

# *railfuture*

## AUTUMN 2009 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Held on 14th November 2009 at St John the Baptist Church hall, Corby, Northants

### “RAIL REOPENINGS”



Nottinghamshire County Council  
making Nottinghamshire a better place



## CONFERENCE REPORT

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# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

**Councillor Mark Pengelly**  
*Deputy Leader, Corby Borough Council*  
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**Colin Elliff**  
*Railfuture – Woodhead Route*  
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**Brian Barnsley**  
*Association of Community Railway Partnerships*  
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**Tim Shoveller**  
*Managing Director, East Midlands Trains*  
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**Steve Abbott**  
*Secretary, TravelWatch East Midlands*  
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**Jim Bamford**  
*Rail Officer, Nottinghamshire County*  
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## Introduction

### Mike Crowhurst (Chairman), Jim Wade (Rf East Mids)

While people were gathering, pictures of some of the 146 stations opened across Great Britain in the 1990s and 2000s were shown via the overhead projector. The rolling presentation ended with the 'bad news' that the Cambridge-St. Ives line has been lost to a concrete guided busway.

At the same time *Railfuture* representatives were interviewed by the local radio and newspaper journalists, who were placed that a national conference was being held in their town to celebrate its new £17m station, which saw its first passenger train in January 2009 and a full service, with official opening by Rt. Hon. Geoff Hoon, in April.

Mike Crowhurst, as National Chairman, welcomed the audience of almost 100 and then handed over to Jim Wade of Railfuture East Midlands to say a few words.

Jim told how the Corby re-opening came as a result of lobbying and running special trains from the town's old station. In 1987 there had been a re-opening under the Speller Act but that ceased after three years when a planned "Wonderworld" failed to materialise. But new campaigning got Corby included in the new EMT franchise. Lobbying is not merely letter-writing and meetings but also thinking creatively outside the box.

### Cllr Mark Pengelly, *Deputy leader, Corby Borough Council* "Council's role in bringing passenger trains back to Corby"

The first slide of councillor Pengelly's presentation said "Corby is back on track". He said that getting the trains back was very much partnership working, with help from the Labour government and an MP. With 13 direct trains a day to London in a journey time of 1 hour 14 minutes, and a lot of publicity when the station opened (see right), the passenger numbers are already double expectation. There is now a hope to get trains to the north as well one day.



Someone he knew had said he wanted to live in a better place without moving. The railway had been instrumental in getting Corby going 1879 - 1967. 12,000 people worked in the steelworks: 8,000 were sacked overnight. During the Speller Act service BR did everything possible not to have a station, such as not collecting fares or replacing a train with a bus. But now there is £17m investment in a new station with 13 direct trains to London every weekday.

Councillor Pengelly answered a series of questions from the audience.

He confirmed that the £17m cost included paying for the long platform, which is longer than those at Wellingborough or Kettering.

For the future it is hoped to get a business park around the station and trains northwards. There will be two weekends without trains when the line will be upgraded.

Asked why SouthEastern Trains website doesn't recognise Corby as a station, nor does the local GPS he said that technology must catch up. But there is now political will, unlike during the Speller exercise.

Would he approach Stagecoach for a bus/rail interchange at the station? He does want to link in local bus services to Corby station and said that there are 500 new jobs in Corby because it now has a railway station.

It's good having a £1.60 all-day local bus fare, but bad not having maps displayed at the station. He said this was raised at a meeting last year. There is also a possibility of a new footbridge over the railway to improve access into the town centre.

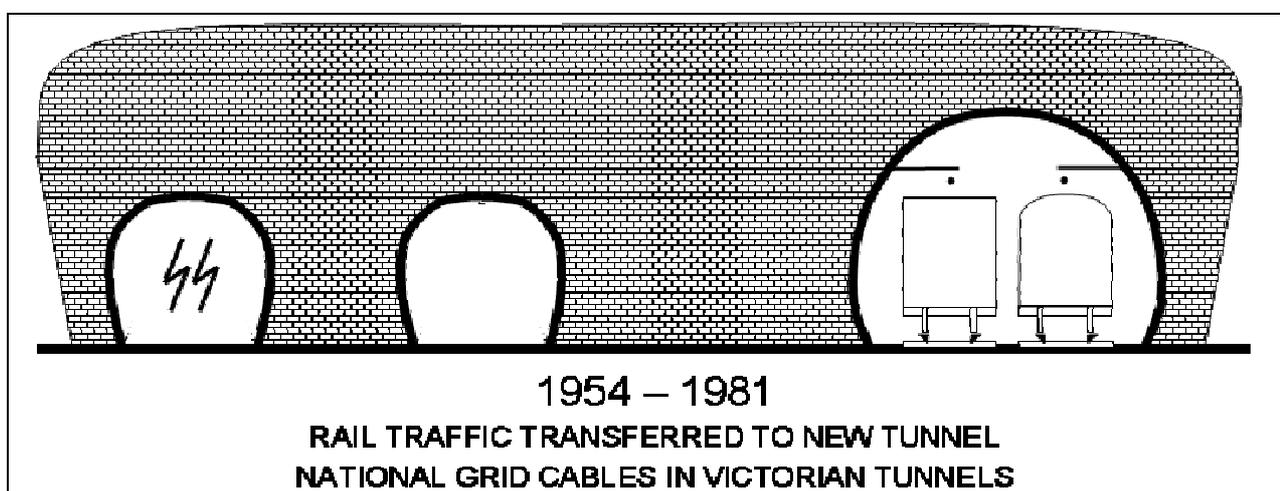
He did not know how much the station feasibility study cost but he confirmed there was funding from local government bodies including £50k from Corby Council.

Asked about the existing freight sidings, councillor Pengelly mentioned the two freight industrial sites in town, but said there was an argument against developing freight because it would restrict passenger trains. However, there is space for a railfreight interchange, and bridge work has been done for double-decker car-carrying trains into town.

**Colin Elliff, Consultant Engineer and Railfuture Director**  
**"Woodhead: a total transport solution"**

Colin Elliff, who has been campaigning to reopen the Woodhead route that was closed in 1981, began by explaining some of the history.

Woodhead is the simplest way across the Pennines, as it has a valley leading directly to a major conurbation each side, thus only needing a single main tunnel. It was opened in 1846 and electrified in 1954 with a new double-track tunnel replacing two



smaller single-track bores. At that time there were four rail routes across the Pennines, but as Woodhead went to the wrong station in Sheffield (i.e. Victoria not Midland) it was selected for closure, for passengers in 1970 and freight in 1981. The old bores have been used for electricity grid cables; now both tunnels and cables are deteriorating, so there is a desire to install new cables in the larger, 1954, tunnel.

He then switched to current situation. Transpennine passenger traffic is increasing and freight has insufficient paths, and no route with W10 clearance. Roads in the area are all single carriageway, the M62 further north being the only modern Transpennine crossing. Although the M67 was built in 1978, it is only a short stub drawing heavy traffic onto unsuitable Transpennine roads (Woodhead, Snake et al) and causing severe congestion. A suggested new road (Mottram-Tintwistle Bypass) would cost in excess of £300m.

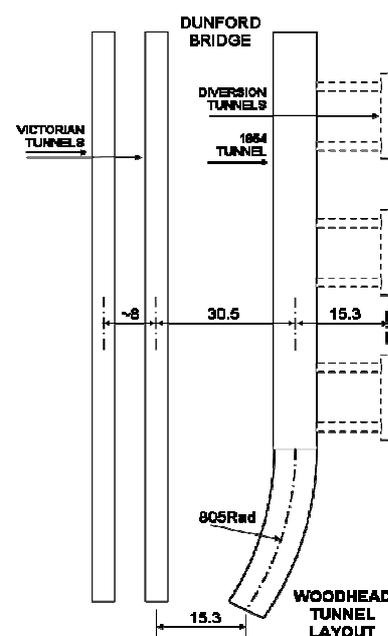
Mr Elliffe then posed the question: for what type of traffic should Woodhead be reopened - freight, lorry shuttle, local passenger, or high speed? There are infrastructure issues: tunnel, abandoned approaches, existing railway operating interface, and the local issue of a cycle track.

The current Network Rail strategy is to enhance existing routes, either 4-tracks restored along the Diggle line, with the Micklehurst loop reinstated (note presence of residential property on former route), or in the Hope Valley in the middle of a National Park. Woodhead would be a far more suitable alternative.

There is also a "Translink UK" scheme for short-haul lorry shuttles, but that would need a major (~700mm) track lowering in the 1954 tunnel (whereas it is OK as it is for 9ft 6in containers). Such a lowering would carry huge engineering risks; it appears more practical to bore out the old Victorian tunnels to a larger diameter. Lorry shuttles will work if prices can be kept reasonable (equivalent to fuel used plus wear and tear to the haulier, plus significant subsidy) and volumes are assured through a network of strategic lorry bans on Trans-Peak roads.

For the much talked-about high-speed rail Colin favours a UK high speed spine route along the M1 corridor, with spurs to Birmingham and Manchester/Liverpool (via Woodhead), and continuing north via Leeds and Newcastle to Scotland. For the Woodhead spur, we are not talking of 300km/h let alone 400km/h, but just 200km/h – and even this wouldn't work in the 1954 tunnel due to a kink at the end (see diagram on right). Also wider stock couldn't pass in the tunnel. The east-west routing of High Speed North across Manchester (in tunnel) would offer massive extra track capacity, an effective alternative to the Manchester Hub proposals.

There are important environmental issues. The 2008 Climate Change Act requirement for CO<sub>2</sub> reductions requires massive mode shift on all major transport axes. So we need new railway capacity across the Pennines, and that means Woodhead, and probably new construction in the National Park. Lorry shuttles are needed for local environmental reasons, but can't alone justify the major work needed. Highspeed via Woodhead is the key to a cost-effective national network. Local passenger improvements should buy in the local



**Lorry Shuttles**

- Essential for reduced road traffic & alternative to M-T
- Wider benefits across Peak District with HGV ban strategy
- Won't fit tunnels
- New alignment required alongside existing railway
- Major costs

**Container / Railfreight**

- Essential to meet wider transport/environment aims
- No major infrastructure requirements

**High Speed Rail**

- Woodhead key to cost-effective national network
- Environmental gains optimised
- Won't fit tunnels
- New alignment required alongside existing railway
- New construction in National Park

**Local Passenger Services**

- Essential for local support
- No major infrastructure requirements but...
- Safety case concerns in 1954 tunnel

community. Then there is container traffic. So we need a **"Total Transport Solution"** (as shown on the slide left).

He summed up by saying that everything together is needed to make it happen.

Colin then took a series of questions from the audience.

How to address the cycle route on the former railway line? He said that the new route would generally be 2-track on existing formation where often it was 4-track, leaving room there, and also cuttings and embankments give extra space, so could engineer a footpath. It is important to buy all users into it.

Asked about the practicalities of widening or lowering a tunnel he explained that the 1954 tunnel, comprising concrete 'horseshoe' cannot practicably be widened. Taking ground out in floor of tunnel would be very risky and difficult. It's easier to ream out the original Victorian tunnels.

Alternatively, could there be bi-directional single track in the existing tunnel? He said it is possible, but four miles of single-track becomes operationally incapable of sufficient capacity. Also there is the engineering need to replace the cables lest the lights otherwise go out in Manchester.

Are there any costs for re-tunnelling costs? He said that no costing has been done, but the overall scheme would give a £10bn saving on the total high-speed network, which gives plenty of room in any budget.

**Brian Barnsley, Operations Manager  
Assoc of Community Rail Partnerships**

Despite being a speaker at a conference about railway reopenings, Brian Barnsley explained that ACoRP doesn't get involved in re-opening campaigns as it looks at the here and now. It represents over 60 Community Rail Partnerships and is supported by ATOC, DfT, Welsh Assembly Government, and Network Rail. ACoRP is predominantly funded by the DfT which pays Brian's wages. ACoRP disseminates examples of best practice and encourages holistic and wide-range thinking, and produces publications such as Scenic Britain by Train and its quarterly magazine, Train Times (see right). ACoRP brings together a wide range of interests (e.g. schools, businesses) along a rail corridor.



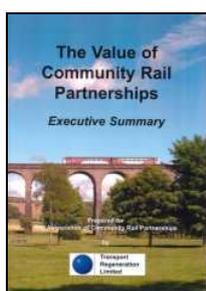
Community Rail was a radical new approach to Britain's rural and local railways with a

strategy published in 2004. At the time it was the biggest SRA consultation. A CRP would cover a whole service whilst a Community Rail Designation would cover the section of route exclusively used by CRP services, for example between a junction at each end. The Heart of Wales line is a long-distance example; the Abbey Line is short-distance; St. Ives - St. Erth is an example making good money with full trains all year, albeit with poor mainline connections; the Tamar Valley is a primarily commuter example.

Ever since Alastair Darling spoke about trains "carrying fresh air around", ACoRP has included passengers in their pictures. So lines are promoted to potential passengers. You've never finished promotion because there's always more to do; there is always someone who doesn't know, for example a solicitor on a music train who wasn't aware of a station near where he lives. There is investment of time and non-railway money. Looking after stations reduces vandalism. There is two-way communication between communities and their railways. There is work with teenagers to catch them when they are young, otherwise they all want to learn to drive.

Trains are often overcrowded. There are now 1.5m passengers on the Penistone line which had started out with 300k. Looe in January may be empty, but it is full in August. But then London to Gatwick can be empty at times too. CRPs can provide real congestion relief, such as at St. Ives. But a tourism person once said why should he promote rail if a rubbish service is provided. Empty trains aren't much good at reducing CO<sub>2</sub> but full trains are very good. The issue is: why do we travel so much? Friends of the Earth might say we should travel less. There is some truth that travellers tend to be more middle-class or wealthier than the average person, but this is less so on CRP trains which often offer a low cost ride for commuters who would struggle to get to work, thus helping with equality of opportunity (a DfT objective).

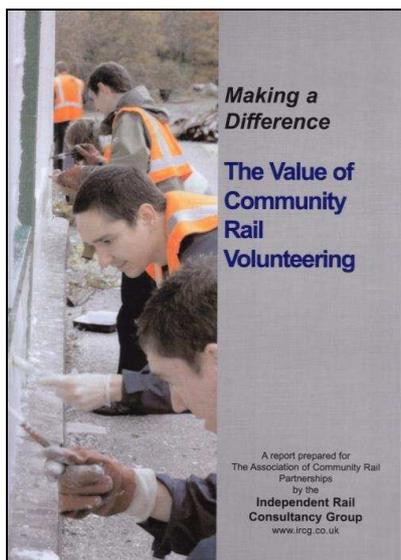
CRPs have a rôle to play in safety, security and health. There is a false perception that railways are dangerous. CRPs fit well into active travel plans. We need to prove the wider value of railways, such as Local Area Agreements giving priorities for a local area, agreed between central government and local partners, e.g. for travel to school, to hospital, to leisure, and to shopping. Railways also help to reduce crime.



A well organised CRP can, because it is so cheap, have a BCR of 4.6:1 according to DfT statistics. There is a huge value in the volunteers, e.g. distributing leaflets and doing gardening, estimated to a value of £27m to the rail industry (as suggested in "The Value of Community Rail Partnerships"). There is also station signposting, although some arguments with the Highways Agency in Tyne & Wear where there are some guerrilla tactics. Music trains attract newcomers. There is some Tram-Train research in Kassel influencing the transport debate.

Some money can be made running station cafés etc. A station adoption is like a CRP but just for an individual station, making it more welcoming. It can be by an individual or a group. There is also a Community Station Initiative to deal with stations without a commercial value. There are also "Harrington Humps" (see photo on right) to reduce the gap from platform to train: the Welsh are going to put one on every rural station.





Community Rail has cross-party support and can apply to re-openings, e.g. Tavistock as part of a roof tax, and is having broader influences, e.g. being asked to help in Spain and Portugal. If we are going to campaign for things, the priority should be for more trains to reduce overcrowding, which isn't helped in Wales by allowing concessionary passes on trains. It is no good borrowing trains from elsewhere, as somewhere else is then deprived. We need cheaper ways of improving the infrastructure, such as cheaper stations, getting expensive partly due to DDA compliance. We must ensure value for money.

With little time for questions, he was asked why can't Heritage Railways provide and promote a proper service for the community rather than just a tourist service?

Brian said that ACoRP can give help if it is wanted, but often that is not the case. He agreed that there are lots of heritage railways that could do more as a proper railway. The Chairman observed that they are often not keen to be seen as real railways.

Brian offered his contact details to attendees:

Email: [info@acorp.uk.com](mailto:info@acorp.uk.com)  
 Web: [www.acorp.uk.com](http://www.acorp.uk.com)  
 Tel.: +44(0) 1484 847790

Britain's Growing Railway Volume II "Vision and Reality" will have a section on the public service that heritage railways could provide in the future.

For information about CRPs see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_rail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_rail).

## Tim Shoveller, *Managing Director* East Midlands Trains

### East Midlands Trains Franchise

- November 2007 – March 2015
- Operated by the Stagecoach Group
- 468 services every week day
- 2,000 staff
- 20 million passenger journeys each year
- 87 stations including Sheffield, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester and Lincoln
- Long distance services from South Yorkshire and East Midlands to St Pancras International
- Regional services in the East Midlands and between Norwich - Liverpool



Tim Shoveller started his talk about East Midlands Trains (which is the operator serving Corby station) by explaining how it came into existence and its size compared to other franchises. The 87 stations served included the recently opened Corby and East Midlands Parkway. There are inter-city services to London, a huge expanse between Norwich and Liverpool, and every train type from HST to rural single coach train.

The mainline is up from 92% to 93% PPM MAA. There was a new timetable in December 2008 with 5 tph off-peak to and from London. It is now faster to Leicester, Derby and Sheffield. But intermediate journeys from Kettering and stations south of there to Leicester or beyond are less frequent. The fleet has been increased with a class 153 unit, an HST power car, and four class 222s, despite a diesel stock shortage in the country. A year ago there was on average 10k to 12k miles per casualty, but

now it regularly exceeds 35k miles per casualty. The class 158 units have been refurbished under a £10m programme. There is more emphasis on train cleaning. HSTs have been refurbished for another £10m.

(EMT route map shown on right)



The franchise offered Corby services, but the DfT didn't buy it in time, so trains that would have been used went elsewhere. Instead Hull Trains were persuaded to give up their Meridians so that EMT could maintain compatibility. But work was needed to re-write the computer program to enable coupling together with existing EMT units.



Etches Park Depot was not long enough, so EMT had to do half a train at a time. The solution was to build a long enough depot to cope with seven-car-long trains, which are its longest train, at a cost of for £22m. There is a new wheel-turning lathe, which avoids trains having to go off-network for tyre-turning. The photo to the left shows a Class 222 train.

Customer service: there is new catering based on customer feedback, two new stations, and £0.25m on minor things, such as dropping kerbs and new TVMs, and bus/rail joint displays. It is hoped that there will be new signalling at Corby that will allow turnrounds in the platform which will allow faster times to/from London, and eliminating the long stand times at Kettering. A UK-based call centre has been opened, and megatrains.com and megabus+ now offer low cost tickets priced at **£1** (see advert – right).



It's not unusual to get 280 passengers on a 140-seat train going to/from Norwich. The original data was wrong, but it is difficult putting it right via a formal proposal to DfT for more trains: current DfT-EMT discussions are already at an Option 9b without final decision! Sheffield to London is to become half-hourly, and is already faster than it was. At present people often drive to Doncaster. The extra train will be semi-fast. There will be no spare path Derby to Sheffield with this extra train added. EMT has got 4 trains from Hull, including 3 for Corby, leaving 1 spare for Sheffield. Sheffield to London will be reduced by 8min, and similar for Nottingham, hoping for 125mph around Sharnbrook and Leicester to East Midlands Parkway. There should also be a line speed improvement for Market Harborough to Wellingborough, where also the problem of the short platforms should be resolved.

There is no capacity in the industry to electrify to Sheffield sooner than in 10-15 years even if it was announced tomorrow. You can't bank on any promised money until you actually have it. Eventually NR hopes to get to run HSTs to Skegness. One way of doing things is to find problems that have to be dealt with, rather than formal planning that then costs the earth and takes ages to do. There has been a 20% passenger reduction as a result of the recession. EMT has managed to renegotiate to stop doing certain things.

Attendees were eager to ask Tim about further improvements that might occur.

On proposals to ease the curves at Market Harborough curves he said the plan is for 125mph running from Leicester to East Midlands Parkway, but Kettering is 80mph owing to foot crossing. However, the plan is to speed-up on the slow lines.

Responding to complaint about overcrowding on the Liverpool to Norwich service he said it is agreed that these big cities have poor road links, so they should have a big train every hour.

Could the Erewash Valley route enhancement save 10 minutes on journey times? He answered that use of the Erewash route would mean only 1tph Derby to London. EMT is not looking at any additional stations (Wigston Magna was specifically asked by the questioner), although Rushden would be top of list if it were.

Railfuture's Elisabeth Jordan, who had campaigned for decades to have Corby station reopened, expressed her pleasure but what about going north (e.g. Corby to Leicester)? Mr Shoveller said it would not be possible in short to medium term because of rolling stock shortage; Liverpool - Norwich is a higher priority. Each train costs £2m so you will never get that back from fares. Lots of people in Rutland drive to Peterborough for a fast train to London. Maybe EMT could run a few more trains, but fares wouldn't cover operating costs.

A similar question about running trains from St. Pancras to Leeds met with the response that the Midland Mainline route cannot compete with the ECML, and there are already both good CrossCountry and Northern trains between Sheffield and Leeds.

John Henderson of East Anglia who now drives instead of taking the train to visit power stations (as part of his job) because of the recession raised is concern about the compound effect of fare rises exceeding RPI. Mr Shoveller said that fares were not discouraging travel as the leisure market is still growing; all that is falling is first class open ticket business. For example, Price Waterhouse now has a standard-only travel policy. There are considerations of yield and volume.

Lastly, the new service was criticised for poor customer care causing passengers to miss the connection at Kettering for Corby 'by three steps' when coming down the footbridge. He promised that EMT will take this on board.

***Steve Abbott, Secretary, Travelwatch East Midlands***  
**"Campaign for a better service on Liverpool - Norwich Route"**

Steve Abbott explained that the 'Travelwatch' organisations around the country are independent bodies that are an alliance of groups in their area. In the case of East Midlands, it was originally formed by the Midlands Rail Passengers Committee to become its independent voluntary successor body, like similar ones in the Midlands, South-West and North-West. It comprises 90 different member organisations, including disabled people, cyclists and small businesses. Travelwatch has 400 contacts for consultation responses. It is an evidence-based project without much funding. It does not undertake long-term campaigning, unlike *Railfuture*; Travelwatch is more for immediate things, such as solving current problems with services.

Mr Abbott's talk focussed on the Liverpool - Nottingham - Norwich route. At just over 250 miles and covering cities with a combined population of 7.5 million, it is the longest cross-country route except for the former InterCity cross-country routes through Birmingham. The new Liverpool - Norwich route was created in May 1988 during the "Sprinter Revolution". The previous Harwich Boat Train did not even serve Norwich, the regional capital. There are many universities and colleges on the route, estimated to cover 1 in 6 undergraduates. There are connections to many other stations with one change (the "leg-up" principle). Liverpool - Norwich trains complement other services on all route sections. The route caters for both inter-regional and inter-urban markets. More people now than in the past live in one town and work in another and/or have a girl-friend in a third place. Crowding is a big issue, as also are key gaps in the service.

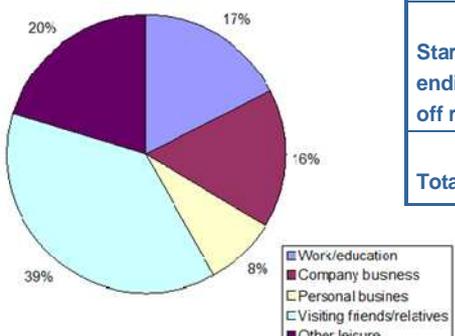
Central Trains used a mix of 2-car, 2x2-car, and 3-car trains. In 2007 when Central Trains was split the DfT agreed some re-allocation, ending up with the right number of vehicles but no 3-car trains. Then a unit was lost to bolster the Derby - Matlock service. Also there was an under-estimate in data given by DfT to the bidding TOCs. So crowding became endemic, especially on Fridays. Every train hits a travel-to-work peak at some point of its journey, and there is also a mid-morning peak due to the use of off-peak tickets. All this is exacerbated by the poor condition and reliability of the class 158 fleet, of which Nottingham has the oldest.

Overcrowding is worst out of Manchester in the peak, where passengers have to stand for up to 45 or sometimes even 60 minutes, there is little space for luggage, seat reservations are irrelevant, and the catering trolley can't get through, so made a loss and was abandoned for a while, all resulting in many passenger complaints and low scores on Passenger Focus' national passenger survey. Also EMT is reluctant to promote the route; indeed it daren't do so because it can't carry the people.

As a result a working group was set up and EMT set up a stakeholder board for the route, which resulted in authority to carry out a **passenger survey**. The mix of passengers on the route isn't like a group of commuters who are able to form a



**REASON FOR JOURNEY**



- Work/education
- Company business
- Personal business
- Visiting friends/relatives
- Other leisure

**BREAKDOWN OF JOURNEYS**

	Starting/ending Nottingham or East	Starting/ending Nottingham or West	Total
Between stations on route	11%	45%	56%
Starting/ending off route	17%	27%	44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>100%</b>

www.emptuf.org.uk

campaigning group. Because of the urgency, a survey was done in August (when there are no students), using a reply-paid postcard rather than the PF-style sheet. The whole route was covered using on-train volunteers over every segment and at every time of day, though not on every train. There were questions about the journey and satisfaction with it, and also space for their comments.

3,500 cards were given out. Normal experience is to get back 5 - 10% and to need 200+ answers to get reasonable conclusions, but actually 1,600 cards were returned,

showing how well worked up people were. A breakdown of journeys was done. The eastern half of the route had more people to or from places off the route than did the western half. More people were standing west of Nottingham. Overall 44% were changing trains. Visiting friends and relatives at 39% was the biggest market. 34% were not satisfied with getting a seat. 36% got a seat on fewer than half their journeys. 40% noted insufficient luggage space. The highest load of a 2-car was 264, implying a load factor of 1.9; the highest 4-car was 421, implying a 1.5 factor.

A refurbished class 158 unit has seating increased from 138 to 146, plus also 11 tip-up seats. There will be one or two extra units available once the refurbishment is done. Class 222 Meridians are cleared for the route but are only occasionally available. The new Nottingham - Leeds service provides some relief between Nottingham and Sheffield. There is now a bid to the DfT for more rolling stock. The DfT has admitted getting it wrong, hence option 9b as referred to by Tim Shoveller (see above). All this shows the value of hard evidence and getting passengers views.

Mr Abbott then answered half a dozen questions from the floor.

He was told that there is an overcrowding problem on the Newcastle to Bristol / Reading routes. He said that short-formed trains are a British problem, citing Germany where there would be much longer trains, although only one per hour.

He confirmed that the extra seats did cause the luggage racks to be removed. Norman Bradbury suggested at-table seats could be grouped to create luggage space between them, which is a solution preferred by many passengers as like to see their luggage.

Graham Nalty said more luggage space was needed these days. It was pointed out that there used to be luggage racks above the seats, as on Southern Electric stock in the 1960s and 1970s.

Travelwatch were also reminded of the need to be able to get bikes onto trains.

***Jim Bamford, Rail Officer for Notts County Council***  
***"Rail successes in East Midlands and aspirations for better links with other regions"***

Jim Bamford opened by listing the successes that Nottinghamshire county council had achieved since he had become rail officer. These reliability improvements on the Robin Hood line, which is England's largest rail reopening to date, and the Nottingham resignalling project.

The Robin Hood line improvements arose from persistent complaints about the number of cancellations. The PPM was in the 50s (out of 100) for well over a year. Cancellations were rife, including extra cancellations just to restore on-time running. One problem was a 13½ minute single-track section with a train every 15 minutes, adding both ways together. Nottinghamshire County Council chose to help find a solution rather than just pass on the complaints. The desired actions were: (1) reduce impact of delays from elsewhere (such as guard late off another train); (2) reduce single-track time; (3) increase turnaround time. EMT is doing great work on issue (1), so Notts CC is taking up (2) and (3).

## Robin Hood Line - linespeeds

### Very variable !

- south of Kirkby 70mph
- Kirkby – Mansfield 40 & 50mph
- Mansfield – Woodhouse 60mph
- Woodhouse – Littlewood 20mph
- Littlewood – Shirebrook 40 or 60mph
- Shirebrook – Woodend junc. 60mph
- Woodend east curve 20mph
- Woodend – Worksop 60mph



Nottinghamshire County Council

There was no choice of alternative paths in and out of Nottingham, so faster line speeds were needed, which were very variable between 20mph and 70mph. South of Kirkby became 70mph under re-alignment to accommodate the tram. There was no obvious current need of the lower limits, with 20mph seeming slow for a gentle radius. So Notts CC offered to pay for a GRIP Stage 3 assessment to give sufficient information to choose which option to go for, at £70k original cost,

reduced to £60k, paid by NR in the end. This indicated £360k to raise 3 miles of route to 60mph, which NR agreed to pay because of their performance benefits. Notts then said their money was not taken away but could be used for something else. There was £50k for some ballast and three tamper runs to save two minutes, raising one section from 20mph to 50mph. The southern phase work was being done in autumn 2009 to save 45 seconds for Woodhouse trains and over two minutes for Worksop trains. There was the risk of extra costs if something underneath was discovered when tamping. All this will increase Woodhouse turnaround times by 1½ minute and Worksop by nine minutes. From a NR point of view, it wasn't worth the cost of the assessment as they didn't know whether it would be worthwhile. Every alternate round-trip ends up at Worksop where it can make use in future of its slack there.

He considered if this technique be applied more widely. NR is now structured to facilitate enhancements with a more can-do attitude than in the past, learning from past errors, including missed opportunities, such as relaying Trowell Junction for 30mph when an extra £1.25m would have got 40mph. There is now a service improvement in the East Midlands since reducing the bottleneck at Trent Junction. Then there are Nottingham resignalling enhancements. ORR turned down the original but Notts lodged a successful appeal (unlike Stagecoach and Arriva who didn't win their appeals). All tracks will be bi-directional, with 35mph raised to 50mph and a MML line speed improvement. The 2008 Periodic review will reduce Sheffield - London by 8min. He reminded the audience that people travel by time not distance.

British Rail even started straightening the track that runs through Market Harborough (see photo on right) but only got it half done before the government cut BR's funding. Now for £69m there is a massive step-change, compared with £2bn for the WCML or £1.5bn for M1 widening for same journey-time benefit.



## The prospects for the future

### For local authorities

- Money for rail through RFA
- Inc rail schemes that weren't previously viable
- Could count towards CO<sub>2</sub> performance
- Future proof local economies

### For NR

- Funding over and above HLOS
- Could bring forward some renewals
- Or increase capacity
- with delay minute reductions
- Less call on NRDF ? Or shared schemes with NRDF ?



Nottinghamshire County Council

Mr Bamford explained that the Regional Funding Allocation is where the money is. There is a package of schemes recommended to the Regional Assembly, where one needs to go for funding. Another scheme is Nottingham to Lincoln with a preliminary allocation of £51m, fitting many key policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy, connecting two of the region's five principal urban areas. The line is flat and straight, but linespeeds

are only 55, 60, and 70mph, albeit with few curves. Average speed is 40½mph for the 34miles in 50 minutes with one stop at Newark. The target is to get to under 50 minutes at over 50mph. The traditional focus is to increase patronage, but this will also reduce costs because, for example, 1h59min needs 5 diagrams whereas 1h49min needs only 4 diagrams Nottingham to Leeds, so saving £750k per annum. These quicker journeys yield a total financial benefit of 16 - 20%, an effect bigger than any other single saving an operator could make. Nottingham - Lincoln now needs 2 diagrams for 1tph, but if the journey is reduced to 35min it could have 2tph with 3 diagrams.

Following his long and very detailed presentation time for questions was limited.

Responding to Colin Elliff's question about the extra fuel costs of a faster run, he said this wasn't studied but his hunch is that the cost is not much as it would cut out braking and re-accelerating.

He said that the council didn't investigate switch rail investment to road, despite a vociferous road lobby, in response to a question raised by Norman Bradbury.

Graham Lund asked whether Notts CC would like electrification continued on from Sheffield to Leeds and Doncaster. Jim said that better acceleration through electrification would save a further two minutes on top of the eight minutes saved by line-speed. Therefore line-speed is a higher priority than electrification, although both are wanted, the latter for environmental reasons as well.

## General Audience Discussion on the Day's Presentations Chaired by Jerry Alderson, *Railfuture* vice chairman

Nigel Philips said he was working with a local media society to promote awareness of the missing 4½-mile link between Bourne End and High Wycombe, but he had lukewarm support from Bucks County Council, albeit positive support from Windsor. Ian McDonald, chairman of *Railfuture's* Network Development Committee, said the

line does have potential in view of the lots of commuting in the Thames Valley, so it would be a good case for re-opening, including giving access to Heathrow.

Peter Wakefield, chairman of Railfuture's East Anglia branch, had printed 10k leaflets about the East-West Rail Link [Oxford - Bletchley - East Anglia] and had got rid of 9k of them. He asked everyone to individually register themselves as a supporter via the [www.railfuture.org.uk/Ox-Cam](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Ox-Cam) web-site. He explained that the route from Aylesbury to High Wycombe fits with going via Bourne End (as mentioned by the previous speaker) to Heathrow. Oxford to Milton Keynes is already almost certain, but the eastern half is still being argued about trying to find the best route. The best way southwards from Milton Keynes would be via High Wycombe, which already has a tunnel under the motorway and a working bridge over the Thames. The only problem would be a few houses on the land of the old formation, but it should be possible to get round. Aylesbury and Milton Keynes are both big development areas.

Wrapping up the conference, *Railfuture* members were told that the next national meeting would be the RDS Ltd. AGM on Saturday 8 May 2010 at Wrexham Football Club (next to the railway station), [www.wrexhamafc.co.uk](http://www.wrexhamafc.co.uk). Speakers are Ben Jones of Arriva Trains Wales and Tim James, Head of Transport at Welsh Assembly Government. The RDS Summer Conference would be on Saturday 3 July at Taunton Albemarle Centre (5 minutes' walk from station), [www.albemarle-centre.co.uk](http://www.albemarle-centre.co.uk). There was a suggestion from the floor to go back to Scotland at sometime after that.

## Glossary

ACoRP = Association of Community Rail Partnerships	k = thousand (1,000)
ATOC = Association of TOCs	m = million (1,000,000)
BCR = Benefit to Cost Ratio	MAA = Moving Annual Average
bn = billion (1,000,000,000)	MML = Midland MainLine
BR = [former] British Rail/Railways	NR = Network Rail
CRP = Community Rail Partnership	ORR = Office of the Rail Regulator
DfT = Department for Transport	PF = Passenger Focus
ECML = East Coast MainLine	PPM = Public Performance Measure
EMT = East Midlands Trains	RPC = [former] Rail Passengers' Council
FoE = Friends of the Earth	SRA = [former] Strategic Rail Authority
GPS = Global Positioning System	tph = trains per hour
HR = Heritage Railway(s)	TOC = Train Operating Company
HS = High Speed	TVM = Ticket vending Machine
HST = High Speed Train	WCML = West Coast Main Line

The Corby Reopenings Conference coincided with putting the finishing touches to *Railfuture's* brand new book detailing the new stations and lines added to the railway network in the last forty or so years. It is a superb and invaluable resource.

**BRITAIN'S GROWING RAILWAY** consists of two volumes. The first, is the **A-Z of Reopenings** (shown to the right) which was published in February 2010. It can be ordered from the *Railfuture* web-site - [www.railfuture.org.uk/books](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/books) - for £9.95 including P&P.

Volume II, subtitled *Vision and Reality*, is in production and will explain how to campaign for new stations and lines.



The following three pages show photos of the Corby's new station, which most attendees used to arrive in Corby

1. The compact but superb Corby station building, which opened in January 2009



2. Buses pull up close to the building with a covered walk to the entrance



3. Corby station has a large amount of car parking (view from south)



4. Corby station building has plenty of floor space and two ticket windows



5. ...plus a refreshment kiosk with tables and chairs



6. The building is locked in the evening so a night gate is provided to enter and exit



7. The Class 222 train has arrived at station – view from southern end looking north



8. Rebuilt platform on east side (left) with old (unused) one on west side (right)

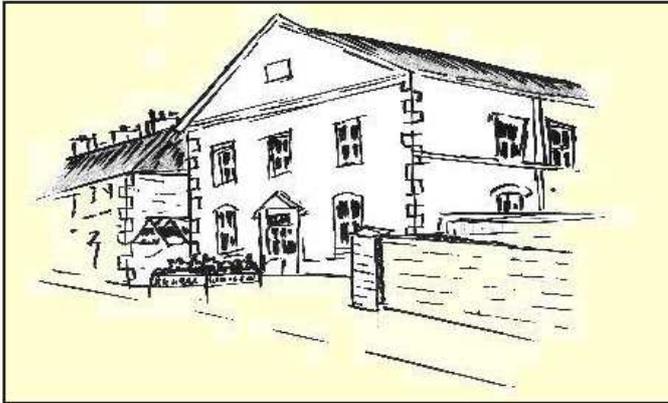


9. Freight-only/diversionary route north of station used for stabling passenger trains



The Northallerton and Corby conferences in 2009 were a great success according to those who attended. Railfuture's 2010 conference in Taunton looks at rail freight enhancements.

# 2010 RAIL USERS CONFERENCE



**Theme: Rail development**

THE ALBEMARLE CENTRE

ALBEMARLE ROAD

TAUNTON TA1 1BA

FIVE MINUTES WALK FROM STATION

SATURDAY 3 JULY 2010

11.00 TO 16.30

(DOORS OPEN 10.00)

## SPEAKERS

**Charles Varey**, Network Rail's senior commercial scheme sponsor  
Southampton to West Midlands freight upgrade and loading gauge  
enhancement

**Nick Gallop**, rail consultant for Intermodality  
Freight terminal development

**George Boyle**, Railfuture  
Rail freight campaigning

**First Great Western** speaker

Electrification and Reading remodelling

**Richard Burningham**

Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership manager

**Keith Walton**

Sevenside Community Rail Partnership

**railfuture** [www.railfuture.org.uk/taunton](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/taunton)

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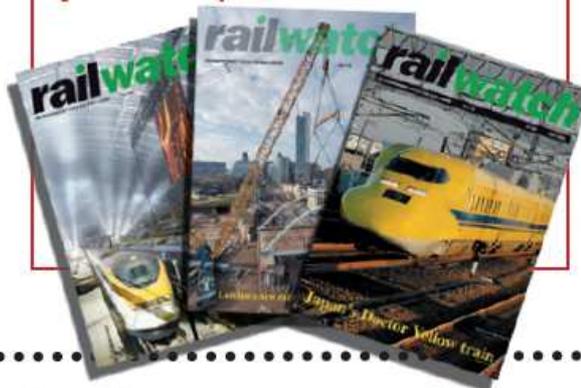
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