

Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.

Feel free to forward RUEX to a colleague, or to reproduce items in your own newsletter (quoting sources). If you want further details of any of the stories mentioned, look on the relevant website or, failing that, get back to me, and I will send you the source material.

For details of group affiliation to Railfuture, see website [here](#) (from the "Membership Type" menu, select "RUG or similar").

STOP PRESS: Having finally received the corrections to the Summer timetable from Network Rail (NR), Middleton Press will after all produce a printed copy of the National Rail Timetable in the usual format, but in a limited edition. Copies can only be obtained direct from the company. The cost including delivery is £31.75, and orders must be received by 31 July. Standing orders are unaffected.

Meanwhile, the on-line version is as unhelpful as it could be: one has to download the whole zip file (84MB!) before navigating to the relevant table. A list of stations with a link from each to the table(s) concerned would be ideal; or a list of tables, each with a link and a description of its scope. NR also claims that: "Each train company produces timetables for their services, which are available at their stations. "But Govia Thameslink Rail has not produced a consolidated timetable for the current Thameslink or Great Northern service, on paper or on line, merely a series of pocket timetables for specific routes.

Roger Smith

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

Friends of the West Highland Lines – a step in the right direction

The Scotland Route Study sets out investment choices through to 2029. As well as more passing loops on the Oban, Fort William and Mallaig lines, some existing loops should be lengthened to accommodate longer tourist trains, and trackwork upgraded to increase speed through the loops, reducing journey times for passengers, and facilitating a growth in freight traffic.

FoWHL now has two committee members on ScotRail's Stakeholder Advisory Panel, which is seeking to create a new Community Rail Partnership, the "Lorn-Lomond CRP", for the Helensburgh – Oban line. The summer edition of West Highland News rounds up the many places to visit by train this summer. Increased services on the Oban line have helped to attract groups from as far away as Iceland to the handcrafted textile mill, which has been established at Dalmally station.

Speakers from ScotRail and Caledonian Sleepers addressed the AGM. Issues included changes to the rules for Club 55 (relaunched as Club 50 by Abellio), cancellations due to crew shortages, extra restrictions on the carriage of cycles, and an ongoing programme of tree clearance to restore iconic views from the train.

Levenmouth Rail Campaign

LMRC fears that Brexit may distract from the decision-making process, as constitutional matters take precedence, and if funding became scarcer. Meanwhile, the 2016 roadshow will be at Buckhaven Open Day (31 July), Silverburn Festival, Leven (13 August), and the Leven & District Flower & Crafts Show (27-28 August).

Support the Oldham Rochdale Manchester Lines (STORM) – competition for capacity

Passengers arriving at Rochdale without a ticket are being unfairly treated. There are many reasons why it may not have been possible to buy one, for example if the train is overcrowded, making it physically impossible for the conductor to serve every passenger. Not everyone without a ticket is a fare-dodger. Arriva Staff should ascertain the reason for non-possession before penalising anyone.

A date for the opening of the new bay platform at Rochdale is still awaited. Currently, the Saturdays Only departures from Manchester Victoria at 2226 and 2321 could use it, rather than the crossover and reversing siding at Rochdale East junction. Whether any more use will be made of it from October or December 2016 is still unclear. The timetable recast in the new franchise will not be for another year.

Transport for Greater Manchester seems unable to influence stopping patterns that are not endorsed by Rail North: the specifications set out in the new franchises put the wishes of the Franchising Authority ahead of the needs of passengers. Once politics takes over from transport needs, the public will suffer.

Virgin Trains, Northern Rail, TransPennine Express, GWR and Merseyrail are represented on the steering group of the new Women in Community Rail, along with two community rail partnerships, two station friends of groups, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP), Merseytravel and Transport for Greater Manchester. The group is open to everyone, men as well as women, paid staff and volunteers.

East Suffolk Transport Association – *united we stand*

NR hopes to have full digital signalling between Lowestoft/Yarmouth and Norwich by mid-2018, whilst track improvements at Oulton Broad Junction and the approach to Lowestoft station could allow higher speeds. NR would advise a TOC on any infrastructure enhancements that might be needed to run additional trains. Improvements in the Port of Felixstowe area have led to more reliable freight traffic, and partial doubling of the branch is also proposed. The leaf fall season in November 2015 had been fraught, with 40% of the leaves coming down in a single week. From 2016 the TOC would report any problems to NR on a daily basis.

At the AGM in May, in a presentation on Rail Development in East Anglia and the aspirations of Railfuture (to which ESTA is affiliated), Ipswich Councillor Philip Smart said "We don't do closing railways any more, we do building them." ESTA is pressing for hourly Sunday services on the East Suffolk Line by 2019, with four through trains to and from London, and more limited stop trains between Ipswich and Cambridge. Cambridge North station is due to open next May, with another serving Addenbrookes Hospital in planning. Compared with towns of similar size, Woodbridge warranted more trains; these could be provided by a half-hourly service from Saxmundham, with alternate trains omitting Wickham Market, Melton and Westerfield. Ipswich should have an extra platform, and the capacity of the Felixstowe line increased.

Hitchin Rail User Group – *Roll on 2018*

GTR have substantially altered its proposed Thameslink service pattern from 2018, to enable trains in the peak to arrive at either St Pancras and Blackfriars at a rate of 24 per hour. Cambridge – Brighton trains will now start back at Cambridge North, whilst the stopping service to Tattenham Corner will run instead to Maidstone East and Ashford. There will also be a Welwyn Garden City – Sevenoaks service. Following a 3-month consultation on structure and calling patterns, a full draft timetable will be published in the New Year. Meanwhile, Thameslink has seen the inaugural run of a Class 700 train in passenger service between Brighton and London Bridge. As more are introduced in the autumn (see next item), nearly new Class 387 stock will transfer to Great Northern to replace the ageing Class 317s and 321s.

Association of Passenger Train Users (Thameslink North)

From 11 July, there will be three Class 700 units in service, and then two more every fortnight. The revised 2018 timetable has two additional semi-fast services from Luton to Dartford and Rainham via London Bridge, which could be 12-car trains; Wimbledon loop services will now terminate at St Albans, whilst Caterham and Tattenham Corner services will remain part of the Southern network.

Chesham & District Transport Users' Group

Operational issues include the landslide between Chorleywood and Rickmansworth, trains departing early, bright sunlight preventing drivers from seeing their monitors, and the early overnight closure for tunnel work between Finchley Road and Baker Street. Efforts continue to provide step-free access at Amersham Station; the Group has made the new Mayor of London aware of this and other issues.

Windsor Lines Passengers Association

The latest WLPA newsletter lists its aspirations: 9 achieved, only 26 to go! I am indebted to it for alerting me to the reluctant decision by the Middleton Press to replace the printed copy of its Comprehensive Rail Times by the British pages from its European timetable, which covers only Principal stations on Main Line and Rural Routes. See, however, the breaking news in my editorial – Ed.

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Bedwyn is now a penalty fare station, but GWR accepts there are times when buying before boarding is not possible, for instance if there is a problem with the ticket vending machine (TVM), or if a customer wishes to pay by cash and the TVM only takes cards. A Penalty Fare would not be issued in this instance. Customers should however ensure they purchase their ticket at the earliest opportunity. Announcements regarding the change were made for over a month before it happened. GWR has adopted the Transport Focus Treating Customers Fairly approach: staff are briefed to help customers who have made a genuine mistake, and penalise only those who it is felt are deliberately trying to evade payment. Anyone who feels they have been treated unfairly has 21 days in which to appeal to Independent Transport Associates Ltd, and GWR will abide by their decision. Arriva take note!

East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership

With help from First Community, Pfizer, South West Trains, Petersfield Tesco and East Hampshire District Council, volunteers have brightened up the front of Petersfield Station and the Old Parcels Office as part of a project to provide a “Welcome to Petersfield and the South Downs National Park” in the Summer holiday. Spare plants, books or CDs for use here, or at Liphook, Liss or Rowlands Castle, are always welcome! Look out for more improvements and information in the near future!

Rail & Bus for Herefordshire

The franchises of all three TOCs that serve Herefordshire are coming up for renewal. RBfH is discussing with the Welsh Government and the DfT whether the Marches line should be in the new Welsh franchise, or taken into an English one. And could electrification of the Bristol and South Wales line herald the end of through trains between Hereford and London via Worcester and the Cotswold line?

Capacity is also an issue, particularly at Bromsgrove, which has a new station and car park but no extra trains. Re-signaling the Marches Line seems to be on hold, but Birmingham trains off the Worcester line arriving at platforms one and two of Hereford Station can now reduce their turn-round time by returning wrong line to Shelwick Junction. Doubling of the line from there to Ledbury is a high priority in the Marches Local Enterprise Board report, but is not yet in NR’s capital programme. However, a dynamic loop between Stoke Edith and Shelwick Junction, like that on the Cambrian Line between Welshpool and Newtown, would be an alternative solution at less cost.

The group is also concerned about the social and economic impact of councils cutting bus subsidies in rural areas, in particular on the elderly, and on young people, who are deprived of the means to seek work, get to college or simply visit friends. Rail services rely on people being able to get to and from the station!

West Sussex Rail Users Association

The revised Monday to Friday timetables for the Southern network, which are expected to last for 4 weeks, should give passengers more certainty than the current hit and miss experiences. There is only the one change on the Arun Valley line, whereas the West Coastway services has lost all of its direct services from Brighton to Southampton, apart from 2 early morning trains. However, not all of the recent delays are down to Southern. Infrastructure problems with signals, points and level crossings, and speed restrictions such as Yapton, are down to NR.

Tarka Rail Association

The TRA has launched a new Strategy Document, which is available on its web site. It hopes that the ten-car Intercity Express Passenger (IEP) trains could divide at Exeter, with the front five cars providing Barnstaple with a direct service to London. The hugely successful HST charter from Paddington proved that such trains are able to use the line as it is, though infrastructure improvements are needed. The group was therefore very encouraged at a Community Rail Conference when NR devoted almost all of its presentation to the Tarka Line, and its remarkable growth.

At its AGM, Chairman Mike Day said he was very heartened by a meeting with Transport Minister Claire Perry, following her visit to Barnstaple. She and her staff recognized the importance of the line, and its economic value to North Devon. Chris Loder of South-West trains cited the operating constraints caused by the lack of passing loops, and drew a parallel with Salisbury - Yeovil; both were main lines with potential for growth. However, he reminded the meeting that, whilst raising line speeds was a key objective, NR was funded for operation, renewals and maintenance, not for enhancements.

RAILFUTURE



Railfuture's annual Rail User Group Awards aim to recognise and reward the achievement of the country's 300 RUGs in fulfilling Railfuture's mission: to be the number one advocate for the railway and rail users. They will be presented at its annual conference in Birmingham on 12 November in the following categories:

- 1 & 2 - Best newsletter - Gold and Silver awards [not available to last year's winners]
- 3 & 4 - Best website - Gold and Silver awards [not available to last year's winners]
- 5 - Best social media promotion
- 6 - Best campaign
- 7 - Best individual RUG campaigner [for Railfuture members only]
- 8 - Best new group
- 9 - Judges' Special Award

The closing date for nominations/submissions is Saturday 3 September 2016. For details about how to make a nomination, see the website at: www.railfuture.org.uk/RUG+Awards. Just click on the logo on the left side of the Railfuture homepage.

The Railfuture Board has reviewed the responsibilities of its directors. Chris Page is confirmed as national chairman, whilst as national Vice Chair, Allison Cosgrove will look to reinvigorate branches. Stewart Palmer takes over Corporate Governance, assisted by Wendy Thorne, whilst Jerry Alderson adds IT to the Finance portfolio. Chris Hyomes is the new Communications Director, with the key role of increasing the use of social media, and ensuring that branches keep their web pages up to date. Roger Blake has been appointed Campaigns Director, and Ian Brown remains Policy Director.

David Harby is standing down from his position as Acting Finance Officer at the end of 2016, and needs a replacement by 1 October to help draft the 2017 budget. And after more than a decade as Reporting Accountant, Tony Sheward is also retiring; he needs to be replaced by January 2017. The new role of Membership Director is also vacant. Please contact Jerry Alderson or David Harby for more information about any of these vital posts. The Board is keen to attract new members with up-to-date workplace skills and having greater diversity, and will work with Young Rail Professionals to attract younger activists.

RAILWATCH

Ray King, co-editor of the Railfuture magazine Railwatch, welcomes reports from the grassroots. So if you are campaigning at a local level, tell him what you are doing, and how it is going. Your stories and pictures could help others. Please advise him in advance of any input, so he can reserve space for it. The copy deadline for the next issue is 1 September, but the sooner he has it, the better. So make it early, make it accurate - but don't make it up! Nor is it too soon to start thinking about content, including photographs, for the Annual Review of Railfuture's successes that will accompany the March 2017 issue.

WALES AND BORDERS BRANCH

The new transport minister in the Welsh Assembly is Ken Skates, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure. A new scrutiny committee will replace the Business and Enterprise Committee; details of a new company Transport for Wales are on its web site.

Reporting as it does directly to the DfT and ORR, GWR seems to have no obligation to consult with anybody in Wales. Closure of the Severn Tunnel in the autumn will see the loss of three weekday trains per hour in each direction between Cardiff and Newport; two between Cardiff and Severn Tunnel Junction; two between Swansea, Cardiff and Newport, and three between Newport and Swansea, including commuter trains. GWR has tried to maintain present service timings west of Newport, and also continue to serve Carmarthen. However, a retimed GWR train has caused two Arriva Trains Wales services to be cancelled. On the other hand, Cross Country have accepted Railfuture's suggestion that many of its Cardiff to Nottingham services should call at Severn Tunnel Junction.

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

Restoration of the Wisbech line has attracted a flurry of political activity. At a conference in London on expanding the railway, the Transport Secretary alluded to its "well-advanced plans"; then, on a visit to the town, Communities and Local Government Secretary Greg Clarke said that people should view the link "not as a special favour to Wisbech, but as an opportunity to invest in the prosperity of our country".

The Branch is campaigning for a single line from Cambridge North - Haverhill with a half-hourly service. Although a recent report estimated the Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) as 0.99, half that needed for a scheme to be considered viable, it could be substantially higher for various reasons: capital costs were inflated; the growth assumed was much less than Cambridge is actually experiencing, and rail travel is becoming increasingly important. See: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Haverhill>.

The news on East West rail is mixed. The Central Section between Bedford and Cambridge received a boost when the Chancellor directed the National Infrastructure Commission to support the EWR Consortium. The proposed "line on the map" should be unveiled shortly, whilst a 125mph capability would substantially enhance its business case. In the west, the extension from Oxford Parkway into the City has been approved, and Chiltern hopes to start services in December 2016. However, at the other end of the Western Section, electrification will end at Bletchley, and there are currently no plans to upgrade the Marston Vale line from there to Bedford, or increase the line speed from just 60mph.

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS

An ACoRP project supported by the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership has been awarded £75,000 from DfT's Heritage and Community Rail Tourism Innovation Competition. A new website to be launched in 2017 will promote the UK's community rail lines and heritage railways both at home and abroad. Published in several European languages, and user-friendly on every type of device, the site will use Britain's most scenic lines to "hook" tourists, and then introduce them to a wide range of regional lines.

TRAVELWATCH

BBC Panorama is making a programme about train services in the UK, and invites passengers and User Groups to share their experience. They are seeking a local perspective from the regions, as much as from London, and want to find out more about what Travelwatch does. Please respond to Celia Watson at celiaw@filmsofrecord.com, ideally by 31 Jul.

TRAVELWATCH NORTHWEST

In April and May, TWNW monitored rail and road replacement services (RRRS) during the blockade of the West Coast Main Line. Services were generally provided between Preston and Carlisle via intermediate points, but on some weekends on to Glasgow and Edinburgh. There was much to commend, but also inconsistency, examples of poor quality, and a lack of information at change points, stations and on board trains and buses. Thus information at Kendal station was non-existent, some RRRS were inadequate or inappropriate, destination information was inconsistent, and revenue protection non-existent.

On the popular tourist route between Oxenholme and Windermere, there were problems accommodating the substantial quantity of luggage, with rucksacks blocking the aisle. And on a Lancaster to Windermere service, the 3 + 2 seating pattern on a coach normally used for school contracts proved very cramped, and wholly unsuitable. Wherever possible, diversionary rail routes were preferable to RRRS, despite the extended journey times. Also, passengers should not have to pay a train fare for an inferior bus journey: every passenger affected should be compensated whenever RRRS are used, and for whatever reason.

CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT

Rail minister Claire Perry responded to the CfBT campaign for flexible ticketing but, after spending £37million on its South East Flexible Ticketing Scheme, the DfT abandoned it. Instead, it wants the rail industry to introduce flexible ticketing and smart cards. CfBT is working closely with Transport for the North to advance smart ticketing. It hopes that local authorities will make full use of the powers in the Bus Services Bill to plan and manage their bus services, and introduce tickets that can be used across various operators and modes of transport. Integration of bus and train services is essential to provide the travelling public with a real alternative to using the car.

TRANSPORT FOCUS

TF has published its latest rail passenger satisfaction figures. Despite welcome investment, as numbers rise passengers are suffering delays and cancellations. Simply getting on a train has become a struggle for some. Both planned and unplanned disruption needs better management, with compensation to acknowledge the problems that passengers have experienced. This could include meeting a promise to cut the threshold for Delay Repay from 30 minutes to 15.

ENGLISH REGIONAL TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

Although the majority of just 25 responses to an ERTA survey in Roade, between Northampton and Milton Keynes, had supported the option of a bypass and a new station, at a meeting to discuss the idea local opinion was generally against the idea. The group continues to campaign to reopen the line between Northampton and Bedford, and Ampthill station on the Thameslink line.

letters

Ed: The following letter of mine in the Telegraph attracted comments from Chris Page and Bryan Burdett.

RS: "By the time that HS2 is built, the EU Directive that required it to be a high speed line will now no longer apply. However, the growth in rail travel means that we will need the additional capacity, that only a new line could provide without massive disruption to existing lines. So rather than scrap the project entirely, why not redesign the line to the standard of the existing trunk network? The Class 800 trains that will be brought into passenger service next year have a potential top speed of 140mph."

CP: “The opportunity to reduce costs by lowering the speed comes primarily from reducing the constraints on the choice of alignment. However [that] choice has now been made, so the opportunity of reducing cost has gone. Whilst there is no real need for 400kph trains, as much of the route is limited to less, there would be nothing to gain from limiting it to 225kph. The speed at which trains actually run will be determined later by market forces. [Railfuture] campaigning has focused on the capacity and connectivity issue throughout.”

BB: “Yes, the EU directive...will no longer apply, and we can now look at other less expensive options. I have always seen gauge as the restricting factor in gaining a significant increase in rail capacity in the UK. The constraint is, as it was in Brunel's time, the need for compatibility with other companies and routes in a network that was much more interconnected than it is today. One cannot escape the fact that had Brunel's preferred gauge been accepted one hundred and fifty years ago, the capacity of our present railway network would be at least twice what it is today.

“If one is building a new line such as HS2, that benefit is surely worth considering? Interfacing with other gauges has been managed successfully in Spain, Australia and elsewhere. So perhaps with new technology routes the need to interface is a secondary benefit compared with capacity? The civil engineering for many miles of the present UK network (tunnels, embankments, etc) was put down to serve a broad gauge system and this could be the base for an initial foray into the possibilities of using a wider gauge. Railfuture UK should be looking at this as a longer-term option.”

...and now the rest of the news ...

During a visit of Her Majesty The Queen to the extension to Bond Street station currently under construction, it was announced that Crossrail1 would be known as The Elizabeth Line in her honour. The project is almost 75% complete: 13km of track has been laid in the central tunnel section; Transport for London (TfL) Rail services between Shenfield and Liverpool Street began last May; Canary Wharf station was completed in September, 4 months ahead of schedule; the designs of West Ealing and Southall stations have been approved; the civil engineering work at Acton dive-under and Stockley flyover is approaching completion, and the rebuild of Abbey Wood station is well underway.

Chris Grayling has taken over as Transport Secretary in Theresa May's government, whilst the new Rail Minister is the Rt Hon John Hayes, MP for South Holland and The Deepings (around Spalding, Lincs.), who was briefly a transport spokesman under David Cameron in 2005. Claire Perry has resigned.

The DfT has published the Invitation to Tender for its South Western franchise, to run from 2017 to 2024:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-western-franchise-2016-invitation-to-tender>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/south-western-rail-franchise>

With 150 brand new train carriages, and new and longer platforms at Waterloo, it is looking to bidders to make best use of this additional capacity – and then to go even further, with innovative proposals to deliver even more trains, more space, and shorter journey times. Highlights include:

- at least 95 additional weekday services from December 2018
- Waterloo services to Reading and to Windsor and Eton Riverside both doubled from 2 tph to 4
- earlier first trains and later last trains on many routes from December 2018
- shorter journey times on at least 70% of services from December 2020
- peak time capacity increased by at least 20% in from December 2020
- a new delay repay compensation system for passengers, with a quicker and simpler claims process
- new smart ticketing technology, and new tickets for part-time workers.

It has also updated both the Northern Rail and Transpennine rail franchise agreements, although there is no indication as yet of the scale of the changes, whether they are far-reaching or simply cosmetic:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-rail-2016-rail-franchise-agreement>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transpennine-express-2016-rail-franchise-agreement>

The recent Bus Services Bill exempts rail replacement services, and seeks to bring real-time information for bus passengers up to the standard provided for rail passengers. Ticketing schemes should embrace other modes of transport (e.g. rail, tram, ferry), whilst Government can help align fares and ticketing to enable passengers to transfer seamlessly between services provided by different operators. However, schemes to improve bus services could come at the expense of other transport schemes.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-bill-overview>

The first of a fleet of 57 Class 800 Intercity Express Passenger (IEP) trains has been unveiled at Paddington station. GWR ran a special service to mark 175 years since the opening of the Great Western Main Line. The trains will enter service from next summer, and are expected to operate on services between London and Reading, Oxford, Swindon, Bath, Bristol and South Wales, and on the north and south Cotswold lines.

Rail minister Claire Perry intervened in the Southern rail dispute to reassure on-board staff about their role in future franchises. On the new trains, the driver operates the doors, so that the on-board conductor is free to assist passengers. The rail regulator is content that this is a safe method of working. Future franchises will require operators to invest in the skills of their workforce, including on-board staff, so there is no threat from the new trains to safety, jobs or pay, and thus no excuse for industrial action. However, she has just resigned. On Wednesday, she said that the chaos on Southern routes “feels like a failure”. The refusal by the RMT union to call off the action in the light of her reassurance above may have been the last straw. As an active proponent of developing the rail network, she will be greatly missed - Ed.

Professor Stephen Glaister will now chair the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) until 31 December 2017. The ORR reports that, in the year 2015-16, NR had a good safety record, and made progress in improving its infrastructure. However, this cost more than expected, and has yet to deliver improved performance across the network as a whole: <http://orr.gov.uk/news-and-media/press-releases/2016/orrs-annual-assessment-of-network-rail-good-on-safety-but-network-performance-needs-to-improve>

Following repairs to a major landslip, the iconic Settle to Carlisle line will fully reopen by the end of March 2017. The track will be re-laid on a 1.5 metre-thick, 100 metre-long concrete slab, 70 metres above the River Eden, and supported by hundreds of high-strength piles – steel tubes filled with concrete – driven into the sloping bedrock of the Eden gorge. Extensive earthworks will protect the foot of the bank down to the river. Drainage systems, ‘rock armour’ to guard against erosion, and tree replanting will stabilise the land. <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/news/2016/jul/Settle-Carlisle-to-reopen-March-2017/>

The National Assembly for Wales Research Service has published a discussion paper on the future of passenger rail in the next Wales and Borders rail franchise. It has concerns regarding both the shape of the next franchise and its affordability were the more financially viable cross-border services to be transferred to English franchises. There would be an impact too on passengers, if they had to change trains at the border. <https://assemblyinbrief.wordpress.com/2016/06/16/the-future-of-passenger-rail>

and finally...

Letter in the Daily Telegraph, 20 June: “SIR – I thought it was remarkable that it took [Major Tim Peake](#) only around three hours to return to Earth from the International Space Station; over the past week, it took us the same length of time to travel from London Victoria to Eastbourne, due to the miserable train service currently offered by Southern Railway.”

What does one make of a DfT document entitled “Guidance on the scope of the Recast First Rail Package Transposition Regulations (The Railways (Access, Management and Licensing of Railway Undertakings) Regulations 2016)”? In fact, it rationalises a number of Statutory Instruments that enshrine various EU Directives in UK law. [But maybe not for much longer! – Ed.]

EVENTS (See also the [Events listing on the Railfuture website](#))

Blob colour indicates the various types of event:

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

July

- 18. Monday. Harrow Public Transport Users' Association, Baptist Church, College Road, **Harrow**, 1930. Also 26 Sep (AGM).
- 20. Wednesday. Association of Community Rail Partnerships, Members' Seminars North; Bar Convent, **York**.
- 21. Thursday. Association of Community Rail Partnerships, Members' Seminars South, DfT, **London**; <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>
- 20. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton line AGM, *Sloop* inn, **Barton**, 2000. enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk. (Also 16 Nov and 21 September, No 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes** Station.)
- 21. Thursday. English Regional Transport Association (ERTA) AGM, The Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London, WC1X 8JR. 19:30.
- 27. Wednesday. Levenmouth Rail Campaign, Fife Renewables Innovation Centre, Methil Docks, 1830. (Also 12 September, 12 October, 16 November (to be confirmed).)

August

- 8. Monday. Bexhill Rail Action Group, Hastings Direct, **Collington**. 1900-2100. Also 12 Sep, 10 Oct, 12 Nov. December in a local hostelry. <http://www.bexhillrailaction.org.uk/>.
- 8. Monday. Ribble Valley Rail, New Inn, **Clitheroe**.
- 9. Tuesday. Chesham Transport Users' Group, Town Hall, **Chesham**, 1930. Also 20 September, 25 October, 13 December.
- 13. Saturday. Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association, Borth, 1215. (Also 10 September, Welshpool, 1130; 8 October (AGM), **Machynlleth**, 1100; 1 November, **Newtown**; 10 December, Aberystwyth, 1145.)

Further Ahead

- 24 September. Passenger Group Meeting, Birmingham, 13:00. Also 10 December (London).
- 29 September. ACoRP Community Rail Awards 2016, Floral Hall, **Southport**.
- 6 October. Capital Rail Action Group, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, **Edinburgh**, EH1 2JL, 1930. (Also 3 November, and a special meeting on 24 November with Christian Wolmar and Nigel Harris).
- 15 October. East Suffolk Transport Association Autumn Meeting, St Johns Church Hall, **Woodbridge**, 14:00.
- 17 October. Avocet Line, AGM - **Topsham**).
- 29 October. Railfuture Away Day, Priory Rooms, Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham, B4 6AF, 1000.
- 12 November. Saturday. Rail User Conference, Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, **Birmingham**, 1000 for 1045. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

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