

# Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

Number 57

Summer 2022

## HOW CAN WE make our railway fit for the post-pandemic world?

Let's think about public transport as a sociable, environmentally friendly transit that people want to use. That means having fares that are not too complex or costly. What does "peak" mean if commuting is reduced, and we have places like Garforth where the last morning peak train to Leeds is at 0928, and next one not for another hour? (See p8.)

**It's good for people to interact with other people.** More are booking online, but informed staff give a vital service. My local station ticket office is always busy. If it's costing too much let's widen good practice, not chuck it out. Merseyrail stations at Liverpool Central, Southport and elsewhere combine ticket offices with shops so you can buy a sandwich, a magazine, and your ticket all under one roof. Are other TOCs even considering this? Merseyrail have staff on every station from first to last train. We need printed timetables so would-be people can browse to discover where they might go, not just when's the next train to where they've already decided. Let's recreate the joy of travel. Let's advertise the railway off the railway. Could station adoption groups help distribute booklets to local shops, information centres, GP surgeries, even through letterboxes...? Northern Rail itself has produced an excellent timetable booklet for the Lake District.

**We've just had a first batch of national strikes.** RMT members voted 89% in favour on a 71% turnout. Can they all be wrong? Wages have been held back during the pandemic and now workers are facing worsening conditions as well as inflation most will struggle to remember. The Government has not been helpful, apparently refusing to participate meaningfully and leaving rail bosses hands-tied, piggies in the middle. You can't run a railway with rushed-in contract staff. And it's not just rail workers – teachers, NHS staff, postal workers, council staff, airline staff and more are all impatient for a better deal. Recent news was a 7.1% offer to Merseyrail staff which seemed likely to be accepted. That is significantly less than the headline inflation rate.

*(See also Nina's view → INSIDE)*

**J Stephen Waring, Editor** *(All articles in YRC are personal views.)*

**WELCOME to Summer's YRC** and our picture of Knaresbrough in the Spring!

# railfuture

**Yorkshire branch**

### President:

Alan Whitehouse:

### Vice-Presidents:

Mike Crowhurst, Alan Williams,  
Chris Hyomes

Chair's column:

by Nina Smith, Railfuture Yorkshire branch chair

## Dark times

IS IT AN EXAGGERATION to say that the state of Britain's railways at time of writing is bleak? It is certainly very worrying. Our railways should be on a continual and progressive recovery from the Covid pandemic (which is not yet over, merely much less noticeable). Instead rail faces the double whammy of HM Treasury which sees spending on the railways as expenditure rather than as investment in a sustainable future, and a trade union, the RMT, which has just held a first phase of industrial action – **three days of strikes, spread over 5 days, causing disruption – and advice not to travel – over almost a whole week.**

This is potentially disastrous. The railway had made a 90% recovery from COVID. The strike risks the jobs of some railway workers and is an insult to commuters, many of whom are unable to work from home with some paid less than RMT members. This is not the time for the RMT to behave like it is the 1970s.

Whenever there is the threat of a railway strike, I am reminded of the disastrous train drivers' strike of 1955, as a result of which the railways permanently lost considerable volumes of freight traffic, such as brewery traffic from Burton-on-Trent. Our roads became more clogged with heavy commercial vehicles, which probably accelerated the motorway boom that has been both the cause and the effect of the continual modal shift from rail to road in the second half of the Twentieth Century.

**This should be a positive time for rail freight.** Lockdown showed how important the railway is for delivering essential supplies. The all too real spectre of the climate emergency means we need a major modal shift from road to rail. Progressive hauliers like the Malcolm Group have invested heavily in transferring trunk haulage from road to rail. Others are considering doing so.

A rail strike threatens all this, as well causing massive inconvenience. The strike is about both job cuts and pay. Many RMT members, such as conductors are paid in the vicinity of the national median average wage and deserve a pay increase, but one in line with other public sector workers (most railway staff work for companies that are either state-owned, or receive substantial state subsidies). An increase in line with the present high inflation rate is economically untenable and would surely accelerate the Treasury's determination to cut the size of the railway workforce. That would have implications for both safety and service provision. Some RMT staff are rather better paid, with signallers, who could paralyse the whole system, on an average of £47k a year. They do a highly responsible job and deserve their salary level, but they are not poor. ASLEF, the train drivers' union, is also balloting its members. Train drivers are very well paid, having done extremely well from competition between companies following privatisation, and now have median basic salaries of £52k, with many drivers paid considerably more. There can be no doubt that such pay levels have been one contributor to the escalating cost of running the railway, whose high fares deter potential passengers.

We are living in a world beset with a **climate emergency**, which must be robustly tackled if much our planet is to remain comfortably habitable. A prime cause of climate chaos has been unregulated economic growth over many decades. This has been fuelled by advertising-led conspicuous consumption, often of products with built-in obsolescence, and by unsustainable (and still growing) levels of car use and commercial aviation. We need green growth in the future, but we cannot expect the overall economy to grow for ever. It is unsustainable. Thus workers, other than those on low incomes, cannot for ever expect their income to keep up with or exceed inflation. Public transport must be an area of green growth, which means an increasing workforce, but wage demands must be affordable or we will never get the modal shift that is so urgently needed.

**The Treasury** wants state-owned Network Rail to reduce the size of its workforce. But this is only acceptable if safety is not compromised, and passengers are not inconvenienced or deterred. →

**Ticket offices** are one component of customer service which is under threat, including from the Prime Minister. Railfuture must fight this. An increasing number of tickets are being sold on-line, but millions of people still use ticket offices, as do potential passengers seeking knowledgeable and easily accessible advice. Those who purchase from ticket offices include those who find it difficult to use ticket machines, those without internet access, those with internet access but no printer, and those who do not own or cannot use a smartphone (e.g. due to arthritis). Some of us simply do not want our ticket on our mobile – for fear of a flat battery, network down, or a lost phone. There is danger in a society over-dependent on electronic communications.

**Service reductions** Yorkshire and other parts of the north of England are still experiencing service cuts. On **TPE**, many timetabled services at weekends are being cancelled due to ongoing industrial action by TPE conductors. This really must be resolved soon. Neither Northern nor TPE have yet returned to the full pre-COVID timetable. At **Northern**, this is because sickness absences are still high, and the company have not yet caught up with the delays in staff training caused by the pandemic.

Whilst this is understandable, some of the decisions taken by Northern have been bizarre. The Harrogate line, has a two-hour gap between two evening services – this between Yorkshire's largest city and a major commuter, leisure and conference town. Other temporary reductions on this route have been the loss of two early morning services, meaning early connections at Leeds to a variety of destinations have been lost. Removal of whole diagrams has meant services from Bradford to Skipton and Ilkley have been reduced to hourly, unacceptable for both adult commuters and the large number of Bradford Grammar School (and perhaps other) pupils who commute on these routes. **Not only must the pre COVID timetable be resumed as soon as possible (Northern is hoping for December), but long-standing timetable failings must be addressed.** We need Sunday services to be similar to weekdays, tweaked to reflect demand differences. We need full services on poorly served routes including Sheffield-York via Pontefract, and Goole to Leeds, a full half hourly service on the York-Scarborough route, and direct trains between Pontefract and Doncaster with a new station at Askern. Cuts on Hull-Halifax, Bradford-Brighouse-Huddersfield and Manchester-Todmorden-Blackburn services, and suspension of Huddersfield-Wakefield also need to be reversed.

I fear none of this will happen until this or a future Government recognises just how important the railway is for tackling the climate emergency, increasing social mobility, helping the economy, and levelling up.

**Fares** Many fares in GB are at unaffordable levels, unless you are able to book an inflexible ticket in advance. What a contrast to Germany, which has introduced over a 3-month summer period a **9€** (about £8) a month ticket allowing unlimited travel on regional and local trains and buses, trams and U-Bahn. At the recent International Railway Summit in Berlin, the German Federal Minister for Digital and Transport, Volker Wissing, stated that the railway is the way to decarbonise the transport sector to achieve carbon goals. What a contrast to Grant Shapps, who is focusing on electric cars that will continue to cause congestion and emit carcinogen particles from their brakes and tyres, and so-called zero carbon aircraft. Makes one embarrassed to be British.

**Printed timetables** Understandably, Northern, TPE and other TOCs have not produced paper timetables during the pandemic, as the need to constantly modify timetables would have rendered them rapidly obsolete. The fear is that they will never return. That would be very bad for prospective passengers. Many find it much easier to plan a journey from paper timetables than online. They must return once service patterns stabilise.

**Branch meetings** We have not had an in-person branch meeting during the pandemic, although we have met via Zoom, and we have held a series of webinars. **Our spring series of seven webinars proved very popular**, with average attendance in the high 20s. Northern Trains attracted 54 participants. The highlight for many was the Gareth Dennis event, in which the railway engineer and blogger laid bare the extent of Yorkshire's betrayal by DfT and the Treasury over the cancellation of HS2E and the disastrous truncation of Northern Powerhouse Rail. 37 people attended this. We plan to continue with topical Zoom webinars over the winter months, and to have a branch meeting in September. – NS

# Penistone line thoughts

**Andrew Oldfield**, secretary, Huddersfield Penistone Sheffield Rail Users Association.

**Oliver Coppard, elected Metro Mayor of South Yorkshire in May, said “My message to Boris Johnson and the Government in London is this: things have to change, enough is enough. Sleight of hand is no replacement for substance, spin no replacement for support.” (Independent, 6 May)**

Members of HPSRUA, the Penistone rail users’ group met the new mayor at a panel event staged by Sheffield Star a few days after the election. To turn “enough is enough” on its head, the Penistone Line has had nowhere near enough! Precious little indeed so far in response to calls for investment in the most neglected area of South Yorkshire, the upper Don Valley, and the most neglected transport mode – rail.

Sheffield is the big-city rail pauper, having lost its electric east-west railway via Woodhead 40 years ago. Transport for the North’s long term plan offers limited improvement to E-W connectivity.

In a radio interview, Mayor Coppard referred to 52-56 minute journey time Sheffield-Manchester (via Woodhead) in 1954. Today’s timing via the Hope Valley and Stockport is little if any better, though capacity improvements are on their way.

Penistone is an expanding town in need of liberation from inadequate rail provision. Rail could be an economic driver. Present hopes of better days rest on a levelling-up fund second round bid, which if successful will require South Yorkshire to do more. We need the direct line to Sheffield via Deepcar restoring to provide an attractive faster alternative to the round tour via Barnsley.

This would be an extension of the Restoring Your Railway round 3 proposal for Stocksbridge. It is about a car-competitive rail offer. With 2021 census data awaited, we are talking about transforming the fortunes of the Upper Don Valley. Housing development is planned at Deepcar, Oughtibridge and Stocksbridge as well as Penistone itself. We need ambition, investment and vision – now!

It would not mean abandoning the route via Barnsley. Future Huddersfield trains would be increased and routed both ways. There is a very solid student market based on the Barnsley College link with Huddersfield University. This should be extended to students from Deepcar, Oughtibridge and Stocksbridge. The whole area needs a vastly improved alternative to private transport – meaning rail. Without such pollution and traffic congestion will continue to prevail.

Mayor Coppard has said all the right things so far. He will be judged on delivery.

**At HPSRUA’s annual general meeting**, Northern’s **Pete Myers** was in an optimistic mood about... →

## RYR update

On this page Andrew Oldfield considers how the direct route Sheffield-Penistone might be added on to the **Don Valley** (Stocksbridge) Restoring Your Railway scheme. A June DfT update listed **Askern** and **Beverley-York** as “**developing to Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC)**” alongside the Don Valley. **Waverley station** on the Sheffield-Retford line is mentioned. Also of interest *inter alia* in this category are Gainsborough-Barton, Ashton-Stockport and Rawtenstall-Buckley Wells (Bury).

Listed as “**progressing past SOBC**” are the **Barrow Hill route** Sheffield-Chesterfield, and **Haxby station**. Fleetwood stands out in this group a little outside our area.

A third category is “**being delivered**” and includes the Leeds area stations at White Rose, expected to be complete next year (building has started), and Thorpe Park on the Garforth line expected to open 2024.



Which makes one ask what about Skipton-Colne, and Elland station which are not mentioned. Watch this space.

Fourth category is “**not being delivered under RYR**”. Highlight colours as on map from the DfT report at [Restoring your Railway Fund programme update \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/108848/Restoring_your_Railway_Fund_programme_update.pdf)

New funding of £15million was announced for further studies on nine schemes, including the Barrow Hill line, Haxby station, and the Fleetwood line. Haxby station alone needs £17million to build, so clearly there is some way to go. – JSW/GC

... Penistone line levelling up. The new bid is reported to be better than the original submission, with partial reinstatement of the second track and increased line speeds.

3-car sprinters (150s) are due in December, a short term measure as they are set for withdrawal in 2024. Replacement will be discussed with the DfT. The key is signal positioning for the bay platform 2 at Huddersfield and it is unclear whether this will be included in the TRU works planned for Huddersfield.

Pete was positive about the Stocksbridge RYR proposal. The hope is this will be heavy rail. The fear that the Treasury will demand a cheap and nasty job that will restrict the level of service.

On the existing route future electrification could be through quick charging Sheffield-Meadowhall, tapping into Sheffield Doncaster electrification. If Doncaster gets the GBR headquarters, we hope that long overdue investment for SY will finally materialise.

Penistone, 1954.  
Line going west  
(?!) is the  
Woodhead route.  
Ordnance Survey  
(Copyright expired)



## Don Valley (and Barrow Hill) options

Options for Stocksbridge reopening include different stopping patterns and service frequencies of 1, 2 or 3 trains per hour. A cheap option would terminate trains at Deepcar. More stops would increase journey time and potentially need more train units. Sheffield terminus would be Victoria – or, more usefully Nunnery Square, on the Supertram network. The most attractive options appear, unsurprisingly, to serve more stations at higher frequency. It is not clear how connection would be made with Sheffield's main (Midland) station; the trams do not at present operate direct from Nunnery Square to Midland.

There is an obvious possibility of linking Stocksbridge (or indeed Penistone) with the proposed Barrow Hill route to Chesterfield which is at a more advanced stage of development. It is thought that proposed Waverley station would be served by both Chesterfield and Worksop/Lincoln trains.

Anyone know any more? - JSW

## Memories of Muriel Towler

The passing of Muriel Towler, wife of the late James Towler, warrants a fitting tribute. James had been well known to many of us firstly as Yorkshire Transport Users' Consultative Committee chair, and then as chair of this Railway Development Society (RDS) branch - later Railfuture Yorkshire. However, in a sense Muriel had been with us first, attending our meetings at the time when James was chairing TUCC hearings on the proposed closure of the Settle-Carlisle line.

Muriel was a most gracious lady, greeting everyone with a lovely warm and friendly smile and words of support. It was Yorkshire RDS that introduced Muriel to the railways. Settle-Carlisle matters were starting to escalate, and she tirelessly took shorthand notes at branch meetings. Thus was James kept informed of the activities of user groups, and Muriel was the unsung hero maintaining the communication chain in those bleak times. RDS Yorkshire met in some fairly drab and depressing venues, but this did not put Muriel off attending, (Eventually better facilities were found.)

Muriel supported a meeting in 2008 to mark the tenth anniversary of James's death and celebrate his achievements. The event at Stockmoor heard generous comments by John Moorhouse (of the former TUCC) and Alan Whitehouse (Yorkshire Post) with a personal message from former transport minister Sir David Mitchell.

As well as being an able administrator and supporter of James's work, Muriel accompanied James on numerous Settle-Carlisle trips keeping up with developments.

Muriel deserves appropriate recognition for her vital contribution in the bleak 1980s. Her place in railway history should never be understated. There could be no finer tribute than to think of Muriel, alongside James, whilst you are crossing Ribbleshead Viaduct.

Muriel Towler died on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021, surviving James by 23 years. – AO

# Open access anniversary

by **David Pennie**, Hull & East Riding Rail Users Association

HULL TRAINS has celebrated its 21st anniversary. For many years there was only one through train per day Hull to and from London King's Cross, but open-access changed that in September 2000 with three additional return services. Those trains were 3-car class 170s from which Hull Trains has graduated through various types to its present class 802 fleet, branded "Paragon" after Hull's station. Standard timetable is now 7 daily return trains (6 at weekends), some working beyond Hull to Beverley. The Paragon fleet was inaugurated in December 2019, unfortunate timing as the company's revenue was soon to be badly hit by the pandemic. Open-access operators had no extra government support, and services were suspended or reduced during lockdowns. Full service was restored in stages over the course of the past year.

The new class 802s do not include a café bar of the kind that was popular in the previous class 180 Adelantes. This was reported in the local press as a plus point, as standard class passengers, as well as first class, would now enjoy "first class at-seat service" – from the trolley – and first class would have, as before, a complimentary hot meal appropriate to time of day. The standard class at-seat promise did not last. Hull Trains' website now says: "In First Class choose from a selection of freshly made sandwiches, served at your seat with tea or coffee and light refreshments, subject to availability... Catering is not available in Standard Class, so we encourage you to bring your own snacks and drinks."

We hope that on-board catering on Hull Trains will be returned to what it was. In the meantime, in terms of catering, LNER offers a more attractive option in both standard and (particularly) first class.



**"Paragon" at the Cross  
– bound for Beverley**

SavageKieran, CC BY-SA 4.0  
<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons



# Painting the railings platinum: keeping busy at Dronfield

by **Mike Penney**, Friends of Dronfield Station

THE FRIENDS of Dronfield Station (FoDS) have been busy preparing the station for the summer. Flower beds and planters had to be weeded and stripped of the winter plants. The volunteers then set to work replacing them with a colourful display of summer bedding supplied by Millthorpe Nursery at Holmesfield. Northern Trains finished the job in early June filling up the planters on the platforms and the oval flower bed in the turning circle.

In recognition of platinum jubilee FoDS also painted a section of the station railings platinum and purple and decorated the station garden with bunting. FoDS member Philip Brightmore said "When FoDS was formed in 2008 the station garden was a patch of scruffy grass and not much else. Now after years of dedicated work by the volunteers the garden is an attractive place to visit. We are very gratified that it attracts a lot of favourable comments from station users. We also like to do our bit to recognise the Queen's 70 years of devoted service to the nation".

# Improvement strategy for bikes on trains

by **Simon Geller** (Northern cycle-rail forum)

A CYCLE-RAIL FORUM for the North was a franchise commitment involving cycling advocates helping the commitment to be met. Other train operating companies are now included along with Northern. Well attended meetings have been instrumental in changing the attitudes of both cyclists and the train operators towards cycle-rail integration. Over a hundred organisations, including local authorities, cycling organisations, rail and passenger and tourist groups, community rail partnerships are involved.

The forum shares good practice, engaging in dialogue with TOCs and widening horizons. There is greater mutual understanding of the challenges facing the operator, with rapid growth in passenger numbers but minimal increases in rolling stock, and of the needs of cyclists.

The forum has steered a number of significant bike-rail initiatives including the Leeds Cycle Point, a programme of improved cycle parking in the city and beyond. Ideas have been promoted such as eco-stations, staff cycling schemes and leisure cycling. Focus has now moved to the north west.

We are assessing the impact of the introduction of new rolling stock on both the Northern and Trans-Pennine franchises and opportunities for further integration of cycling and rail travel.

Over a million pounds has been spent on improved cycle facilities, encouraging people to ride to and from the station instead of driving.

A flexible policy has been introduced allowing bikes on trains over the two per train limit. Permit schemes allow bunches of schoolkids to travel by train with their bikes in Cheshire. Could the same be done for BMX riders? Cycle trainers in South Yorks have been given free passes to extend their coverage.

Northern has now refreshed its fleet, with new and refurbished trains, while TPE has the Nova range of trains abating some of the capacity problems. However, the growth in use of the Northern/TPE network up to the pandemic caused difficulties when travelling with a cycle at peak times.

Train operators prefer people to leave their bikes at the station rather than take them on the train, so our focus has been making that a viable option. The Cycle Forum's activities have helped to develop a mutual understanding of each other's needs so we can work together to provide a sustainable and healthy alternative to the private car.

The strategy has now become Northern's Cycling Promise while Trans-Pennine Express has its own cycle policy. A volunteer secretariat serves the Cycle-Rail Forum for the North, as it is now called. Anyone who wishes to attend our meetings can contact us via the contact form on <https://sites.google.com/view/cyclerrailforum/contact-us?authuser=0>



... but, asks our editor, where do you put your bike on a Northern 195 train?

TURN OVER for **Feedback** items →

**DIARY:**

**Railfuture Yorkshire Branch AGM** was postponed for reasons including the pandemic. See note at end of Nina's column (page 3) and look out for further notification. We are looking at September.

Sat 16 July 2022 Doors open 10.00; 11:00 start	Railfuture national Annual General Meeting, St Michael's Church Centre, The Green, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8PD. Close to Bristol Parkway Station. No fee for members. Details in Railwatch.
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Sat 27 August 2022	Copy deadline for YRC 58, Autumn 2022 – <b>get thinking about it now!</b>
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Thurs 15 September 2022	Railfuture Annual Conference, St. George's Centre, Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3DL. Theme: <b>A turning point for the railways.</b>
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## Feedback – readers’ reactions to Spring items

# Garforth (as well as Scarborough!) grumbles

Mike Crowhurst takes up a few points

PRE-COVID, east Leeds stations, including my local station at Garforth, long had a basic 2 trains/hr all stations service Leeds to Selby/York, extended across Leeds at various times and the Selby trains recently extended from Halifax to Hull. In addition one of the TransPennine Express trains has long called at Garforth. Shortly before Covid TPE introduced their new “push-pull” sets. These have a free-standing Class 68 diesel locomotive



**Noise pollution** from what one might call “new but old-fashioned” Class 68 diesels has caused complaints by local residents in Scarborough (pictured), and, it seems, in Garforth. It’s worst when the trains are left at a standstill with engines idling, (Why to do they have to do that?) We hear TPE has plans to redeploy the smart but unsatisfactory locomotives elsewhere. Which could mean Scarborough trains going back to cramped 185s – or maybe Nova 1 (Class 802) electro-diesels? Westminster Council has, we hear, complained about Chiltern’s 68s running into London Marylebone. Of course this would not be a problem if the lines were converted to electric traction. – JSW

at one end. Parked with engines running they have gone down like lead balloons with Scarborough residents. Well, they are not popular with lineside residents in east Leeds either! Fine when moving, when stationary these locos seem to need to rev the engine, producing smoke, noise and vibration, rather like a worse-for-wear

InterCity125. Calling at Garforth (though in the present version of the timetable not many do) causes a deluge of noise and pollution. Residents complained, and I organised a letter which TPE seemed to lose for six months before telling us what we already knew and seemingly passing the buck to Network Rail. We tried again and got nowhere.

During lockdowns we lost TPE calls, and the present timetable has most Scarborough trains just shuttling between there and York, coming nowhere near Leeds. I wonder whether there is no intention of serving Garforth and TPE is waiting for Thorpe Park to open.

Not that Northern have served us any better. The present Leeds-York and Halifax-Hull pattern has persisted. The latter was 3 trains every 4 hours for a time, now straight 2-hourly (apparently so Northern can reintroduce hourly extras on Hull-Bridlington). 2-hourly is simpler, but you still have to remember which hour you are on. So departures from Garforth for Leeds are at 28 past every hour 12 past every odd hour. The last morning peak-rate train is 0928 followed by an hour’s wait for the next one. (And, our Calder Valley line colleague reminds us, in hours when there is no Hull train there are 3 trains Halifax to Leeds in less than half an hour then nothing for up to 35 minutes.)

Folk get round the Garforth 0928 problem by buying singles to Cross Gates (the next station), in order to make it to hospital appointments or whatever. **What a pantomime!** →

## ... and whither GBR HQ?

Mike continues: "Location of Great British Railways HQ" caught my eye. *RAIL* magazine's Nigel Harris has had his two penn'orth. Others dismiss it as a distraction. I think not. The eventual choice may tell us much about how GBR will be run, how independent (or not) and so on. Someone suggested a site in Scotland, with both Wales and Scotland looking for more devolution I think we can rule both out.

I think rail heritage will beat population and communication centres, so York and Doncaster beat Leeds and Sheffield. Crewe and Preston beat Liverpool and Manchester. Swindon beats Bristol. Centrality and being at a nodal point will count for a lot: so Swindon and Darlington fall at this hurdle, and we are down to York, Crewe, Doncaster, Preston, Derby and Birmingham (biggest nodal point of all)... And the dreaded Milton Keynes – Network Rail HQ, on East-West rail, close to seats of power in London. Of northern contenders Crewe seems to have best chance – in part because of HS2 – with little to choose between York and Doncaster, and Preston a poor fourth. Which brings us to Derby which I think could be on the final shortlist with Birmingham and (sorry) Milton Keynes. Derby is the *imaginative* choice with masses of rail heritage, expertise and tradition; central; ample land, handy for the station.

The bureaucrats will resist anything north of Watford. Derby is a compromise, within their comfort zone, just about. **But Derby is the exciting choice. And it's north of the Trent – well, just!** – MC

### Contact us!

Next issue YRC58 will be out early Autumn. Please email **photos, news, community rail** and **opinion** pieces to Stephen ([js.waring@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:js.waring@hotmail.co.uk)) to arrive by Monday 27 Aug'2022. Length? 1000 words fills more than a page – less is more! Edit your own stuff – less for editor to do.

**Having your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email saves us time and money. Please contact Andrew Dyson our membership secretary ([andrew.dyson@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:andrew.dyson@railfuture.org.uk)) to request this.**

## Electric saga!

**East Coast Main Line electrification reached Newcastle in 1990. But the pre-grouping North Eastern Railway had planned to wire York-Newcastle way back in the 1920s.**

### Clive Barton gives a personal angle:

A design draughtsman at a famous Leeds engineering works, I was made redundant in 1980. The company was a Quality Assurance Directorate-approved supplier to HM Government and nationalised industries.

Earlier schemes showed British Railways and its predecessors, like other European rail industries, that the most effective way to operate was to electrify. The story goes back 100 years. Before grouping in 1923 the North Eastern Railway (not the later LNER) had learned the same lesson. The NER had electrified Newcastle suburban lines, and Shildon-Newport (Middlesbrough) – two successful schemes – when (around 1922) government stopped the third scheme, York-Newcastle.

60 years later BR, in 1979, came to the firm where I worked. The proposal was to electrify 100 route-miles each year, but to do this they needed to reduce installation costs by automation and needed us to do design work. At the end of that year I was informed that I was to be promoted to design engineer to work on the BR electrification project. We had, of course, elected [arguably!] the most anti-rail government of modern times. BR 1979 plans were cancelled. And my redundancy followed.

Golden opportunities were wasted, both with the NER scheme and in 1979-80. – CB

**Postscript:** ECML electrification was agreed in 1984. Work proceeded at a pace almost unbelievable now, reaching York in 1989, Newcastle in 1990, and Edinburgh in 1991. (And our memory is it was all paid for by British Rail internally because they knew running electric trains would save costs. Please correct us if we are wrong!)

Surely a lesson there for today. (But enough history.) – JSW

**Finished with this newsletter? Please pass it on to a friend or colleague who might be interested in campaigning for better transport or even joining Railfuture. Or you could leave with other second-hand books and magazines where these are left e.g. in station waiting rooms – please ask for permission if appropriate.**

## User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.avrug.org.uk">www.avrug.org.uk</a>
Askern Station, Friends of	Contact Graham Moss on <a href="mailto:graz.moss@sky.com">graz.moss@sky.com</a> or 07510 555722
Bradford Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.bradfordrail.com">www.bradfordrail.com</a>
Esk Valley Railway	<a href="http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrhc.html">http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrhc.html</a>
Halifax and District Rail Action Group and Electric Railway Charter	<a href="http://www.hadrag.com">www.hadrag.com</a> and <a href="http://www.electriccharter.wordpress.com">www.electriccharter.wordpress.com</a>
Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group	Care of <a href="mailto:billymms@btinternet.com">billymms@btinternet.com</a>
Harrogate Line Supporters' Group	<a href="http://www.harrogateline.org">www.harrogateline.org</a>
Hope Valley Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk">www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk</a>
Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association	Email: <a href="mailto:hpsrua@btinternet.com">hpsrua@btinternet.com</a>
Hull and East Riding Rail Users' Association	<a href="mailto:davidpennierail21@gmail.com">davidpennierail21@gmail.com</a>
Hunmanby Railway Station, Friends of	<a href="https://e-voice.org.uk/friendsofhunmanbyrailwaystation/">https://e-voice.org.uk/friendsofhunmanbyrailwaystation/</a>
Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group	
Minsters Rail Campaign (Beverley-York)	<a href="http://www.minstersrail.com/">http://www.minstersrail.com/</a>
Pontefract Civic Society Rail Group	<a href="https://en-gb.facebook.com/PontefractRail/">https://en-gb.facebook.com/PontefractRail/</a>
Selby and District Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/">http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/</a>
Settle-Carlisle Line, Friends of the	<a href="http://www.foscl.org.uk">www.foscl.org.uk</a>
Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership	<a href="http://www.selrap.org.uk">www.selrap.org.uk</a>
Stalybridge to Huddersfield	Email: <a href="mailto:markashmore@yahoo.com">markashmore@yahoo.com</a>
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: <a href="mailto:Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk">Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk</a>
Upper Wensleydale Railway	<a href="https://upperwensleydalerrailway.org.uk/">https://upperwensleydalerrailway.org.uk/</a>
Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (Yorkshire Coast Wolds Coast Line)	<a href="http://www.yccrp.co.uk">www.yccrp.co.uk</a>

## Branch Committee and the small print

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