



January 2018

## Welcome to the Rail User Express.

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The New Year heralded the annual chorus of disapproval of the rise in regulated rail fares, the more so as it is still linked to the discredited Retail Prices Index, not the officially accepted (and rather lower) Consumer Prices Index. However, the first signs of transformation are starting to appear. May will see the Thameslink service extended to Cambridge and Peterborough via the Canal Tunnel, and December the advent of Crossrail, aka The Elizabeth Line - a bigger better railway indeed!

*Roger Smith*

*We continue with the usual roundup of news items from groups around the UK. Please keep your contributions coming: they are all gratefully received.*

## Levenmouth Rail Campaign

LMRC cannot understand why Transport Scotland is progressing a Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance appraisal when the STAG report for Levenmouth was completed in 2016, and Transport minister Humza Yousaf has asked it to progress to Stage 4 of NR's Governance of Railway Investment Projects (GRIP).

A Playfair Consultancy assignment on the Levenmouth campaign made three main recommendations:

- Increase Fife Council's Engagement. "It needs to be playing a more proactive role in the campaign. The main push for the project needs to come from Council rather than LMRC".
- Streamline arguments. These can be distilled into three broad themes of "making Levenmouth a great place to live, work and visit"; its benefits extend far beyond the Leven sub-region.
- Make the website more accessible, engaging and user-friendly; simplify the newsletter format, and streamline the Facebook pages.

The newly published statement 'A Decade of Transport Investment' carries the proud boast by Keith Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs & Fair Work, that "substantial and on-going investment to 2019 will truly transform the rail network and give passengers and freight users in Scotland the best railway they've ever had". This rings hollow in Levenmouth until they complete the simple and inexpensive task of reinstating its rail service, which would require a mere 1.4% of the total investment.

The top two strategic transport priorities for Dundee Council's Planning and Economic Development Division were to reduce journey times to other major Scottish cities, and to improve access to the City for workers and visitors. About half of Dundee's residents are wholly reliant on public transport. When LMRC stated its case, Council officials soon realised that the project could benefit not only Levenmouth, but also wider areas of Scotland, including Dundee. The Transport Committee's main concern was that services might run solely to Edinburgh, and not to Dundee as well.

## **Copeland Rail Users' Group**

Sellafield Ltd is encouraging staff to travel by train by offering interest-free loans to buy season tickets. Employees will gain 12 weeks' free travel, compared with the usual annual season. There is a free car park at Workington, and another under construction at Maryport. Sharon Keith, Northern's Regional Director West, is in talks with DRS about using more modern locomotives to make the service more reliable.

West Cumbria Mining (WCM) plans to run six trains during the day on Mondays to Saturdays, and none on Sundays. Destinations include Redcar, Port Talbot and Scunthorpe. Waste will now be buried on site, initially in the old anhydrite workings, then in exhausted coal workings. The line can already accommodate the four additional train paths needed for the first three years of operations, but upgraded signalling between Maryport and Wigton would allow an extra train path per hour (tph), which is all WCM needs. A planning decision is expected soon. Freightliner's Class 70 locos are quieter and have lower emissions.

## **Lakes Line Rail User Group**

LLRUG has contrasting experiences of working with Arriva Rail North. Station and on-train staff look after the passengers well, and retain their good humour, often in trying circumstances. The Stations Manager and the West Region Stakeholder manager, supported by the West Region Director, and the Stakeholder Manager know and care about the Lakes Line and its services. However, LLRUG wonders if the top management actually knows where the Lakes are. Its Chairman highlights the disconnect between planning and printing departments: the new timetable left passengers ill informed, and made ARN look silly. Conscientious staff are being let down by dysfunctional organisation.

At the AGM, Simon Shrouder, Transport for the North's Rail Stakeholder Manager, explained that it facilitated links between areas of success in manufacturing and other industries. As each major conurbation in the North has its own transport body, TfN cannot direct and commission services; its role is to coordinate their views, so that the North speaks to Central Government on transport with one voice. TfN's intention to simplify the fare structure was well received, but where does tourism figure in its plans? Simon was briefed that its needs for good rail links differed from those of the big cities: more people want to come to the Lakes at holiday times, but that is when NR plans engineering work – and with Northern Powerhouse Rail, disruption could go on for years.

Every Lakes Line station should have a ticket vending machine (TVM) by Easter; the one at Windermere will be updated. They will be sheltered and accessible at all times, and also deliver tickets bought on line, but will be card-only. Northern needs to ensure that schoolchildren can still get a ticket if they do not have a scholar's season ticket. Conductors will still be able to sell tickets, but in theory anyone boarding a train without one can buy only a standard, full-priced ticket - *see the Transport Focus case study below - Ed.* At Oxenholme, Virgin Trains has installed an additional, conveniently sited information screen.

## **CKP Railways**

After Cumbria County Council had discussed the Keswick to Penrith railway project in a leadership meeting, CKP Railways posed a number of questions to the Council Leader. He replied that the Council's priority was to secure investment in the existing rail network, but CKP Railways did not have to wait until its scheme was included in the LTP (Local Transport Plan) or any other Local Plan; it could request a Transport and Works Act Order at any time. On receiving any such application, however, the DfT would check with the Local Transport Authority as to whether the proposed scheme fitted with its plans and policies - and that was the County Council! Although the Keswick - Penrith re-opening was mentioned in the first edition of the 2001 Cumbria LTP, it was omitted from later editions, so the answer could only logically be "NO". In a 2012 letter to CKP Railways, the DfT had expressed regret that the scheme was not a priority for the County Council - a clear hint that it had to endorse the project for progress to be made. It would not have to fund or manage the project, but unless and until the Council has enshrined it in a policy document on which investors and the railway industry could rely, CKP Railways dare not commit to an expenditure of up to £1M. It has been ready to move since 2007, so 10 years have already been lost.

## **Support The Oldham Rochdale Manchester lines**

Rail fares for Rochdale passengers are now the most expensive in comparison to those for a similar length of journey anywhere in the country not just Greater Manchester. Although Rochdale is marginally nearer than Bolton to Victoria station, its fares are always 12-20% dearer.

A Rochdale to Manchester Annual Season ticket costs £1,136, so at £990, not only is a GM Annual Traincard £146 cheaper, it is valid for all rail journeys on all routes within GM. The problem stems from an anomaly in the TfGM zone structure, which STORM describes as "botched". Both Rochdale and Wigan are at the extremities of the Fare Zones, so as you can travel to Wigan via Bolton, the latter fare has to be lower. Fare anomalies are supposed to be the remit of Rail North, but it doesn't heed Rail User Groups or individual local authorities directly, only via the PTE – and that's TfGM! But STORM is not convinced that the issue is of any great concern to TfGM.

Thames Valley Class 387 EMUs have released some Class 165/166 Thames Turbos for the Bristol area, allowing Class 150/2s and 158s to move further west. Their arrival in Exeter allowed three Class 150 units to move north. Northern will get two more in February, but they may need some work as well as a change of livery, and so are not expected to enter service until May.

### Friends of the Barton Line

FoBL have invited Northern to review the revised bus timetable from 4 September, and suggest revisions to bus companies where connections could be improved. Its timetables include the new bus times, but there were some further, albeit very tight, connections. The FastCat buses that served Hull city centre had been rerouted. There were only minor changes from December.

### Friends of the Brigg Line

The 0803 Sheffield Midland to Cleethorpes, and its return service carried a Northern Rail driver inspector to film a section of the Brigg Line: with only a Saturday service, it isn't feasible to train every driver on the route. Passenger numbers have been good for the time of year: Brigg Station saw people come from far and wide for the Christmas Farmers Market, and Kirton In Lindsey saw many first-time users, probably due to the new travel guide published by the Community Rail Partnership and Stagecoach Lincolnshire buses.

Regrettably, the new Northern ticket machines at Worksop station still offer peak tickets that don't apply at weekends, but those at Cleethorpes (TPE) and Retford High Level (VTEC) do show the appropriate fares.

### East Suffolk Travellers' Association

An NR census at Halesworth station in June claimed that 278 people "misused" the crossing, usually by walking behind or in front of a stationary train, but also by cycling over the crossing or trespassing on the line. Unless the situation improved, the crossing could be closed, so ESTA conducted its own survey. Over a 60-hour period, 730 people used the crossing, of whom 397 were rail passengers. 136 walked in front of a train for Ipswich, and 9 behind one bound for Lowestoft. 6 cyclists did not dismount. No one was seen walking on the track. Many people looked to see if the line was clear before crossing, but the vast majority waited for the train to leave. ESTA suggests that train drivers sound their horn before proceeding, and that a cautionary reminder is made over the public address system on trains approaching Halesworth.

The afternoon Ipswich - Lowestoft service is irregular, as there is a path reserved for a freight train to Sizewell that has to be exercised occasionally. ESTA suggests that this be removed, to allow an even passenger service, with a bus replacement on the very rare occasions that the path was required.

### Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group

STOP PRESS! Passenger train services between Barking and Gospel Oak will resume on 15 January. The first EMU to run on the line under its own power did so on 11 January. London Overground expects to receive the first Class 710 Aventra for route testing early this year. As soon as it has clearance to start running the new trains over the Barking –Gospel Oak route, there will be a short period of driver training, but the trains will enter passenger service as soon as possible, although there may be a period when both 2-car diesel and 4-car electric trains are in service together. *Couple pairs of two-car units? – Ed.*

The *Access for All* scheme at Blackhorse Road was funded in 2012, but six years later the work is **still** not complete! As NR owns the Overground platforms, the scheme was designed to NR standards. However, London Underground (LUL) owns the main station building. So the help points and the alarms in the lifts are incompatible with the LUL alarm systems in the Underground station! NR assured BGORUG that the lifts would be operating on 15 January, but this has now slipped to 19 February.

The good news is that TfL has said it will consider refunds to ANY passenger financially disadvantaged by the closures, not just to those who had to travel through the Zone 1 fare zone.

## Magor Action Group On Rail

MAGOR is seeking to open a Magor and Undy Walkway Station between Newport and the Severn Tunnel by integrating a community hub (MUCH - the Magor Undy Community Hall) with a walk/cycle/public transport rail station. A 2016 bid for New Stations Funding was premature, but MAGOR hopes to resubmit the bid in the spring of 2018 once GRIP 3 has been achieved.

DfT officials have said that the concept, believed to be unique in the UK, would provide an opportunity for 'modal shift', attract new westbound traffic, facilitate access to the rail network, and integrate with other forms of public transport. The cross-party support has been exceptional, and MAGOR and Monmouthshire County Council were delighted when the Welsh Government allocated £110,000 towards the completion of GRIP 3. The RMT Newport Branch has also contributed, and attended MAGOR meetings.

## Bexhill Rail Action Group

To address concerns about peak-hour overcrowding on the 2-car Brighton to Ashford diesel service, GTR proposed a 4-car electric service between Brighton and Hastings/Ore. This was totally unacceptable to BRAG and other user groups, as through passengers would have to change at Hastings, adding time and discomfort, particularly in the peak. Stations west of Hastings would lose direct access to Ashford, affecting the many passengers using that route to reach London, whilst the local economy would suffer the loss of strategic connectivity along the East Sussex Coast. However, subject to confirmation next month, GTR appears to have adopted BRAG's counter-proposal for an Ashford - Eastbourne diesel service. This would preserve a strategic through service for the Hastings/St Leonards/Bexhill conurbation to Rye and Ashford, and increase the service between Hastings and Eastbourne from 3 tph to 4.

Such a service would build confidence and boost passenger numbers on the most likely route of the planned High Speed Javelin service through Ashford to St Pancras. The return is 3:1 on a comparatively modest investment of about £200m. East Sussex County Council and Hastings Borough Council now include Eastbourne in their business plans. On visit to Ashford International, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling supported modification of the track layout to allow Eastbourne trains to travel direct to London St Pancras.

In August, BRAG signed a Station Partnership Agreement with the Sussex CRP, which looks after Marshlink, the local Community Rail Line. Southern's area station manager advises that the Bexhill ticket office would be staffed more regularly, with the proposal for station hosts currently on hold. With three possible routes into London, passengers need more from the recently installed TVMs than the purchase of a straightforward journey. They may look smart but leave much to be desired operationally, although they are useful to collect pre-paid tickets bought on the Internet.

BRAG has formed a sub-group to look into the issues that affect physically and sensory disabled travelers, and what discourages them from using the railways. However, access is also about catering for travellers with heavy suitcases or buggies, and those who lack the confidence to use the rail network. The stealthy extension of services with no second crew member is unhelpful in this context. Please [contact](#) BRAG if you or your group would like to share your experiences or make suggestions.

## West Sussex Rail Users Association

From December, Thameslink, another GTR brand, has operated some Southern trains. As a result, the 0557 from Littlehampton to London Bridge was withdrawn south of Horsham, badly affecting those who used it for local journeys, or to reach Gatwick, either for flights or to connect with the 0704 Gatwick Express. Regrettably, there was no prior notice of this change, although Southern has subsequently arranged for posters on the stations affected to explain the reason for it.

Subject to confirmation, from May, there will be an extra London Bridge service on weekdays, with services from Portsmouth and Bognor joining at Horsham. The 0636 from Victoria should run to Chichester as originally planned, rather than Bognor, as it conveys students and workers from Arun Valley stations to Chichester arriving 0846. Forcing 150-200 passengers onto an already crowded 3-car Brighton train at Barnham is unacceptable, and would add 10 minutes to the journey. Saturday services replicate the weekday off-peak services, but on Sundays the Portsmouth to Victoria services via Hove will be a 4-car portion attached to the Bognor service at Barnham, and run via Horsham with only one stop between Gatwick and East Croydon.

## RAILFUTURE

*Railfuture welcomes new members, both individual and groups: the more we are, the more effective our campaigns. Join Railfuture [here](#). From the "Membership Types" menu top right, select either the appropriate category of individual or, to affiliate, select "RUG or similar". Read the latest from Railfuture and its Campaign updates by clicking on [News and views](#), [Press releases](#), [Railfuture in the news](#), and [Railfuture submissions](#).*

## EUROPEAN PASSENGER GROUP

Dennis Fancett for the EPG will liaise with the European Passenger Federation (EPF), an umbrella body of public transport campaign groups throughout Europe. An EPF [survey](#) on European Passenger Rights (by air and ferry as well as rail) is open until 28 January. Railfuture wants the harmonised conditions of carriage for cross-border journeys to and from the UK to be retained when it leaves the EU.

## RAILFUTURE THAMES VALLEY

At a Branch meeting in November, GWR's Regional Development Manager, reviewed its new train fleets. IET trains are now running off-peak on the north Cotswold line. By January 2019 they would operate all of its services, and Paddington – Oxford fast trains. Class 387 electric trains now serve Paddington - Didcot, with a cross-platform connection to the stopping Didcot - Oxford - Banbury service wherever possible. In 2019, IET services will be accelerated, with more Bristol trains, an hourly north Cotswold service and, subject to NR lengthening the Bedwyn turnback siding, Paddington – Bedwyn services. About half of its Turbo fleet will move to the Bristol area. The aspiration to run 3tph Reading – Gatwick has been deferred due to NR's concerns over five level crossings, and Redhill – Gatwick capacity; GWR hopes eventually to achieve this route in an hour. Reading – Basingstoke electrification has been deferred until at least CP6.

Green Park station is due to open in 2019. Plans to redevelop Newbury station include a larger car park, a new footbridge, better bus – rail interchange, and new offices for business start-ups, whilst maintaining the traditional station architecture. Meanwhile, a £20 million scheme has started on a 6-floor multi-storey car park at Didcot. Land has been secured for a further 400 spaces in the Hanborough car park, which has already expanded twice. It should contribute to Oxford's Park & Ride, with the potential for a new bus link with Eynsham and its proposed Garden Village. Given the difficulty of accessing Stratford station, GWR would like to reinstate a service from Honeybourne to a Park & Ride station at Long Marston (the base of a rail vehicle manufacturer!), funded by the developer of a housing and employment site.

Oxfordshire County Council is updating its trailblazing Rail Strategy, which the Branch uses as a template for other Councils. Thames Valley projects all have very good Cost/Benefit ratios: Cowley Branch, Wantage Science Vale Parkway, Milton Keynes - Heathrow (via Bourne End) and the Witney Transit Link all exceed the BCR criterion of 2 by some margin.

## RAILFUTURE WESSEX

Railfuture Wessex [response](#) to the South Western Railway December 2018 timetable consultation reflects the views of every branch affected by the suggested changes, and of other organisations and individuals that contacted the Branch.

## ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS

Community Rail Cumbria won the 2017 ACoRP award for outstanding Contribution to Community Rail in recognition of the excellent work done by Dawn McGough and her team in Carlisle, and two line officers: Jim Trotman for Lakes and Furness, and Laurence Hilland for the Cumbrian Coast. It is only the second time the award has been won by a Community Rail team, rather than a train operator. Tim Owen, Chairman of both Lakes and Furness CRPs, was awarded second place in the category 'Outstanding Volunteer of the Year'. The previous year had seen the Lakes Line Chairman shortlisted.

South Cambridgeshire Council is hiring a part-time [Project Officer](#) to support the Sustainable Communities and Partnerships Team. The post holder will work with other stakeholders in the villages between Royston and Cambridge to undertake operational and project support activities, get involved in the community, set up local projects and initiatives with schools, businesses and community groups, and work to develop the Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton CRP.

On 23 January from 1100-1200, ACoRP is running a free webinar, “Developing your tourism offer”. It will look at how CRPs can identify the tourism potential along their line, and promote the offer to visitors through projects and activities, including Community Rail in the City. You do need to [register in advance](#).

Funding has been secured for signage at stations between Reigate and Guildford showing walking routes from the line to the North Downs Way long-distance path, and describing local walks from each station. Surrey Hills ‘Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ is also contributing to the project. Also, GWR, Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council are informing an NR study of rail level crossings on the line, with a view to providing 3 tph.

## TRANSPORT FOCUS

In a [recent TF report](#), passengers say that they will be understanding about routine railway maintenance, even though it causes disruption, as long as they are kept well informed. TF is calling on the rail industry to:

- Tell passengers why the work is happening – support for routine maintenance is stronger when passengers understand why the work is necessary
- Give passengers accurate, timely and reliable information at least 12 weeks in advance, so they can plan journeys and book tickets with confidence
- Communicate alternative arrangements clearly, both at stations and online.

Mr B normally buys a ticket at Bromsgrove station, but the ticket office was closed, the TVM only accepts cards, and Mr B only had cash, so he had to board the train without a ticket. When he changed at Birmingham University, there were no TVMs inside the barrier, so he boarded the Five Ways train still without a ticket – and received a Penalty Fare Notice. Mr B’s appeal was rejected on the basis that there were facilities to purchase a ticket on departure. [TF investigated the case](#), and London Midland (LM) Prosecutions validated Mr B’s account. LM agreed to waive the penalty fare and refund the £20 Mr B paid. TF believes that staff should check the ticket purchasing facilities available before issuing a penalty fare: not everyone, especially those under the age of 18, has a bank card.

So would you like to help ensure that penalty fares are fair? TF is looking for 12 people to join the new [Independent Appeals Panel](#). Full training and ongoing support will be provided. Access to the relevant IT systems will allow panel members to work remotely at evenings and weekends. A per-case fee will be paid. Recruitment began on 8 January and runs until Friday 16 February.

### *...and now the rest of the news ...*

A ministerial group has published its [recommendations](#) to DfT and NR on the digital railway programme. Proposals for the introduction of digital signalling and regulation technology are being developed jointly by the Digital Railway Programme and the respective train and freight operating companies on five NR Routes. Confusingly, these are not listed, whereas four “other” schemes being explored are:

- Trans Pennine – to deliver Britain’s first digitally controlled intercity main line railway
- West Coast Main Line - HS2 issues of performance for Euston, and capacity around Crewe
- South East and East London Line (with TfL) - capacity and performance through the East London Line tunnel and into the south-east network
- Western Route - to trial the ‘Luminate’ Traffic Management System between London Paddington and Bristol Parkway.

A list of eight schemes on the [Digital Railway web page](#) from December 2016 may provide the answer. Omitting three of the four above leaves:

- London North East Route: London King’s Cross to Leeds and Newcastle (East Coast Main Line)
- Anglia Route: London Liverpool Street to Norwich (Great Eastern Main Line)
- Anglia Route: Essex Thameside
- South East Route: including the Brighton Main Line (BML)
- Wessex Route: London Waterloo to Southampton (South West Main Line).

The DfT and GTR have given early warning of two blockades on the BML: during school half-terms 20-28 October 2018 and 16-24 February 2019, no trains will run between Three Bridges and Brighton, and Three Bridges and Lewes. The work will focus on four Victorian-era tunnels and their lines: Balcombe, Clayton, Patcham and Haywards Heath. (*All together, now: “if only there were a [BML2!](#)” – Ed.*)

The DfT has updated its [list](#) of rail vehicles built or refurbished to meet modern accessibility standards. The spreadsheet shows the number of vehicles of each class by operator, and their unit numbers.

The DfT has also published a table of [Compensation paid by Train Operating Companies \(TOCs\): Passenger's Charter and Delay/Repay from 2009/10 to 2016/17](#). Unsurprisingly, given the Thameslink upgrade and the rebuilding of London Bridge station, GTR tops the list for 2016/17 at almost £15M, but Virgin Trains East and West Coast are not far behind.

Since the previous consultation, Phase 2 of the East West Rail Western section has seen a number of changes between Bicester and Winslow. A third round of [consultation](#) is therefore running until 9 February.

England's Economic Heartland, a consortium of local authorities on the Oxford – Cambridge arc, is working with the DfT to ensure the final East Midlands franchise reflects local needs and supports economic growth. The Strategic Transport Forum is deeply concerned by the proposed reductions to rail services in Bedford, Luton and Wellingborough. The EEH programme team is also in dialogue with two of the three bidders for the West Coast Partnership franchise as, post HS2, WCML train paths will be needed for services on the Northampton – Milton Keynes – Aylesbury – Old Oak Common/Park Royal axis.

The Telegraph reports that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is calling for evidence on how Internet and phone connectivity on Britain's train network can be improved by 2025. Masts along railways and inside tunnels would provide trains with uninterrupted speeds of around 1 Gb/s. An initial trial on the Trans-Pennine route will focus on wi-fi, but may also take in mobile coverage; trackside infrastructure between Manchester and York will support the rollout of full-fibre and 5G networks. The NR test track in Melton Mowbray is also being fitted.

An exhibition in Bury St Edmunds celebrates the 170th anniversary of the opening of the town's railway station, and the 25th anniversary of the death of railway poster designer Sybil Andrews. It shows the lives and memories of passengers and workers forged at the station, in particular the women who worked there in the 19th and 20th centuries. "Mind the Gap" runs until 24 February at Moyse's Hall Museum, IP33 1DX (12 minutes walk from the station) on Mondays-Saturdays from 1000-1700, and 1200-1600 on Sundays. Admission is £4, £2 (concessions and children).

## CONSULTATIONS

- Hertfordshire County Council: [Local Transport Plan](#), closes 23 January 2018
- European Passenger Federation (EPF): [European Passenger Rights](#), closes 28 January
- DfT: [Future of Community Rail Strategy](#), closes 28 January.
- DfT: [Great Western rail franchise](#), closes 21 February.

Please advise [Roger Blake](#) of any other consultation, eg that of a County Council or Unitary Authority.

### *...and finally*

Northern's refurbishment of Class 156 units for the Lakes Line sometimes overlooks the information system. In November, a driver unable to find a Lakes Line station for the display opted for Lincoln Central as the destination, hoping that no one would take it seriously! Fortunately, there was the conductor on board to make PA announcements that were correct for the line.

Virgin Trains, which is partly owned by Remain supporter Sir Richard Branson, has withdrawn the Daily Mail newspaper from its WCML trains over apparent concern regarding the Mail's editorial position on issues such as immigration, LGBT rights, and unemployment: "this paper is not compatible with the VT brand and our beliefs." Given the scale of VT's Delay Repay (see above), and its treatment of alleged fare dodgers (December issue), there are those who would like to boycott Virgin.

To mark its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Paul Salveson recalls the last booked BR steam train to run over Shap. On Boxing Day (!) 1967, Carlisle Kingmoor turned out Britannia Pacific 70013 'Oliver Cromwell' to work a football special to Blackpool. Paul joined other steam enthusiasts for the return journey. With 13 coaches in tow, the driver stopped at Tebay for a banker, but none was available, so the 'Brit' set off to an amazing display of fireworks from Cromwell's chimney as it hit the 1 in 74 climb up to Shap summit, which it breasted in style. The run downhill to Carlisle was equally thrilling with speeds well into the 80s. Over the next few months, steam was lost shed by shed. Plans are afoot to mark the closure of Stockport (May '68) and Bolton (end of June) with a community gala at each station. The respective steering groups are open to offers of help. Please get in touch via [The Salvo](#) if you are interested in supporting either event.

## EVENTS

Do please keep your events coming in, both to me and to [Roger Blake \(Railfuture\)](#), who maintains the [List of Events](#) on the Railfuture website. A Calendar of Events embedded in a pdf document can get discarded, and this is a problem if the venue changes from month to month. A copy of your Calendar as a separate document in Word format would therefore be much appreciated.

Blob colour indicates the various types of event:

- National & regional rail events.
- Railfuture events (rail user group representatives are cordially invited).
- Local Group events.

### January 2018

- Monday 15. April. TravelWatch SouthWest consultation event, County Hall, Topsham Road, **Exeter**, 1400.
- Wednesday 17. Friends of the Barton Line, No 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes**, 1900 (also 21 March, 1800 for 2000 at The Sloop, **Barton**; 16 May, 18 July (AGM), 19 September, 21 November).
- Thursday 18. Magor Action Group On Rail, Golden Lion, **Magor**, 1930 (and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday every month).
- Saturday 20. Railfuture Yorkshire AGM, The Carlton Centre, Harrison Road, **Halifax**, HK1 2AD, 1300.
- Tuesday 23. ACoRP free webinar: "Developing your tourism offer", 1100-1200. See above.
- Tuesday 30. Levenmouth Rail Campaign, Fife College, Methilhaven Road, **Buckhaven**, KY8 1EA, 1830 (also 27 February, 27 March, 24 April, 29 May, 26 June.)

### February

- Saturday 10. Copeland Rail User Group, Methodist Church hall, **Seascale**, 1350.
- Monday 12. Bexhill Rail Action Group, Hastings Direct, Collinbgton Avenue, **Bexhill**, 1900.
- Saturday 17. East Suffolk Travellers' Association, St Marks Church Centre, **Oulton Broad** (next to South station), 14.00
- Monday 19. Railfuture Thames Valley, Jericho Community Centre, 33a Canal St, **Oxford**, 1830.
- Tuesday 20. Chesham and District Transport Users' Group, Town Hall, **Chesham**, 1930 (also 3 April, 22 May, 19 June, 7 August, 18 September (followed by the AGM), 23 October, 11 December.)

### Further Ahead

- 3 March. Railfuture Wessex AGM, Above Bar Church Centre, **Southampton**, 1300 (NB. Change of date).
- 12 May. East Suffolk Travellers' Association AGM, Quay St Church, **Woodbridge**.
- 17 March. Railfuture North East AGM, Newcastle Arts Centre, Westgate Road, **Newcastle**, 1400.
- 17 March. Railfuture Herts and Beds, St Paul's Church, Blandford Road, **St Albans**, 1045 (Also 13 June, 20 October).
- 24 March. Copeland Rail Users' Group AGM, Methodist Church hall, **Seascale**, 1350
- 28 April. English Regional Transport Association (ERTA) Public Transport Users Conference, Castle Hill United Reformed Church, Doddridge Street, **Northampton**, NN1 2RN, 1100-1600.

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