

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

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Castleford, crowd for mid-morning TransPennine from Manchester to York, Friday of first week in service. Not put off by the grey weather. Oh for a blue sky! (JSW)

Snippets of good news. How about a trip to York by TransPennine? That's now possible from all West Yorkshire stations from the Colne Valley through Huddersfield and Castleford. Manchester Piccadilly is the destination at the other end, and Wakefield has direct trains across the Pennines for the first time in many years. There are just four trains a day in each direction (five Manchester-Wakefield). This needs to be improved to at least one every hour, not least because one purpose of this service is to replace the former Northern Huddersfield-Castleford shuttle. This is an important reopening. A new platform and footbridge has been built at Castleford enabling the York trains to call in both directions and potentially allow more trains on other routes serving the "Five Towns". Castleford-York off-peak day return feels a bit steep at £19.30 (less usual railcard discounts). A TPE Advance single is not much less. For comparison, Leeds-York has a confusing array of cheaper fares, at least three operators and more trains (but beware the trap of single-operator fares).

Elsewhere, **Penistone line capacity** work now has government approval (p2). Let's get on with it!

Meanwhile Network North cuts HS2, redistributes spending away from rail in the north, and offers ideas that may never happen. TP Express has temporarily (we hope) cut back main line services and nobody knows where their withdrawn loco-hauled sets will end up – can't help dreaming about Leeds-Carlisle or York-Blackpool!

Plenty to campaign for in 2024. **Meanwhile have a wonderful and merry Christmas!** JSW 16Dec'2023

All opinions in this newsletter are views of the writer, not necessarily of Railfuture or its Yorkshire branch.

railfuture

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Penistone line improvements must be just the start

writes **Andrew Oldfield**,

Secretary of Huddersfield-Penistone-Sheffield Rail Users Association



UNBELIEVABLE! It's good news that the government has awarded £48 million of levelling up money to upgrade the Penistone Line, creating capacity for more frequent trains. ***And it will become great news once the project is delivered, liberating and transforming a route that has long been neglected, indeed pared to the bone by rationalisation measures in 1989.***

Much credit is due to Mark Eastwood MP (Dewsbury, covering Denby Dale to Stocksbridge), for raising the line with Rishi Sunak at Prime Minister's Questions. Eastwood had co-sponsored with Miriam Coates MP (Penistone and Stocksbridge) the Levelling Up Fund bid developed by Huddersfield-based Kirklees Council. The MPs deserve praise for garnering support across the political spectrum along the line. Funding was won after two failed bids.

Funding will be centred on enhanced route capacity and increased line speeds, leading to a half-hourly timetable – doubling of frequency on the line – and reducing timings. This should make the railway more relevant to the places it serves. All the communities have new housing developments with the 2021 census recording populations of 25,000 for Penistone and 10,000 in Dodworth. Population has grown; rail has stagnated. More trains will be more car-competitive.

Rail projects do have a reputation of running over budget. It is hoped that inflation will not hit too hard. Even with favourable conditions completion could take at least three years.

Stocksbridge next...

... then Deepcar to Penistone maybe?!

The £48M should be just the start. October saw funding approval for the next stage of Sheffield-Stocksbridge reopening.

This must be accompanied by restoration of the Deepcar-Penistone gap, vital for liberation of the long-neglected upper Don Valley. Miriam Cates MP has referred to the need to reduce Penistone-Sheffield journey times and this is the only way rail can emerge car-competitive. Without the Penistone link Sheffield-Stocksbridge would be a dead-end line. Reopening to Penistone – part of the old Woodhead route – would capitalise on potential and population. It's a no-brainer! Here is an opportunity to expand South Yorkshire's modest rail network to deliver revived and new opportunities.

Making the most of it!

The existing Penistone Line is basically single-track between Huddersfield and Barnsley. There is a "long loop" (1¾ mile) through Stocksbridge and Shepley. The one at Penistone (pictured) is little more than a train length between twin 5-car platforms – long for this line. A third loop is on the approach to Barnsley from Summer Lane – less than a mile in length. Could these loops be extended?

To increase train frequency there will have to be longer lengths of double track. This could mean more loops, existing loops extended, or both. A loop between last station Lockwood and Springwood Junction outside Huddersfield could also help. We guess all Penistone line trains would continue to use the existing bay platform avoiding conflict with TransPennine trains.

Higher line speeds should also increase capacity on the line. At present the maximum line speed between Huddersfield and Barnsley is 50 mile/hr. It is not clear whether station platform lengths, all 3-car north of Penistone, will be increased. Three carriages is a severe limit on capacity.

Promises do include station improvements such as EV charging points, cycle hire, parcel delivery lockers, and better access and waiting facilities.

If you know any more, please tell us!

Beyond current projects, a future reopened direct Penistone-Sheffield route could give significantly less than an hour's journey from Huddersfield. That is a big project. Capacity problems would have to be solved if such trains were to get to Sheffield Midland station.

A can-do mentality is required!

– **JSW** (editor's note)

Looking ahead in Hope Valley

by **Andrew Dyson,**

Vice Chair (South Yorkshire), Railfuture Yorkshire

The Hope Valley capacity improvement scheme should be completed in spring 2024. After a public inquiry in 2016, and ministerial approval in 2018, by the time work is completed, the scheme will have taken over six years from approval to completion. That's slightly longer than it took to build the Channel Tunnel!

The scheme seeks to reverse the decision of the 1980s to single the line through Dore & Totley station. That created one of the most notorious bottlenecks in the North. Knock-on effects can easily be felt as far afield as Scotland and Cornwall. Reinstatement of the double track section, extension of Dore south curve for longer freight trains and construction of an eastbound passing loop between Bamford and Hathersage are intended to allow a third fast train per hour to operate between Sheffield and Manchester, and to facilitate a more robust timetable all round. However, there are now doubts as to when, or even if, the promised third fast service will be introduced. Paths into and through Manchester Piccadilly are at a premium and the station is effectively already full.

A parallel issue is connections between South Yorkshire and Lancashire/Cumbria. An established commercial connection between the two areas has been enhanced by investment in the advanced manufacturing park and associated research and skills centre in Sheffield. Transport for the North (TfN) has identified this route as one of seven strategic development corridors, yet there are no direct trains linking Lancashire and Cumbria with Sheffield.

These issues could be addressed by extending some TransPennine Express Edinburgh/Glasgow–Manchester trains to Sheffield, rather than all serving Manchester Airport they do now. Not only would this introduce through journey opportunities on the strategic corridor, but it would also allow a third fast service to operate between Manchester and Sheffield without requiring an additional path through Manchester Piccadilly.

Such a service would, of course, require the use of bi-mode trains to reach Sheffield, but at time of writing, TPE has three daily bi-mode diagrams that operate entirely under the wires – one on the West Coast route and two that shuttle between Edinburgh and Newcastle/Berwick all day. Connecting Sheffield might involve some challenging rolling stock management, but it could potentially eliminate such wasteful use of bimodes. Three trains each way per day would represent an attractive service for users. *(Editor's note: other possibilities exist. Greengauge 21 suggested a service avoiding Stockport and going towards Chester, serving Manchester Airport by Metrolink tram on the way. JSW)*

Improved stopping service?

The Hope Valley stopping service is similarly hampered by a lack of available paths. As recently as 2018, local services ran at two-hour intervals for most of the day and were provided almost exclusively by Pacer DMUs. The introduction of a regular hourly service has given rise to substantial growth in passenger numbers, particularly at weekends. Gross overcrowding is often now the norm on Saturdays.

Between Manchester and New Mills, the hourly Manchester-Sheffield service is complemented by an hourly Manchester-New Mills, creating a half-hourly frequency at the western end of the line. Tight turnarounds mean the Sheffield service requires three train sets to operate, whilst the New Mills service requires only two. Were a third unit to be made available for the New Mills service, it would technically be possible to extend every service to Sheffield and provide an additional hourly service along the entire route. Even with pathing difficulties, a skip-stopping local service would potentially give a much-needed boost to the stations that it might serve. Again, this solution offers the potential to enhance Hope Valley local trains without requiring any additional paths at Manchester Piccadilly.

Timetable planning is a complicated science (or a dark art!? – Ed.) and the enhancements proposed here are clearly far from straightforward. However, it is important that TPE and Northern (and East Midlands who operate fast trains via Sheffield to Liverpool) make best use of the opportunities afforded by the line upgrade. All parties, including Transport for the North, must work together to ensure the objectives of the scheme are delivered.

After investment of £137 million in the scheme, to simply retain the status quo would be completely unacceptable to rail users and taxpayers alike.



Hope for more stopping trains popular tourist valley? Peak in background is Lose Hill.

Let's start with the good news

Ticket offices and ticketing – very good news has been the Government's decision to scrap the recent ticket office closure plan.

Around three quarters of a million responses were sent to Transport Focus on consultations by the various train operating companies. I understand 99% were in opposition to the plans. A rare, but very welcome, example of a government listening to people!



Get your tickets here – and your snack, drink and something to read on the journey!

Picture shows station shop on Merseyrail electrics network combining ticket sales and convenience store (picture with thanks to Merseyrail). You can find shops like this at Southport, Liverpool Central and South Parkway, and Hamiton Square. And most if not all Merseyrail electrics stations have ticket offices open from before the first train each day until just after the last. The network is locally controlled by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and was not part of the national consultation on proposed ticket office closures. Talking to staff on stations we did find some fears about the future. <https://www.merseyrail.org/journey-planning/at-the-station/mtogo/> and <https://www.merseyrail.org/journey-planning/stations/>

Nina rightly calls on this page for a national tap & go system. Ticket staff would have different roles but will still be needed to help customers with special needs either personal – for example disability – or ticketing needs such as planning and getting the best deal for a complex journey. Such staff need to be easy to find – normally ticket-office based rather than “roaming”.

Railfuture's national AGM last July agreed a resolution calling (*inter alia*) for openness to broadening station retailing – selling snacks, travel goods etc alongside full-range ticket sales. Any reforms should be appropriate to location, putting passengers first: “one size” does not fit all. See link [here](#) or (railfuture.org.uk/display/3393) – **JSW**

In the future, we can expect to see closure plans resurrected, at least for some stations. In our responses opposing Northern and TPE's plans, we said that any future proposals to close a ticket office must be on a station by station basis, with a full option appraisal being conducted involving stakeholders. That said, Yorkshire has comparatively few ticket offices and most are very well used and are assets to their local communities. Such facilities really should not even be considered for possible closure. Looking ahead 5 to 10 years, **there needs to be a nationwide tap in, tap out system across the railway**, using both bank cards (debit and credit) and a specific pre-loaded Oyster type card. The latter must be widely available to buy from retail outlets, by cash if desired, so that those without bank cards are able to purchase them. These cards should, ideally, also be accepted on trams, buses and station car parks.

The Penistone Line

More excellent news is that nearly £48 million is to be spent on much needed upgrades to the Penistone Line. You may have just read Andrew Oldfield's welcome for this on page 2. Andrew speaks out for further developments including progress towards Stocksbridge reopening, even the direct Deepcar-Penistone link.

After HS2: Network North

Bad news is reallocation of £36bn funding earmarked for HS2 (Birmingham-Manchester), under the misnomer “Network North” – misnamed because only £19.8bn is for the North of England. Front cover of **RAIL** magazine 997 summed it up: BETRAYAL! ROADS GIVEN HS2 CASH. The high speed link to Crewe (Phase 2A) and Manchester (Phase 2B) was budgeted at £36bn over a period of perhaps 15 years – so about £2.5bn a year. The “reallocation” of funding was spin. £8.3billion was allocated to deal with the serious problem of potholes on our roads, in other words investment (capital) funding transferred to day-to-day (revenue) funding. Of the rest, £6.5bn was reallocated for road schemes, mostly shovel-ready schemes the government was planning to fund anyway (and most of these were in the south of England). The funding announced for rail rather gave the impression of a hastily cobbled together list, exemplified by much needed funding for the Leamside line in the North East being removed from the list within 24 hours. Rail projects in Yorkshire mentioned on the revised initial press release were: ...

- Electrifying and upgrading the Hope Valley line and Sheffield-Leeds¹.
- Bringing Hull into the NPR network – does this mean much needed electrification?
- Re-opening Stocksbridge to Sheffield, and new stations at Haxby (already approved), Waverley (east Sheffield), and Rotherham.² Waverley would also be served by trains on a reopened Barrow Hill route (Sheffield-Chesterfield) which gets a mention in the Midlands section of the report.

These are announcements rather than approvals of funding, so we need the Government to confirm funding and timescales. The electrification proposals must be part of a wider rolling programme of electrification, as recommended in Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Study (TDNS). Also announced was £2bn "to ensure the delivery of a brand new station for Bradford supplying a new fast 30 minute link to Manchester via Huddersfield". This raises a number of serious issues which I will address in the next YRC.

For me, the biggest positive from the announcement was a £500 million down payment for **West Yorkshire Mass Transit**. I say this must mean trams (or light rail). This is something which the prime minister does seem genuinely keen on, so given that it is likely we will have a new prime minister within the next year, it is imperative the next Government retains that commitment.

Was cancellation of the Manchester leg of HS2 the right decision? This was discussed at the joint Yorkshire and NW Railfuture Branch meeting on 25th November. Key points made were that HS2 was over-specified from the beginning, and therefore was perhaps always doomed to fail; and that given the choice of where railway funding should be allocated, **we would prefer it to be spent on improving and expanding the existing network, including resolving bottlenecks (starting with Manchester), reconnecting communities, a rolling programme of electrification, and new train orders to secure the future of the Alstom plant in Derby. Network improvements include the vital need to improve capacity on the West and East Coast Main Lines**, to enable more freight trains to run as well as enhancing passenger services.

Northern's new trains...

... and UK train building capacity

Northern's planned new trains must have passenger-friendly interiors. We learn that Northern is consulting on these, but so far has not involved either Railfuture or rail user groups. We have asked Northern to include us.

Who will win the contract to build the new trains? CAF must be the front runners, for fleet standardisation reasons, but we urge that Alstom at Derby is also considered as they need new orders to survive. The recent joint meeting of Railfuture's Yorkshire and NW branches highlighted the need for a rolling programme of new train orders to safeguard the UK's train manufacturing (as opposed to mere assembly) industry, and this is something which the Great British Railways Transition Team should be stressing to government.

All of this should go hand in hand with another point from our meeting. **A rolling programme of railway electrification is vital, which will mean increased demand for new electric trains to replace the ageing diesel fleet.**

Good trains for all

Northern's new trains must be good and attractive for all passengers. Not just "cheap as possible". Not just for the able-bodied. Not just about commuters. Let's make our trains more tempting for families, people with bikes, people with disabilities, people who want to play as well as work, people who want to sit in groups and have a view out of the window, people who don't want to feel the cold draft every time the doors open. Watch where people sit in Northern's "curate's egg" CAF units, and you'll see that people favour seats with a view!

And accessibility means for all. You don't have to have an obvious disability to find the little "half step" disconcerting when alighting from a "195" or "331". **New trains must be compatible with level boarding** (like the new Merseyrail electrics) even if that can't be provided at every Northern platform yet. I know we've said this before! – JSW

Climate chaos... and rail versus air

Our precious planet, our home, is in crisis. The goal of reducing global warming to 1.5C above pre industrial levels is looking less and less achievable. As I write, the UK government is at COP28 confirming its commitment to Net Zero, **yet Rishi Sunak our PM has not shown any enthusiasm for the important role the railway must play in addressing the climate crisis.** If he had, he would have moved forward with that rolling programme of rail electrification.

Instead, the PM has an obvious enthusiasm for air transport, highlighted by his refusal to follow the French example of banning short distance internal flights, and by halving (April 2023) the rate of air passenger duty on internal flights. We have the ridiculous situation (see *Railtech.com* <https://www.facebook.com/railtechcom/posts/879907917256205/>) that

¹ We assume this means Sheffield to South Kirkby Junction where the main Sheffield-Leeds passenger route joins the already electric Doncaster-Leeds line,

² And there is no mention of the Askern route between West Yorkshire and Doncaster! – JSW

over the Christmas holiday season, a London-Edinburgh flight will be four times cheaper than the train. Similarly, flights from GB to the near continent tend to be cheaper than Eurostar, a situation made worse by the reduction in the number of Eurostar services with the obstacles of security and Border Force checks. Some years ago, the Government foolishly sold off part of the family silver, the national shareholding in Eurostar, and much of that was bought by a Canadian Pension Fund whose concern has to be Eurostar's profitability, rather than maximising its contribution to carbon reduction or addressing its failure to serve intermediate stations.

There are other potential operators considering starting cross channel services in competition with Eurostar, to which I say: **bring them on!**

Labour and public transport...

A recent report by the Centre for Cities has found that the number of people travelling to work on trains, trams and buses in Britain's major urban areas outside London will need to double to catch up with similar places on the continental mainland. Britain is addicted to the car, and this has to be tackled.

According to current opinion polls, Labour will win the next election. **It is really important that an incoming Labour government does much better in terms of railway development than the Blair and Brown governments did.** We are looking for Labour to commit to rolling electrification, investment in both improving and extending the network, and positive policies to encourage the transfer of both people and freight from road and inland air to trains. This requires Labour to be bold, to emphasise that mode shift is in everyone's interests – both in terms of reduced carbon emission and reduced air pollution, not just from petrol and diesel exhausts, but also from the tyres and brakes of all vehicles including electric ones. They also need to stress the benefits to everyone if there is less traffic congestion. Labour needs to embrace workplace parking levies for city and town centres and other places that are well served by public transport, with the revenue raised used to enhance local public transport. It must retain the £2 maximum bus-fare and extend this to trams and short distance train commuting. Yes, this will cost the public purse, but the benefits are in my view far greater than tax cuts.

... tackling the SUV menace

Alongside modal shift to an increasingly electrified railway, electric vehicles are part of the solution to reduced greenhouse gases. But they still contribute to traffic congestion and road accidents just as petrol and diesel vehicles do. Sports utility vehicles (SUVs) are the worst offenders.

Labour in power should use fiscal measures to reduce the attractiveness of SUVs, both internal combustion and electric. Electric SUVs have heavy batteries, which both cause more damage to roads, and also need more rare and precious metals that are in finite supply; electric SUVs demand up to 75% more raw materials for their batteries than smaller EVs, whilst the carbon emissions resulting from materials processing and battery manufacturing can soar to levels 70% higher for electric SUVs compared to smaller electric vehicles (source: *Why growing sales of large SUVs should raise environmental red flags. Laura Lander and Grazia Todeschini, theconversation.com, 6.11.23* [SUV and ute sales slowed due to NZ's Clean Car Discount – expect that to reverse under a new government\(theconversation.com\)](#)) SUVs take up an unnecessary amount of both road and parking space, cause greater injuries if they hit pedestrians and cyclists, and, anecdotally, they often seem to be driven more aggressively than smaller vehicles. In 2019, 30% of electric vehicles sold worldwide were SUVs; by 2022, that percentage had risen to 40%, not least because the motor industry through heavy advertising and initially attractive finance deals is encouraging this. Large vehicles are more profitable!

Freight on rail...

... and once again the need for electrification

A recent green finance report shows that HGVs account for 20% of the UK's transport emissions. **Diesel hauled freight trains emit a quarter of the carbon³ compared to lorries carrying similar cargo weights.** Electric hauled freight trains eliminate tailpipe carbon emissions – although, of course, the electricity used may have been generated by burning fossil fuels⁴. The report advocates electrifying HGVs, which raises real issues about where the raw materials for the heavy batteries will come from, and how much damage to roads, bridges, and neighbouring buildings will be done by the extra weight of electric HGVs⁵. ...

Clearly much more freight needs to be carried on rail rather than road or inland air. But there are serious barriers to this which need tackling. Our railway is still largely Victorian, with both inadequate capacity generally, and a lack of

³ Presumably CO₂ equivalent – JSW

⁴ But as electricity generation is decarbonised, electricity consumed will progressively approach zero-carbon – JSW

⁵ Should we add that overhead wires for electric HGVs on motorways has at least been considered! – JSW

routes whose tunnels and bridges are high enough to take the increasingly prevalent W12 size containers.

This is another reason why we need much more of our railway to be electrified. Prioritising infill electrification will make it much easier to run electric loco hauled freight trains. But the cost of electricity is such that in 2021 Freightliner withdrew its class 90 electric locos, and DBCargoUK took a similar decision this summer. If the government was really serious about tackling the climate emergency, it would have intervened to subsidise the extra cost of using electric traction. But ideology gets in the way!

We need much extra capacity. The Trans Pennine Route Upgrade will, we are told, allow one freight train an hour, but this is insufficient to make much impact on reducing lorry traffic on the hideously crowded M62. The East and West Coast Main Lines need extra capacity – this is one of the reasons why the Leamside (Ferryhill-Gateshead) line is so important.

In south Manchester, **Railfuture's proposals for a new freight route to Carrington** will both free capacity on the Castlefield corridor for passenger trains and allow for an increase in freight train numbers.

Strikes: time for an end to it

Quoting a recent email from about the ASLEF strikes in early December: *"Unbelievable. Every time I come to back to the UK after carefully making advance arrangements to visit friends and family by rail, those arrangements subsequently get screwed-up by industrial action. Although not everything about public transport in (Poland) is perfect, I can't recall a single rail strike in the thirteen years that I've been spending more time there"*.

It really is time for ASLEF to stop inflicting misery on passengers. If the RMT, whose members are mostly paid much less than train drivers, can settle their dispute⁶, then so should ASLEF. As I have said before in this column, train drivers are on average paid around twice the national average wage and have an offer that would increase their earnings to around £65k. They are amongst the highest paid drivers in Europe. They still refuse to end some restrictive working practices that reduce the railway's operating efficiency. Train drivers have a very responsible job, and they are well rewarded for it. In return, they need to agree to uniform working conditions across the industry, with their standard working week being spread over seven days, not least now that Sundays are one of the busiest days on the railway with train services need enhancing in many parts of the country.

Car parking at stations

We should be doing all we can to encourage people to get out of their cars and travel my train. Yet the train operating companies (at DfT's behest?) continually come up with policies which may deter some people from using trains. The thankfully scrapped ticket office closures were one example. Draconian penalty fares inflicted on honest people who have no intention of evading payment are another. A third concerns car parks.

Thankfully, policy in West and South Yorkshire is for station car parks to be free. This has two advantages. Drivers are motivated to transfer from car to train rather than in some cases driving all the way. And it means you can park, lock your car, and go onto the station in a seamless movement. Northern charges at many stations outside the metropolitan areas, and recently extended this to ten further stations. The reason given is to ensure non-passengers are not using station car parks. But is there any evidence that this is a serious problem?

Even charging £2 a day is a major increase to commuting costs at a time of rising cost of living. Over 5 days a week and 46 weeks a year that is £460, so not a token charge.

The other problem with station car parks is how you pay. Northern and TPE favour apps and/or QR codes. Both have problems. Fraudsters stuck a false QR code over a genuine one in the TPE station car park at Thornaby, resulting in a 71 year old driver's bank details being captured by fraudsters and £13,000 stolen from her bank account. Northern's parking app is a deterrent to anyone who does not have it. If a car parking charge is imposed, then it must be easy for anyone to pay. The easiest way would be by bank card to open an exit barrier, as people are usually in less of a hurry leaving a car park than arriving.

Branch diary: be there!

Tuesday 13 February 2024 7pm – online meeting (Log-in link will be circulated a few days before the meeting.)

- **Speaker Ian Brown, CBE, FCILT, Railfuture national vice president and policy director**
- **Prospects for the railway to 2030**

AGM is likely to be late spring, probably Sat 27 April, Leeds – all details to be confirmed.

⁶ The 2023-3 dispute involving RMT members is settled. Negotiations with individual TOCs will follow in 2024.

What's to be done about Bradford (and the Calder Valley line)?

by Stephen Waring

Network North, the governments hotchpotch of schemes to replace (it that's the right word) HS2 North, does contain some interesting proposals for Bradford. With Leeds-Bradford electrification already committed (?) earlier plans for a new station replacing Interchange seem to be on the agenda.

Site put forward by Bradford council for the new through station is St James wholesale food market. This is in the centre of an area the City Council wants to modernise and transform. Problem is distance from present city hub around Hall Ings. Some Railfuture members favour a cross-city rail link joining the networks north and south of the city. A serious physical obstacle to that demand is the Broadway shopping centre which seriously blocks one obvious route. Would we want to demolish it, with all the disruption that would cause? The "SWOT" analyses below are intended to get you thinking.

We'd welcome readers' reactions.

Cross-Bradford heavy rail link Interchange to Forster Sq	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N-S connectivity (Aire/Wharfe-Calder Valley line) 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bfd-Lds via Shipley indirect unlikely to be faster (13.50 mile) • Pathing issues at Shipley and Bradford Interchange would constrain timetable despite removal of reversal need.
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New connections as above e.g. Ilkley-CV, Skipton-New Pudsey. • Possible mass-transit alternative providing wider connectivity 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is heavy rail link buildable? Recent shopping complex blocks route. Would we want to demolish this? • Tunnel too difficult? • Difference in levels between Interchange and Forster Sq



New through station "near" Bradford Interchange (St James?)	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to build if stn at St James. • Journey time Bfd-Leeds 12 min or less (9.1 mile). Calderdale-Leeds timings could be reduced by 10 min or more. • Eliminates need for reversal. • St James site owned by Bradford council 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St James station out of present city centre (1.0km from Hall Ings cf present Interchange 0.3km), requires frequent fast local link. • Major road junction at present blocks way
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass transit could provide cross city link looping between St James, Interchange and Forster Sq plus wider links e.g. Wharfedale & Airedale city and beyond • Future transport within centre could include "people pods" on rails – or road (wash my mouth out). • Road junction could be adjusted/moved. 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide high quality link into and across centre would damage existing connectivity. • Market traders would have to be found new site.
Note: alternative more central station sites are possible but would require more land acquisition and property demolition.	

The other government proposal for Bradford is a new route to Manchester joining the trans-Pennine route at Huddersfield. 12 minutes has been suggested as timing for Bradford-Huddersfield, total half an hour to Manchester. Modern Railways magazine suggested the idea is to use the former Pickle Bridge line, closed 1952, which cuts south off the Bradford-Halifax line to rejoin the line east of Brighouse before swinging south to Huddersfield. It is not clear what the solution is for sections now blocked by industrial development, and residents in Bailiff Bridge might have something to say about trains next to their houses. We gather rail professionals have questioned the proposed timings. There would be pathing issues around Huddersfield: remember 8 trains/hr Manchester-Leeds is the plan post-TRU so the Bradfords would have to fit between. A more realistic timing might be 35 minutes from the new Bradford station to Manchester. Is it worth building new line for that? The Bradford service might be as few as 2 trains per hour.

A better idea might be to improve the Calder Valley line. With modest linespeed and capacity improvements a Bradford-

Manchester timing of 40 minutes is possible with two stops, say Halifax and Rochdale. Existing services would continue and benefit from journey time improvements.

This would deliver benefits for the Calder Valley line which barely get a mention in Network North beyond a promise of mass transit – note not fast transit – sometime in the future. And it would cost a lot less than the £2bn mentioned for the suggested (let's not say proposed) Bradford link.

The full CV line was ranked top of the list by the “Northern Sparks” electrification task force [EFT Report FINAL web.pdf \(transportforthenorth.com\)](#) the best part of a decade ago. **Nowhere does this appear in Network North.** – JSW



Great workshop session in Halifax!

Limited in number by the railway failing us for the second time running, members of Railfuture's Yorkshire and North West branches had a successful joint meeting in Halifax. True, we'd have like to have more members present but signalling problems had brought Bradford and Halifax to a halt. Rumour has it someone had forgotten to fuel a generator – making all the signals go to red. You couldn't make it up. (We haven't been able to confirm this yet. There must be more to it.)

Our speaker was Professor Paul Salveson, well known as a founder of community rail and more recently active as a railway thinker. Paul's website is [Lancashire Loominary – Paul Salveson's Website](#) and his organisation Rail Reform Group is also worth looking up: <https://railreformgroup.org.uk/>.

Members who made it to the meeting enjoyed a workshop session devised by Paul. Title was **After HS2: setting a new agenda for rail**. Task in groups was to consider priorities for rail investment regionally and nationally, and then consider the question **HOW?** Every group set out their ideas on big sheets and the session ended with a plenary led by each group in turn. Here are the results. Could be an agenda for future discussion. **Just look at the consensus for electrification!**

Group	A	B	C	D
Top priorities <i>north</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion at hubs (Leeds, Manchester etc) • Better use of existing track • Reopenings – difficult to get political commitment, slow and expensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity, platform length, signalling • Skipton-Colne link • Western access to Trafford container & Castlefield 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network not lines • Freight and passenger integration • Urban decongestion – capacity (Shf, Lds, Mcr...) • Reliability & timetabling – operational failure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail to identify Manchester capacity increases needed; & how to deliver. • TRU construction under way in full with better timescale (not 2040!)
Top priorities <i>national</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrification - rolling programme • Retention/support of stock constructors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrification: TRU, CV line, MML, Ravensthorpe & west • ECML capacity • Ely junction capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrification – rolling programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous (process of) electrification • Climate resilience • Fare simplification
<i>How?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with politicians – how?! • As much noise as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk up green agenda • Emphasise (a) road building costs (b) benefits on road users of increased rail use • Ensure media releases usable with minimum effort • Increase news release volume at regional level • Attend rail forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political • Show advantages for public • Who's lobbying against? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrate on building alliances with politicians – need to be onside • Engage with social media users to convince them our ideas are viable • Get business involvement (CBI etc)

Big thanks are due to Paul who arrived from Kents Bank via Manchester with last leg by bus from Hebden Bridge, and had just as interesting a journey back to Bolton after the meeting. (The East Lancs route was also blocked for engineering work.)

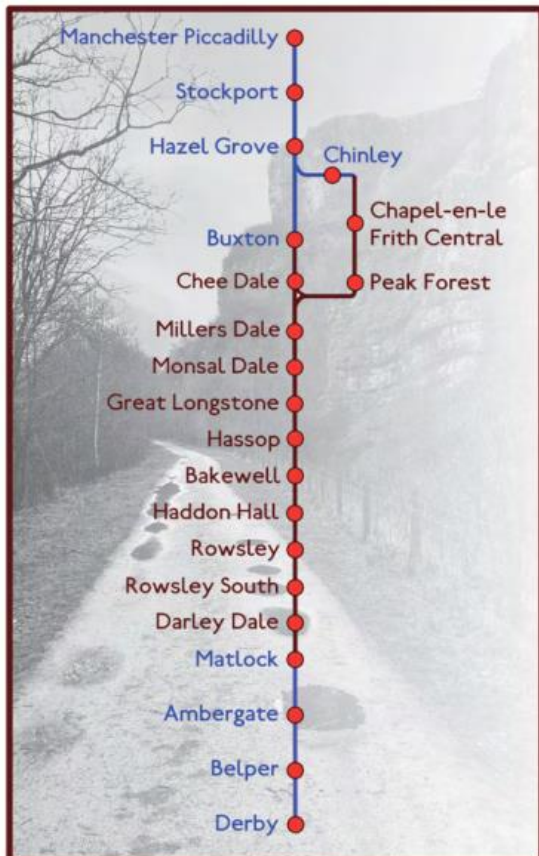
An excellent session generating many points to ponder. – JSW

Peaks and Dales

– are reopenings always best?

Peaks and Dales Line

Proposal to reopen the line



Not all existing stations are shown.

Station names shown in red are proposed, and are subject to consultation

Find out more at
www.peaksanddalesline.org

At our autumn Yorkshire Railfuture meeting in Sheffield members were grateful to Stephen Chaytow of MEMRAP (Manchester East Midlands Rail Action Partnership) who spoke on an ambitious reopening scheme. Stephen described his group's campaign to restore the long closed rail route through Millers Dale. Trains could run from the East Midlands via Bakewell and Millers Dale to Buxton, and also down to Chinley, Stockport and Manchester. There would be inter-city trains through from London.

Matlock to Millers Dale is at present a well-established green route, a trailway for walkers, cyclist and horse riders. MEMRAP know this. ***So diversion of the railway to other nearby routes is a key part of the plan.*** This would happen before railway track were reinstated so there would be little if any "break in service" for the green transport users. This makes it easier for some of us who want to see our railway grow nationally to support this conversion back to rail. (But there is still a question of whether the quality of a replacement would match that of the rail trail for less athletic cyclists!)

The plan is for stopping and faster passenger trains and the route would also be used by the mineral trains that at present take up space on the Hope Valley line. At the south end of the route a preserved railway operates between Matlock and Rowsley.

Yorkshire Railfuture members have already received minutes of the Sheffield meeting along with a copy of Stephen's presentation. (Many were unable to attend because of rail disruption on the day.) Whilst the Peaks and Dales proposal is just outside the Yorkshire boundary it is at very at the heart of many branch members' aspirations. But do we have to support every reopening scheme? Another view is given here by one of our regular contributors, with a detailed reply from MEMRAP at the end. ***May debate continue and flourish!*** – JSW

(MEMRAP graphics used with permission.)

What would Ruskin say?

by Simon Geller

Thank you for allowing me to occupy a page of this newsletter. Sorry I was not able to attend the meeting where Stephen Chaytow spoke on behalf of MEMRAP.

Since the line was closed, many things have changed in this area centred on Matlock and Buxton. It is now predominantly an area used for tourism and agriculture, the mills now being used for accommodation and small businesses. The only heavy industry in the area is quarrying and it is understandable that this industry would have a strong interest in reopening the line.

Under the guiding hand of the Peak Park National Authority this area has returned to peace and tranquillity and is a haven for wildlife. With the reality of mass species extinction upon us, we need to provide these areas for wildlife to

thrive so that it can start to repopulate where mankind's activities have wiped it out, in the same way as maritime parks can repopulate fish stocks.

The rebuilding of a main line railway through Miller's Dale would hardly be conducive to this.

Derbyshire County Council conducted an investigation before allowing the route to be converted for walking and cycling. This concluded that there wasn't a business case for re-opening the line. They invested £1.5 million converting it, so it is not surprising that they are unenthusiastic about this proposal. Although the intention to provide a replacement trail is laudable, the cost of providing an alternative route of the same standard would be considerable and require nearly as much work and disruption to the valley as the original railway.

What of freight services? These currently use the Hope Valley line and with the capacity improvements that are currently being made there seems no reason why this should not continue. A Railfuture proposal (<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display2302>) to re-site Trafford Park freight terminal to Carrington Park, tellingly, would not only reduce congestion through Castlefield allowing more passenger trains through the corridor and the underused Ordsall Chord, but, with an eastern (as well as western) link near Cheadle Hulme would also make it possible for the Tunstead quarry trains to access the West Coast Main Line

Meanwhile, should the Government keep to its promise to fully electrify the Hope Valley and the Midland Main Lines, with a short extension to Tunstead the quarry operators could use low-carbon low-cost electric locos for their deliveries. In any case, we won't be able to keep digging up the Peak District indefinitely and the quarries will eventually have to close and become wildlife refuges in their turn.

Moreover, once these improvements are completed there will be capacity for an additional express train per hour along the line, but as things stand there is no capacity for these trains at Sheffield or Manchester. An ingenious solution would be to run trains between Derby and/or Nottingham via Dore South curve to Stockport where platform 0 is virtually unused and connections into Manchester and other locations can be readily made.

There is certainly congestion at the Greater Manchester end of the A6, but most of this is local traffic and could be mitigated by improvements to rail services on the Buxton line, better bus services via the Bee network and the extension of Metrolink trams through Stockport. At the southern end, congestion is not so severe and is mostly caused by tourist traffic. Allowing service trains to run through from Matlock to Rowsley could provide access to the tourist honeypots of Chatsworth and Bakewell via a shuttle bus.

So what other improvements to transport through the Peak could be made? The Transpeak bus provides an hourly service between Derby and Buxton and with an improved fleet could carry bikes and more heavy luggage. These improvements could be made at a fraction of the cost of re-opening the railway. The bus has the advantage of being able to access places where the population is concentrated – and indeed less concentrated.

By this means, as Ruskin said, "Every fool in Buxton can be at Bakewell in half-an-hour, and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton." We live in different times now and I feel we need to solve our transport problems in the areas where we live and leave precious areas like the River Wye to recover from our previous despoliation. It this latter kind of developments that Railfuture should support.

Derbyshire residents do not deserve to be consigned to the economic bin in this way

by Stephen Chaytow,

The proposed reinstatement is from Ambergate (on the Midland main line). 13 miles are missing and 23 miles either side of the gap require upgrade. The quarries support a southbound reopening. However they oppose our proposals, which seek to run a London-Derby-Manchester semi-fast past Tunstead, an approach endorsed by the DfT last March. With commercial negotiation we can see the track layout being resolved to mitigate the risks to the quarries' businesses. ***This is to be a passenger led reinstatement, to provide the public benefit that a long-suffering Derbyshire population has lacked for close to 60 years.***

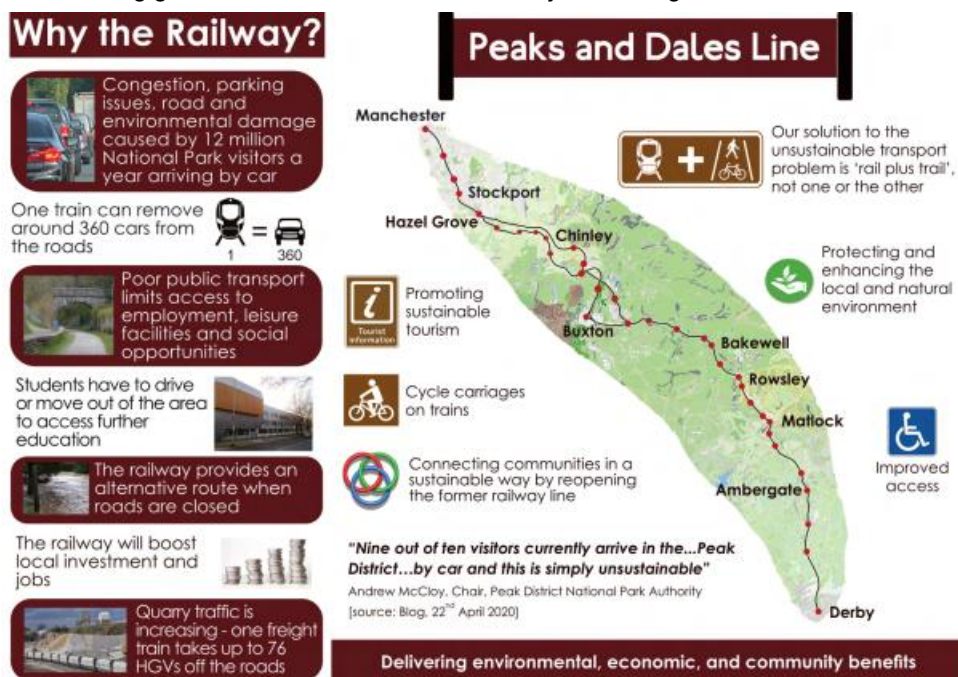
Getting more freight off unsuitable Derbyshire roads would be welcomed by residents. When I drive the Via Gelia (A5012) to Buxton and the HGV double wheels come round the corner at me – on the wrong side of the double white line – I do need a strong nerve. These tankers belong on rail.

Simon's statement about peace and tranquillity – a haven for wildlife – is rather broad brush, and fails to take into account that the Sites of Special Scientific Interest are currently a mixed bag of conditions some 70 years after the creation of the National Park. Our studies suggest that there is doubt about just what has been achieved in all these years. Disappointing – but because the park authority owns very little of the land, they cannot roll out the sort of policies you might assume. On the

other hand, the temporary powers accorded to a biodiversity-favouring rail reinstatement exceed what the national park can achieve alone. Recent statute now requires the Peaks and Dales line to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, far beyond the capability of the National Park. Once the park “gets” this, there could be a further change of heart. The reinstatement might be in a better position than the park itself to deliver on the park’s own biodiversity action plan. It appears that park legislation originates from gentler times, the bar set lower.

Having suffered 40% funding cuts over the last decade, the park is in no shape to deliver on these objectives. Even their planning portfolio is under threat. They can’t afford to employ experienced staff. It is a revolving door for junior grades to progress careers elsewhere. The park is close to special measures for planning. Our own university-backed biodiversity studies show that the rollout and development of nature recovery networks would be ideal for the Wye Valley area, attached to the rail reinstatement and the rerouted Monsal Trail.

You will have noted the recent nerves in the media that have greeted the announcement of a new National Park (location TBA). Government sleight of hand is regularly to announce these things and then steal from other budgets to fund the headline catching gimmick. National Parks are an easy “soft” target.



My updated brief on all the above comes from a consents manager, attached to the campaign, who worked on the current Hope Valley upgrade: “80% of my work is ecology and noise.” He is an environmental specialist who earns his living as a consultant from identifying and resolving these and many other challenges.

The Derbyshire County Council (DCC) study (2002-4) was flawed. The scope was artificially narrow and had the “real” study been carried out, the railway might have been open by now. The call in its conclusion for a new study in the 2020s has been squashed. The study is totally silent on what would happen economically if no railway was reinstated. The study is rather like a Swiss cheese; we have pointed out these and other substantial holes. DCC are indeed upset,

but their predecessor administration might have scoped the study with more care and vision. It is now “policy” to have a multi user trail based on what MEMRAP has shown to be defective data.

The freight comments have been outpaced by events, from our recent TfGM meeting. After HS2 cancellation, “Manchester is now broken”. This includes the Stockport platform zero idea, which we proposed to turn back our faster services. TfGM was shocked by the suggestion. To calm them down, I reminded them that TfN had suggested this initially. There is a desperate need for extra capacity – of which the strong Peaks and Dales line case is one part – we can’t say how large. TfGM is hoping for a good study from us and will input to our work, though Mayor Burnham is blocked from backing it while DCC remains “dug in”. Roll on the East Midlands mayor next year.

The DfT said in March 2023 that the biggest opportunity for us is their recognition of the mess (congestion) that is the Midland main line north of Chesterfield. The current Hope Valley line upgrade is palliative, and the Dore South curve is now being turned into a freight parking lot. Only Peaks and Dales can rescue Dore south for any regular passenger services. And as a case study, my new partner suffers delay most days on this exact stretch of track. She is not happy, and nor is the MP who employs her, when she is so regularly late for work.

Earls cement works at Hope will close finally in 2042. However, the Peak District has limestone for 70-80 years worth of aggregates – current proven reserves. Our reinstatement is based only on a 60 year concession to the private investor.

I mentioned Stockport earlier. Sadly, there is nothing ingenious about the Dore South curve. It is unavailable for passenger until Peaks and Dales spreads the freight burden out. The only passenger trains that use it today are late running Norwich-Liverpool trains that delete the Sheffield reversal leg. In fact, the 2018 franchise, won by EMR, proposed two such services, one from Stansted to Manchester and the other from Leicester – both quietly dropped.

Congestion issues are complex. Our own light rail proposal in Buxton, to reach the Monsal Trail is a “Trojan horse” proposal – now picked up by Network Rail. Chatsworth prefers access to the House from a reinstated Hassop station – the access road from Rowsley is congested – there is also a nasty narrow bridge on which long vehicles ground.

But I also had similar comments by a Belper councillor, who can avoid and therefore ignore the all-year-round roadworks

on the A6 between Matlock Bath and Bakewell. A former Chapel Parish Council leader showed me from Eccles Pike viewpoint the concrete infill of the A6 corridor ("should be complete by 2050"). The traffic there shows the worst features of London suburban congestion. Only rail scales to resolve this.

Further afield, Jane Hunt, the MP for Loughborough says: "It is ridiculous that I have to drive for 3 hours to meetings in Manchester. This is the dislocation of connectivity between EM and NW regions. Students there use railcards for London travel and use "old bangers" to drive to their homes in the Manchester region – as they agree with the MP.

Bus? Tram? I think not – can't handle the distance, the traffic or the numbers of people. And so the list of examples and anecdotes goes on – the case is huge.

The Peaks and Dales line was merely a solution to a regional problem until cancellation of HS2. It is now part of a national problem to solve. Peaks and Dales re-opens a secondary mainline (as it always was) that will be as successful as Chiltern is between London and Birmingham. A senior Network Rail programme director confirmed this to me at our last public meeting in Ripley on 10th November.

The Transpeak bus is a shrunken remnant, proving the case for rail. Originally it ran from Nottingham to Manchester. Today it struggles to handle Derby-Buxton and was nearly withdrawn last year until Derbyshire was forced to hand over more subsidy. Slow and uncomfortable, stuck in the roadworks with everything else on the A6. No solution there. In their Feb 2023 public meeting, Darley Dale residents nodded vigorously at the distress revealed by my analysis of DfT transport volumes data along their section of A6 – all year round.

We do indeed live in different times. One of the key slides I showed at Railfuture Yorkshire's meeting in Sheffield is the poor productivity of UK core cities. The Peak District unfortunately blocks productivity in 3 regions and 5 major cities. This is the core case, never articulated in the last DCC backed study. If the National Park was in the wilds of Devon or Northumberland it would not matter. However, it stifles the English economy through its location and contributes to this, reported by OECD, just as the first lock down happened – so ignored by the media.

Without the Peaks and Dales line, the Midlands and North can look forward to a congested, internationally uncompetitive and declining regional economy. Be prepared for higher taxes and fewer services. The message of the above graph is that UK plc is asleep at the wheel, while other countries have all invested and overtaken us.

As "developing" countries step up for their share of the global "cake", we should prepare to fade into obscurity as a nation, for the missing link between the East Midlands and North West is seen here to be playing a disproportionate part in this decline. The local effect can be seen in the decline of High Peak and Derbyshire Dales productivity below in the local GVA (gross value added) graph. The difference in relative prosperity between Scottish Borders rail reinstatement, compared to High Peak and Derbyshire Dales (without!) is stark. Derbyshire residents do not deserve to be consigned to the economic bin in this way.

As you see, I have scratched at the surface here of the campaign's 5 years of research, analysis and promotion

Today: Strategic productivity weakness

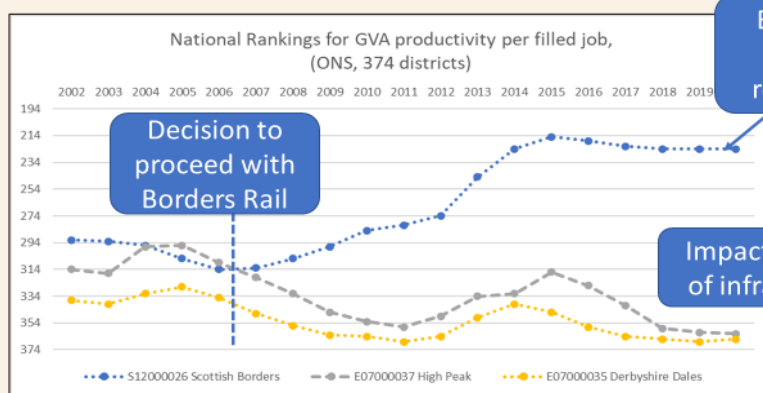


1. "Core city" connectivity neglected (Midlands and North)
2. UK "Core city" productivity is uncompetitive
3. The Peaks and Dales Line aids :

- a. Nottingham,
- b. Derby,
- c. Leicester,
- d. Manchester
- e. Sheffield via Hope Valley

13

Today: Local Regeneration Urgently Required



12

Celebrating 200th anniversary under micromanagement?

by Andrew Oldfield

FLAWED, fragmented and feeble? Under government micromanagement? Will that be the railway facing passengers in 2025, on the 250th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway?

Rail has “enjoyed” a rotten five years since the May 2018 timetable debacle, followed by Covid 19, then the government failure to launch a sensible recovery plan, before pausing Great British Railways (GBR) the structure for the future that so far, from November 2021 to July 2023, has cost £76.5 million through the agency of GBR transition team. Meanwhile, observers hint of changes not needing legislation.

Finally, to top it all, 18 months of damaging strikes.

The proposed cull of 974 ticket offices by the Rail Delivery Group (rail dismantling group?) and the train operating companies (TOCs) was disgraceful, showing that they either do not grasp users’ needs, or just choose to ignore them. These industry bodies seem to bow to DfT and Treasury pressure instead of fighting their corner⁷. Direction of travel cost-cutting and increased passenger misery.

“Booking Office Beeching” is an apt term for what was a brutal attack against disabled, elderly, others not IT-savvy, and others who prefer to deal with human beings, leaving them paying a higher fare than if they’d bought the ticket from experienced ticket office staff. Data selected to justify the proposed cuts was questionable. Rail’s major costs are infrastructure, track and signalling, and train operation.

Had the proposal not been condemned by Transport Focus and then promptly rejected by the minister, passenger security and safety would have been put at risk. Then add the sacrificing of pocket timetables and posters in cases. How passenger friendly is this? What other industry would act likewise?

Rail is so weak because it lacks a champion like Sir Peter Parker or Chris Green from BR days. Where is the drive to increase passengers and revenue rather cost-cutting? Growing the service must surely be a no-brainer.

Global warming leading to climate change surely makes electrification a priority!

Look at Belper. Railwatch 177 hailed service improvements, but train operators’ ambitions still seem to reflect a “can’t do” attitude. Why would enterprising rail service planners not want to draw on the benefits of this market town served by hourly Matlock-Nottingham trains but also on the inter-city route through Sheffield and Derby?⁸

As for Network Rail, are they not the masters of negativity by being remote from users? Is not the “rules of the route” process outdated? Rigid approaches penalise routes such as the Penistone line where first train from Huddersfield arrives Sheffield 29 minutes after the local target of 07.00. Does this not make a mockery of the idea of a 24/7 railway? Should not rail’s mentality be more fit for the 21st century?

It is said that where there is a will there is a way. Is it micromanagement by government and trying times that are the problem? Can we wait for legally constituted GBR to fix the problem? Surely it is time to start a review now.

Reforming rail – GBR plc?!

by **Mike Crowhurst**, Vice President, Railfuture Yorkshire Branch

We need to be careful what we wish for. In *RAIL* 989 Christian Wolmar seemed to advocate outright renationalisation (judge for yourself at [Rail989: The railways in limbo and TFL needs to step up – Christian Wolmar](#)). Renationalisation now would be far worse than the old BR set-up. At least then the railway was run by career railway people, not civil servants, and they were left to get on with it.

What are the alternatives? In its present form the industry will come under heavy pressure from HM Treasury to cut costs, irrespective of the outcome of the election, and irrespective of the effect on patronage and revenue. That’s the DfT’s problem!

HS2 is only the first victim. Ticket offices could easily have been next but have only been saved by a huge campaign. Or maybe ticket office salvation was a sop to compensate for HS2 – who knows? Another way of hitting the passenger has already been suggested – clamping down on delay compensation payments. This might lose fewer passengers than the “up to 10 per cent” mentioned of ticket offices, but neither is a good way of attracting customers back.

That requires fully restored, frequent, reliable, accessible (in every sense), affordable and welcoming services.

⁷ It is still not entirely clear where the proposals started. In *RAIL* magazine 996, Christian Wolmar says the original idea came from the TOCs, who suggested many ticket offices could be closed. The TOCs apparently wanted to keep half the resulting savings. To which the DfT said, as Wolmar reported: good idea, but we’d like to have all the money... but draw up the plans and we’ll support you. – JSW

⁸ It could also offer connections from Yorkshire to the Matlock Branch – JSW

Cutting staff or hitting pay and conditions will not solve the problem, as these inevitably lead to service cuts. TransPennine has recently decided to reduce service frequency on the basis that certainty is better than uncertainty – at best a stopgap measure while the problem is addressed at source. Any solution based on cost cutting risks a spiral of decline.

Most of our experienced managers and commentators agree that the only way to make ends meet is to grow revenue, by attracting more customers. As a minimum this requires a unified balance sheet for the industry, **not the present split between Treasury and DfT control**. Ideally it requires as many bits of the industry put back together as possible under one central direction, including both operations and infrastructure, and an end to the fragmentation associated with franchising. It would then be possible to get rid of all the consultants, lawyers and accountants who deal with delay attribution, cost allocation and so on. **With consequent savings.**

Back in 1992-4, informed opinion, especially within the industry was that the best option was BR plc, a single unit at arm's length from government ("parastatal") with full operational and financial independence, subject only to a support budget and strategic objectives. Such a body would only have to come back to the state if they needed powers to buy land, or to withdraw services or close stations. That is still my preference. Today I suppose we should have to call it GBR plc!

So I would encourage a Labour government to press ahead with legislation to set up GBR, based at Derby and as for "guiding mind" I would put Lord Andrew Adonis in charge. Adonis was a transport minister from 2008 to 2010 (Secretary of State for Transport June 2009 to May 2010). Now 60, he has the energy and enthusiasm, knows Whitehall and the industry very well and he would not be the first politician to become head of the rail industry (Richard Marsh did, long ago).

Then I would tell him to consult with all parts of the industry to determine if GBR plc would still be the best structure, and how to get there with minimum disruption.

And finally a little physics at one member's request!

"Physics was my worst subject at school." Now how many times has this retired science educator heard that? The request was for an explanation of efficiency. If I say an electric train has an efficiency of 80 percent from overhead wires to wheels what does that mean? Energy cannot be created or destroyed (first law of thermodynamics) but is always wasted (2nd law). Things that get hot cool down. So an electric train collects energy via the overhead wires and converts it to movement (kinetic energy). But nothing is 100 per cent efficient because of that wasted energy. All the electrical connections, transformers, motors and moving parts with friction waste energy. And that wasted energy ends up as heat. All that waste heat spreads and (as Flanders & Swan put it) cools down. And you can't get it back.

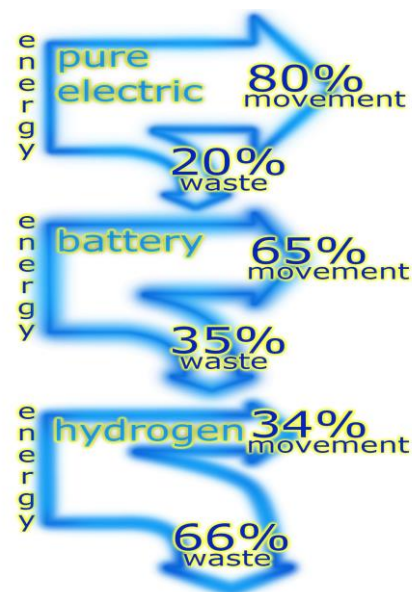
The electric train wastes about 20% – that fraction doesn't get to the wheels – so its efficiency is 80%. This can be shown in arrow diagrams like the ones on the left ("Sankey diagrams"). Please do not take the figures as gospel; they give a rough idea. The main thing to note is that battery trains have to charge batteries and then get that energy back, meaning more circuitry and more energy wasted as heat (heat that you can't readily get back). Sustainable hydrogen power uses electricity to split water (H₂O) into hydrogen and oxygen, fuel cells recombine the two and get the energy back. That's even less efficient than batteries. And you just have to hope that eventually all the electricity will be generated from wind, other renewables or nuclear energy. (A lot of hydrogen is actually made from hydrocarbons and a by-product is Number One Greenhouse Gas Carbon Dioxide. So if we want to move towards a hydrogen economy we have to fix that.)

Just one more thing about battery trains. Charging uses electric current. Charge = current x time. That means how fast you can charge depends on how big a current you can take. Quick charging is sometimes beyond the current that the mains can supply. So an attractive idea is two stages of charging. First charge a big (that is BIG) battery from the mains. Then use that charge at high current to charge the smaller battery on your train as quickly as possible between trips. In other words a 2-stage process. More stages means more energy wasted, so the efficiency drops to maybe not much more than 50%.

Hybrid trains are great of course: bimodes, even trimodes. But all the extra weight means more energy needed to accelerate the train and all the extra materials needed to make the batteries and diesel engines. Even when operating in electric mode the efficiency is less. Less efficiency means more energy is wasted. Can we afford that as a global society? **Pure electric is best!**

To quote the great Tom Lehrer, I hope you've all been paying attention; there will be a test next lesson. – JSW

Wishing all members and health and happiness in 2024



User groups affiliated to Railfuture within Yorkshire area

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

Yorkshire branch (RfY) committee and the small print

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Vice Chair (SY lead): Andrew Dyson: andrew.dyson@platform5.com
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by 29 February 2024.
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