



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 6 NOVEMBER 2008

RRUG MEMBERS' MEETING*

RUGBY TOWN HALL, WEDNESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER, 7.15 PM

Guest Speaker - Michael Lee, Director, Access, Planning and Performance, Office of Rail Regulation

With all the arguments exhausted on both sides about the impact on Rugby of the December 2008 timetable (see later) and with the track engineering and station works coming to an end, the RRUG Committee felt that further detailed debate on the implications of these issues would best be left until the New Year when the impact of both has been experienced first hand by Rugby Rail users.

However, the Committee recognises that these issues cannot be totally ignored in the intervening period and in order to respond to comments from some members about inviting senior figures in the railway industry to Rugby, the Committee is delighted to welcome Michael Lee from the Office of Rail Regulation. Michael will briefly outline the ORR's role and then focus more specifically on Rugby in terms of how the ORR can assist in developing a way forward which benefits Rugby Rail users.

Following Michael Lee, and the opportunity to ask questions, Paul Fullwood from Passenger Focus will make a short presentation before being joined by representatives from Virgin Trains, London Midland, and Network Rail for a panel discussion.

RRUG Chairperson Stephanie Clifford said, "Over the last two years the Committee, with the support of Rugby Rail users, has been working hard to lobby Ministers and the Department for Transport over improvements to the December 2008 timetable. The Committee is proud to report some success, but the campaign is set to go on".

"We don't know for certain what problems, if any, there will be with the new timetable, but Rugby passengers have a right to expect good performance. We will be monitoring the situation and we expect any problems of overcrowding or unreliability to be addressed as soon as they become evident."

"In the meantime members have this magnificent opportunity to question a senior figure in the rail industry as well as raise general questions through the panel discussion".

With a full Agenda, the meeting starts at 7.15pm prompt in the Council Chamber at Rugby Town Hall. Doors open 7.00pm.

* Entry is free to Members. Non-members can join at the door for £5.

Date for the Diary: Thursday 12th March 2009 - Council Chamber, Rugby Town Hall, 7:15pm to 8:45pm, Members' Meeting with Annual General Meeting - speaker to be announced.



The new timetable - train times for Rugby - starts December 14th

The much vaunted new timetable is set to commence on Sunday 14th December. Full details are now available from the online journey planners, but the main points for Rugby are:

Weekday fast services from Rugby to London:

06.03 (calls Milton Keynes and Watford),
06.20 (calls Northampton - note this train is overtaken by the 06.32 from Rugby)
06.32 (calls Milton Keynes),
06.53 (calls Milton Keynes),
07.08, 07.29, 07.55, 08.23, 08.46, 09.23,
then at 23 minutes past each hour until 21.23, then 21.28 (calls Milton Keynes),
22.31 (calls Milton Keynes and Watford), 22.43 (calls Milton Keynes and Watford),
23.43 (calls Northampton, Milton Keynes and Watford).

Weekday fast services from London to Rugby:

05.47 (calls Watford and Milton Keynes), 06.03 then hourly until 16.03,
then 16.33 (16.30 until Jan 23rd), 17.03, 17.33, 18.03, 18.33, 19.03, 20.03,
21.03 (calls Milton Keynes), 21.10 (calls Watford), 22.00 (calls Milton Keynes),
22.43 (calls Watford and Milton Keynes), 23.43 (calls Milton Keynes).

Weekday services from Rugby to Coventry and Birmingham:

05.37, 06.16, 06.51 then at 16, 37 & 51 mins past the hour until 20.51,
then 21.56, 22.16, 22.37, 23.16, 23.44
Fast Pendolino services are at 51 minutes past the hour

Weekday services from Birmingham and Coventry to Rugby (times from Birmingham):

05.29, 05.53, 06.19, 06.33 then at 33, 50 & 53 mins past the hour until 16.53,
then 17.13, then at 33, 50 & 53 mins past the hour until 21.53, then 22.10, 22.53, 23.10
Fast Pendolino services are at 50 minutes past the hour

Weekday fast services from Rugby to the Northwest:

06.45 (to Glasgow), 17.22 (to Preston), 18.22 (to Liverpool), 19.22 (to Liverpool),
22.03 (to Preston), 23.19 (to Manchester).

Weekday fast services from the Northwest to Rugby (times at Rugby shown):

06.30 (from Manchester), 06.51 (from Liverpool), 07.06 (from Preston),
07.27 (from Manchester), 07.52 (from Manchester), 08.44 (from Holyhead),
21.26 (from Preston), 22.29 (from Liverpool).

Local service from Rugby to Nuneaton, Tamworth, Lichfield, Stafford, Stoke and Crewe

06.02, 06.58, 08.03, then hourly until 17.03, then 20.03

Local service from Crewe, Stoke, Stafford, Tamworth and Nuneaton to Rugby

Arrives Rugby at 06.47 (starts from Rugeley), 08.18, 09.18, 10.18,
11.17, then hourly until 18.17, then 19.18 and 20.18

The information above is taken from the National Rail Journey Planner at the time of going to print, but alterations are always possible.

Note: No weekend trains at Rugby on 22/23 November, 29/30 November, 6/7 December.



DECEMBER 2008 TIMETABLE - starts 14th December! SOME SUCCESS, BUT THE CAMPAIGN GOES ON

After many months of hard work, culminating with the petition backed by the Rugby Observer and representatives of all the main political parties, Rugby Rail users can claim a significant victory in having services added to the December 2008 timetable.

Timetables published last autumn proposed that peak hour departures from Rugby station to London would be cut from December onwards, making overcrowding a certainty. Now, the track access application by Virgin Trains to the ORR shows that trains leaving Rugby at 0620 and 0653 have been restored. A meeting in March 2008 between Rugby MP Jeremy Wright, Rail Minister Tom Harris and RRUG Chairperson Stephanie Clifford discussed the trend towards earlier commuting, and RRUG followed this up with a written submission to the Department for Transport (DfT). RRUG believes that this led to the indicated increase in the frequency of London trains.

Stephanie Clifford said: "We now have absolute confirmation that these additional trains will run, and their appearance in the new timetable shows that the RRUG petition and campaign is getting results. We still deplore the withdrawal of fast services to Scotland, although our campaign has resulted in one early morning train being saved."

In addition to the extra services, a summary of the main changes:

Positives:

1. Increased service frequencies to Northampton (London Midland) and Birmingham (London Midland/Virgin Trains - both routes three trains per hour;
2. More connections opened up by the new London Midland stopping service to Crewe at Nuneaton (Nottingham), Tamworth (the Northeast) and Stoke (Manchester); and
3. The restoration of hourly through trains to Milton Keynes and Watford.

Negatives:

4. **Journey times** – disappointment that the new service to Milton Keynes and Watford has not been specified to run on the fast tracks (via Weedon), as this would reduce journey times by about twenty-five minutes. This would also have made it a viable through service to London both from Rugby and the Trent Valley stations. As it stands, off-peak passengers from, for example, Lichfield to London may find it beneficial to change from London Midland to Virgin at Rugby thus introducing a potential capacity issue.
5. **Virgin services to the north** - despite saving one early morning train, RRUG is still appalled by the removal of all other fast trains to Crewe and the Northwest (currently an hourly service). The alternative put forward by DfT initially of using the new London Midland service to Crewe (see 2) is not a viable option since the decision was made to route via Stoke, with four additional stops. This is a well-established route from Rugby; figures obtained by RRUG under Freedom of Information show that in excess of 100,000 journeys to/from Rugby via Crewe are made per year.



The Campaign goes on (continued):

During 2009 RRUG will be monitoring the impact of the new timetable and pressing hard to have more fast services to the north restored. Also, looking to the future there are the further implications of:

- The increase in commuting generally;
- The increase in population of Rugby, with up to 23,000 new homes planned;
- Passengers changing at Rugby to/from the London Midland train serving Nuneaton, Tamworth and Lichfield because this runs slow from Rugby to London; and
- Construction of the multi-storey car park at Rugby station.

RRUG will also be posing the question to DfT and others that if Virgin is not prepared to provide the services required at Rugby, then is there a gap in the market for an Open Access operator?

RRUG WEBSITE CHANGES

You may have experienced problems accessing the RRUG website recently. The reason is that webmaster Malcolm Smart is no longer in a position to host and maintain the website. The Committee wishes to thank Malcolm for his work since 2004 in developing the site which has become a well used and invaluable resource to the Group. The website has now been transferred to a new host, but more development work is required which will take place over the next few weeks. Please bear with us and support our new webmaster, and RRUG member, Robert Stevenson. Thanks to Robert for offering to take the job on.

More Members Needed!!!

RRUG currently has nearly 100 members.

Since RRUG started in early 2005, it has built up strong links with all the main players in the rail industry, including the DfT, Network Rail, London Midland and Virgin Trains, and the local authorities, WCC and RBC. RRUG has also developed a good working relationship with Virgin staff at Rugby station.

The more members we have the more we can claim to be the real voice of Rugby rail users. Membership forms are available on the RRUG website. It costs £5 to join.

Committee 2008/09:

Stephanie Clifford, Hilary Hall, Claire Wells, Alan Turner, David Carpenter, David Cheney, Chris Priddey, Jerry Thorne, Richard Ford, Robert Stevenson (co-opted).