? What alternative can we propose for people who just want to exercise whilst enjoying our northern countryside? Who benefits more, today's active travellers or tomorrow's possible rail passengers and freight customers?...

... ***We would welcome readers' views on this and other issues raised in Yorkshire Rail Campaigner***, by end of February for Spring edition – Ed.

User groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire branch

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group	www.avrug.org.uk
Askern Station, Friends of	Contact Graham Moss on graz.moss@sky.com or 07510 555722
Bradford Rail Users' Group	www.bradfordrail.com
Esk Valley Railway	http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrhc.html
Halifax and District Rail Action Group and Electric Railway Charter	www.hadrag.com and www.electriccharter.wordpress.com email js.waring@hotmail.co.uk
Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group	Care of billtymms@btinternet.com
Harrogate Line Supporters' Group	www.harrogateline.org
Hope Valley Rail Users' Group	www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk
Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association	Email: hpsrua@btinternet.com
Hull and East Riding Rail Users' Association	davidpennierail21@gmail.com
Hunmanby Railway Station, Friends of	https://e-voice.org.uk/friendsofhunmanbyrailwaystation/
Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group	
Minsters Rail Campaign (Beverley-York)	http://www.minstersrail.com/
Pontefract Civic Society Rail Group	https://en-gb.facebook.com/PontefractRail/
Selby and District Rail Users' Group	http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/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
Stalybridge to Huddersfield	Email: markashmore@yahoo.com
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk
Upper Wensleydale Railway	https://upperwensleydalerrailway.org.uk/
Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (Yorkshire Coast Wolds Coast Line)	www.yccrp.co.uk

Yorkshire branch (RfY) committee and the small print

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