



RRUG UPDATE

RRUG ON TV: BBC Panorama

In a piece recorded at 'The Wheeltapper' in Railway Terrace, RRUG's Jerry Thorne appeared in 'Train Fares: Taken for a Ride?' broadcast on 23rd January 2012. Part of the programme looked at 'value for money' for tax payers from infrastructure projects undertaken by Network Rail (NR) and the programme producers chose Rugby station as their example.

It was established that the 2008/2009 works had gone over budget, but Panorama could not find out how much as NR failed to provide figures. Within the context of the overspend, Jerry made the point that while Rugby rail users had put up with all the pain during construction, the overall quality and levels of service at Rugby are now poorer.

To illustrate the point the programme showed a Virgin service passing through the improved station at high speed. Presenter Vivian White remarked, "Terrific.....Unless you live in Rugby and want more trains to stop there."

New West Coast Franchise

The final invitation to tender for the new West Coast franchise, was published by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 20th January.

The four shortlisted bidders Keolis/SNCF, Virgin Trains, First West Coast Limited and Abellio Intercity West Coast Limited have until 1st May to submit their bids. The successful franchisee will be confirmed in August. The franchise is due to start on 9 December 2012 and run until 31st March 2026, with an option for a 20 month extension.

RRUG's response to the DfT's original franchise consultation in April 2011 can be found on RRUG's website (members' area). DfT's invitation documents are available on:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/rail-passenger-franchise-intercity-west-coast>

RRUG Members' Meeting and AGM

The next Members' Meeting will be held on Wednesday 28th March at Age Concern, Clifton Road, Rugby starting at 7.30pm. The plan for the evening is to start with a question and answer session with representatives of Virgin Trains and London Midland and finish with the 2012 AGM. The meeting is open to all RRUG members, but non-members can join at the door by paying the £5 annual membership fee.

'Alliance Rail' proposals may benefit Rugby

With Rugby rail users likely to see improved services to London if London Midland's Project 110 initiative gets the go ahead (see RRUG's January 2012 Newsletter), there is the possibility of more good news courtesy of Alliance Rail's⁽¹⁾ latest open access track access application. This has recently been submitted to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) for rights to operate services on the West Coast Main Line.

This application, a revision of an original submitted back in October 2011 which now takes on board the results of a significant industry wide consultation, would see services from Euston to Leeds, Bradford, Blackpool North and Cumbrian Coast line stations. Although Rugby is not included as a stop in the regular calling pattern for these services, it is shown as an additional stop, implying that at least some trains would call.

This would go some way to restoring through services between Rugby and the North West, with the possibility of one or two through services to West Yorkshire as well. The services would be operated by new-build rolling stock with 125 mph enhanced permissible speed capabilities (i.e. tilt operation), and would start in December 2014.

The ORR will now consider this application along with others for the West Coast Main Line, and will make its decision in due course.

1. More details about Alliance Rail Holdings (Alliance) can be found on: <http://www.alliancetrail.co.uk>.

www.rugbyrailusersgroup.org.uk



HS2 Gets the Go Ahead

Transport Secretary Justine Greening has announced that the new high speed line known as HS2 is to go ahead. The first phase of the line will link London Euston with Birmingham, with journey times reduced to 49 minutes, a saving of about 35 minutes on existing timings. As part of this first phase, a link will also be built to the existing high speed line (HS1) which runs from St Pancras International to the Channel Tunnel. However, work will not start before 2016 and the earliest date for completion of the first phase would be 2026.

Whilst this new line will have no direct effect on Rugby, it is expected to free up capacity on the West Coast Main Line for additional services. RRUG will be campaigning for additional trains to restore a regular through service between Rugby and the North West, while retaining the existing level of service to both London and Birmingham.

However, Rugby MP Mark Pawsey fears HS2 will have a negative impact on West Coast stations including Rugby (Rugby Observer, 12th January 2012).

RRUG chair Stephanie Clifford responded (Rugby Observer, 19th January) with a more optimistic view, saying:

“HS2 will not directly benefit Rugby as the route passes well to the south of the town. However, there might be expected to be indirect benefits from the freeing of capacity on the existing West Coast Mainline.”

HS2 Publication

“Future priorities for the West Coast Main Line: Released capacity from a potential high speed line.”

This report, produced in January 2012 by Network Rail/Passenger Focus, is available on a link from:

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/highspeedrail/>

What is RRUG all about?

Formed with the help of Rugby's then MP Andy King back in late 2004, the Group aims to:

- Fight on your behalf to improve and maintain the Rugby rail service, the station and its environment.
- Act as a voice for Rugby rail users.
- Collect your views and feed them into discussions with Virgin Trains, London Midland and Network Rail.
- Take the longer term view of Rugby rail services by taking part in consultations run by the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, Passenger Focus, Local Authorities and others.
- Maintain links with other Groups through membership of Railfuture.
- Provide members with information by e-mail, post, meetings and via RRUG's website.

Everyone is busy so we understand that it's difficult for you to find time to get actively involved in the campaign to improve Rugby rail services. We'll take the strain and fight on your behalf, but we can't do it without your support. You can:

- Join Rugby Rail Users Group today for just £5 to help with administrative costs (membership form on the back page of this newsletter).
- Come to periodic meetings held with the train operators and other key organisations - we will e-mail or post details to all RRUG members.
- Help with publicity and spreading news about the Group to other rail users.

Member or not, keep us informed about your rail experiences through the 'Contact us' link on the RRUG website.

2012 annual membership fee still £5!!

Sponsors required!

RRUG wants to distribute copies free to people using Rugby station and other facilities around the town.

With limited funds, any donations towards print costs would be gratefully received, possibly through sponsoring an issue and having your name included.

If you're interested please send an e-mail to RRUG on secretary@rugbyrailusersgroup.org.uk.

Members: if your contact details change please let us know by e-mail on secretary@rugbyrailusersgroup.org.uk



On The Spot - Your Points Answered

Let us have your questions about the train services, station facilities, the station environment or other rail related issues relevant to Rugby rail users. We will then put someone on the spot to provide the answers and then report back in the newsletter. Your support is needed, so if you have any points to raise, please e-mail the Secretary via the 'Contact us' link on the website.

(Note: due to space limitations it may be necessary to summarise the contents of original e-mails. Thanks to all contributors - Ed.)

This newsletter - 'On the Spot' with RRUG Treasurer Jerry Thorne and Warwickshire County Council.

With the £5 annual membership fee for 2012 due, it was suggested that a bank transfer facility would provide a more convenient way for some existing members to pay by internet. Jerry responded.

"As this issue had never been raised before I will be making enquiries with RRUG's bank. The Committee supports the idea and believes a bank transfer facility would not only benefit members, but also make it a lot easier to administer the funds. Hopefully we can announce details in the March edition of the newsletter.

In the meantime members can still send cheques to 'The Membership Secretary' - Hilary Hall, Rugby Rail Users Group, Highgate House, Ivy Grange, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 7HF. Payments will also be accepted at the Members' Meeting and AGM on 28th March."

RRUG was alerted by an e-mail from a member concerned about the operation of the pedestrian crossing immediately to the north of Mill Road tunnel which links the station to Virgin's multi-storey car park. Based on the member's experience the e-mail stated that, "**the lights on the crossing fail to work on over 95% of occasions when the button is pressed and (the signals) continue to function as traffic lights giving only the short space of time when on amber for pedestrians to complete the crossing. This means it is always necessary to run.**" With safety paramount, especially for people crossing from the station side where visibility of traffic approaching through the tunnel is limited, RRUG asked Warwickshire County Council, as local highway authority, for their views and the following prompt response was received from Senior Traffic Signals Engineer, Bob Foy.

"I asked our signal maintenance engineer to visit this site immediately after receiving your e-mail to check the operation of this pedestrian crossing. No faults were found with any of the push buttons and overhead detection and the pedestrian facility was working correctly. The overhead detection fitted at this location monitors the presence of pedestrians waiting at the crossing point. Should a pedestrian having demanded the green man through pressing the button then move away from the crossing point before the pedestrian stage is serviced, the demand will be cancelled. I suspect this is what your member experienced. Should you have any further concerns, please contact me."

Recent Additions to the website, Members' Area:

Committee meeting minutes 25th January 2012
Members' Meeting notes 24th November 2011 - proposed SUE and DIRFTIII.
London Midland Workshop Notes 14th October 2011

RRUG Consultation Responses on the website, Members' Area:

London Midland's Project 110, December 2011
HS2, July 2011
New West Coast Franchise, April 2011
West Coast RUS, 2011

See RRUG's Jerry Thorne on Panorama, 'Train Fares: Taken for a Ride' on the BBC iplayer: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b01bd1jv/Panorama Train Fares Taken for a Ride/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b01bd1jv/Panorama%20Train%20Fares%20Taken%20for%20a%20Ride/)



Rugby Rail Users Group – Membership Application Form

Full name:	Home telephone (optional):
Home Address:	Work telephone (optional):
	Mobile telephone (optional):
Postcode:	E-mail address (we shall use this as primary means of contact):

Annual membership fee: **£5**

Cheques payable to ‘Rugby Rail Users Group’

Please send this form and cheque for £5 to: The Membership Secretary - Hilary Hall, Rugby Rail Users Group, Highgate House, Ivy Grange, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 7HF.

I normally travel to: London Birmingham

Other (*please specify*).....

I wish to become a member of the Rugby Rail Users Group in accordance with its rules.

Signed:	Date:
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Data protection act: all data provided by you on this application form will only be used by RRUG for administration purposes relating to RRUG membership. Copies of RRUG’s Manifesto and Constitution are available on: www.rugbyrailusersgroup.org.uk