

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012**CHAIRMAN****david.berman@railfuture.org.uk****Dr. David Berman**

This is my first report as Chairman. I would like to open by saying that we have been madly busy this year responding to endless consultations – they seem to be coming out of the woodwork at an amazing rate! I would also have liked to say that this has been a good year for the railways. Trouble is it's been if anything an almost ludicrous year of one step forward and two steps back. The HLOS contained many good things especially something resembling a rolling programme of electrification – even if it did create (on the map) a series of rather curious operational gaps and proposed a start to DC to AC conversion also in a somewhat curious manner. January 2013 has already seen the publication of the Strategic Business Plan by Network Rail and the subsequent debate with ORR about affordability and deliverability. The society intends to make clear our priorities for the rail network and we will also work closely with others to achieve common objectives.

In the autumn of 2012 came the West Coast franchise competition. I am not even going to comment on this because I can't believe how much of a mess the DfT has made of this. I've worked in a Ministers' Private Office so I know how much checking, rechecking and re-rechecking goes on before you even ask your Minister to sign something off, especially something that could have major political and/or commercial repercussions. Something went very wrong here and both politicians and officials have a lot to think about. The Laidlaw and Brown reports contain a lot of useful (and revealing) information, but at the end of the day, the DfT needs to get a grip on the process and also to consider new ways forward such as greater local devolution and concessions. They also need to get a grip on the strategy for smart ticketing in England; we now lag way behind the decisive efforts in that sphere being made by the Governments in Scotland and Wales.

I could go on but that would just sound like a litany of the unlikely (or unbelievable) so let's not mention franchising or smart ticketing any more; at least for 5 minutes! And then there's rolling stock....well yes, perhaps it's time to change the subject. We could of course discuss HS2 at this point, but since 2012 saw very little real progress other than argument, recrimination and prevarication, *ad infinitum*; perhaps it's best to let this go too without much mention; and with the recent (January 2013) announcement of phase 2 there will be ample opportunity to discuss the whole aspect of HSR even more; and who knows, we might possibly even achieve some common ground.

On the other hand, Railfuture has had both a busy year and a refreshing one. We have launched a major review of our management and structure. We have started a major and wide-ranging upgrade of our family of websites. We have begun to use social media such as Twitter, You Tube and LinkedIn, and during 2013 will make our presence felt on Facebook. We have been mentioned numerous times in the press thanks to the talent, hard work and expertise of Bruce Williamson, our national press spokesman.

We have implemented a complete review of Committees, replacing them from 1st January 2013 with new, fit for purpose Groups that will operate in a much more dynamic, transparent and modern style.

During 2012 Christian Wolmar succeeded Peter Lawrence as our new President, and Peter was elected a Vice President along with my predecessor Mike Crowhurst. Lord Andrew Adonis, Barry Doe, Roger Ford, Chris Green and Adrian Shooter also joined us as Vice Presidents. Along with our existing Vice Presidents they have all already contributed much to help support the society, in terms of advice and influence, and not forgetting numerous interesting articles in Railwatch.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of the members of the society for the hard work they do and for all of the effort they put in to support our objectives.

INTERNATIONAL & EU COMMITTEE**international@railfuture.org.uk****Andrew MacFarlane**

There were three meetings of the Committee in 2012, in Birmingham, London and Peterborough. From 2013 the Committee will be known as the International Group. Two members of the Committee met Brian Simpson MEP, Chairman of the Transport & Tourism Committee of the European Parliament, during the summer. Issues discussed included the EU Transport White Paper, foot passengers on ferries, combined passenger rights across public transport modes, cross-border ticketing, our Eurostar report, mega-trucks and "levelling the playing field" (e.g. by taxing aviation fuel).

We met representatives of DB (German Railways) during the year. Issues discussed included ticketing, night trains, changing trains at Brussels and the chances of a DB service to London. This meeting will become an annual one. Discussions were held with representatives of Eurostar at an EPF-organised meeting in December and covered issues including connections at Brussels and Lille, adding further destinations on the Continent, the need for more calls at Ashford and some at Stratford International and marketing of Eurostar services to people living outside London and the South East. We also took part in the EPF Working Party on international long-distance trains; we are also collaborating with Continental colleagues on an EPF report "The final mile".

The Committee produced a report on Rail Links to UK airports in the autumn. I'd like to thank Chris Brown, Trevor Garrod, Simon Hope, Trevor Jones and Damian Bell for their work on this. One of the findings of the report was that passengers couldn't buy a through ticket from Heathrow Airport to anywhere beyond London at the airport itself (e.g. at the Heathrow Express booking office). This issue must be addressed on an urgent basis. Other findings were that rail fares to airports must be attractive and there is a need for more luggage space on some airport services. Refranchising should take account of the needs of airports served by franchises. The report was issued only in electronic format, which was not an ideal arrangement from the point of view of the Committee (e.g. hard copies were not available at the launch). It is available from www.railfuture.org.uk/dl445. We will be doing another ferries survey in 2013, to which contributions from members will be welcome.

We responded to a DfT consultation on the Channel Tunnel: Transposition of Railway Safety and Interoperability Directives in December. The transposition of these EU directives into UK law will hopefully make it easier for other passenger rail operators to use the Channel Tunnel. The Committee has also started work on a set of questions to be put to UK political parties in the run-up to the European Parliament Elections in 2014.

Railfuture continues to be a member of the European Passengers' Federation (EPF) and four members of the Committee attended the EPF AGM in Salzburg in March.

The committee once again met three times during the year, in February, June and October. The Committee was also represented at three Transport Taxation Group meetings during the year. TAR meetings no longer take place.

Representatives met with Norman Baker MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, on 13th June. Topics discussed included light rail, electrification, rolling stock, smart ticketing, East-West rail and Lewes-Uckfield and it was our intention to discuss freight terminals and new Planning procedures but unfortunately we ran out of time for this item. A report on this meeting is available on request from Norman Bradbury norman.bradbury@railfuture.org.uk.

It was gratifying that most of our suggestions for further electrification were confirmed as Government policy for CP5 shortly after this meeting.

We also sought a meeting with Maria Eagle, Labour Party Shadow Transport Secretary but a date was not agreed. Policy Group will follow this up early in 2013. Topics to be discussed would include Franchising reform, HS2 and rail industry costs & taxation.

Much of our work during the year was taken up with responses to a number of consultations.

May I take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to these consultations, in particular to Chris Page who took the lead on many of them.

The Committee was also represented at a number of consultations during the year on HS2, franchising and environment issues etc.

Ian McDonald was invited to speak about HS2 to the Midlands branch of CPRE and the response he got to his presentation on the Railfuture alternative proposals for HS2 was very positive.

This will be the last annual report for Policy Lobby & Campaigns Committee as next year it is to be reformed as the Policy Group.

NETWORK DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEEnetworks@railfuture.org.uk**Chris Austin OBE**

The year's work was dominated by HS2. Whilst welcoming the Government's commitment to rail investment to provide more rail capacity, many members were concerned at likely opposition to the route chosen, and that it might not maximise benefits to the network as a whole. Underlying this was the view that the route was being developed on a 'stand alone' basis with inadequate provision for through running onto the classic network. Similar concerns were expressed about the plans for out of town parkway stations rather than city centre locations. Railfuture's views were submitted to Government. This year we will be considering the planned extensions to Manchester and Leeds.

During the year, a lot of work was put in by the group, and particularly by Ian McDonald on the second volume of *Britain's Growing Railway*, covering planned re-openings. This will be a sequel to the first volume, a valuable reference source covering over 350 stations and 300km of track reopened since 1960. Also during the year the briefing notes produced by the Group for the Railfuture website were brought up to date.

Railfuture has long lobbied for further electrification, and many of the arguments supporting this were forged in the Network Development Committee. So, when publication of the High Level Output Statement revealed the extent of the planned electrification programme, it was evident that the work of the group had been worthwhile. Railfuture wrote congratulating the Government on this imaginative step and received a very positive response from DfT.

The year produced tangible benefits in the opening of the East London Line extension to Clapham Junction, together with the start of work on Crossrail, Reading and Birmingham New Street developments, Nottingham Express Transit and Manchester Metrolink extensions. There have also been positive decisions in relation to the East/West Rail link (including Chiltern's extension to Oxford) and the Todmorden Curve.

A Fighting Fund application for a contribution to a study of the Lea Valley line and connections to Chingford, making the most of the regenerated area around Stratford was endorsed.

NDC will be reconstituted in 2013 as the Networks Group, with a revised remit to consider five main subject areas – capacity, performance, connectivity, integration and metro/light rail. More work will be done by e-mail and in smaller groups with just two meetings a year planned for the full group.

PASSENGER COMMITTEEpassenger@railfuture.org.uk**Howard Thomas**

The Passenger Committee met four times in 2012 alternating between Birmingham and London. The committee was strengthened with the arrival of further new members during the year.

We were unable to meet with either ATOC or Passenger Focus in 2012. Although the committee had met the latter in July in recent years, in 2012 this was not possible. It is hoped that meetings with both ATOC and Passenger Focus (PF) can be arranged early in 2013. However, a meeting was arranged with Angel Trains who invited Railfuture to a presentation on the refurbishment of the class 317 emus currently operating on the Greater Anglia system. Once again, it was encouraging to note from contact with organizations in the rail industry that the work of Railfuture is both valued and respected in railway circles.

The committee responded to two government consultations on fares & ticketing and the Department for Transport's (DfT) proposals to abolish the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC).

The response on fares & ticketing focused on the principles of fares and ticketing regulation; smart ticketing and season tickets; using fares to achieve more efficient use of rail capacity; the complexity of fares and ticketing; and simply buying tickets. The response covered the need to re-evaluate the rôle of ticket gates, and for greater clarity on regularly used terms in ticketing such as 'route availability' and 'any reasonable'.

The Committee considers that none of the options proposed by DfT for replacing DPTAC is capable of providing the quality support that is needed to reassure the disabled passenger that his/her needs are being catered for. Only one option came close to achieving this level of support. This was dependent on the DfT ensuring and maintaining a team of disability experts in house, and giving a fair amount of operational flexibility and freedom to the team. This cannot be guaranteed. The Committee will hold a watching brief on the development of this issue. The Committee, therefore, recommended DPTAC continuing as a statutory body with possible restructuring. Parliament, ministers and officials would continue to be advised the transport needs of disabled people and what should be done to overcome the disadvantages and discrimination that they frequently face.

The committee maintained its watching brief on fares, and noted with concern the practice by a number of TOCs of adjusting their fares, including regulated fares, during the year, typically with the start of the summer timetable, or early in September. The committee was given an example of a 15% increase in a regulated fare in September 2012. This practice can result in a misleading view of the amount by which fares increase in January each year.

Towards the end of the year, the Committee became aware of cuts in timetabled services at weekends by East Coast, as an economy measure. There has been serious overcrowding on EC trains at weekends as a result.

DISABILITY ISSUES SUB-COMMITTEE**disability@railfuture.org.uk****David Harby**

During 2012 Clara Zilahi stood down from her role of guiding this sub-committee after many years of very hard work; much of it in the background and mostly unacknowledged. We are grateful to Clara for all her work and achievements and wish her well.

CYCLING SUB-COMMITTEE**cycling@railfuture.org.uk****Chris Hyomes**

2012 may have been a golden year for British Cycling, with the yellow jersey of the Tour de France being won by a English man, numerous medals by Team GB at the Olympics and bike sales at an all-time high, sadly it is going to be a long time before this filters through to our train operating companies and cycling by rail becomes an easy proposition.

While increased space for the carriage of bikes on trains remains a priority, there is at the moment little action we can take here, so while it is hard to take your bike on the train we can press for better bike security at stations, which is why late last year I started a survey of cycle parking provision at stations.

I would welcome photos from across the country of cycle parking facilities so please e-mail to **chris.hyomes@railfuture.org.uk**, which can then be used to press the case for safe cycle parking at stations.

The group continue to work with both nation and local cycling campaigns especially on improved cycle access to stations.

FREIGHT SERVICES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**freight@railfuture.org.uk****Gary Tinsey**

We met on four occasions in: Birmingham, Peterborough, Manchester and Oxford. Despite the geographical spread of venues attendee numbers remain stubbornly down. Not deterred, a small core of panel members reviewed the committee Standing Orders and a varied range of other topical items. Wherever possible these were acted upon immediately, either directly, or by further investigations and if appropriate dissemination to relevant sources. A portion of meeting time is set aside to meet with select third parties, such as: The RFG, the Tyne and Wear Freight Partnership (Rail Freight Partner Group), and Network Rail to further our aims and objectives. From these dedicated forums useful insights were gained.

Our National, Regional and Local contacts supply us with much useful information and data, which subsequently feeds into our meeting agenda. We also maintain regular communications with both of the leading trade industry bodies, The Rail Freight Group RFG and Freight-on-Rail.

It was pleasing to note the publication of our Freight Franchise Scoping Report. This detailed a stimulus package, for the revival of Nationwide and connecting UK/European, Single Wagon Load Network Services. The damaging loss of less-than-trainload traffic is unabated, with chemicals, gas oil and lime recent victims of Trainload Company policies. The paper was circulated electronically, with an accompanying press release, to key target companies and individuals. It is available for download from the society website **www.railfuture.org.uk/dl478**.

Our committee Vice Chairman, as a member of The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK) (CILT (UK)), undertook site visits to The Bristol Port Company at Avonmouth and Royal Portbury Docks. A further CILT (UK) tour of the Wm Morrison's distribution centre at Bridgwater was made. The latter, could be rail-linked, if a siding is installed alongside the warehouse. With this in place transhipment of bulk foodstuffs is possible. He also attended an RFG Conference and Port tour, on behalf of the committee, at the Associated British Ports ABP Southampton Port complex. Internal reports were presented to the committee from all three excursions showing fully the potential for new-to-rail traffics.

Formal responses were made to consultations from The Office of Rail Regulation ORR on their Periodic Review 2013 Track Access Charges for freight trains. We further submitted a reply to The Department for Transport - Lorry Road User Charging consultation. And the Network Rail paper on Freight Railway Infrastructure and Terminals transfer of ownership proposals. We also added a number of comments to other Society collated responses.

RAILWATCH**editor@railwatch.org.uk****Ray King**

Railwatch continues to rely on Railfuture members who provide letters, articles, reports and pictures. Railwatch aims to disseminate news of Railfuture's campaigning activities to a wider audience and we are worried that some of your good work does not get reported.

Please tell us about your achievements as well as problems. If it is published in Railwatch, other media outlets often pick it up. Please include Railwatch if groups you are involved with issue press releases. Railwatch also aims to provide a platform for discussion about Railfuture itself while not undermining the agreed policy of the organisation.

Our overall production costs have been held steady during 2012 and Print-Out of Histon, Cambridge, continued to print all copies of Railwatch during the year.

Distribution was carried out very efficiently by Mailhandlers of London E2. They have provided good service throughout 2012. Despatch postage, however, increased by 50%, comparing July 2011 with July 2012. Despatch post for July 2012 is now as much as the cost of printing the entire magazine and Royal Mail could well increase their prices again in 2013.

Several hundred copies of Railwatch continue to be sent free as part of our campaign to keep opinion formers properly informed on rail issues. Lloyd Butler maintains the list of those who receive Railwatch free.

The full editorial board comprises Jerry Alderson, David Berman, Roger Blake, Lloyd Butler, Alan Cocker, John Barfield, John Davison, Laurence Fryer, Ray King, Graham Morrison (secretary), John Stanford and Robert Stevens.

The editorial board meets four times a year in London.

INFORMATION, PUBLISHING & COMMUNICATIONS GROUP **ipc@railfuture.org.uk****Dr. David Berman**

2012 was a very busy year for IPC. Much effort has been put into a complete overhaul of Railfuture's on-line presence. The first fruits of which can now be seen with the re-launch of the national website **www.railfuture.org.uk** and the Scottish website **www.railfuturescotland.org.uk**. Further work is going on to expand and upgrade the Welsh website and the Railwatch website. The aim is to produce a family of websites with common features, supporting our work and members with up to date information.

The national website now includes such e-commerce features like membership and renewal facilities, conference bookings, a shop (for books and hopefully an expanding range of other rail and society related merchandise), and our lottery. In early 2013 we will be launching online surveys and hopefully, electronic voting for national elections, although this could also be extended to branch level elections as well in the medium term.

We have also made tremendous progress using social media like Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube and during 2013 our presence on Facebook will be improved and expanded.

Finance & Internal Affairs, which under David Berman's recent restructuring of the society has become the Finance & Corporate Governance Group, exists to support the elected Board of Directors so that they can concentrate on decision-making and strategy. As Financial Director I now chair the group, which meets between each Board meeting.

We coordinate activities across the society to ensure that we meet our legal obligations (such as filing accounts, paying tax, holding an AGM) and provide the services our members expect, such as two excellent national conferences. We strive to ensure that all of Railfuture's expenditure provides value for money, and negotiate with suppliers for the best deal. We have built up reserves over the last years but no one wants to see them wasted.

Finance Officer David Harby and I have started analysing directors' expenses to understand how much is being spent and where it goes. To encourage a culture of openness both David Berman and I, as chairman and vice chairman respectively, have decided to disclose to members a fully itemised list of our expenses for 2012.

To attract younger members it is essential that we modernise and make maximum use of the upgraded web site and the new social media such as Twitter. In 2012 we took over sales activities and it is pleasing that many people now use the web site to join, renew, enter the lottery, book conferences and buy books.

We successfully mitigated postal cost increases in 2012 but will incur them in 2013. To enable more of your money to be spent on campaigning rather than administration we are investigating how to enable willing members to receive communications by e-mail. I am delighted that a new member – one of very few women active in Railfuture, sadly - who is an accountant and business adviser, has agreed to look at the necessary legal details and also appraise our revised business plan.

The Corporate Governance Review is on going as a sub-group. They met twice during 2012. Outputs included a review and restructuring of Committees, who will be replaced by Groups in 2013. The group also reviewed the society work plan and decided to completely restructure the Articles of Association during 2013, for subsequent approval at the May 2014 national AGM.

MEMBERSHIP**membership@railfuture.org.uk**
renewals@railfuture.org.uk**David Harby**
Lloyd Butler

At 31st December 2012 membership stood at 2092 including 104 family members counted as 2 (2011 = 2135). New members for 2012 numbered 94, which is 14 more than 2011 and 35 more than 2010. 6.4% of members failed to renew in 2012, which is less than might be expected given the age profile of our membership (over half are pensioners) and the inevitable loss of some due to age, infirmity and the financial situation. The net fall in membership over the last 12 months was therefore 43.

The rapid fall in membership of a few years ago has slowed but membership is still falling. I therefore make no apology for repeating comments in previous years that for the long-term survival of Railfuture we need a strong commitment from our membership to the recruitment of new members. Joining has never been easier. The facility to join on-line via our website went live in March and since then 62 new members have paid this way. On-line renewals did not go live until November but a growing number of members have renewed this way too.

DEVON & CORNWALL**peter.mulley@railfuture.org.uk****Peter Mulley**

This has been a quite year, and we continue to explore ways of growing and empowering our membership. Our AGM was held in April 2012 in Plymouth, with guest speaker, Richard Burningham from the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership.

At the end of the year Devon suffered catastrophic flooding which had a major effect on the Railways. Our Chairman, Gerard Duddridge published a major report on the event, and this is available from the website at **www.railfuture.org.uk/dl1504**.

EAST ANGLIA**nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk****Nick Dibben**

The Branch celebrated 40 years of campaigning during the year. We produced a special leaflet that both highlighted our campaign successes and set out our vision for the future. Copies were circulated to members, the local media and politicians. During the year our AGM and three public meetings included presentations from the rail industry and local use groups. The meetings were well attended by up to 40 people. The Branch produced four newsletters during year with increasing use of colour photographs. We are aiming to expand the newsletter to 12 pages.

The Branch attended many meetings with train operators and local authorities where we were able to put our views across. Of special note is the developing relationship with Wisbech Town Council, where we are working with them to re-opening the railway line between March and Wisbech. The Branch carried out station passenger counts at a number of stations.

During the year the Branch contributed to the national Railfuture response to franchise consultations and also to local consultations of subjects such as the new station at Cambridge Science Park and the new power station at Sizewell. We also contributed to the Rail Prospectus for East Anglia, a key document of future rail development, supported by MPs, local authorities, business groups and other rail user groups.

The Branch welcomed developments to the rail network during the year including a new passing loop at Beccles, the Hitchin flyover, approval of the Ipswich freight curve and improved facilities at many stations.

EAST MIDLANDS**terry.holt@railfuture.org.uk****Terry Holt**

I write this report on the day when the Government has announced the confirmation of the preferred route of HS2 through the East Midlands. Along with the electrification of the MML, the Nottingham tram, and belated station enhancements in the region; this is a long overdue feast after decades of famine!

Our year began with the fruition of a long campaign for platform extensions, passenger lifts and enhanced car park capacity at Loughborough and passenger lifts at Long Eaton. City stations at Nottingham, Leicester and Derby are all undergoing improvements through 2013 if not already completed in 2012.

After the initial disappointment of the DfT response on MML electrification, giving preference to London to Bristol, even with a poorer economic case, we were delighted when Nicky Morgan MP (Loughborough) took up the fight in the House of Commons. Railfuture members responded admirably, assisted by their colleagues in South Yorkshire by lobbying all the East Midlands MPs to be present at that debate in April. Our MPs across the political divide duly ensured that the debate was well attended to support Nicky and subsequently an electrification proposal was approved in June. In order to maximize the benefits of this scheme, further route enhancements, particularly at Market Harborough and Leicester need approval and we will continue to support the rail industry and other interested groups to achieve these objectives. It should be noted that new high-speed electric rolling stock for the route is yet to be defined.

The installation of infrastructure for the Nottingham Tram (NET) extension continues and we look forward to their opening along lines 2 and 3 in late 2014, with the possibility of a national Railfuture event in Nottingham in 2015.

Although personally I think the chosen route for HS2 is the right one, I am less convinced by the choice of Toton as the East Midlands station site. Road access to Nottingham and Derby will be along the already congested A52 and there are unlikely to be easy main line rail options to connect to this site. I would prefer a split-level station at East Midlands Parkway on the existing main line passenger network, with major road access along the dualled A453 and also easy access to East Midlands Airport. The Toton legacy could also possibly result in an uncertain role for Loughborough, East Midlands Parkway, Long Eaton and Beeston stations on the current network.

We continue to have excellent relationships with most of the rail industry and other interested parties in the region. We look forward to our AGM, which is to be held at Lovatt House, the GCR HQ in Loughborough on April 20th 2013 when our guest speaker will be Nicky Morgan MP, who will talk about the Westminster campaign to electrify the Midland Main Line.

LINCOLNSHIRE **david.harby@railfuture.org.uk****David Harby**

During 2012 the branch activities covered a wide range of issues: the imposition and subsequent withdrawal of car parking charges at Metheringham and Ruskington; a lack of car parking at Barnetby; plans for two pedestrian bridges over the railway in central Lincoln; the Central Lincoln Masterplan; countering opposition to increased freight traffic through Lincoln; more direct trains to London and the 4th Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan.

The branch exhibited at the 2 day Grantham Rail Show and has continued to contribute to the activities of TravelWatch East Midlands and East Midlands Transport Activists Roundtable.

During 2011 and 2012 the branch, along with other NGOs, contributed to a successful £4.9m Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid for the LN6 postcode area. This includes improvements to Hykeham station and surroundings; cycle facilities and new bus routes.

The branch chairman has been interviewed on BBC Radio Lincolnshire, Lincs FM and Lincoln City Radio and spoken to researchers at both local TV stations about transport items (rail and buses) that they were covering. He has also written 12 columns on transport matters for Lincolnshire Echo.

Targets for the next two years are to press for better passenger services on the Joint Line following completion of the upgrade and to press for improvements to what is essentially still a Victorian railway (with journey times no better than 100 years ago) between Lincoln and Nottingham. We will also need to be contributing to preliminary work on renewal of all 4 of our franchises.

LONDON & SOUTH EAST **keith.dyall@railfuture.org.uk****Keith Dyall**

The start of the year saw the completion of the response to the consultation on the Combined Thameslink franchise on behalf of Railfuture. The autumn of 2012 also saw further success with the final go-ahead for the western part of East-West rail which is not only to be re-opened but to our surprise will be electrified as part of the freight spine. We are continuing to support the campaign for the eastern section to be reopened between Bedford and Cambridge. Also saw the successful completion of the campaign to electrify the Midland main line. We have continued to support the conversion of the Watford-St Albans Abbey branch line to light rail. We have done station counts on the Ashford Hastings line; in conjunction with the Chingford Line Users Association been active in promoting a new station at Lea Bridge, which also appears to have been successful.

We have started a major campaign to re-open the line between Uckfield and Lewes and to date with we have built up a good relationship with not only local members, but also local residents, and councillors in the area. We have also been establishing relationships with heritage lines in the area, as they would be affected by any re-opening of the route.

We continue to campaign actively for the electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak Line. In addition we look to strengthening out campaigning for the expansion of the London Overground and for Crossrail 2.

As previously noted branch members are on all of the national committees. Several of our members are on the national board and others represented the society in meetings with Eversholt Leasing, Angel trains and Bombardier Transportation. The branch has met with the following TOCs FCC, Southern, South Eastern, Greater Anglia, London Midland, Great Western, Southwest Trains, London Overground and TfL and also Network Rail. Our divisions have collectively met 24 times; all of these have been open to members and RUGs. Some have been in conjunction with wider general members meetings arranged by the branch. We have also kept in email contact with many of the user groups. The Branch also produces a quarterly magazine *RailSE*, and continues to support a Yahoo discussion group, although this may well be replaced during 2013.

NORTH EAST **trevor.watson@railfuture.org.uk****Trevor Watson**

We have organised three meetings for members this year, subjects were, operating Cross Country trains, The Wensleydale Railway, and The Port of Tyne.

The committee met five times during the year at Durham. Various committee members and myself attended a number of meetings and events.

Unfortunately the decision was taken to uplift the remaining track materials from the Leamside line allegedly due to persistent pilfering but in my opinion, procrastination by those in power.

Alcan Aluminium smelter closed resulting in lost goods rail traffic; however the power station was saved and is still rail served, with imported coal via The Port of Tyne, which indecently is a rail success story, with much bulk handling of goods by rail and an increase of biomass fuel handling destined for power stations.

Alnmouth and Morpeth had passenger lifts installed. James Cook hospital, Middlesbrough has had funding authorised, for a new station. Grand Central has an extra train path but only as far as Hartlepool.

At Alnwick the Aln Valley line project is under construction and should be running over a short stretch of line soon. Bishop Auckland station is to have a ticket office as part of the model shop. Hitachi will soon start work on their new train factory at Heighington. Our Branch is proud to be organising and hosting the national AGM in Durham in May 2013.

NORTH WEST **trevor.bishop@railfuture.org.uk****Trevor Bishop**

Railfuture North West has continued to make campaigns a central part of our focus for the year with pressure applied to Virgin through letter writing re both its fares policy and ticket availability. We believe that its strict policy of charging full fares in addition to the fare already paid for those who through no fault of their own are on the wrong train on West Coast-Euston services is wrong and counter-productive. They also ought to make better use of empty seats on peak services by offering them at lower prices shortly before departure. We have as yet received little positive response but that may be because of the replacement franchise fiasco and are planning to take up the matters again now that the franchise extension has been confirmed with Virgin for a further near 2 years.

We have also continued applying pressure to Metrolink about the quality of its current services and the service dates for the upcoming new parts of the network, all of which so far have missed the supposed dates of introduction, whilst the new signalling and control system on which so much faith has been placed by Metrolink management at TfGM seems not to be what it's meant to be.

Fostering links with user groups in the area has been beneficial and an additional one (FLAG) has affiliated to Railfuture and this has helped in having our ears to the ground.

Two editions of our newsletter have been published to keep members informed on progress across the year.

SEVERN SIDE**nigel.bray@railfuture.org.uk****Nigel Bray**

We held three meetings during 2012, including its AGM in Trowbridge, where our guest speaker was the public transport portfolio holder of Wiltshire Council. In May we held a joint meeting with Wessex Branch for the second year running, this time at Salisbury, to discuss issues concerning routes through Branches. At our November meeting in Gloucester, John Hassall was elected Chairman, succeeding John Walker, who had held the post for over 10 years. Two guest speakers from Ashchurch, Tewkesbury & District Rail Promotion Group gave an excellent presentation on raising public awareness the station.

Our Branch co-ordinated the unified response to the Great Consultation, with and national Committees. Copies the response were sent to Passenger Focus and the four short-listed bidders, three of whom later contacted Railfuture to discuss our ideas further.

We took part in the public inquiry into the BRT2 bus rapid transit route, which threatened the Bristol Harbour Railway; and in the public examination of South Gloucestershire Core Strategy. At both events we gave evidence of the remarkable growth in usage of local stations in the Bristol area to make a case for investing in the rail network as an effective weapon against congestion. It was encouraging to read that South Gloucestershire Council appeared to have accepted some of the ideas the Branch had submitted in a 2010 Consultation.

David Wood continues to write his *On Track* column in the *Bristol Post*, drawing on his long experience in the rail industry but also including input from the Branch.

THAMES VALLEY**andrew.mccallum@railfuture.org.uk****Andrew McCallum**

Following the 2011 Autumn Statement, that East-West Rail was to be funded, this year has been one of waiting for the conclusion of Control Period 5 planning. It has confirmed many of the Thames Valley Branch's priorities; East-West Rail, Thames Valley Branches Electrification, Heathrow Western Access and Oxford Remodelling. The Branch has watched as legal wrangling continues over Chiltern Railway's Oxford –Marylebone Scheme.

The Branch held two meetings. At the AGM we welcomed Chris Philimore, Commercial Director of Go-op, a rail cooperative seeking to develop rail services between Birmingham and Westbury; members learnt about the complexity of open access. Our autumn meeting was a general update with Patrick O'Sullivan of the East-West Rail consortium.

Members visited Reading Depot in November, which was exceptionally informative as it is moving to a new site in the summer due to the Reading Remodelling; it gave us a good insight into the Works and the scale of the Scheme.

The branch had a stand at Oxford Green Fair in December; this resulted in a good dialogue with many visitors and we recruited a number of new members, which is welcome.

During the year the Branch has issued numerous of press releases and Hugh Jaeger, our press officer, has appeared on local media, on issues as diverse as HS2, level crossings and fares; we have always striven to give an upbeat message.

The branch has involved itself in issues such as Bedwyn electrification, Bourne End – High Wycombe (with limited effect), HS2 and supporting user groups.

WESSEX**john.friedberger@railfuture.org.uk****John Friedberger**

The AGM was held in Winchester on 17th March. The guest speaker was John Salmon, Network Rail Wessex Region. Mike Southgate was elected Chairman on the retirement of John Friedberger. Stuart George from the Isle of Wight joined the committee.

A second annual joint meeting with Severnside branch was held on 26 May in Salisbury. With no guest speaker this was a good opportunity for members to express their views on the issues concerning the three routes of mutual interest: Portsmouth-Cardiff; London Waterloo-Exeter; and Weymouth-Bristol.

Consultation and discussion on two important franchise renewals continued throughout the year - Great Western and Southern/Thameslink. In the event both were scrapped but committee members worked in conjunction with Severnside and L&SE branches to coordinate views. Long awaited improvements to the Portsmouth-Cardiff line will be further delayed as result of the GW postponement.

Wessex branch committee members meet directors of our principal operator, South West Trains, on both formal and informal occasions where our aim is to suggest incremental improvements to services, for example over better information in event of delays caused by disruption.

Our priority for re-opening of a branch line for passenger services in this is the existing freight line to Marchwood and Hythe. We also support moves to re-connect the Swanage railway to the mainline at Wareham.

Branch members carried out six detailed station surveys in the summer. These drew attention to the value of staff at stations, information about bus connections and car park provision in respect of a good overall transport provision.

WEST MIDLANDS**william.whiting@railfuture.org.uk****William Whiting**

The Branch has been very active in 2012. We organised speakers and hosted the Autumn Conference in Birmingham, which attracted 100 delegates and we were given media coverage from Central TV on the day. A highlight of the conference was a presentation of how Birmingham New Street will look on completion of the redevelopment in 2015.

The Branch has attended regular meetings with representatives from Centro. We have raised concerns about the London Midland franchise regarding the closure of booking offices when they should be open, lack of revenue protection and that trains should run on Boxing Day as well as a more frequent service on Sundays.

We have appointed representatives to attend the new Partner Engagement groups set up by Centro in Summer 2012 and which separately meet in Coventry, Birmingham and The Black Country three times a year. These replace Passenger Focus Groups and the intention is that they are more representative of user groups rather than individuals.

Members of the Committee have been given media coverage. Our Chair of the Branch was interviewed at the Autumn Conference, another member has appeared on the BBC WM Radio Breakfast Show and Central TV interviewed a member at his home on the cancellation of trains by London Midland over the last 6 months.

We wish to build on this success by attracting new members to the Committee. Our AGM will be held on the 27 April 2013 at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham.

During 2012, we continued our regular programme of meetings, in January, June & September with our AGM being held in March.

January's meeting was held in York, with Neil Smith, Head of Communications, East Coast Trains as Guest Speaker, Neil had previously contacted the branch expressing a wish to peak at one of our meetings.

Late 2011 saw the branch start work on a document outlining what Railfuture in the North wanted from the next Northern Franchise. This was put together with input from the North East, North West, East Midlands and Lincolnshire Branches, as we had been unable to secure a guest speaker for our AGM, the time was spent discussing the final draft which was circulated to MP's, TOC's and the DfT. No sooner had we started to receive acknowledgments when the whole franchise process was put on hold due to the WCML fiasco.

June saw the branch meet in Doncaster where our new National Chairman, David Berman, addressed us.

Our final meeting of 2012 was taken to Debden Bridge, on a hot September day; only weeks after that, Debden Bridge had made the news headlines for being badly flooded.

Also during 2012, the branch took the lead on a number of responses to consultation documents including the East Coast Franchise Consultation; locally we submitted a response to the West Yorkshire Railplan 7.

It was pleasing to note that throughout the year our views were increasingly being sought by the local media on rail related stories.

Railfuture SCOTLAND**donald.macphee@railfuturescotland.org.uk****Donald MacPhee**

Railfuture Scotland was delighted to host the 2012 Rail Re-openings Conference in Stirling. Topics included the Airdre-Bathgate, the Alloa reopening, the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Project (EGIP) and the Borders Rail scheme. There were also reports on Railfuture Scotland's recent and current campaigning.

It was somewhat of a relief when Network Rail appointed a contractor to deliver the Borders Railway Project late in 2012. Parliamentary authority for the line was granted in 2006 but Transport Scotland flirted with a "non-profit distributing project delivery vehicle" for several years before eventually seeing sense and appointing Network Rail to manage the project in 2011. This scheme will add to the impressive list of rail re-openings that have taken place in Scotland in recent times.

Existing rail service improvements include a new weekday service between Glasgow Central and Edinburgh calling at Motherwell, Wishaw, Carluke, Carstairs and Haymarket as well as improved journey times and increased services on Ayrshire and Inverclyde routes made possible by the recently completed Paisley Corridor Infrastructure Improvements which were originally intended to provide capacity for services to Glasgow Airport. Various routes now have improved Sunday services. There was also the introduction of electric trains on the Paisley Canal line. The electrification of this route was carried out under the auspices of a formal alliance between Network Rail and First Scotrail. One of the subsidiary benefits is that diesel units were released to strengthen other services.

Despite these successes there is still much to do and our campaigning continues for further improvements to rail services in all parts of Scotland.

Railfuture WALES/CYMRU**CAMBRIAN/Y CAMBRIAN****glyn.jones@railfuturewales.org.uk****Glyn Jones**

The Cambrian branch spent 2012 campaigning on issues that directly affect rail users on the Cambrian lines of mid and northwest Wales. In particular we continue to press the Welsh Government to facilitate the badly needed upgrade to an hourly service between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury, at present trains between the two towns run every two hours creating capacity problems and overcrowding, especially at peak times. The six-car trains promised by Arriva Trains Wales for the Cambrian main line last summer have not materialised and this too is an issue that we continue to pursue, although we commend the Welsh Government for refurbishing the fleet of class 158s used on the line, and as this work draws to a close the results have been much appreciated with the trains well presented.

As a branch we continue to work in partnership with other key groups and stakeholders to develop the provision of integrated community focussed services along the Cambrian lines, between Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth and Machynlleth – Pwllheli, highlighting in particular the potential of rail to increase tourism and it's positive impact on the local economies along the route of the line. We continue to work in close co-operation with the other Welsh branches, with the South Wales branch taking a lead role on behalf of ourselves in direct policy discussions with the Welsh Government.

NORTH WALES/GOGLEDD CYMRU**david.mawdsley@railfuturewales.org.uk****David Mawdsley**

2012 proved to be another difficult year for the North Wales branch of Railfuture. The Annual General Meeting held on 19th November was attended by only four members, with eight others sending apologies. None of those attending or sending apologies was prepared to accept nomination as an officer. In the circumstances the retiring treasurer and acting secretary agreed to continue in those positions on a caretaker basis.

The major difficulty facing the branch is that it covers a large geographical area, thus making it difficult to arrange meetings of members, several of whom have no access to public transport, particularly in the evening. Hitherto, meetings have been held about twice a year at Flint Town Hall, which is adjacent to the railway station, but the town is remote for those members in the western part of the branch's area. Attempts are being made to find a more central location convenient to a majority of members.

Given the small number of members attending meetings, it has not been thought appropriate to invite guest speakers. Accordingly, such limited meetings as have been held have tended to concentrate on a discussion of local issues and a consideration of the Wales Development Plan in the course of preparation by the South Wales branch. If a more convenient location for meetings proves attractive to members, it is hoped that more regular meetings will be possible.

SOUTH WALES/DE CYMRU**john.rogers@railfuturewales.org.uk****John D Rogers**

The year has been dominated by preparation of the 70-page, third edition of our influential Railfuture Cymru DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR WALES, the result of the deliberations of the Welsh branches [in consultation with the neighbouring English branches] and soon to be sent to all Welsh National Assembly Members, the local authority transport consortia and so on.

The SW committee has been able to meet with each of our transport ministers in Cardiff Bay, and at times, members of the transport civil service. Over the years, aspects of our policy and recommendations have been implemented – hence the word 'influential'!

The main news in 2012 was the long delayed Westminster go-ahead to electrify the first sections of the Welsh network, one of the last countries in Europe to be without this traction. We are pushing for full control of rail transport to be passed to the Welsh

Government so that there can be a rolling programme of electrification for an eventual 100% electrified network *together with* a gradual introduction of trams/light rail in the main urban areas. We were also pleased to see the re-opening in the summer of the Fishguard & Goodwick station in Pembrokeshire.

We also have a welcome regular invitation to the meetings of the local authority transport consortia, such as SEWTA, and committee members are also active in their own local area user groups – useful cross-fertilisation.

The branch was also represented at a recent government conference in Cardiff Bay and we were delighted at the enthusiasm shown by the Minister, Mr Carl Sergeant, for what is virtually our own Plan for a government owned, not-for-dividend Rail Wales [or whatever] after the expiry of the Arriva Trains Wales franchise. An encouraging number of Welsh organisations are now backing the principle – perhaps encouraged by the success of the similarly run Glas Cymru, the Welsh Water company.

We have also provided Railfuture input via consultation documents from many transport bodies, such as Active Travel Consultations, Passenger Focus, FGW and ATW re their timetables, and from time to time, the Welsh National Assembly itself.

Railfuture NORTHERN IRELAND

michael.stevenson@railfuture.org.uk

Michael Stevenson

Unlike other regions of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland has yet to seriously grasp the nettle of rail re-openings. Indeed the past six months has seen the province suffer a rail closure, albeit temporary, of the Coleraine to Derry/Londonderry section of the former Northern Counties line. Improvements to the infrastructure are progressing well, and the line is on schedule to re-open in April 2013, and play its part in the transportation of local people and visitors to the 'City of Culture'.

Nevertheless there are some positives to report. DEMU railcars (70-class later rebuilt as 450-class and 80-class) which had been the backbone of NIR traction since the late 1960s, made a final appearance in March 2012, just as the number of new 3-car CAF 4000 class units in service notched up to 10. Now all 20 units are available along with 23 existing 3-car CAF 3000 class units, which provide NIR with the greatest surplus in motive power since steam days. A new timetable, introduced on 6th January 2013, shows the Belfast to Coleraine service upgraded to hourly frequency and half-hourly at peak hours. This is a historic high for the route despite being single track for nearly 90% of its distance. The Belfast to Whitehead service has also been upgraded to 30-minute intervals off-peak.

It is expected that when the Coleraine to Londonderry service does resume, every other train will connect with Derry, thus providing a 2-hourly service.

To accommodate much greater use of 6-car sets, a programme of platform lengthening is almost completed. Most notable was the replacement of the short wooden bodied halt at Bridge End, East Belfast, by an extensive concrete and wheel chair friendly layout, which was also rebadged as 'Titanic Quarter'.

HOW MEMBERS CAN HELP *Railfuture*

Almost all *Railfuture* campaigning is funded by our members. As well as making a donation with your subscription there are other ways of helping *Railfuture*.

Can you recruit a new member? Online enrolment is available or a membership leaflet can be downloaded from www.railfuture.org.uk/join, or by contacting the Membership Secretary, 6 Carral Close, Brant Road, Lincoln LN5 9BD. membership@railfuture.org.uk

Why not volunteer to take an active role in National and local branch activities?

Try to attend one of *Railfuture's* national events. The **AGM** will be held at the City of Durham Town Hall, The Great Hall, Market Place, Durham High St., DH1 3NJ on Saturday 11th May 2013, starting at 11.00 (Registration from 10.00). We are also hosting a '**Rail Reopenings Conference**' at the Albemarle Centre, Albemarle Road, Taunton TA1 1BA on Saturday 22nd June 2013, and a **Rail Users Conference** at City of Oxford Town Hall, The Assembly Room, St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BX on Saturday 2nd November 2013. Full details (and online booking) available at www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences.

Join the *Railfuture* Lottery. 50% of the net receipts are paid out as prizes each month, with the remainder allocated to our Campaigns Fund. Details can be obtained from the *Railfuture* Lottery Organiser, 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND or visit www.railfuture.org.uk/lottery.

Consider making the Society a beneficiary of your will. Please consult your solicitor for advice on how to do this.

***Railfuture's* MISSION STATEMENT**

To be the number one advocate for the railway and rail users

Railfuture, is the campaigning name of the Railway Development Society Ltd, a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered in England and Wales No 5011634. Registered Office: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk, IP9 2ND

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk www.railwatch.org.uk



railfuture on twitter



railwatch on twitter



railfuture on Facebook



railfuture on LinkedIn



railfuture on YouTube
