

## Railfuture in London and the South East

quarterly branch newsletter

**Campaigning by the Railway Development Society in London and the Home Counties - Kent, Surrey, Sussex, south Hertfordshire, south Essex, Bedfordshire, and Greater London**

**The *independent* campaign for a better passenger and freight rail network**

### Linking classic and heritage

Railway development, the core business of our society's campaigning, takes any number of different forms. Opening new lines such as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, now known as HS1, is one. Re-opening former lines such as the City branch of the North London Railway, now known as the East London Railway and part of the London Overground network, is a second. A third, currently in evidence more in other regions than our own, is re-doubling lines singled by earlier generations, and this region has its two prime candidates. There will be many other concepts and definitions, whether to do with the infrastructure of lines and stations, or services, rolling stock, and ticketing, and all within policy objectives such as increasing rail's mode share of freight and passenger travel.

As this summer issue marks a new season of exploration, we note that one often neglected manifestation of the development of the railways is the links between the current classic network and the resurrected heritage lines. A look at [www.heritagerrailways.com](http://www.heritagerrailways.com) – the website of the Heritage Railway Association – reveals a list of almost 100 heritage railways and a further 35 railway centres and museums across the UK and Ireland. About a dozen of the railways and a handful of the railway centres and museums are within our region, with several more nearby in our adjoining East Anglia, East Midlands, Thames Valley and Wessex areas.

In the season of generally better weather and certainly more hours of daylight we look at two of our south-east heritage railways making national headlines in their efforts to reunite with the classic network.

**The Spa Valley Railway in Kent** recently achieved its long-held ambition to extend its operations south to reconnect with the main line at Eridge station. Services from Tunbridge Wells West now terminate in a platform opposite the one used by Southern's London Bridge-Uckfield services. The Spa Valley's

timetable commendably publicises the connections in and out of the services to and from London Bridge.

Tunbridge Wells West station, and the connection with Eridge, was opened by the London Brighton & South Coast Railway in 1866 but a century later lines around began to close – Eridge to Hailsham (the Cuckoo Line) in 1965, East Grinstead to Groombridge in 1967, and then Uckfield to Lewes in 1969.

In September 1982 British Rail announced its closure in May 1983. Objections made to the Transport Users' Consultative Committee didn't stop the Secretary of State announcing his consent in February 1985. The new date given for the withdrawal of services was 6<sup>th</sup> July 1985, to allow time to set up alternative bus services.

Months before closure, the Eridge Line Action Group (ELAG) formed to keep the line open, possibly by joint operation with a private company and BR. The ELAG campaign involved rallying the support of MPs and councils to apply pressure on the Secretary of State, but they were also willing to take the case to the High Court which set 24<sup>th</sup> July for a judicial review of the Transport Secretary's approval of the closure. However, as the court action was not against BR the closure proceeded regardless.



Following closure and a hastily-convened meeting in Groombridge, a charitable society [the Tunbridge Wells and Eridge Railway Preservation Society] formed to bring the line back from the grave. After

the next few years' struggle against vegetation, disinterest and even outright hostility, with a generous loan from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council the society acquired the line in 1994; by winter 1996 they were running trains, with the line opened through to Groombridge in August 1997. News spread about the route and passenger numbers rose. The owner of the High Rocks Inn built a station at High Rocks, between Tunbridge Wells and Groombridge which opened in August 1998.

In 2005 the railway opened an extension just short of the former Birchden Junction, the main line boundary. Only operated on special event days, the railway's main intention had always been to extend into Eridge further down the line. In mid 2007, after discussions with Network Rail and others, physical work began on the Eridge extension. The running line between Birchden Junction and Eridge was restored, and after delays and complications the extension opened to the public in March 2011.

Many said it couldn't be done, but events have proved them wrong! Read all about the railway, its history, the line closure, and the Eridge Extension Project at [www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk)

**The Bluebell Railway in Sussex**, the former Lewes and East Grinstead Railway, has been clearing the Imberhorne cutting in readiness for the reinstated link from the railway's northern terminus at Kingscote, across the Imberhorne viaduct and into its own platform opened last September at East Grinstead station. Predating the L&EGR, the Ouse Valley Railway was planned as a line cutting through the same area. Construction was started but abandoned at an early stage. Had this line been built, it is certain that the present Bluebell line would never have existed!

British Railways 1954 proposal to close the line became effective from May 1955. A battle followed between BR and the Users. A local resident had discovered a clause relating to the "Statutory Line" and immediately requested BR to honour their obligation and they were forced to re-open the line in August 1956. The case was taken to the House of Commons and a Public Inquiry followed in 1957. BR were severely criticised but subsequently the Transport Commission persuaded Parliament to repeal the special section of the 1877 Act, and the line was finally closed in March 1958. It was later taken over by the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society.

Read all about the railway, its history as the first preserved standard gauge passenger line in the

world, its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary appeal, and the recent Waste by Rail project at [www.bluebell-railway.co.uk](http://www.bluebell-railway.co.uk)



These photographs show the opening of the new East Grinstead platform in September last year and Waste by Rail in action in the Imberhorne Cutting in March this year.

## Members summer regional gathering – mixing business and pleasure

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July** will be the opportunity for members of our regional branch to gather in **Tunbridge Wells** for, shall we say tongue-in-cheek, some 'yackety-yack and clickety-clack'. The morning, from 11.00 until 13.00, will be an informal get-together in the Friends Meeting House at 1A Grosvenor Road TN1 2BB, for fellow rail campaigners from the local area as well as from across our region to share experiences and ideas for future campaigns.

The venue is about a 15-minute walk up the 0.7 mile from Tunbridge Wells mainline station. Local bus services run from the station, on Mount Pleasant Road – stop D for routes 7 or 77, or stop B for route 229, to Grosvenor Road stop H; or stop C for routes



281 or 282, or stop B for route 234, to Grosvenor Road stop G.

After finding lunch in town the afternoon then enables us to take advantage of the extended Spa Valley Railway's services. The steam-hauled 14.55 from Tunbridge Wells West reaches Eridge at 15.20, with either a diesel-hauled return trip at 15.30 or a connection into Southern's London Bridge service at 15.51 or Uckfield service at 16.03, or a wait for the steam-hauled 17.10 return journey of 30 minutes to Tunbridge Wells West.

## Other products and services are available

– more heritage rail to visit near you

Amberley Museum, Amberley, West Sussex, BN18 9LT – [www.amberleymuseum.co.uk](http://www.amberleymuseum.co.uk)

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway, Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 8AT – [www.bwlr.co.uk](http://www.bwlr.co.uk)

Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, Quainton Road, Buckinghamshire, HP22 4BY – [www.bucksrailcentre.org.uk](http://www.bucksrailcentre.org.uk)

Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway, Chinnor, Oxfordshire, OX39 4ER – [www.cprra.co.uk](http://www.cprra.co.uk)

Cholsey & Wallingford Railway, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 9GQ – [www.cholsey-wallingford-railway.com](http://www.cholsey-wallingford-railway.com)

Colne Valley Railway, Castle Hedingham, Essex, CO9 3DZ – [www.colnevalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.colnevalleyrailway.co.uk)

East Anglian Railway Museum, Wakes Colne, Essex, CO6 2DS – [www.earm.co.uk](http://www.earm.co.uk)

East Kent Railway, Shepherdswell, Dover, Kent, CT15 7PD – [www.eastkentrailway.com](http://www.eastkentrailway.com)

Epping Ongar Railway, Ongar, Essex, CM5 9BN – [www.eorailway.com](http://www.eorailway.com)

Great Whipsnade Railway, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU6 2LF

Hollycombe Steam Collection, Hollycombe, Liphook, Hampshire, GU30 7LP – [www.hollycombe.co.uk](http://www.hollycombe.co.uk)

Kent & East Sussex Railway, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6HE – [www.kesr.org.uk](http://www.kesr.org.uk)

Lavender Line, Isfield, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 5XB – [www.lavender-line.co.uk](http://www.lavender-line.co.uk)

Leighton Buzzard Railway, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 4TN – [www.buzzrail.co.uk](http://www.buzzrail.co.uk)

London's Transport Museum, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 7BB – [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk)

Mangapps Railway Museum, Burnham on Crouch, Essex, CM0 8QQ – [www.mangapps.co.uk](http://www.mangapps.co.uk)

Mid-Hants Railway, Alresford, Hampshire, SO24 9JG – [www.watercressline.co.uk](http://www.watercressline.co.uk)

Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, New Romney, Kent, TN28 8PL – [www.rhdr.org.uk](http://www.rhdr.org.uk)

Rother Valley Railway, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5DG – [www.rothervalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.rothervalleyrailway.co.uk)

Ruislip Lido Railway, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 7TY – [www.ruisliplidorailway.org](http://www.ruisliplidorailway.org)

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2DZ – [www.sklr.net](http://www.sklr.net)

## Scenic Britain by Train

Rounding off this issue's summer out and about theme, the attractive and informative guide of this name is available from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships – [www.acorp.com](http://www.acorp.com) – and features four areas in our region, including three CRPs.

Lines radiating from Brighton are highlighted, while the Community Rail Partnerships featured are Sussex – [www.sussexcrp.org](http://www.sussexcrp.org), Kent – [www.ruralkent.org.uk](http://www.ruralkent.org.uk), and a potential candidate for a journey to and/or from our 9<sup>th</sup> July Bletchley Park conference, the Marston Vale line – [www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk](http://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk)

## London and South East draft Route Utilisation Strategy

Network Rail published this draft 'second generation' RUS last December, with responses due in mid-March. The full document can be viewed and downloaded at [www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/4449.aspx](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/4449.aspx). Our branch co-ordinated a joint response on behalf of the society which can be seen at [www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Submissions](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Submissions)

The responses from London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus can be viewed at [www.londontravelwatch.org.uk](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk) and [www.passengerfocus.org.uk](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk) respectively.

Whatever one thinks of the RUS system, its advantages and its limitations, the process of producing our response to this regional and cross-boundary draft also taught us something about ourselves. The collation task not only meant melding contributions from our three divisions, four neighbouring branches and individual members, it also required a simultaneous and sharp focus on the issues actually being posed by the Network Rail consultation. Put simply, the core issue was posed as how to address morning peak period, and especially peak hour, capacity demands at and on the approaches to the capital's termini taking a strategic view over the medium-long term of the next twenty-three years. That said, the RUS is also the context for the location and allocation of infrastructure investment during the next Control Period 5 from 2014-19.

A number of the suggestions put forward for inclusion in our response, while valid in themselves, did not directly address the specific context of this particular consultation. One lesson emerging is that our campaigning to be effective requires a clear appreciation and understanding of the broader policy

as well as the technical/operational influences on decision-making; wish-lists of long-held aspirations must be directly relevant to the organisation asking the questions, and the questions being asked.

## Network RUSs – stations, and passenger rolling stock

Responding to consultations takes up a considerable amount of the time and energy of branch committee members but is seen as a vital way to exert influence. These two drafts were published by Network Rail for consultation at the beginning and end of May respectively, with closing dates of early-July and early-August respectively. Both can be seen on Network Rail's website at [www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/4449.aspx](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/4449.aspx) London TravelWatch has also launched its own consultation on the subject of stations – see [www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/consultations/recent\\_consultations](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/consultations/recent_consultations)

It is worth repeating here that individual members are perfectly at liberty to respond to any public consultation, in their own personal and private capacities. Any use of the name Railfuture in a response is however the sole prerogative of either the national or a branch or a national specialist committee chairman, acting on behalf of the society.

## The train operator now leaving all platforms at Liverpool Street

How are the mighty fallen. Once the country's largest TOC, National Express were not even in the shortlist of three invited to bid for the short Greater Anglia franchise to commence next February, prior to the expected award of a long-term franchise from 2013 or 2014. Only the Essex Thameside 'c2c' operation will remain in National Express hands for a while longer. While past performance is no predictor of the future, NXEA's overall 23<sup>rd</sup> place ranking out of 24 TOCs in last autumn's National Passenger Survey may have been reflected in their bid as well as its result.

Abellio [Merseyrail and Northern], Go-Ahead [London Midland, Southeastern, and Southern] and Stagecoach [East Midlands Trains, South West Trains, and 49% of Virgin Trains] were due to receive a joint submission from this and the East Anglia branches setting out local campaigners' views on the new operator's immediate priorities. Bids were due in to the DfT by early-July, with the winner expected to be announced in November.

## Focus on passengers

The latest National Passenger Survey for spring 2011 was expected to be published in late-June. It will be available on [www.passengerfocus.org.uk](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk)

## Southern comfort

The East Sussex communities of Winchelsea and Three Oaks have been enjoying the restoration of their regular all-day services since December. These will come under scrutiny from Coastway division members this summer as they check patronage. All-day term-time weekday and holiday Saturday passenger counts have been planned for July, to add to the evidence base started with the division's count at Rye in September 2009.

One of the next steps required in the progressive build-up of the MarshLink service is extending the current six-day calling pattern to Sundays. This is especially needed in the summer timetable through to the autumn half-term to help support the area's visitor economy as walkers and others enjoy the various attractions the area has to offer during the extra daylight hours. Another urgently-needed step is to recognise the growing importance of Ore, with its new college, as a destination which merits regular all-day connections with Ashford, Rye and the other local communities in that direction, not just Hastings and points west and north.

Close examination of Table 189 of the GB rail timetable suggests that there may be scope for these further modest service enhancements. Southern may need to press Network Rail to examine what they need to do to help deliver them. Line-speed improvements, for example, might be necessary so that extra station stops can be absorbed into existing overall journey times. Stakeholders will need to press both organisations if MarshLink is to realise its potential as a genuinely community railway.

## More Overground comfort

Further to the previous issue's correct anticipation of the February public opening of the full northern extension of the former East London line, with Crystal Palace and West Croydon services running on from Dalston Junction via Canonbury to Highbury & Islington, the May timetable changes then saw the introduction of the final package of service improvements following completion of the [albeit de-scoped at Camden Road] North London Railway Infrastructure Project. In many ways it also marks the culmination of a long-running Railfuture campaign which has variously highlighted the

potential of the different routes which make up the capital's 'Outer Circle' – to give it just one of the network's many unofficial titles.

The Stratford-Richmond/Clapham Junction service is now a standard daily six 4-car class 378 electric trains per hour each way between Stratford and Willesden Junction, until about 22.00, four serving Richmond and two serving Clapham Junction. During the weekday peak periods it is supplemented by an additional two trains per hour between Stratford and Clapham Junction to give an eight trains per hour frequency on that northern core section. This also boosts the service level on the hugely popular west London cross-river orbital route, although there remains an issue with the intervals in Southern's first Milton Keynes-Croydon weekday services in what is otherwise an hourly frequency.

Mention must also be made of the Barking-Gospel Oak line which finally gets its complete weekly service of four 2-car class 172 diesel trains per hour, and the Euston-Watford service which similarly sees its Sunday service now match the other days' frequency of three trains per hour, both until about 22.00.

As some readers may have seen, or even worse heard said, elsewhere, this is however no time to rest on our LOROLs. The campaign to complete the overhead electrification of the Barking-Gospel Oak line must intensify; platforms on the west London route need lengthening to take longer, and more frequent, Southern services; on the new east London route to Clapham Junction due to open on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2012, Brixton must have a high-level station [although being on a curve and a gradient makes this far easier said than done]. As we look forward to further campaign challenges it is worth reflecting that the transformation seen on the former Silverlink Metro network has been achieved in just the first half of LOROL's 7-year TfL concession, a sure demonstration of the art of the possible.

## East-West Rail

Although the first stage of this major new cross-country route is still not irrevocably committed, its prospects are looking much better than at any time during its protracted history. Last year's national rail re-openings conference in Shoreditch heard an up-beat assessment.

Now campaigners are turning their attention to the next phase, east of Bedford, and in particular 'the missing link' between Bedford and the East Coast main line near Sandy. East Anglia branch's John Henderson is spear-heading these efforts and members in our Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire

areas are particularly requested to make contact with him at [johnvhen@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:johnvhen@hotmail.co.uk). He will be able to provide campaigning information to assist with stimulating support for the project from among local opinion-formers and 'movers and shakers' – elected representatives at all levels, people in the business community who could see its benefits for the local economy in terms of wider access to job markets and easier journeys to work, people across the media who could give the project's benefits a local angle, and so forth.

See the website [www.eastwestrail.org.uk](http://www.eastwestrail.org.uk) not least because it now has a new video to watch and enjoy!

## Rail Action Plan for Kent

Kent County Council had already held a couple of rail summits, and the final Plan flowing from the results of the February summit were launched at the third in April and presented to Transport Minister Theresa Villiers MP in May. See [www.kent.gov.uk/your\\_council/have\\_your\\_say/rail\\_summit/rail\\_action\\_plan.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/have_your_say/rail_summit/rail_action_plan.aspx) for the details.

## High-speed developments

The HS2 Project documentation upon which the Government is now consulting, until the end of July, can be viewed on the DfT website at [www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/proposedroute/](http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/proposedroute/)

Railfuture is organising a summer conference on High Speed Rail. The conference will be held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July at the historic Bletchley Park, home of 'Station X', the wartime code breaking centre. Railfuture is delighted to welcome the leading writer and broadcaster on transport issues, Christian Wolmar as Conference Chair. Speakers now include:  
Professor Andrew McNaughton, Chief Engineer of HS2 Ltd;  
Graham Nalty, RDS Network Development Committee;  
Lizzy Williams, leading campaigner against HS2/founder of STOPHS2;  
Stephen Joseph [or Richard Hebditch], Campaign for Better Transport;  
Jonathan Tyler, Passenger Transport Networks.

Details are on the Railfuture website at [www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=High+Speed+Conference](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=High+Speed+Conference)

Meanwhile on HS1 there are two network expansions this year. Since the May timetable change there have been three morning and evening peak services

each to and from Maidstone West, putting the county town on the high speed map. From early-October the east Kent towns of Deal and Sandwich will also be served by Southeastern High Speed thanks in part to some support funding from the County Council.

## Engaging with our TOCs

There are almost two dozen operators of rail services across our regional area, which presents us with a major challenge and opportunities to influence their plans and proposals. They offer a variety of approaches to getting up close and personal with their users-customers-passengers, moving on from the familiar formal consultations and letters, phone-calls, emails and website contact forms. It has been said that other people's jobs are always easier for others to do the further they are away from having to do them, so the personal reality of a Meet the Manager session at a local station or a discussion at a rail users group forum can help develop shared understanding of issues and concerns, shedding more light where there might have been excess heat.

Some known examples are NXEA's Rail Users Group sessions in a cafe above Liverpool Street station, and Stakeholder Forums run by First Capital Connect and Go-Ahead's Southern and Southeastern companies. It's perhaps no coincidence that these are generally in areas of our branch where we have active divisions to provide effective bridges into what's happening out and about across our diverse region. In terms of the counties our regional branch includes, Surrey, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire are the ones we [that's including our members in those areas] could cover better than we do. Offers to host a get-together to highlight local campaign issues?

Two developments might be seen as being in parallel and complementary, and meriting TOCs' consideration. On the one hand our methods of communication become ever more sophisticated, especially with use of what are generically termed the social media, so that there is more widespread and immediate awareness of events and ideas. On the other hand so too do our demands as consumers of a public service [or a publicly-regulated privately-provided service]. A key demand is for 'integration', which means a bit more than trains making good connections. We talk of cycle parking at stations, bus links to stations, even car parks at stations, and multi-modal ticketing and so on.

Customarily seeing ourselves and those on whose behalf we campaign as 'rail users' there are some signs emerging from the more thoughtful among the legions of commentators and practitioners that pre-

occupations with 'public transport' are being re-cast around concepts of 'citizen mobility'. Jargon? Spin? Or a provocative re-thinking of the relationship between service provider and service user?

## Branch annual general meeting 2011 – report-back to members

The meeting was held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April at the London Thameside Youth Hostel, Rotherhithe, and began with an illustrated presentation by Richard Storer, Area Community Relations Officer for Crossrail. He brought us up to date with all aspects of progress with the project, which will add 10% to London's rail capacity when it opens in stages from December 2018.

In March a shortlist of five bidders was announced for the supply of the fleet of 10-car class 345 overhead-powered electric trains plus their depot facilities. The contract is expected to be awarded in late-2013. Officially it has been said that because confirmation that the Crossrail project would proceed was given after the Thameslink rolling stock procurement had commenced, therefore Crossrail rolling stock requirements cannot be incorporated into the Thameslink tender process. Then just two days before our meeting the contracts for the remaining tunnelling works were awarded. Tunnelling activity will commence in late-2011 with the first two tunnel boring machines starting out on their journey in spring 2012 from Royal Oak towards Farringdon. This will be followed by the launch of two further tunnel boring machines in Docklands which will head towards Farringdon under central London. Further shorter tunnel drives will take place in the Royal Docks and east London.

The intention is for the operation of Crossrail services to be let as a concession by TfL London Rail, similar to the concession let by Transport for London for the London Overground.

After lunch the formal business was limited by the lack of the necessary quorum. Since by the close of nominations in January the four officer and six other branch committee posts were uncontested, so no ballot was required, the election results were confirmed as follows:

Chairman – Keith Dyall

Vice-Chairman – Roger Blake

Hon. Secretary – vacant [no valid nomination received]

Hon Treasurer – Trevor Jones

Other Committee members – David Berman, Norman Bradbury, Graham Morrison [all re-elected] plus Chris Fribbins and Howard Thomas [both newly elected].

Martin Parker had earlier withdrawn his nomination, creating a vacancy.

Stop press: at its May meeting the new branch committee co-opted Peter Woodrow to fill the vacancy created by Martin Parker's withdrawal. Peter is active in our Eastern division, is chair of the Chingford Line Users Association, and had been on last year's committee.

### **Chairman's report for 2010**

As ever the year has been a busy one for the branch if for no other reason than the large volume of railway activity that takes place within our boundaries. It is easier to count the numbers of train operators who do not run services within our branch boundaries than those who do. This means that we also have to deal with a large number of Network Rail regions plus the DfT, and Transport for London who are specifiers of services as well as train operators in their own right. Due to our location branch members also carry out duties on behalf of the society nationally. The branch has for many years believed in working in co-ordination with our neighbouring branches and it is something which we continue to do especially with consultation responses. Indeed the national Board has mandated this to happen, which we welcome.

The branch has responded to the following consultations:-

1. Southern, East Coastway timetable
2. Passenger Focus, Ticketing
3. South West Trains, ticket office opening
4. Mayor of London, transport strategy
5. Kent County Council, Rail Action Plan
6. Chilterns and West Midlands RUS
7. West Coast main line RUS
8. NXEA, West Anglia timetable
9. DfT, Greater Anglia franchise
10. DfT, Essex Thameside franchise
11. Watford to St Albans route conversion to light rail
12. London & South East RUS [on-going at year's end]

Members have taken part in a number of station passenger counts, and attended a number of conferences including one on High Speed Rail. We have attended a number of stakeholder meetings held by train operating companies as well as meetings put on by both Passenger Focus and Network Rail. We were represented at the public opening of the refurbished platforms of St Albans City Station by the Minister of State.

We have changed the format of the branch magazine and although we have not settled on a new name 'railse' is the current version. The changed content has drawn favourable comment; suggestions and input are most welcome.

We have written letters to the Hackney Gazette to correct misleading input to that paper supplied by the secretary of an unaffiliated rail user group. We wrote to the Mayor of London regarding his meetings with train operators to which we had replies of appreciation and thanks. [Although not relevant to the period of this report, we have repeated the process this year.] We also had correspondence with the Minister regarding Thameslink rolling stock.

In view of the inquorate Extraordinary General Meeting in September, we have had to come back to the business of Standing Orders, which are intended to be a method of empowering members to take part in our affairs. This may not always have been seen to be so but in a limited company power resides with the national Board unless distributed downwards and this is what Standing Orders are meant to do by a series of limitations and delegations. We also seek to put right a few anomalies such as allowing the committee to co-opt which brings us in line with the Articles of Association.

Members have represented the society with politicians at Westminster at meetings with all three main parties. Members have also been involved with meeting officials of ATOC and Passengers Focus. Members have also attended parliamentary debates at the request of the society.

In October the branch organised the widely acclaimed national rail re-openings conference at Shoreditch Town Hall with a number of major conference speakers.

Branch members have taken part in the company's affairs through membership of the specialist national committees with representation on all of them. Your chairman was commissioned by the national Board to carry out a review and produce a report on the running of one part of the society's affairs.

We have tried to increase the number of meetings around the branch for members, however time and cost have been major problems with this. It has been a source of concern that we have not yet been able to set up a Northern division and your committee will continue its efforts to do so.

I would like to thank all members for their support and especially members of the committees both branch and division for their efforts. I note with regret that three members of the branch committee who for various reasons will not be with us for the next year but express the hope that their absence will be only temporary.



## Hon. Treasurer's report

Our income was the branch subvention of around £1600 from national funds, and our expenditure as usual was mainly on this newsletter and room hire for meetings. Although our deficit for the year of around £600 was higher than the previous year and as a result our year-end balance of around £500 was lower than the previous year, this was mainly due to short-term support for the Shoreditch conference in November which has been reimbursed in 2011.

## Divisional reports for 2010

**Coastway** – The main feature of our meetings since our report a year ago has been discussion of Clause 10 [of Standing Orders] and the feeling by some members that this severely stifles initiative. Regrettably both Ivor Hueting (past Chairman) and Tony Crooks (Secretary) felt that treatment by the branch was unacceptable and have resigned. Tony has resigned his membership of Railfuture also. Coastway members have appreciated very much the work both have put in and will miss their input enormously.

Two Southern stakeholder meetings have been attended by Coastway, one last September [and one in March 2011]. At both Southern have no answer to overcrowding on the 2-car Brighton-Ashford service and no apparent interest in a solution. Coastway did suggest a solution with the use of class 73 electro-diesel locos and mark 3 coaches, but various obstacles were proffered by Southern. This did more to highlight the lack of incentive under the current franchise structure for TOCs to spend money where it's needed to solve overcrowding. (Remember Southern is the only TOC this year to be operating without any subsidy).

Coastway carried out a passenger count on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2010 at Bexhill station to highlight the problem and sent the results to Southern. The worst case was 160 schoolchildren alighting from a 2-car diesel in the morning, which has seating for 120 passengers. Also highlighted was the incorrect classification of Bexhill as a 'small staffed station'. With an annual footfall of 1,225,000 it is classified lower than 10 other local stations, including West Worthing and Polegate, all under 1,000,000 passengers per annum. Our concern is that this will undervalue Bexhill's importance and we have expressed this to Southern.

Contact was also made with Network Rail at Southern's stakeholder meeting. We were able to confirm that work is on gaps identified in the Sussex RUS, and reported on last year, are in fact being progressed despite no apparent action on the ground. These include:-

An acknowledgement of the need to make provision for extra trains and speed up the whole route between Keymer Junction and Ashford by:-

- 1 - Resignalling between Lewes and Polegate and in the Bexhill area, to allow shorter headways .
- 2 - Track improvement work throughout to increase permanent speed restrictions. (total savings 15mins).

The proposed work to install an extra platform 7 at Gatwick Airport for Gatwick Express services to be switched to platforms 5 and 6. While this does not directly affect Coastway services it does ease congestion and help to prevent delays on the Brighton main line and consequent knock-on effects to Coastway. We also asked for clarification on the proposal for Thameslink trains to go to Eastbourne and Littlehampton as part of the 'Thameslink 2000' project as this would make splitting/joining at Haywards Heath impossible with fixed formation trains.

Coastway made representation to Southern on their consultation on the proposed December 2010 timetable for East Coastway as reported last year. It is satisfying to note that Southern have implemented stops in the Brighton-Ashford service at Winchelsea and Three Oaks on alternate trains as we suggested. Splitting the service at Eastbourne was also abandoned which effectively prevented class 313s straying into East Coastway territory on a route for which they are not suitable.

Coastway made their contribution to the branch deposition to the Network Rail 'London & South East RUS'.

**Eastern** – The division met five times during 2010 to discuss a range of issues covering the Olympics, Stratford station, and London Overground. The division continues to look for developments such as the possible re-opening of Lea Bridge station, and the Hall Farm Curve [to link Stratford directly with Walthamstow/Chingford]. It has also been keeping a watching brief on reliability problems on the Great Eastern main line. The division has contributed to the responses to consultations on the draft London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy and the proposed new West Anglia timetable.

The Olympics and the development of the Westfield shopping centre are beginning to have a significant impact on the area around Stratford station. Whilst the Olympic development appears to be on, or even ahead of, schedule the division has learned that there are delays in introducing the new Docklands Light Railway service to Stratford International, and the opening of the Westfield centre. The latter is not now expected to open before September 2011.

Associated developments at Stratford station have seen a new first floor booking office opened, and the opening of a new platform 3A for London-bound



Central line trains. When these trains call at Stratford, passengers board and alight using both sides of the train.

The future Stratford station is taking shape, and it is apparent to the division that worries about overcrowding have not gone away. The potential for serious overcrowding occurs especially in the peaks when London Overground trains disgorge their passengers against the flow of a central subway already crowded with passengers entering the station and seeking their departures from platforms 6, 8 and 10. There has now been at least one occasion when, during disruption on Central line services during the evening peak, passengers have been urged not to use the central subway when leaving the station.

Proposals for changes in the West Anglia timetable have been broadly welcomed, with both East Anglia branch and ourselves in broad agreement. The division is concerned about the possibility of a reduction in peak hour frequency at some inner London stations, especially on the Seven Sisters route. London Boroughs have concerns about connectivity in the new timetable.

The division's contribution to the response on the L&SE RUS emphasised the need for infrastructure improvements to help to increase capacity and line speed in the Lea Valley. The division is especially interested in what decisions will be taken about the approaches to Liverpool Street following the introduction of Crossrail services.

At the time of writing [April]: new class 379 EMUs were being introduced to Stansted Airport and other West Anglia services; TfL appeared to have decided that Crossrail rolling stock will not be provided with toilets, and may have longitudinal-only seating [similar trains to the Overground class 378s]; National Express is not to be bidder in the race for the new Greater Anglia franchise due to start on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Finally, there is the challenging question of who has operational responsibility for Stratford station. Nobody seems to be able to give a straight answer to this one.

2011 promises to be an even more interesting year for the division.

**Kent** – Meetings were held according to the established quarterly pattern, generally on the third Saturday of each month, at Faversham, Broadstairs, Maidstone and Tonbridge. Average attendance was six. Members were reminded of Branch standing orders. The organiser attended the branch and national AGMs, the Wealden Line Campaign (WLC) AGM, the WLC annual route walk, the 18<sup>th</sup> September branch EGM and the Kent CC "rail summit" in Maidstone on 25<sup>th</sup> March. This concentrated on what became a theme of the year,

namely the impact of Southeastern's HS1 timetable changes, seeing reduced frequencies and longer journey times on many classic routes, plus sharp fare increases of up to 12% above RPI. There were many very angry people there, especially from around Maidstone and West Malling. KCC presented ambitious aspirations for the county's rail services, including a £608m plan for a new line to put Thanet within an hour from London and to promote Manston airport. That would be justified by economic regeneration leading to major savings in benefit costs in the area. Southeastern faced a barrage of criticism for atrocious performance in the snow, and scraped inside the threshold for season ticket discounts by 0.04% of PPM. Severe concerns about overcrowding and lack of services to London Cannon Street persist. Possible persistent disruption because of the Thameslink works and the Olympics are looming threats.

HS1 appeared to be doing well on the route via Ashford, but patronage via Medway was slower to build up, leading to reversion to a single unit. However, that was expected to be reversed in 2011. Simultaneously, some peak services previously starting at Rochester will be diverted to Maidstone West, reaching St. Pancras in 47 minutes with stops at Strood, Gravesend and probably Stratford. That will compensate in part for the poor present service to Victoria. The organiser is delighted by the massive improvement in network connectivity brought about throughout central north Kent by HS1, as well as to north, and north of, London. Trains4Deal attended the Tonbridge division meeting. It campaigns for extension of HS1 services from Dover to Ramsgate via Deal, to eliminate severe delays caused by today's very poor connections from Deal. Modifications to suspension bushes had improved the appalling ride quality on class 395s, but more work was needed.

Chris Fribbins has attended several branch committee meetings on behalf of the division and continued with sterling work relating to community rail, RUSs, the second Kent rail summit and KCC's Rail Action Plan for Kent. It focussed on journey times between east Kent and Victoria, better service for Deal, and capacity. Capacity would be grown by maximising train lengths and frequencies. RUSs sought to maximise the benefit of HS1 by exploiting its capacity and gradually extending direct HS1 services to more towns, plus exploiting the removal of Eurostar. Thus, Tunbridge Wells now enjoyed a 4tph service, thanks to activating the new turnback siding. However, frequencies beyond to Hastings were reduced. There had been some improvement in the formerly negligible service at small stations between Ashford and Hastings.

Gillingham Station was about to get a £2.4m major refurbishment. The 'Kent International Gateway'

freight terminal in the AONB near Bearsted had been rejected. Plans remained for another much-needed terminal at a possibly more suitable site near Borough Green, and attempts continued to be made by industry to open up HS1 and the Chunnel for freight.

WLC's 'BML2' concept envisaged doubling the route to Brighton by adding to the previous Uckfield-Lewes reopening proposals, short tunnels allowing direct trains. Network links to Lewes and Tunbridge Wells would also be restored. The Tonbridge route would also be relieved by the extra journey opportunities. Kent and Sussex would be reconnected, and rail-heading would be reduced. The ambitious scheme envisaged restoring the Selsdon route, alongside Croydon Tramlink, to bypass the Croydon bottleneck. The London end could join the Hayes branch and maybe eventually cross the City to Euston in a new tunnel.

Motions – proposed by the Branch Committee, as notified in branch newsletter 110 for December 2010, to adopt the revisions to Standing Order 10 which were proposed to the inquorate extraordinary general meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2010. The motion was not taken as there were insufficient members present.

Regular readers will be aware that our election process requires candidates to submit a CV and Election Statement, each of up to 100 words. In the interests of transparency and accountability, here are the eight elected candidates' submissions.

**Keith Dyall** [proposed by Norman Bradbury, seconded by David Berman]

CV - Retired engineer and construction manager having worked in both civil engineering and building which includes railway schemes. I have been a member of Railfuture and its predecessor societies since the mid-'70s. I am currently chairman of the London and South East Branch, a member of the Finance and Internal Affairs committee and also the Policy, Lobby and Campaigns Committee; I was also a Director until 2006. Outside the society I am a governor of 3 schools, chairman of trustees for local almshouses and also chair of trustees to an outdoor centre. I am also member of two town twinning societies.

Election statement - I am ambitious for the society in promoting rail development. I wish to make the voice of Railfuture respected within the industry. I am trying with the co-operation of other branches to make sure that we speak with one voice as an organisation. I hope to increase the voice of the membership at large within the branch through the divisional sub-committees. I also look forward to working with the editor of our branch magazine and his editorial committee to improve the presentation

and relevance to the regional rail scene and the branch affairs in particular. I also wish to improve liaison with the local RUG's.

**Roger Blake** [proposed by Ray King, seconded by Graham Morrison]

CV - Memberships/Qualifications: Railfuture late-80s+; London & South-East Branch Committee 2006-11, Vice-Chairman 2007-11. National Director since 2009. Railway Study Association and Transport Planning Society mid-90s+. Chartered Town Planner/corporate member, Royal Town Planning Institute early-70s+. Principal Transportation Planner, Hackney Council mid-90s+; Senior/Principal Town Planner there mid-80s+. Co-founder Cambridge Heath & London Fields Rail Users' Group late-90s; MarshLink Action Group, Wealden Line Campaign, Brunel Museum Rotherhithe, Great Central Railway, North London Railway Historical Society, Barking-Gospel Oak Line User Group, Spa Valley Railway, Campaign for Better Transport, Friends of the Earth. Trustee, Skillshare International [development charity] early-80s+.

Election statement - Work experience: Hackney's Public Transport Liaison officer; Voluntary organisation governance experience: Trustee, Skillshare International. Lead Hackney's work - East London Line Extensions, safeguarding Chelsea-Hackney line, developing North London Line/London Overground/Outer Circle; East London Line Group, North Orbital Rail Partnership, West Anglia Routes Group. Key Regional Branch objectives 2011-12: improve communication/involvement with 25% Railfuture's members in Regional Branch and its Divisions, Rail User Groups, Community Rail Partnerships, Heritage lines; Branch Committee rejuvenation and accountability; develop regional branch members' magazine; develop members' social and campaign events, including evidence-based campaigning to support planning/transport policy objectives and our profile and credibility.

**Trevor Jones** [proposed by Richard Tyler, seconded by Linda Irvine]

CV - Membership: 40 years (including predecessor society). Branch: London & SE. Past Committee Service: London & SE Branch committee (was Chairman for 5 years, current Branch Treasurer 5 years); National Executive; Board; International Committee. Qualifications: Mathematics graduate. Former IT professional. Recent past temporary employment with Network Rail followed by 15 months junior manager in a Train Operating Company at their London HQ. Age 63. Membership of other organisations: Bus Users UK (BUUK); Guildford Environmental Forum (GEF); Railway Study Association; Guildford Chess Club (League Secretary, team captain); Guildford United Reformed

Church (inter-faith representative); CPRE. Representing RDS: European Passengers Federation; GEF; BUUK. Rail users group: Past Chairman of Tunbridge Wells Railway Travellers (during Hastings electrification).

Election address - Active in Railfuture and forerunners most of my working life; helped form our Coastway Division; have meetings with Guildford MP; Board's liaison officer with BUUK e.g. to avoid AGM clash, and with Wessex Branch. Shareholder in most TOC-owning companies and several rail suppliers, sometimes making useful contacts at company AGMs. Former RDS Computer Officer for 11 years. Non-driver, so reliant on public transport for all my travels (including buses). Believer in integrated public transport of all modes. From past rail user group work and recent employment, I am often aware of what is and isn't readily achievable.

**David Berman** [proposed by Graham Morrison, seconded by Roger Blake]

CV - UK Civil Service, 16 years: Defence, Treasury, Cabinet Office, National Audit. Worked in Transportation, Construction and Finance in Europe, and North America where undertook professional and academic training. Specialise in Transport and Construction Project Cost Estimating and Planning; Programme Management and Business Management. Managing Director, Transportation and Construction consultancy firm. Lecture, write on Transport, Construction and Politico-Economic issues. Member, professional transport, planning, management and construction associations; London Overground Passengers Committee; North Orbital Rail Partnership. Director, Railfuture National Board; member, Finance & Internal Affairs and Policy Committees, Information, Publishing & Communications Group, Railwatch Editorial Board. Member, NHS Foundation trusts in London. Associate, Institution of Railway Signal Engineers.

Election address - Railways have always been a passion whether in UK or abroad. I have devoted most of my personal and professional time to promoting rail transport. I believe that Railfuture is in a perfect position to influence public opinion and political policy in favour of integrated transport programmes including a very strong rail element. It would be a privilege to be able to continue to bring my professional expertise into the London and South East region committee and assist Railfuture at a time when straightforward logical influence is needed to sway Government opinion.

**Norman Bradbury** [proposed by Keith Dyall, seconded by David Berman]

CV – Born 1937. Joined family business 1954, becoming MD 1975-96. Chaired Ewell & Stoneleigh Chamber of Commerce 1997-2000. Chairman of Radio & Electrical Buyers Ltd 1998-2002. Joined Railfuture 1982, becoming London & South East committee member 2002. Railfuture Board member 2003-06, Secretary of Policy, Lobbying & Campaigns Committee since 2002.

Election statement – Became active member of Railfuture in 1999 following life-long interest in and campaigner for railways, authoring the Railfuture publication “The Case for Rail” in 2004 and the more recent “Rail Manifesto” in early-2010, and co-authored “Britain’s railways – much more for much less” published in August 2010. Represented Railfuture at Transport Activist Round Tables and Transport Taxation Group meetings for a number of years and wish to continue doing so. Continue to take part in lobby meetings with Ministers and MPs and have responded to many DfT consultations and Network Rail Route Utilisation Studies. It is my wish to continue campaigning vigorously for rail and to promote Railfuture at every opportunity.

**Graham Morrison** [proposed by Ray King, seconded by David Berman]

CV – Age: 61. Born and educated (secondary + university) in Edinburgh. Degree: Mathematics and General Linguistics; Postgraduate Diploma in IT and Management. Chartered Secretary. Mostly worked as university administrator (Leeds, Queen Mary, LSE and Cambridge) also in housing. Enjoy exchanging ideas, sharing information and explaining things - but never wanted to be a teacher! Non-driver; reliant on public transport. Member of Railwatch Editorial Board for about 15 years. Was on the Committee of the former Capital Transport Campaign.

Election statement – Living in London for over 30 years has led me to experience some of the upsides and downsides of public transport in general and railways in particular. To continue the improvements it is necessary to consider the whole passenger experience. The challenge for Railfuture and this branch is to harness the energy of enthusiasts to work together and with other individuals and organisations with mutually consistent objectives to make overall progress towards our objectives. Realistically that will not be achieved evenly on all fronts, but with goodwill we can try to raise our own and the country's expectations

**Chris Fribbins** [proposed by Keith Dyal, seconded by Roger Blake]

CV – Vice-Chair of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council (Parish Councillor for 27 years), District and Unitary Councillor (and past Chair of Planning & Transport) for 13 years to 2000. Former member of Rail Passenger Committee (Southern England) until abolition in 2005 where I was responsible for liaison with Railfuture (Kent Division) and other local RUGs and local authority transport forums. Member of Medway Valley Line Community Rail Partnership. Active Rail campaigner for many years. Vice-Chair of Dickens Country Protection Society (DCPS) a local amenity society.

Election statement – The Railfuture branch and divisions have got to reach out more to existing members and also find new ones. There is no quick fix and it will take time. We have got to strike a delicate balance between the formal business of the organisation, informing, encouraging debate and action. We need to develop ways to encourage active participation both within the organisation and externally in the name of Railfuture.

**Howard Thomas** [proposed by David Berman, seconded by John Barfield]

CV – Semi-retired lecturer; BA, DipEd, MRSPH, MCMI, MifL, CertTESOL. Railfuture member for over 20 years. Served Railfuture as: Board member; Passenger committee member and now Chair; International & European and Policy, Lobbying & Campaigns committees member; London & South East Branch Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and committee member; Chair of branch's Eastern division. Wrote responses on behalf of railfuture to House of Commons Transport Committee enquiry into fares [2005], and white paper "Delivering a sustainable railway [2007]". Served in public life as councillor, community health council chairman, magistrate.

Election statement – More and more people are turning to the railways for their travel solutions because of increasing congestion and concerns for the environment. To cope with this there must be commitment to increase capacity in terms of train length, station facilities, and track configuration. To keep the railway attractive to its customers, attention will have to be given to details such as toilets on trains and at stations, better crowd control and management at key stations, and fares that don't frighten people off the railway. I will work hard to campaign on these issues.

## Branch divisions members meetings open to all branch members

**Coastway** – usually meet monthly [except August and January] on the first Thursday at 18.00 – the next one will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> June then 21<sup>st</sup> July and 8<sup>th</sup> September, at the Lewes Arms, 1 Mount Place, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1YH. Contact Dick Tyler at [richard.tyler@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:richard.tyler@railfuture.org.uk) or 27 Windsor Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN39 3PB or phone 01424 211500.

**Eastern** – usually meet bi-monthly on the second Wednesday of odd-numbered months at 18.30, in Stratford – the next one will be on 13<sup>th</sup> July and then 14<sup>th</sup> September. Contact Howard Thomas at [howard.thomas@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:howard.thomas@railfuture.org.uk) or 24 South Primrose Hill, Chelmsford, CM1 2RG or phone 01245 496439 before 21.00.

**Kent** – usually meet quarterly on the third Saturday afternoon in a different venue around Kent – the next one will be on 20<sup>th</sup> August in the Friends Meeting House, 9 St. Peters Park Road, Broadstairs, CT10 2BL – only a few minutes walk from the station. Divisional Organiser is Peter Collingborn at 82 Burnham Walk, Parkwood, Rainham, Kent, ME8 8RX or phone 01634 364744; email contact is Chris Fribbins at [chris.fribbins@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:chris.fribbins@railfuture.org.uk)

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