



June 2017

Welcome to the Rail User Express.

Feel free to forward it to a colleague, or to reproduce items in your own newsletter (quoting sources). For further detail of any of the stories mentioned, consult the relevant website, or come back to [me](#) for the source material. Please say if you no longer wish to receive Rail User Express, or if you know of anyone who would like to be added to the circulation list.

I do try to keep politics out of RUEx, but since the election they have intruded into every sphere of activity. On the one hand, we don't have to bring a whole new government up to speed, and Chris Grayling has retained his position as Secretary of State for Transport. However, the danger is that anything the least bit controversial will be shelved. We need to continue to lobby vigorously for what needs to be done.

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 Far North Line

FoFNL contrasts the £3 billion spent on dualling the A9 between Perth and Inverness to save about 20mins with the lack of funding for the Highland Main Line, which is beset with single line working. The fastest train from Edinburgh to Perth (1334) takes 76 mins, 11 mins longer than in 1895! Refurbished 40 year old HSTs will offer some improvement from 2018, but the diesel engines in the current design of bi-mode trains could not cope with the HML gradients. Electrification cannot come soon enough. Alternatively, reinstating the direct route via Kinross would cut 10 miles off the journey and save up to 35 mins to both Perth and Inverness.

Since last October, FoFNL has recorded weekly figures for late running and cancellations; aggregation in the official figures obscures the detail. On-time arrivals were as low as 20% initially, but rose steadily to top 77% in mid-January. Since then they have hovered around 70%, but dipped to 50% for two weeks in May. The [figures](#) are published on the FoFNL web site, as are its detailed [responses](#) to Scotland's Rail Infrastructure Strategy and 2017 High-Level Output Specification (HLOS) due out shortly.

Friends of the West Highland Lines

Passenger numbers between Oban and Crianlarich have markedly increased since the service was doubled in May 2014. The 'school train' from Dalmally (0520 ex Glasgow Queen St) has seen numbers there quadruple from 1,945 to 8,338 between 1998 and 2015. On weekends in March, track renewal between Gorton and Rannoch saw the Caledonian Sleeper diverted to Oban. According to the MoD, the expansion of Faslane naval base could justify a new station at Shandon to replace the one that closed in 1964.

The Scottish Government has published Delivering Your Goods, a guide to the benefits of rail freight. Ironic then that the demise of the oil tanker train and the possible withdrawal of alumina into the smelter at Fort William could see the West Highland Line without any freight for the first time since it opened in 1894! And as David Spavin explains, appropriate pump priming from the Scottish Government could open up the whisky industry to rail. Lifting the Spirit, a trial programme of rail services in 2013, did not take off, but thousands of lorries could be removed from the A9 and A95.

Levenmouth Rail Campaign

Restoration of rail services to Levenmouth via the existing line from Thornton could be achieved in Control Period 6 (2017-24) and, together with bus connections, would transform public transport to the East Neuk of Fife. A full complement of constituency and regional MSPs turned up to present a petition of 12,506 to Transport Minister, Humza Yousaf – effectively a third of the Levenmouth population. However, his latest response was rather discouraging, with yet more work needed on the business case despite the exhaustive, revised STAG Report submitted 6 months ago, and another reference to a planned change of approach in considering new rail projects. But the Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.31 - far higher than that for the Borders line – will further increase as project costs reduce upon detailed survey, whilst any new approach to rail investment should not effectively freeze projects that are already well advanced.

Rail Action Group, East of Scotland

RAGES has succeeded in curbing the excessive rise in fares from Dunbar. The day return to Edinburgh has decreased by £1 to £11.90, and can be used to travel to and from Waverley, Haymarket, Park and Gateway. However, the single fare remains unaltered at £8.40, and the ticket machines have not been updated with the new lower fare, an inconvenience to passengers and station staff alike.

Campaign for Borders Rail

A 20-page CBR report makes the commercial, social and economic case to extend Borders Rail via Hawick to join the West Coast Main Line at Mossband, just north of Carlisle, and so provide a new strategic link in the national network, and reconnect more places on the 98-mile Waverley Route before it closed in 1969. Communities not directly served would benefit from connecting bus services and Park & Ride stations. CBR claims that such an extension is the only realistic way to address economic and social problems faced by the Scottish Borders, and release their full potential. Its Chairman, Allan McLean, presented the first copy of the report to Humza Yousaf MSP, Scotland's Minister for Transport and the Islands.

Copeland Rail Users Group

A meeting on 3 May convinced CRUG that Northern are genuinely trying to improve the service, and are not shying away from poor reliability levels - they get more complaints from Cumbrian Coast line passengers than from the rest of their network combined! The issue is trying to run a service with museum quality stock not designed for start-stop running. Top'n'tailing sets with a pair of locos would reduce the stress on each, and ensure that a spare was already attached should one fail. NR is confirming that the track can take it, although Tony Potts recalls a previous use: a single Class 37 was to have had a Driving Brake Standard Open (DBSO) at the other end so that it did not have to "run round" the train at the end of each journey, but the DBSOs weren't ready, so top'n'tailing was used in the interim. The distance to step down from the carriage of a loco-hauled train onto the northbound platform at Seascale has also drawn a complaint. To save raising the height of the platform, Martin Bibby suggests replacing the loco hauled trains with Pacers; the one already on this line is always on time, does not break down and is very easy to board and alight from. Others, though, may prefer a Harrington hump!

The May 2018 timetable due out in August will definitely include Sunday services, later evening trains and an afternoon gap-filler. Northern are actively discussing line capacity with NR, and eyeing an improvements package of around £400m, to include signalling, double tracking where possible, and speed increases. However, any changes driven by the Moorside project are in doubt given Toshiba's financial situation.

Keswick to Penrith Railway Project

Keswick to Penrith was included in the first edition of Cumbria County Council's Local Transport Plan, but omitted from later versions. And whereas feasibility studies and consultations for road schemes enjoy Government funding, rail projects have to find their own - and investors expect a return.

The National Parks Authority wants 40% of visitors to reach the Lake District by public transport. Currently about 95% of 23 million or so visitors come by car, seeing little alternative. They spend over £950M/year, although business volumes in areas such as Keswick are effectively "capped" when the car parks are full. A passenger railway forming part of the national network would tap into this potential: a frequent service, with double track sections re-instated and longer trains on the most popular services, could take most of North Lakes' visitors off the roads, but even an hourly service to Keswick could provide 1 million return journeys per annum.

Friends of the Settle – Carlisle Line

The Settle Carlisle line fully re-opened on the 31 March, some thirteen months after the line was severed at Eden Brows. As well as the re-opening special hauled by Flying Scotsman, a freight train traversed the S & C en route to Scotland early the same day, so the line was back in use for all types of traffic. The good news is that passenger numbers have jumped dramatically during April, so much so that some trains are full and standing. After all the favourable publicity, this is not what the customer wants or expects.

So could a regular steam service be profitable on the S&C? For 22 weeks of every year, in the far north west of Scotland, West Coast Railways of Carnforth operate the Jacobite from Fort William to Mallaig alongside the normal Scotrail diesel services. Steam trains cost more to travel on, but visitors flock there. Some take steam in one direction and diesel in the other. It boosts the local economy and is successful by any measure. Meanwhile, the railway facilities of Hellifield lie unexploited and neglected. FoSCL lives in hope that somebody has heard the wake-up call.

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User group

On 17 May, LASRUG joined the Leeds-Morecambe CRP (LMCRP) at Lancaster station in promoting the Bentham Line as part of the nationwide launch of Scenic Rail Britain and 'Community Rail in the City' day. The new Bowland Explorer service operated by The Travellers' Choice started on 7 May, and connects with rail services from Leeds and Skipton at Bentham, and from Manchester, Bolton and Blackburn at Clitheroe.

The proposed Northern timetable from May 2018 onwards contains most of the improvements to services that should have been implemented in December. The Bentham Line will see the following improvements:

- Monday to Saturday services increase from 5 to 8 each way, and cover a longer period of the day
- Sundays services increase from 4 to 5 each way, with a morning service to Leeds and an early afternoon service from Leeds
- Earlier and later commuting services from Lancaster to Leeds
- A mid-evening service from Leeds after 1915
- A late evening eastbound service to Skipton, departing Lancaster after 2100.

The LMCRP and local rail user groups have spent much time and effort in gaining these improvements, and hope to see greater use of the Bentham Line both by local communities and visitors to the area. LASRUG would now like an even distribution of services during the day, and the commuter service arriving in Lancaster before 0900 brought forward to May 2018 from December 2019.

Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership

Reopening the 12 miles of line between Skipton and Colne to create a new East-West rail route for both passengers and freight could really be on. Local and national planners, and policymakers of every political hue, now accept that rail capacity is a very real problem, and the route would add capacity, flexibility and resilience to the whole pan-Northern network. A consultant report "Central trans-Pennine Corridor: East-West Connectivity: An Economic Study" published in March is a game changer. It justifies transport interventions across a corridor from Burnley to Leeds, and states that:

- Improving rail travel would deliver a greater economic impact over a wider area than road schemes
- Skipton-Colne would "in effect join two discrete parts of the rail network and provide a more coherent network across the study area as a whole"
- Its benefits would be "significantly in excess of other tests undertaken within study", and also benefit other parts of the corridor by re-routing existing flows, eg freight
- More effective use of existing infrastructure, and an upgraded Colne branch, would drive economic growth, employment opportunity and job creation, as well as housing, leisure and tourism
- Overall, it has potential to add a third more to the 25% improvement already demanded by TfN

The effect could be "transformational". Modelling within the study shows that reopening the line would increase Gross Domestic Product £43.5million/year; it would pay for itself in under 3 years!

Bolton Rail Users Group

Jeff Davies (01204 412503) is finding the choice of web hosting and building services bewildering, and price comparison difficult, as you need to consider prices from the second year, as well as the first year's freebie offer to get you hooked. Most offer a months' free trial, but you have to sign up indefinitely and move everything over. He wonders if any other RUGs could recommend a provider with a suitable system at a fair price that provides for online processes for new members joining and for receiving donations.

The Northern Weekly Salvo (Paul Salvesson)

Paul's Sunday walk in the Peak District ended up some way from Hope station where it had started, but as he was about to return, the heavens opened. Then he saw it: a 273 bus, sat in a lay-by just about to set off. It dropped him at the bottom of the road up to the station, and his train arrived within 3 minutes. So it does pay to plan ahead, find out what public transport connections exist, and then use them or lose them.

Following the election, Paul says it's time to put up the Northern Umbrella, and take the debate beyond the usual suspects and into the towns and villages. So how appropriate that its first open meeting is in the little village of Croston, on the Preston – Ormskirk line, which exemplifies all that's wrong with our rail network: Pacer operation, terrible track, single-line, a completely inadequate timetable and no Sunday service at all. The meeting is at the Twin Lakes Velo Cafe on Monday 26 June at 1915 (1904 train from Preston arr 1917, five minutes' walk to the Cafe; return 2111 or 2311).

Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association

MCRUA has received a draft timetable for the Mid Cheshire line from May 2018. The service is much improved, but Northern has asked MCRUA not to undertake any PR or share the consultation information. The decline in Train Performance, primarily due to track maintenance with temporary speed restrictions (TSRs), appears to have been reversed. It had got so bad that the Mid Cheshire Line even managed to displace Southport to Manchester Airport at the bottom of the table! Work to remove TSRs continues, and the figures should improve from early summer. Meanwhile, the Crewe-Liverpool Line is not seeing any developments as the end of the current franchise approaches. Off-Peak Day Return fares within the TfGM area have increased by 50p as stipulated in the new franchise, so as to harmonise fares on either side of the TfGM boundary.

Following its direct franchise extension, Cross Country is now providing £10,000 a year to Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership (CRP); Sally Buttifant, its staff member, now works 4 days a week. The CRP continues to promote the Line and its attractions. Vintage travel posters with a modern take will be on display at Lion Salt Works from 5 August until early September, with the artist and Sally giving a talk at 1400 on Sunday 6 August. The CRP is planning to update its booklets featuring walks from stations on the Mid Cheshire Line, but needs volunteers to try them out. Please contact Sally if you can help with this.

On 28 March, Neil McArthur, the founder of TalkTalk, launched a £30 million scheme to reopen Glazebrook to Skelton Junction (Timperley) as a heritage line with steam traction. Cadishead viaduct over the Manchester Ship Canal would be restored, and West Timperley, Partington and Cadishead stations reopened, but further detail remains to be confirmed. The section of line between Glazebrook East and Partington Junctions closed in August 1982, and traffic from there to Skelton Junction ended on 10 October 1993, although that section is still officially open.

Friends of Barton Line

EMT revenue management are considering FBLs' request for cheap-day return fares, as the Brigg line has succeeded in getting to Lincoln. FBL also want through ticketing on the Humber Fastcat 350 bus between Barton and Hull. North Lincolnshire Council is withdrawing its free rail travel passes for disabled persons and discounted rail fares for the elderly. On-board conductors on the Barton line are now issuing paper tickets rather than card. FBL has suggested that North and North-east Lincolnshire Councils ask to be represented on the Transport Committee of East Midlands Councils. DfT's £31,700 Rail Tourism Award to Community Rail Humber is funding a new Cleethorpes to Scarborough railway map to replace the ones on the Barton line. Trans-Pennine Express will also display it at its Grimsby Town and Cleethorpes stations.

English Regional Transport Association

ERTA has launched a consultation on reopening over 50 miles of the Great Central line south of Leicester. Even if not currently affordable, at least the option to do so should be kept open over a 20-year planning cycle. However, given the 25 years of heroic effort that it took to reopen just 11 miles of the Swanage branch (see News below), this would seem to be somewhat ambitious, whatever its potential benefit.

Association of Public Transport Users (Thameslink North)

From 21 May, GTR Thameslink (*but not Great Northern – Ed.*) replaced its weekday Off-Peak ticket with two new tickets: a more expensive Off-Peak ticket with the same validity in the morning but which allows you to return in the peak, and a Super Off-Peak at the same price as the old Off-Peak ticket, but which is not valid until an hour later in the mornings (ie on trains arriving into London after 1100, not 1000) and not at all in the evening peak. The restriction on the validity of Railcards is unchanged. APTU is disappointed with the lack of consultation (*even at the Stakeholders' meetings in March – Ed.*), the poor implementation both online and on ticket vending machines, and the standard of communication to ticket office staff.

Hadley Wood Rail User Group

Hadley Wood's new accessible entrance officially opened on 26 May. For clarification, it is the first on the Great Northern route into Moorgate in **Greater London** - there are others outside the Oyster zone.

Tonbridge Line Commuters

Rather than detailing the train services required, the questions in the consultation document for the next South Eastern franchise are more open ended, raising the possibility of radical change such as redrawing the franchise boundaries. An alliance of rail user groups including TLC and chaired by the Campaign for Better Transport has set out the following shared goals:

- A fairer deal for part-time commuters that gives flexible workers a fair deal
- Value for money, including a commitment to always sell the cheapest ticket for a journey
- Better stations, including accessibility upgrades, eg a ramp on the down platform at Hildenborough
- Extra carriages on the shoulder of peak services, and services later in the day and on Boxing Day
- Protecting ticket office opening hours, and trained and visible staff on trains and at stations.
- Incentives to provide reliable, on-time trains that don't skip stations
- Formal recognition for rail user groups

The Kent Area Route Study sets out a draft strategy for improving the rail infrastructure in the Kent area up to 2044, including key choices for investment up to 2024. It acknowledges that capacity on the Tonbridge line is a key issue, and proposes a new siding in central London to create an extra train path for the Tonbridge service. However, whilst the Route Study acknowledges the constraints of the single-track tunnels on the Hastings Line, the list of potential schemes lacks any proposal to widen them. TLC will press for previous plans to be revived.

The two consultations differ in regard to the Tonbridge to Redhill line. The franchise consultation enthuses about a "London Orbital" service between Ashford and Reading, which TLC would strongly support, whereas the Route Study loftily dismisses the idea, claiming that "there is no specific connectivity gap between Kent and Gatwick Airport", an astonishing conclusion given that Kent is currently the only county in the South East which has no through train service to and from the Airport.

The new Eurostar e320 trains cannot currently call at Ashford owing to a signalling incompatibility, so the Ashford service has been reduced from three to two trains daily (using existing rolling stock) until the re-signalling project has been completed, but will then be fully restored. TLC is seeking reassurance from NR that the project is on track, and will monitor the situation closely to ensure that Eurostar keeps its word.

South Hampshire Rail Users' Group

SHRUG hails the transfer of the SWT franchise to First MTR South Western Trains Ltd from 2017 to 2024. CEO Tim O'Toole has promised to 'deliver the tangible improvements that customers and stakeholders have told us they want from this franchise'. The transfer should happen on 20 August, but Modern Railways, June 2017, wonders if it might have to be delayed as the signals at Waterloo that will allow access to the international platforms while platforms 1-9 are closed were not commissioned in May as planned.

Refurbished Class 442 Wessex Electrics will be reinstated on the London - Portsmouth route, and there will be 750 new suburban coaches by December 2020, with air conditioning, toilets and wide gangways and doors. Various routes will see faster journey times and additional services, and the Portsmouth – Southampton service will be extended to Weymouth. Southampton Central will see a major refurbishment, and plans are progressing for new stations including Park Barn and Merrow in the Guildford area, and Wilton Parkway outside Salisbury.

Plans for commercial and residential development on the Calshot power station site have revived the proposal to restore passenger trains to Hythe: three special services ran on 13 May to promote the idea. The latest scheme would see a half-hourly service linking Southampton Central, Totton, Marchwood, Hythe Town and (eventually) Hythe & Fawley Parkway.

Ivybridge Rail Users Group

The Group has engaged Plymouth University to carry out a consultancy in support of its proposal to have Ivybridge Station rebranded as a Parkway station, with an enhanced level of train service, rather than as a Park-and-Ride.

RAILFUTURE

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



Railfuture's sixth Rail User Group Annual Awards will be presented at its annual conference in Leicester on Saturday, 4 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

There are no application forms; details about how to make a nomination/submission are on the [website](#). The closing date is Saturday 2 September 2017. Early bird booking for members is open until 31 August. Just one nomination in any category will suffice. The same person or group can nominate in more than one category. RUGs and individuals can nominate their own in any category - except for self-nominations in Category 7! The awards will be decided on merit by a panel of independent judges, which should include our Vice-Presidents. The Judges' Special Award is at the sole discretion of the judging panel.

RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA

The new Cambridge North station opened on 21 May. RFEA Branch Chairman Nick Dibben said: "This is great news for rail passengers, as many people living in the north of Cambridge will have better access to the railway without the need to get caught up in traffic getting to the main station. A lot of different groups, including local authorities and the rail industry, have been involved in making this happen, and they deserve our thanks for their efforts. The large cycle storage and regular buses along the busway and around Cambridge mean that people can leave their cars at home. Once the station has settled down we will carry out one of our station audits to see if improvements can be made."

The station is operated by Greater Anglia (GA) and served by its trains to Norwich and stopping services to Liverpool St, and (except on Sundays) by Great Northern services to Ely and Kings Cross. However, the Cross Country (CC) service from Birmingham and Peterborough to Cambridge and Stansted Airport does not call. On the one hand, CC claims that there is no business case, but is also concerned about overcrowding! RFEA also wants to see a later weekday departure from Cambridge, and an earlier arrival at and departure from Cambridge on Sundays, both from the current operator and in the new franchise due in 2019.

In regard to the new rolling stock, the Stadler FLIRT bi-mode trains will have 2+2 seating to the Fisa design that came top for comfort in a Northern Rail consultation – except that Northern didn't use them! However, the 12-car trains will have only 5 toilets, whereas the current Intercity fleet has one per car. Meanwhile, the Aventura Class 720 trains being built in Derby by Bombardier for the more intensive services into London, will have 2+3 seating, with a narrow aisle and no first class.

On 12 August, A-3 locomotive Tornado will make a return journey from London Liverpool Street to Walton-on-the-Naze to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the town's rail service. Prior to its return, the train will make five trips to and from Colchester Town, giving 1,500 visitors an opportunity to enjoy an historic trip. The branch is currently lightly used, but will see a large expansion of housing developments along the route. In the new franchise, RFEA is seeking a half-hourly metro service. However, this would probably expose infrastructure problems such as the single island platform at Thorpe le Soken junction and a single platform at Colchester Town. The new bi-mode trains from Sudbury could cause service/platform movement conflicts between Colchester and Colchester Town.

NR agreed that GA's proposal to double the Ipswich - Peterborough service to hourly, which formed part of its franchise bid submitted in 2015, was workable. However, before GA was awarded the franchise, the 'Hendy Review' deferred both the Soham to Ely doubling and Ely North Junction projects beyond 2019 – so NR has now declared the improved service unworkable owing to a lack of capacity at Ely. GA ordered new rolling stock for it, so will be out of pocket unless a solution can be found. Their MD, Jamie Burles, has written to local authorities and stakeholders (including Railfuture) seeking support in lobbying the Treasury, the DfT, the Office of Rail and Road and NR to make this junction, and the one at Haughley on the Great Eastern mainline, an urgent priority.

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS

The new [website](#), blog and social media encouraging people to explore 'Scenic Rail Britain' offer inspiration and information to help tourists and day-trippers plan visits to epic landscapes, coastal scenes, historic sites and picturesque areas by train, particularly via Britain's stunning and fascinating 'community rail' routes.

The Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership negotiated an improved timetable from May. The principal change is an earlier first train from Bedford, which connects with the 0700 fast train to London Euston and the 0706 Southern service to East Croydon. Commuters can now be in London by 0739 as opposed to 0806 previously. Other improvements include the introduction of a clock-face timetable for services from Bletchley in the morning.

Rail Safety Week will run from 25 September to 1 October. Posters will be available to download soon from its website to post on social media, company websites and internal intranets. To obtain copies for display in a workplace, simply email alan@railsafetyweek.co.uk stating which design is required.

TRAVELWATCH NORTHWEST

TWNW has written to Andy Burnham, the newly elected Mayor, to set out its aspirations for travel in the Greater Manchester area. It urges consultation with passenger groups when station improvements are planned. For example, Manchester Victoria's new roof is spectacular, but does not cover the whole of platforms 1 & 2, whilst platforms 3 - 6 are gloomy, with poor overall lighting levels, a lack of seating and generally faded overall ambience. On the trains, toilets and leg room need detailed attention.

The Mayor will no doubt have an input to the Strategic Transport Plan being developed by Transport for the North and Rail North. TWNW would like to see:

- Electrification of the North TransPennine route
- More through trains to Windermere including electrification of the branch
- Reinstating CrossCountry destinations (SW & S Coast) from Wigan
- A Western Rail Extension to Manchester Airport, to improve the capacity of its station and open new route options to Cheshire and North Wales
- Extending the electrified Merseyrail network to Wigan
- Increased car parking at stations in general.

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

RUEX salutes the achievement of Swanage Railway in bringing about the return of a public train service from Swanage and Corfe Castle to the main line at Wareham for the first time since 1972, so earning the coveted and prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the ultimate accolade for voluntary groups. The Dorset branch line took just seven short weeks to demolish, but 25 long years to relay! West Coast Railways will operate the service on a trial basis, with 4-car trains and a diesel locomotive at either end. Four services are scheduled in each direction every day except Monday and Friday until 3 September, taking 45 mins for the ten-mile journey; train times and fares are on the Swanage Railway [website](#). Only Purbeck residents are eligible for a discount; National Railcards are not accepted.

Swanage Railway Trust Chairman Gavin Johns: "This is the culmination of a huge amount of hard work by our dedicated volunteers and the support of our valued stakeholders. Thanks go to the Purbeck Community Rail Partnership and the Government's Coastal Communities Fund for its £1.8 million grant, and to Purbeck District Council, Dorset County Council, Network Rail, South West Trains and the DfT for their help in reaching this historic milestone...£3.2 million from a transport development fund paid into by housing developers enabled NR to upgrade Worgret Junction and install new signalling equipment."

DfT has published a new list of public consultation events on the South Eastern Franchise: the station concourses at Charing Cross, St Pancras, London Bridge and Canterbury West on 19, 20, 21 and 27 June respectively, and Gravesham Civic Centre on 26 June. All events run from 1600-1900.

At its annual Stakeholder Conference, GTR announced that Phase 2 of the 2018 Thameslink timetable consultation would be launched on 26 June.

David Brown will join Northern as its new Managing Director in September. He is currently Chief Executive at Transport for the North, and before that Chief Executive of Mersey Travel and Director General of the South Yorkshire Passenger Executive. David thus has a wealth of rail and transport experience, built in the North over the last 25-plus years, and an in-depth understanding of Northern's vision to transform rail travel for customers and the operator's role in the region's transport infrastructure.

CONSULTATIONS

- [DfT: South Eastern Franchise](#), **extended until 30 June**.
- [NR's draft Route Study for Kent Area of South East Route](#), closes Friday 30 June.

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

...and finally

Safety announcements on the first day of scheduled Settle-Carlisle line services operated by Tornado caused amusement, with the scripted warning from a Northern conductor that passengers must not lean any 'body part' out of the windows. By the second day it had been changed to 'head'. Nor did Valentine's Day pass unnoticed: one romantic explained to BBC 1 news that the regular train fares were cheaper than a bunch of roses for his wife, who smiled indulgently.

15 February 2017 marked the centenary of the first "Jellicoe Special" from Thurso to Euston. Serving the Grand Fleet based in Scapa Flow in Orkney, the longest ever scheduled service in the UK at 717 miles ran once a day on weekdays in each direction. A similar service ran in World War II.

[All The Stations](#) is an ongoing project for Geoff Marshall and Vicki Pipe to visit all 2,563 national railway stations in Great Britain in just three months, and to create an online documentary film for posterity.

301 Miles, the newly opened bar on Platform 4 at Carlisle, is named after the "traditional" distance from London Euston, although current timetables give it as 299 miles – *as does my Bradshaw's of July 1922!* – Ed.

EVENTS

Do please keep your events coming in, both to me and to [Roger Blake \(Railfuture\)](#), who maintains the [List of Events](#) on the Railfuture website. A Calendar of Events embedded in a pdf document can get lost, and this is a problem if the location changes from month to month, as I don't normally include that in future events. A copy of your Calendar as a separate document in Word format would therefore be much appreciated.

Blob colour indicates the various types of event:

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

June

- Tuesday 20. Chesham & District Transport Users' Group, **Chesham** Town Hall, 1930 (Also 8 August, 19 September, 31 October and 12 December.)
- Tuesday 20. Hadley Wood Rail User Group, St Paul's Church, EN4 0EN, 2000.
- Thursday 22. Watford Rail Users' Group AGM, Training Room 2, Town Hall, **Watford**, 1815.
- Friday 23. Friends of the Far North Line AGM, Town House, **Inverness**, 1100.
- Saturday 24. Railfuture East Anglia, St Mary at Stoke Church Hall, **Ipswich**, IP2 8BX, 1400 (Also 30 September, Norwich, and 2 December, Cambridge).
- Saturday 24. Railfuture North West, **Littleborough** Station.
- Tuesday 27. Levenmouth Rail Campaign, Levenmouth College, Methilhaven Road, **Buckhaven**, KY8 1EA, 1830 (also the final Tuesday of every month to November 2017).
- Tuesday 27. Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association AGM, Village Hall, **Plumley** Moor Road, WA16 0TR 2000.

July

- Monday 3. TravelWatch SouthWest Greater Western and Cross-Country Franchising Meeting, COACH Conference Centre, French Weir Ave, Taunton TA1 1XQ, 1030 for 1100, secretary@travelwatchesouthwest.org.
- Saturday 8. Copeland Rail Users Group, Furness Line Action Group jointly, Trackside Café, Millom Station, 1400.
- Tuesday 11. ERTA, Function Room, The Tavistock Carvery Pub, 117 Tavistock Street, Bedford, MK40 2SB, 1400.
- Wednesday 19. Friends of the Barton Line AGM, Sloop, **Barton**, 2000. (Also 20 Sep (No 1 Inn, Cleethorpes, 1900) and 15 Nov (Sloop)).
- Saturday 29. Railfuture Herts and Beds, St Paul's Church, Blandford Road, **St Albans**, 1045 (Also 25 Nov).

Further Ahead

- 12 August. Copeland Rail Users Group, **Seascale** Methodist Church Hall, 1350 (also 16 September)
- 5 October. ACoRP Community Rail Awards 2017, Roundhouse, **Derby**, [click here for details](#)
- 16 October. Avocet Line Rail Users Group AGM, Malthoude, **Topsham**, 1900.
- 14 October. ESTA Autumn Meeting, Gannon Rooms, **Saxmundham**, at 14:00.
- 17 October. Felixstowe Travel Watch, Salvation Army Church, Cobbold Rd, **Felixstowe**, IP11 7EL, 1430
- 21 October. Railfuture Branches and Groups Day, **Birmingham**, 1030-1600, venue TBC.
- 4 November. Railfuture Annual RUG Awards, the Curve, 60 Rutland St, Leicester, LE1 1SB, 1000 for 1045.

This bulletin has been sent by Roger Smith, e-mail: ruglink@railfuture.org.uk, phone: 01462 815992

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