

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 25 June 2014

railfuture *Yorkshire*

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

The Great North South Rail Divide

by Mark Parry & Nina Smith



A series of news items over the last quarter have emphasised the Great North South Rail Divide. It started with the news that the class 170 diesel multiple units, currently used by TransPennine Express, will be transferred to Chiltern; the silence regarding what happens to compensate TransPennine was noticeable.

A Northern Pacer on an inappropriate long distance journey. Photo by Paul Colbeck

Colin Speakman, the Chair of West and North Yorkshire Campaign for Better Transport wrote: "so rich southern commuters are more important than longer distance passengers on the vital inter-city link between three great northern cities: Manchester, Leeds and Hull." He went on to say, "The transfer of resources is truly appalling and ought to be a major issue, demonstrating yet again London with its ever increasing political power literally robbing the North of assets and treating us as second class citizens." Our own new Chair, Nina Smith pointed out that some Northern 158 units maybe transferred to TransPennine to fill the gap, refurbished but leaving Northern short or using more inferior units. She went on to write that the real villain was "the Major Government whose botched privatisation created the ROSCOs [*the train owners*], and the current government for not ordering more new Diesel Multiple Units to fill the many gaps in provision across the network. It has been estimated by Ian Brown (*Railwatch, April 2014*) that even with units being released and cascaded following the electrification of a number of routes, 120 new Diesel Multiple Units a year are needed. Drew Haley, who is now the Chairman of the Settle – Carlisle Development Company said, "If you look at it, it is perverse, ideally Chiltern with a higher fares yield should lease loco's, instead of outbidding TransPennine Express. It really shows that the Southern Train Operating Companies with a higher average fare, could cripple Northern services by taking units when they come off lease, if it was a truly commercial market we could not compete. The Department for Transport intervene all across the rail system so why not this?"

But while we watch the scrabble for units up north what is happening for Greater Anglia? Along with Serco, Abellio is a partner forming Northern Rail and also runs Greater Anglia; they issued a press release on 16 April. Like the Northern franchise extension, the Greater Anglia extension is only for around 2 years. Yet in Greater Anglia some carriages will have a major refresh, new off peak services are being introduced and a programme of Sunday enhancements is going ahead. The list continues, more seats, new cycle parking, an increase in Community Rail Funding and lots more. The total investment amounts to £20millions. Of course the hidden partner in all franchises is the Department for Transport, through whom subsidies are paid. But without investment to enhance services and attract more passengers Northern will always be leaning heavily on subsidies despite their best efforts.

As strong supporters of the national rail network, we are pleased that services in Greater Anglia are being improved. but we must ask why Greater Anglia is getting better treatment than Northern Rail, whose subsidy has been cut by £34million. Significantly, HS2's Sir David Higgins view seems to be remarkably similar to ours as reported in the Telegraph on 26 March. He wants to see improved services linking the Northern cities integrated with the new high speed lines. He claimed our poor services would not be tolerated by southern commuters. We

only do so because we don't control the purse strings. Come on government; give the north the real improvements we need.

Yorkshire Branch Annual General Meeting

by Mark Parry

Our Annual General Meeting took place on the 15 March at the Swarthmore Centre in Leeds this year. No lunch was provided but we did have a good lunch in the Centre's café. Our speaker was Paul Salveson and his excellent overview of the current situation for rail in the North is summarised below. Paul has had many roles in and around the Rail Industry, currently he is on the Board of Passenger Focus, however, his presentation was a personal view.

He feels our main focus should be on the new Northern franchise with preparation now starting. Also the TransPennine Franchise is to be renewed starting in February 2016. He is disappointed that the Department for Transport are wanting to lead on these franchise processes through a new body instead of leaving it to Rail North. Although he is critical of franchising he is pleased to see that the process is being used to drive wider benefits. Paul posed the question "should we allow fares increases?" in return for more investment given the possible reduction in resource available to support the Northern franchise.

He recognises the key issue of rolling stock and considers the removal of the class 170s from TransPennine Express was done with the connivance of the Department for Transport who do not understand northern economics. A new Labour government is unlikely to be in office in time to significantly alter progress on establishing the new franchises. He also has concerns about the possibility of the Department for Transport exerting extra influence over Network Rail. Paul highlighted developments in Wales where a not for profit franchise maybe established.

Whilst he agrees with Railfuture's support for HS2, he considers the scheme to be too London centric. The New Lane station project at Leeds is more a development project rather than a station properly connected to the rest of the rail network.

Paul has championed community rail for many years and is grateful the Department for Transport is showing interest in this. He hopes that some more of the lesser used branches within Northern Rail might be considered for this option. He suggested a partnership between the Esk Valley line and the North Yorkshire Moors railway.

Looking ahead Paul has concerns for the availability of sufficient diesel rolling stock as many units are due for scrapping. He indicated work is currently ongoing to see what other rolling stock could be "converted".

Finally Paul encouraged us to campaign through our MPs for the North in this period of uncertainty and forthcoming changes.

Nina Smith was elected Chair and thanked Chris Hyomes for his work as Chair – see Nina's article later in this newsletter.

In her first statement since becoming Chair of Railfuture in Yorkshire, Nina Smith welcomed the Government's commitment to invest £38million on improving the conventional rail network over the next 5 years, but said that it was far too little. She said that rather than reducing their revenue subsidy to the rail network, the Government should be investing efficiency savings on improving and expanding train services and the rail network.

Responding to the latest United Nations report on man-made climate change, she said this Government had pledged to be the greenest ever and yet was not doing nearly enough to encourage people to get out of their cars and use trains. Fares are too high, many trains are overcrowded and there is a shortage of services on some routes. Transport is a major contributor to global warming, yet rail fares were increasing at more than the rate of inflation whilst the Government was intervening to keep down petrol and diesel prices.

Referring to the recent announcement of the conditions attached to the 22 month extension of the Northern Rail franchise awarded to the Serco Abellio consortium, and also to the publication of Network Rail's approved plan for Control Period 5, she said that whilst Railfuture warmly welcomed confirmation of further investment in the railways including confirmation of previously announced schemes such as the Northern Hub, and the TransPennine and Midland Main Line electrification schemes, the railway in the north was still seriously underfunded. She said that the following improvements were urgently needed:

- New rolling stock, especially to replace the 30 year old Pacers units
- Further electrification including the Harrogate, Calder Valley and Hope Valley lines.

- New stations to bring train services to sizeable communities including Elland, Haxby, Hipperholme, Millhouses and Methley, plus reopening the Midland main line platforms at Dore.
- Expanded timetables including between Leeds and Pontefract; Pontefract and Doncaster; Leeds and Goole via Knottingley; Sheffield and York via Pontefract; Doncaster and Lincoln; York to Scarborough; and Leeds-Skipton-Morecambe.
- Reopening of closed lines including between Skipton and Colne; between Bradford Low Moor and Dewsbury via the Spen Valley (Heckmondwike and Cleckheaton); between Harrogate, Ripon and either Thirsk or Northallerton; and between Sheffield and Stocksbridge, with serious consideration being given to reopening the direct Sheffield-Manchester route via Woodhead.
- Building Bradford crossrail to join up the Calder Valley and Airedale routes.
- Reconnecting Otley to the rail network.
- New direct services between East Lancashire, the upper Calder Valley (Hebden Bridge and Todmorden) and Huddersfield

The new committee was elected with Graham Collett replacing Peter Yates as Parliamentary liaison and Tony Ross becoming the lead on freight. The usual list of officers is on page 6 in this newsletter. In addition the following special responsibilities were designated:

- Northern Rail and TransPennine Express issues: Nina Smith
- East Coast and HS2: Chris Hyomes
- Cross Country: Peter Scott
- Grand Central: Nina Smith
- Hull Trains: Tony Ross
- Freight issues: Tony Ross
- Cycling issues: Chris Hyomes
- Parliamentary: Graham Collett.
- Other issues: Nina Smith

A Breath of Fresh Air

Yorkshire Branch Press Release

Commenting on the air pollution crisis hitting much of England, Railfuture's Yorkshire branch Chair has called on the Government to significantly increase investment in the railway system to increase the number of journeys being made by train instead of cars and lorries. Nina Smith called for a stepping up of the planned electrification programme to include the Harrogate, Calder Valley and Hope Valley lines. She said that electric train travel was the least polluting and most efficient form of mechanised transport. She also called for more immediate measures including a freeze on rail fares, urgent investment in new trains so as to increase the number of services, and the opening of new stations with Kirkstall Forge, Low Moor, Armley Bridge, Haxby and Elland as early priorities. Nina Smith said that if the government was serious about reducing air pollution and tackling climate change, it should prioritise expenditure on regional rail services rather than embark on a major road building programme. It also needs to improve the affordability of train and bus travel compared to private car use.

Hopes Rise for East Coast Services to Stay Public

by Graham Collett

The Rail Unions ASLEF, RMT and TSSA have launched an application for Judicial Review to challenge the government over InterCity East Coast and the direct award of rail franchises⁽¹⁾. The unions' application is based on the Government's failure to adequately consult over the future of East Coast.

Despite the Brown review of rail franchising recommending that the procurement for a rail franchise should take place over a minimum of 24 months, the Government is rushing through the privatisation of East Coast over a 15 month period to be concluded by February 2015. The unions claim that, in its haste to push services back into the private sector, the Government has cut corners, including breaching its own commitment to proper consultation of stakeholders, including passenger groups and the rail unions.

ASLEF, RMT and TSSA are conscious of the disastrous end to the InterCity East Coast franchises run by GNER and National Express as well as the Department for Transport mistakes in the InterCity West Coast franchising competition. The Unions are concerned that there is again the risk that overbidding by private operators and inadequate and rushed evaluation of the bids will, as on previous occasions, lead to cuts to staff and services and even the franchise collapsing again.

The proposed start date for the new franchise has already slipped to 1st March 2015⁽²⁾. The review is likely to delay this further - probably pushing it back until after the general election. An announcement was expected before Easter, but seems to have been delayed.

¹ <http://actionforrail.org/rail-unions-seek-judicial-review-over-intercity-east-coast/>

² Department for Transport Inter-City East Coast Invitation to Tender document 21 March 2014

Selby & District Rail User Group

by Reg & Terry French

Selby Station

The work to refurbish the footbridge has been completed and the new cleaning regime has resulted in a cleaner, tidier and more attractive Station. Electronic poster cases have been installed giving more easily read information. A number of meetings have taken place to ensure that the summer closure of the river bridge works results in the least inconvenience possible but Northern have yet to finally decide whether there will be a train shuttle between Howden and Hull or a bus replacement service between Selby and Hull. Discussions are still on going about the best way of spending the £82,000 due from the Section 106 grant. A member of the Staff has been promoted to team leader at Hull Station and she has also been given the "Gem of the Month" Award for the way she looked after the 400 people stranded at Selby when the line to Hull was closed due to flooding.

South Milford Station

The improvements needed following the closure of the crossing between platforms suffered a setback when an embankment slippage was detected. A retaining wall is to be built to ensure that the scheme can go ahead as planned. Northern Rail are to install a help phone on Platform 1 and discussions are continuing regarding the provision of closed circuit television and improved Waiting facilities on Platform 2. A Customer Information Service screen is to be installed at South Milford and also at Church Fenton.

Station usage

The footfall figures for the year to March 31st 2013 show increases at Selby, South Milford, Sherburn-in-Elmet Ulleskelf, Whitley Bridge and Hensall. Selby's footfall is now almost 500,000, South Milford well over 100,000 and Sherburn's increase has been substantial since Northern agreed to the request for additional services.

The East Coast franchise proposals

Selby and District Rail User Group was represented at the TSSA union demonstration at York Station to try keep East Coast as a directly operated railway. The Group also met with Keolis/Eurostar, one of the bidders for the new franchise. They stated their aspirations for this line including an additional Hull to Kings Cross return service, a Hull to Newcastle return service, additional trains to Harrogate and Bradford, services between Harrogate, York and London, an increased service for Lincoln and when the horseshoe to Templehirst Junction is completed the possibility of a 20 minute service to London from Leeds to take account of its growth and influence in the financial sector. The advent of further advances in ticket technology, ticket pricing, Station environment and Staffing are also issues we would like to see improved. The User Group want the Headquarters to remain in York and are also concerned about the wellbeing of the disabled. The User Group hope the considerable improvements made by the current incumbent East Coast, as reported from our members, will continue and be built upon.

May Timetable Changes

The additional TransPennine service has had major implications on the Northern timetable and there has been a substantial re-timing of trains between Selby and Leeds. The York-Selby-Hull service is mostly the same with the last service from York departing about 15 minutes later Monday to Friday. There is also a re-timing of the 18:12 York to Hull service now to depart at 18:40. Sherburn-in-Elmet benefits from 2 services each way on a Sunday for the first time. TransPennine Services have an additional evening service from Leeds and a much improved Sunday timetable. Hull Trains are introducing an extra Saturday morning service from Hull to London which calls in to Selby at 08:58.

Good news for disabled people, those with push chairs and those carrying heavy luggage. Hebden Bridge, Northallerton and Garforth stations are amongst 42 stations sharing £100millions *Access for All* funding. Railfuture Yorkshire Branch chair Nina Smith said “this is excellent news and will open up travel opportunities to these three busy stations; it is only right that in the 21st century, disabled people should be able to travel easily on the rail network.” She added that she was especially pleased that her own local station, Hebden Bridge, was one of those included, as footfall has doubled in 10 years to around three-quarters of a million a year.

...calling at Arthington and Horsforth Woodside...**by Mark Parry**

Greg Mulholland, the Member of Parliament for Leeds North West, wants to see stations built at Arthington and Horsforth Woodside, the Bradford Telegraph and Argus reported on 21 April 2014. These new stations would benefit from the electrification of the Harrogate line. The West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority was reviewing the need for new stations across West Yorkshire, but this body has since been superseded by the new Combined Authority, so we wait to see how this work has progressed.

The Wortley Curve**by Mark Parry**

Remember the Wortley Curve? As the Bradford Telegraph and Argus reported on 18 March 2014, this closed back in 1985, although the route is largely intact. But its re-opening could be a by-product of the HS2 investment giving back Bradford’s link to the East Coast mainline without the need for trains to pass through Leeds. This would improve service to both Bradford and Wakefield if it went ahead.

Skipton to Colne re-opening vote of support**92%**

The Yorkshire Post organised a survey of its readers recently and 92% were in favour of re-opening this line!

Meanwhile Andy Shackleton has reported that consultants “ARUP” have completed 2 out of 3 parts of a study commissioned by the Rail User Group SELRAP. This work forms the “GRIP 3 study” that will ultimately decide the future of the Skipton to Colne line.

Rail User Groups: What about Scarborough or Sheffield?

Do you live in, or use rail services in, either of these areas?

Are you interested in starting a Rail User Group for services in either Scarborough or Sheffield?

Or perhaps you could contribute your time and skills towards a new group.

If you are interested then please contact one of the key contacts overleaf.

Branch Key Contacts

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A Message from our new Chair

by Nina Smith

Firstly, can I thank the membership for electing me Chair at the Annual General Meeting. Chris Hyomes decided to stand down so as to give more time to his national responsibilities, and I would like to place on public record my and the Branch's appreciation for five excellent years as Chair. I am delighted that Chris has agreed to remain an officer of the Yorkshire Branch. As Vice Chair, he will lead on two issues which involve several Railfuture branches, namely the East Coast franchise and High Speed rail – the latter with our senior Vice President, Mike Crowhurst.

We have a challenging year ahead. There will be a formal consultation sometime this summer on the content of the Northern and TransPennine franchises from February 2016. The runes are that these will remain two separate franchises; if so, we should have a view as to whether some routes should transfer from the Northern franchise to TransPennine Express and vice-versa. In 2012-13, Railfuture submitted a pre-emptive document regarding the new franchises, but what I consider we need to do now is to do a shorter response emphasising "quick wins" i.e. those things which we think there is a reasonable chance of inclusion in the franchise agreement. These should include extending the hours and improving the frequency of services on a number of routes; increasing the amount of rolling stock available to the successful train operating company; modern rolling stock to replace the Pacers; selective station and line re-openings; selective electrification; and train operating company operated bus links to key rural towns that are not rail served

At the Branch Annual General Meeting in March, I outlined my vision for the coming year. It is reproduced below.

EXTERNAL PRIORITIES

1. Lobby prior to the consultation(s) regarding the content of the Northern and TransPennine franchise specifications (Summer 2014).
2. Identify "quick(ish) wins".
3. Input into the electrification review.
4. Campaign for more and better rolling stock.
5. Work more closely with Rail North, the Integrated Transport Authorities, Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

6. Continue to press for selective station and line (re)openings.
7. Campaigning for affordable walk-on fares.
8. High Speed Rail. Seek the best solution for routing and for better connectivity with rest of network, including integrated stations.
9. Work more closely with the Campaign for Better Transport, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships and Bus Users UK.
10. Liaise across the wider rail industry.

INTERNAL PRIORITIES

1. Improved cooperation, collaboration and communication (the 3Cs”) between Railfuture’s Yorkshire, North West and North East branches and, where appropriate, with the Lincolnshire, East Midlands and West Midlands branches.
2. Inaugural annual northern Railfuture conference in 2015, to take place on the same day as the host region’s Annual General Meeting.
3. Investigate the need for, and facilitate the development of, new Railfuture branches to cover the York-Malton-Scarborough corridor, and the Sheffield area.
4. Increase individual membership.
5. Improve attendance at Yorkshire branch meetings.
6. Consultation with members – what do they want from the County Branch?
7. Speedy issuing of draft minutes and notes after branch meetings.
8. Lead responsibilities for key regional issues to be split amongst the officers.
 - Northern and TransPennine: Nina Smith
 - East Coast: Chris Hyomes
 - HS2/High Speed Rail: Mike Crowhurst and Chris Hyomes, liaising with Colin Elliff.
 - Cross-Country: Peter Scott
 - Freight: Tony Ross (member of national Railfuture railfreight group)
 - Hull Trains: Tony Ross
 - Grand Central: Nina Smith
 - Alliance Rail: to be allocated
9. All affiliated user and campaigning groups to have a named key link amongst the officers. Seek to avoid date clashes with neighbouring Railfuture branches.

NINA SMITH, CHAIR, RAILFUTURE YORKSHIRE BRANCH

Membership News:

Paul Colbeck – Membership Secretary

Welcome to new member: Mr Q. Macdonald of York

Railfuture would wish to pass on their condolences to family and friends of members have died recently:

Brian Houghton of York, Joan Powell of Ilkley and Michael Hardy of Holmfirth.

Hello from your editor – Mark Parry

I’ve received some comments on the lead article of the last edition of the Yorkshire Rail Campaigner number 24. In this edition Andrew Oldfield criticised the authorities in Sheffield for a lack of ambition when it came to developing the local rail infrastructure, in particular the lack of electrification. But, as it has been pointed out, it was the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive back in 1985 who proposed a light rail route from Hillsborough to Mosborough. Because of their efforts and those of Sheffield City Council, Sheffield is the only city on our patch with a tram network. Some of our members will remember our branch member Peter Fox closely following the development of this network in his “Light Rail reviews”. With the tram train being introduced this excellent light rail network will soon be linked in with the national rail network.

Press Date for (YRC 26) September 2014 issue

Please email material, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com to arrive by **Saturday 9 August 2014**. Alternatively call or text 07981 339558

Diary

- Wednesday 4 June 2014: **Railfuture** Annual Rail Freight Group Conference, St. Paul's, London.
- Saturday 14 June 2014: **Railfuture** Yorkshire Branch meeting in Settle, see this page for full details.
- Saturday 21 June 2014: **Railfuture** summer conference in Cambridge's University Centre. 10:45 start.
- Saturday 1 November 2014: **Railfuture** Autumn conference, Rail Users' & RUG awards @ the University of Westminster, London.
- The **Campaign for Better Transport** Rail Group meets in the Grove Pub next to the big tower, Bridgewater Place, in Leeds on 2 June, 28 July, 29 September and 24 November 2014 @ 19:15 hours. Contact the editor for more details.

Yorkshire Branch June Meeting

Settle Victoria Hall, 24 Kirkgate, BD24 9EL

Saturday 14 June 2014 from 14:00 to 16:00 hours

Speaker: Richard Morris, Chair of the friends of the Settle to Carlisle Line

The Victoria Hall is on Kirkgate between the Market Place and Booths supermarket, almost opposite Ashfield Car Park. All town centre car parks are within walking distance and are free after 18:00 hours. It is a short walk from Settle railway station.



Directions from the Station: Turn right onto Station Road. Pass the carpet shop on the left. Take a left turn into Ashfield car park go straight ahead through it. Turn left and Victoria Hall is on the right.

Also of note is that the old signal box is now a museum and it will be open from 10:00 hours.