

railfuture

Annual Review 2014 - what we achieved



Love railways. The future of railways are our children and their education about sustainable railways which will benefit us all. Let's play and show them how to love railways!



The winning photo competition entry, showing the contrast in freight motive power at Peterborough.



Do the Metropolitan Line and Oyster extend to Banbury? Not yet, but Railfuture campaigns for new trains to increase capacity, new services to increase journey opportunities, and smartcards to make buying your ticket simpler and easier.



Hastings & Rye MP Amber Rudd, with Secretary of State for Transport Patrick McLoughlin and Bexhill & Battle MP Greg Barker, holding the model Javelin presented by Railfuture at the Hastings Rail Summit to commemorate their commitment to electrify Marshlink and bring HS1 services to Hastings and Bexhill.

HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE

3. Reports from the Groups
6. Railwatch
7. Local Action
12. Railfuture Scotland
14. Railfuture Wales
15. Railfuture Northern Ireland
16. How members can help



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Our mission is to be the number one advocate for the railway and rail users



Railfuture President Christian Wolmar is an award-winning writer and broadcaster specialising in transport, who has had a fortnightly column in RAIL since 1994.

These are good times for the railways. There is a big investment programme supported by all the major political parties. There are lots of planned enhancements and even some reopenings. Yet, while the decisions are made by politicians at Westminster, it is often the result of grassroots campaigning by Railfuture that has ensured that these improvements are

on the political agenda. Sometimes these campaigns take years and seem to be going nowhere, when suddenly the long hoped-for announcement arrives. At other times, Railfuture is pushing on an open door at a time when there is, at last, money available for investment. Either way, that is why it is so worth getting involved and helping the railway to improve in your area.

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW



@RfChairman

chairman@railfuture.org.uk

It would be disingenuous to say that 2014 has been a quiet year, far from it! As an organisation focused on rail, we have been in the forefront of campaigning for better services and facilities for both passenger and freight. Our influence far outweighs our size and we have the unique ability to speak as a completely non-aligned organisation free from all outside influence or pressure. In other words we are trusted.

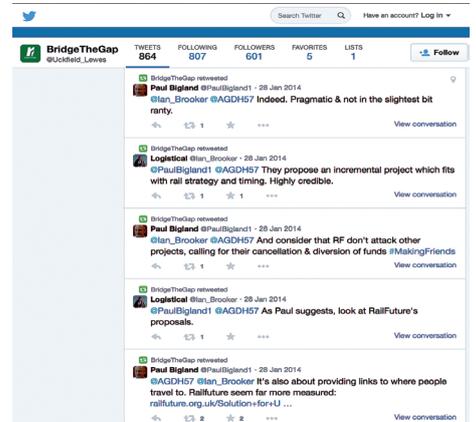
During the year we spoke freely to Ministers within the UK and devolved governments. Our Parliamentary Reception in the House of Commons in March was an outstanding success, attended by MPs and Lords. Our ability to speak directly to the Train Operating Companies was enhanced by our creation of TOC liaisons giving a clear point of contact for the first time.

The National Board continued its work to modernise and streamline the organisation creating a healthy and vibrant management structure. At the same time it delegated some of its work so that it can concentrate on more strategic issues.

Our marketing strategy began to bear fruit with increasing book sales and that in turn has fed into our membership strategy, which achieved very healthy results during 2014.

I am very grateful for all the hard work of the members of the Board and the Directorates and Branches without which Railfuture could not function.

I made it clear 3 years ago that I would step down once it was apparent that the necessary reforms and changes had bedded down – that point has now been



We are recognised as credible and effective campaigners by respected rail consultants and journalists.

reached and Railfuture is once again a spectacularly efficient and successful campaigning organisation. With that in mind, and also, unfortunately, for reasons of ill health, I shall be stepping down as Chairman in May 2015.

David Berman

POLICY DIRECTORATE

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The Policy Directorate co-ordinates four key groups – Infrastructure, Passenger, Freight and International – working in conjunction with the Branches. This puts Railfuture in an effective and influential position interacting with the rail industry and rail stakeholders at every level.

The degree of formal consultation during the last year has been intense, including a range of route studies and projects from Network Rail. Similarly the Department for Transport has

been actively consulting on franchise extensions and new franchise competitions. Interestingly much of this has taken the form of wanting ideas rather than seeking commentary on a pre-formulated proposal. This is leading to Railfuture increasingly being acknowledged as a body of choice when it comes to seeking carefully thought through input on the future development of rail.

Additionally Railfuture is being called upon to provide strategic advice at



Ian Brown CBE FCILT

political level ranging from HS2 integration to individual, smaller projects. We are currently developing a “Manifesto for Rail”, designed to sift input from individual members through Railfuture branches towards a comprehensive set of requirements and questions we can all put to election candidates for potential inclusion in their manifestos and plans.

The key strength of Railfuture is its branches. Industry information

and policies are fed to the branches in support of local campaigns and negotiations with train operators, Network Rail and Local and Integrated Transport Authorities. The branches take the lead, working in a strategic context in an organisation that is building up an enormous knowledge base on rail despite very low overheads, and without the necessity to appoint expensive consultants.

The whole point of Railfuture as a campaigning organisation is to successfully and cost effectively promote a bigger, better railway with the help and support of its members. Member input through local branches is key to this. Running a campaign needs organisation to be effective. Rail development must hit the right buttons to attract support and finance – economic, social, environmental, and indeed transport benefits.

INTERNATIONAL GROUP



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Our Ferrylinks report highlighted the effective interchange between rail and ferry at Portsmouth Harbour.

Our “Going Abroad” leaflet and www.railfuture.org.uk/Going+abroad provide advice on International Rail

Travel. We plan to follow this with a leaflet to increase awareness of the InterRail ticket.

Our survey of members’ experiences of Eurostar, open at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Eurostar+Travel+Survey> until 30th June 2015, has received many responses. We will report on our findings, and discuss with Eurostar, in late 2015. We urged Eurostar to encourage passengers to purchase “London International CIV” tickets if they use UK rail services to connect into or from Eurostar in London so that they do not have to buy a new Eurostar ticket if their UK connection is delayed.

We urged Eurotunnel to reduce their access charges. The reduction in charges for freight services at night was encouraging and has led to a modest increase in the number of through freight trains.

We play an active part in research and lobbying by the European Passenger Foundation - Trevor Garrod, a member of International Group, is its chairman. We contacted British MEPs who were elected in June 2014 (a number have asked to receive Railwatch), and are seeking meetings with those who sit on the European Parliament’s Transport and Tourism Committee.

INFRASTRUCTURE and NETWORKS GROUP



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A premonition of electrification at Uckfield?

The role of I&NG is to identify the potential for changes in the rail network that would bring benefits for passengers or freight. In particular we review campaign proposals for new or reopened

lines, stations and electrification.

A register of rail schemes is being developed along with a clear set of criteria to enable us to judge which campaigns should be led or supported by Railfuture and

to give some idea of priority. A policy on safeguarding former lines will be developed in 2015.

The group has been fortunate in harnessing the expertise of vice presidents, board members and branch officers and works closely with branches on individual projects. It also considers Fighting Fund applications for financial support to campaigns for recommendation to the Board.

The group is leading on the response to Network Rail’s twelve Route Studies which are at the core of its long term planning process. These studies will form the basis of detailed forward planning of the network for the next 30 years and a detailed, high-quality response is being provided to each by Railfuture.



Railcards are a key policy issue for us, so a major success in 2014 was the national introduction of the Two Together railcard, following a pilot in the West Midlands that had ended 2013 with no feedback.

The role of TOC Liaison, where each Train Operating Company has a nominated member of Passenger Group is responsible for working with it, is now in place. TOC liaisons will take the lead on collating feedback from the various branches on franchise discussions. We will encourage good communication between branches and TOC Liaisons to ensure that members are able to contribute to a Railfuture wide view.

Overcrowding continues to be a major issue. Whilst the national

media focus has been on London and other major cities, other areas seem to be ignored despite reports of people being left on the platform. We will work to establish the evidence base needed to campaign effectively.

Crosscountry Trains is experimenting with 10-minute reservations and walk-up advance tickets may have been promoted by other stakeholders. We are in discussion with the TOC and are monitoring the trial, but remain sceptical.

We started the Disruption Study during the year, engaging with passengers, members and the rail industry to get to the bottom of issues that remain high in the list of concerns. A report on issues with good and bad practice will be produced early in 2015, with



How can we manage it better?

an emphasis on good practice that can be spread across the industry.

Our Rolling Stock Design Panel has been active in liaising with DfT, train builders, ROSCOs and TOCs regarding new train build and refurbishments. The panel issued reports on IEP (GWR/East Coast), Siemens Series 700 (Thameslink), and Hitachi AT100/AT200.

PASSENGER GROUP - CYCLING SUB GROUP

Our focus in 2014 was on cycle parking and security at stations, and safe access via approach roads - please forward your photos of good and bad examples.

We welcomed the expansion in the number of cycling hubs by

Northern Rail during 2014, and the introduction of Boris-style bikes at Morecambe Railway Station.

We make contact with the growing number of pro-cycling groups to build mutual support. Our main aim

for 2015 is to create a basic core cycling policy that can be adopted by all TOCs. We plan a summer meet and bike ride – please join us!

FREIGHT GROUP



The Ipswich freight chord long advocated by Railfuture to simplify freight routing from Felixstowe was opened in 2014.

In 2014 Freight Group worked on projects for niche rail courier services, in conjunction with 5PL Logistics, and future planning for rail freight terminals, now formulated into a summary paper published at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Freight> and distributed to key industry

players including local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

A delegate from the group regularly attends the All-party Parliamentary Group for Freight Transport with Minister of State for Transport.

We campaign for a pricing tariff structure for freight trains using the Channel Tunnel to enable the development of new services, and for the Strategic Freight Network. We urge branches to help promote schemes locally as this network is a real driver of rail freight efficiency. It is imperative to improve rail's core strengths of velocity and volume. Various projects, underpinned by dedicated Network Rail funding, include improving the railway loading gauge, grade separation at key junctions,

modernised signalling, the removal of capacity bottlenecks, better drainage, of re-ballasting, structure repairs and new track leads to increased axle loadings and line speeds. Productivity is also gained by lengthening terminal sidings and running line loops. All these actions gradually match the much longer and heavier freight trains to the historic infrastructure, keeping HGV traffic to a minimum.

These gains could be threatened by the cross-border European circulation of "Mega-Trucks". Although blocked at the time of writing, we maintain a watching brief on the potential danger of heavier, larger commercial vehicles being allowed on our roads, decimating both bulk and intermodal rail freight as well as posing a real threat to other road users.

The Finance & Corporate Governance Directorate does not actually campaign itself, but helps make our campaigning as successful, professional and wide-ranging as possible by ensuring that sufficient funds are available, where needed and justified.

Railfuture is one of the most financially sound and well-managed independent campaigning groups in Britain. This didn't happen by chance. We have an able team, with a management, financial, business and technology background which ensures that we get value for money throughout

our activities. As an independent organisation that answers to no-one other than our members, our funding comes entirely from individuals via their membership fees, voluntary donations, and legacies. In 2014 Railfuture did particularly well from legacies, which is only possible because people trust us to spend wisely and productively. The directorate must not become a financial burden either. In 2014, to reduce meeting costs, we pioneered occasional 'e-mail-only' meetings. The process will be refined so that it can be used elsewhere in Railfuture.

With our corporate governance role we minimise risks to the society, by ensuring, for example, that relevant insurance cover is held, business continuity is considered and our public activities are performed safely. We also ensure that our legal obligations, such as holding the AGM and annual elections, are fulfilled along with Railfuture's aim of increased openness. All directors' expenses are now published at www.railfuture.co.uk/expenses

If you wish to leave Railfuture a legacy please read <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/legacies> to find out how.

**MARKETING, MEDIA and
COMMUNICATIONS GROUP**

During 2014 we have focused on encouraging members to work together to develop Railfuture as an effective campaigning organisation that is respected by government, the rail industry and the public so that it will survive and grow. The Have Your Say Survey showed us what members and potential members want from Railfuture, giving us valuable feedback, which we will use to improve the way that Railfuture works so that we can be more successful.

We changed the format of the annual Branches and Groups Day to a workshop session, attended by all directors and delegates from every Group and Branch - there was no audience, every delegate contributed. We reached a shared view of what Railfuture stands for and its achievements of which we can be proud, and identified the issues facing us. The delegates committed to an action plan to address these issues, which we are monitoring and updating as the actions are resolved. A key action is to increase our membership by setting every member a target to recruit a new member.

We continue to improve the website to make it more relevant to rail users, attractive to potential new members and impressive to the stakeholders who

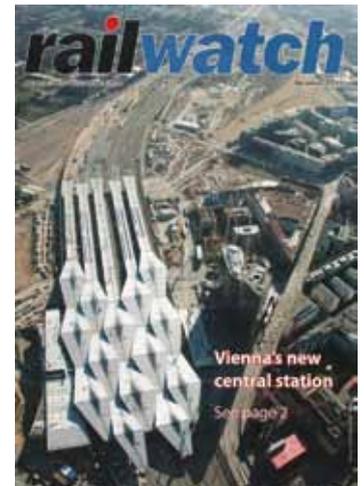


The Railfuture website gives up to the minute news and views about our campaigns

we wish to influence. The Scotland and Wales websites now have the same look and feel, a 'dashboard' has been created for each branch, out of date pages have been removed, Eurostar and Disruption surveys are being run, and the News section now includes personal opinions on key topics. We are increasing our efforts on social media, and have introduced a social media policy to regulate its use.

We are offering rail-related books and gifts for sale at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/shop>; the 'Shock and Ore' print was the prize for our photographic competition.

Our new logo now appears on the templates which we use for our reports, leaflets and consultation submissions, and we used a professional graphic designer for our latest leaflet, both helping to promote our professional appearance.



Railwatch magazine is published quarterly to provide positive news of rail campaigning which often does not get proper coverage in either the mainstream media or the railway press.

We aim to produce authoritative news and views about railways, which will be taken seriously in the corridors of power while encouraging rail campaigners to be more confident and effective.

Railwatch draws primarily on letters, articles, reports and pictures from Railfuture members. It provides

news of Railfuture's campaigning activities to a wider audience, allows members to learn from each other, and provides a platform for discussion about Railfuture and its policies.

Railwatch is interested to hear from other rail campaign groups and also the rail industry. Please tell us about your achievements and problems. If it is reported in Railwatch, it can be followed up by other media outlets. Please send your press releases to Railwatch and persuade other groups you are involved with to send them too.

Copies of Railwatch are sent out free as part of our campaign to keep opinion formers properly informed on rail issues. This free list is maintained by Lloyd Butler. You can send him suggestions for people to add to the free list: renewals@railfuture.org.uk

We also produce the online Rail Action newsletter between issues of Railwatch. This is sent by email to Railfuture members who want it and to selected "movers and shakers". It can be downloaded from www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+Action

Ray King

NATIONAL MEDIA SPOKESMAN

media@railfuture.org.uk

2014 ended with a flurry of activity: Boxing Day trains, the King's Cross fiasco, Network Rail bonuses and fare rises put Railfuture in the national media for several days on the trot. Bruce Williamson at a national level and the branch media reps acting locally are getting Railfuture in the

media on average every 2-3 days. Audio clips of our interviews, available at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Railfuture+in+the+news>, are proving very popular with many being listened to more than 600 times. We also put out more press releases than in previous years, and these too have proved very

popular with some being viewed more than 1000 times. Some of our comments are picked up by press agencies and redistributed, meaning that we end up in hundreds of local newspapers.

Our profile continues to rise.

Bruce Williamson

MEMBERSHIP

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renewals@railfuture.org.uk

Railfuture continues to attract many new members from across the country as a result of our campaigns, our presence at events and coverage in the press.

Both Yorkshire and Lincolnshire branches continued their progress with top recruitment figures for the second year running (based on percentage

increase), but both were outperformed by the Scotland and Devon & Cornwall branches, with South Wales and East Midlands also deserving recognition.

The largest recruiters on a numerical basis were London & SE and East Anglia, who each added significant numbers to an already high count of members.

Our web presence continues to pay off, with many new members joining online. PayPal payments have increased by almost 50%. We would like to encourage members to pay by internet banking to save on bank charges - email renewals@railfuture.org.uk for details.

David Harby



Flooding near Bridgwater

What happens next is the question which needs resolving now that trains are back running along Dawlish Sea Wall. It would appear from the draft Network Rail Western Route Study that 4-tracking could be needed between Exeter St Davids and Newton Abbot by 2043. In order to cater for that it seems logical to implement the fast

125mph route sooner rather than later to contribute to the objective of reducing journey times from Paddington to Plymouth to three hours allowing for around three or four intermediate stops.

The Okehampton route is also necessary to restore a train service to the west side of Dartmoor from Exeter via Okehampton and Tavistock to Plymouth. This could also be used as an alternative freight route or as a diversionary route in its own right should the line between Plymouth and Exeter via Newton Abbot become blocked.

We also campaign for improved passenger rolling stock, and pattern/frequency of service through Cornwall and Devon primarily to Paddington, Birmingham and the North, but also to Wales, Waterloo, and the South Coast.

home about railfuture local action rail user help events membership shop press releases contact us log in

Campaigns
Northern Powerhouse
Oxford-Cambridge
Lokfield-Lewes
Wisbech
Missing Links
Improved services
New stations
Electrification
High speed rail
Southwest rail resilience

EUROSTAR SURVEY

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RENEW MEMBERSHIP

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The case for Okehampton
Author: Philip Shelton - Published At: Sun 05 of Aug, 2014 17:07 UTC - (888 Reads)

Why reopening Okehampton is the only solution - a purely personal view by Philip Shelton.
Photograph of Meldon Viaduct by Martin Cordon, reproduced under GNU Free Documentation License.

Reignited by an impassioned article on our website from Railfuture director Philip Shelton, our campaign for Southwest Rail Resilience by reopening the Okehampton route may soon see trains running across the Meldon Viaduct again.



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Right answer for Wisbech
Author: Chris Page - Published At: Wed 09 of Apr, 2014 15:43 UTC - (9089 Reads)

Why reopening Okehampton is the only solution - a purely personal view by Philip Shelton.
Photograph of Meldon Viaduct by Martin Cordon, reproduced under GNU Free Documentation License.

Strong support by Steve Barclay, the MP for North East Cambridgeshire, for our campaign to reopen March to Wisbech.

The branch rotates its members' meetings around geographic centres to enable all members (and the general public) to have the opportunity to attend a meeting, meet the Branch Committee, and listen to a speaker connected to the railway industry. Committee members appeared on local TV and local radio 10 times. Local press frequently ask for and receive, opinions on rail matters.

We keep regular contact with senior members of the local TOCs., and

were asked to speak at the valedictory event held for stakeholders by FCC in the House of Commons. We meet regularly with elected members and senior officials of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils. We contributed in detail to the Rail Prospectus for East Anglia, a document compiled by our two Local Enterprise Partnerships and County Councils, and produced influential papers and maps promoting East West Rail Link (EWRL).

Our key campaigns of EWRL and Wisbech - March have made significant progress throughout the year, involving numerous meetings, leaflet drops, and petitions, and requiring significant help from Railfuture members, for which we are very grateful. The branch is working with the Haverhill Reopening group and has addressed large public meetings in Haverhill. We keep open very good and active relationships with line user groups throughout the region, organising a station footfall count with one.

The branch actively tweets and keeps up the wisbechrail website and Facebook pages, as well as the Ox-Cam, Wisbech and branch pages on the national website. The Branch newsletter has two aims: to inform and involve the membership, and as a campaign tool; copies go to every regional MP and MEP and other significant opinion formers.

Tweets

Railfuture EAnglia @RailfutureEA 4 Dec
Norfolk jam tomorrow: focussing on #Norwich in 90 and East Anglia rail developments railfuture.org.uk/article1527-No...
Expand

Railfuture EAnglia @RailfutureEA 4 Dec
Last fast London Cambridge @GNRailUK service before rail replacement buses. 4 carriages so predictable overcrowding pic.twitter.com/0kZ36wyfY
Expand

Railfuture EAnglia @RailfutureEA 3 Dec
Autumn Statement: New trains for northern rail routes. Pacers to be replaced with new and modern vehicles
http://www.railfuture.org.uk/news/au...
Expand

Tweet to @RailfutureEA



The NE Branch has been working to influence the TOCs, Network Rail, local councils, business and educational establishments towards a favourable attitude to rail. We briefed a breakfast meeting of local authorities and business leaders on aspirations for the East Coast Main Line, and met all the prospective bidders for the TPE and Northern Franchises to express our aspirations for quality rail service improvements in the North East.

Branch members were invited to the opening of the new TPE train crew depot, at Newcastle and met the new staff recruited to provide additional TPE services for the North East. The branch continues to develop links and work with New Rail at Newcastle University, mentoring students on rail related topics and attending project presentations by overseas students. The Branch Chairman gave a presentation to railway managers and academics titled "Why do we need young engineers in today's railway?" and explained



Olivia Sprudd presented the case for reopening the Ashington Blyth and Tyne rail system, winning the SENRUG schools video competition.

Railfuture's organisation and aspirations.

We work with SENRUG, attending stakeholder meetings on reopening the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne system to passengers, and are pleased that Northumberland County Council is to provide capital funding for this in their 2015 budget and in subsequent

years, with a target date of 2020 for restoration of passenger services.

Committee members involved with the Tyne and Wear Freight Partnership are pleased to report that the rail link to the Port of Sunderland is to be brought back into use.



We argue that the subsidy quoted by the Department for Transport for passengers on Northern Rail services is helping to pay for infrastructure development such as Reading station, recently opened by the Queen but shown here under construction. The nearest Northern Rail services come to Reading is a once-per-day service at Derby, 137 miles away.

by the Department for Transport for passengers on Northern Rail services is not such as Reading station, recently opened by the Queen but shown here under

Railfuture North West has focused on campaigns with specific aims; re-opening Skipton - Colne, Penrith - Keswick and a new station and line in Skelmersdale.

The first two have strong local groups;

whilst the last has political support it has no specific group, but the branch plans to join forces with the Ormskirk, Preston and Southport Travellers' Association to make the case. Additionally our campaign with North Cheshire Rail Users Group for the re-opening of the Halton Curve has produced success at last.

The next phase of the North West Electrification programme (Liverpool - Manchester/Wigan), originally due in December 2014, has been delayed and the Trans-Pennine electrification may not now happen until 2021. We will continue to keep the pressure on Network Rail and the government to complete these schemes on time such that the improved speed of service with electric trains, and the capacity released from redeploying DMUs elsewhere for other services (Manchester-Burnley via the new Todmorden curve is a case in point), are delivered.

We contributed to the Northern and TPE franchise consultation response and have since organised meetings between the short-listed bidders and User Groups in our area, to argue for retaining and improving connectivity for passengers.



The branch held four meetings in 2014. At Bath in February Duncan Hounsell described Saltford Station Campaign's aim to reopen the station closed in 1970. Our AGM at Highbridge in March was addressed by Tessa Munt MP and First Great Western Station Manager Mathew Morgan. In July we held a joint meeting at Trowbridge with Wessex branch, discussing our aspirations for three routes running through both branches. Our November meeting in Stroud heard one of FGW's Customer Ambassadors outline his role in helping passengers on the day

and engaging with local stakeholders.

Behind the scenes, a small delegation met Transport Minister Baroness Kramer in February to discuss bus / rail integration and resilience of the rail network in the South West. In October a delegation met the Managing Director of Stagecoach West to make the case for better public transport connectivity in Gloucestershire. The branch responded to a number of local consultations and co-ordinated the unified Railfuture response to the Great Western Franchise Specification consultation.



Thermometer showing progress toward reopening Portishead



The Thames Valley continues to enjoy a rail boom: the new Reading flyover has opened, electrification continues and Oxford Station awaits re-modelling to cope with growth. Members have seen serious work underway on Phase 1 of East West Rail, for which Railfuture has campaigned over 20 years.

Our AGM was addressed by Mike Hogg of First Group, who was upbeat about prospects for Great Western - members were impressed by his "can do" attitude. Our autumn meeting was addressed by George Bathurst of the Windsor Link Railway, who outlined the benefits of joining the two Windsor stations, explaining how easy it would be to do and the traffic volumes at Windsor (3 million plus passengers a year).

The branch had a stand at Oxford Green Fair where it became clear from the public that the priority is to get to Cambridge. We continue to work closely with Witney Oxford Transport - URS Corporation are completing engineering studies of the options. We



New Bicester Town station to be built for East-West Rail

submitted an application for Growth Funding for a study of the Bourne End - High Wycombe re-opening; the business case for this scheme has been enhanced by the decision to proceed with Western Access to Heathrow in CP5. We launched a campaign Trains 4 Cowley, to bring rail access to the south of Oxford

and the main employment areas.

The branch lobbies politicians on the benefits of rail investment and enjoys regular meetings with various officers to try to shape future policy in the Thames Valley, where rail is the only serious contender to deal with the economic growth being experienced.



75 years and still running!

The guest speaker at our AGM in Southampton was Jon Bunyan, General Manager Rail Operations at Freightliner Limited, who explained the operations of moving containers from ships to trains and lorries, particularly in relation to the Port of Southampton.

Branch membership is stable but we will do more to attract further volunteers to the committee. Two of our committee are now stakeholders on the East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership. On behalf of Railfuture, one of our committee attends the meetings of the Salisbury to Exeter Lineside Council Authorities (SELCA) group that represents local authorities along the line.

We continue to monitor day to day operations and the evolving long-term plans on the Island Line, which we have discussed with a local councillor.

WEST MIDLANDS



We attended a number of meetings and events relating to heavy and light rail in our region. At quarterly meetings with CENTRO we raised issues such as through ticketing when Midland Metro is opened to Birmingham New Street, rail devolution, and the need for better services on Sundays.

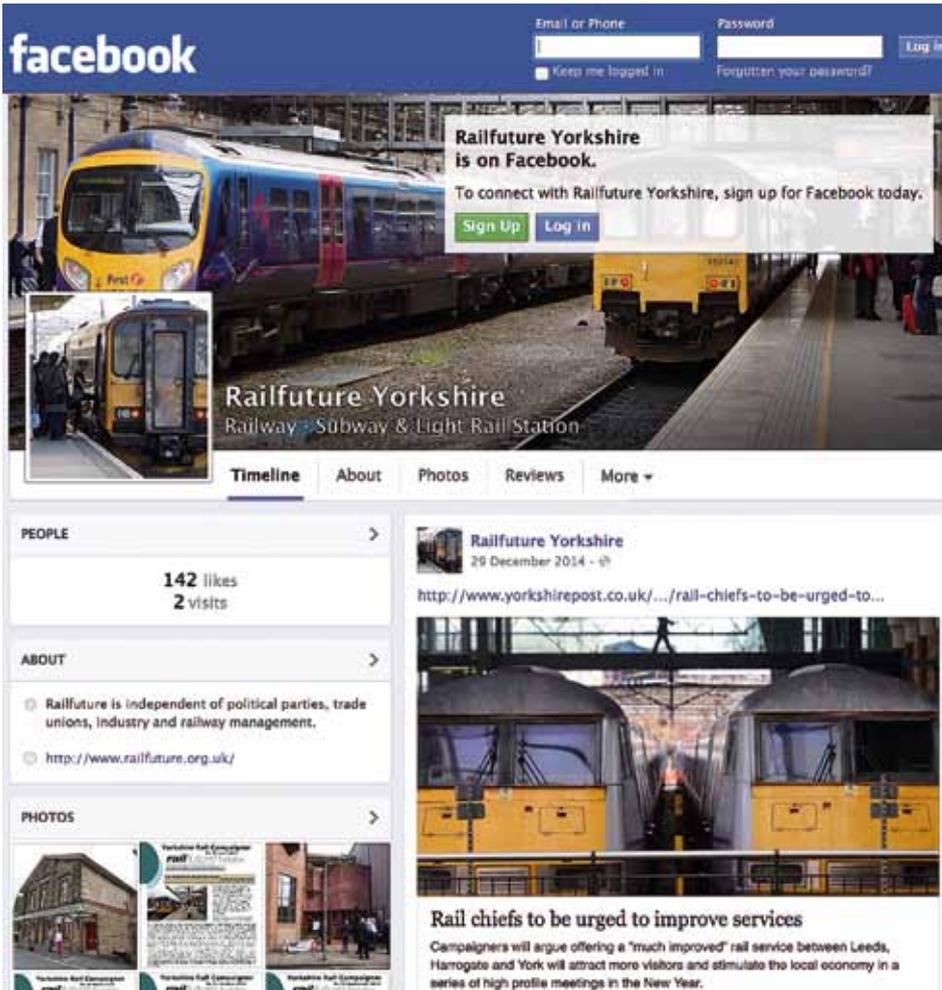
Stakeholder conferences held by London Midland gave us the opportunity to tell the operator that services should be improved to start earlier on Sundays, with enhanced coach formations; fare evasion should be tackled; ticket offices should not be closed when they are advertised to be open; and more trains to and from Stratford upon Avon are needed in peak hours. We also attend meetings of WestCoastRail 250, a campaigning group of local authorities and other stakeholders concerned with developing the West Coast Main Line.

The City Council has produced a



plan for transport in Birmingham over the next 20 years. We have already expressed concern that proposed "Sprint" buses will not significantly reduce journey times along key transport corridors.

The branch organised an evening peak hour survey by a group of volunteers of Cross Country Trains services leaving Birmingham New Street to assess the loading of trains. We plan to extend this further in 2015.



Our AGM in March was addressed by Professor Paul Salveson, Director of Passenger Focus whilst our September meeting was addressed by Pete Myers, Customer Services Director of Northern Rail.

Our media spokesperson Chris Hyomes has made some very valuable contacts with the local media, and is often contacted not just for press interviews but as a source of advice when putting a new rail story together.

The branch arranged meetings between all the bidders for both the Northern and TPE franchises and all the local rail user groups to express aspirations for the new franchises, which both sides found very useful.

In conjunction with the North West and North East branches, we launched the Northern Powerhouse campaign with articles in 'The House' and 'Politics Today', which are widely read in Westminster, to capitalise on the opportunity for rail to turn the great Northern cities into a single strategic economic entity linked by a fast high capacity rail network to realise the economic potential of the region.



Teachdail Rèile na h-Alba



@RailfutureScot

scotland@railfuturescotland.org.uk



Great interest was shown at Falkirk in the banners depicting the 50 new stations and 23 short feeder lines.

Following the successes of previous years including the re-opening of Airdrie-Bathgate, in 2014 Railfuture Scotland campaigners helped bring about achievements including:

- ❖ Glasgow airport rail link (GARL) back on track.
- ❖ 2 new stations announced for SE Scotland.
- ❖ provision for 2 new stations in NE Scotland.
- ❖ continued progress by Scottish Parliament cross-party group.
- ❖ announcement of the go-ahead for stations at East Linton and Reston, with the potential for an enhanced Edinburgh-Newcastle service.

We are particularly pleased with the resurrection of the GARL as a

result of positive action by both UK and Scottish governments, after its earlier shortsighted cancellation.

Looking forward, a long-awaited success will be the re-opening of the Borders line between Edinburgh and Tweedbank, which is scheduled for 6th September 2015.

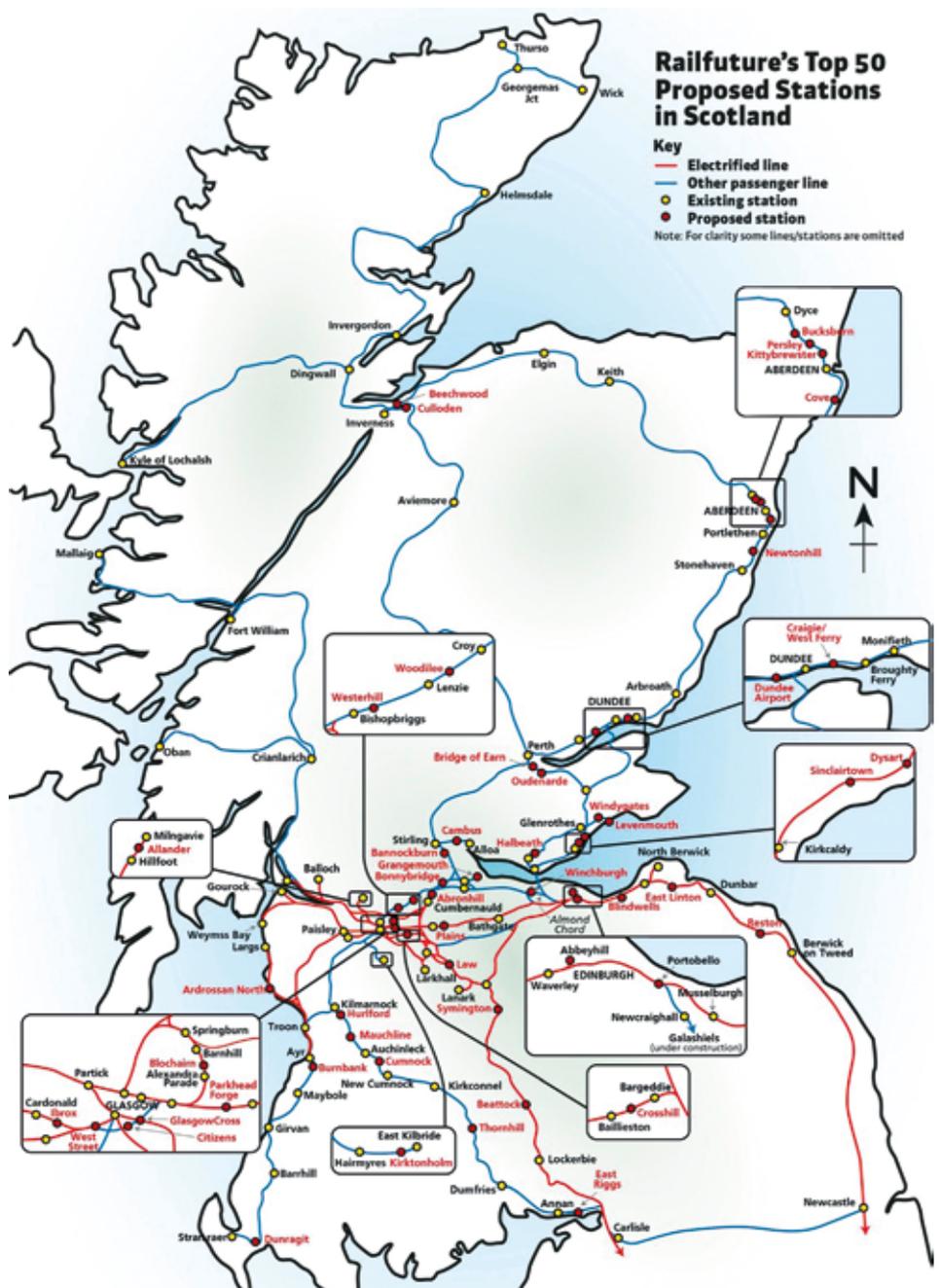
Unlike its Westminster counterpart, the Scottish Parliament cross-party group includes lay members from rail campaigning and user groups and also trade unions, to ensure that MSPs are fully aware of all aspects of rail issues. This group has enjoyed informative addresses from and discussions with a range of transport organisations.

The Railfuture Scotland committee have been getting out and about, attending various events, including the Falkirk model railway exhibition, talking to people and welcoming new members. A visit to campaigners on the Far North Line, demonstrated only too clearly the inadequacies of this service, which despite the campaigners' best efforts, has been hindered by the transport authorities' lack of vision. More engagement with rail users is planned for 2015.

At our Autumn Meeting, we unveiled proposals we consider essential to maximise the efficacy, efficiency and economy of the Scottish rail network. These include: 50 new stations throughout Scotland, from Beechwood to Beattock, and Dunragit to Newtonhall. The inclusion of Culloden and Bannockburn, add to the potential for visiting historic battlefields by rail.

- ❖ 23 short branches from Elgin-Lossiemouth to Stranraer-Cairnryan, including St Andrews.
- ❖ Further 45 stations and main line re-openings.
- ❖ Faster electrification including Aberdeen-Inverness, Ayrshire and Borders lines, and upgraded signalling.

For full details see: www.railfuturescotland.org.uk/campaigning.php



With these ambitious proposals, this we will continue to engage with rail users and to attract as many new members as possible. To accomplish



Potential for integrated transport – Scotrail train right beside PS Waverley at Kyle of Lochalsh.

CAMBRIAN

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The Cambrian branch spent the early part of 2014 continuing to press the Welsh Government to facilitate the upgrade to an hourly service between Aberystwyth and Birmingham International, which the previous year's survey of rail use on the Cambrian Lines had shown was badly needed. In April 2014 the Welsh Government Transport Minister announced that additional funding was to be made available for an improved timetable on the Cambrian Line from May 2015, with an hourly service during peak times. We will monitor closely the implementation of the new timetable.

2014 saw the launch of 'Traws Link Cymru', a campaign to create a strategic south - west - north Welsh rail corridor utilising the Morrison loop near Swansea for a more direct service across South Wales, connecting with a reinstated Carmarthen - Aberystwyth line and the former link between the Cambrian Coast Line at Afonwen Junction and Bangor. The campaign secured a short debate in the National Assembly for Wales in March 2014, gaining cross-party support, and a meeting with the Secretary of State for Wales is scheduled for February 2015.

Cambrian branch are active in the 'Traws Link Cymru' campaign group with the aim of achieving political consensus to fund a feasibility study in the build up to the Welsh Assembly election in May 2016.

We continue to work in partnership with other key groups and stakeholders to develop the provision of integrated community focused services along the Cambrian Lines, highlighting in particular the potential of rail to increase tourism and its positive impact on the local economies along the route.

NORTH WALES

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During the course of 2014 we met Arriva Trains Wales, with whom we have a good working relationship, to discuss developments affecting North Wales services; we met the Manager of the Connectivity Project being undertaken by the six North Wales unitary authorities, a major part of

which is to establish the case for rail modernisation in the area, following which we made detailed submissions in response to the report prepared by their consultants, Greengauge 21; and we responded to the consultation by the Welsh Assembly Government seeking the views of rail interest groups.



SOUTH WALES

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Our 140-page illustrated Development Plan for Welsh Rail, 'On track for the 21st century', was distributed to every Welsh MP in both Westminster and the Cardiff Bay Parliaments and other contacts including civil servants and rail unions. Copies are available via www.railfuturewales.org.uk



In September, we had a valuable meeting in Cardiff with the Welsh Transport Minister's two top rail civil servants, where both sides swapped information and ideas. We urged renewed pressure on Westminster to devolve the remaining rail powers to Wales, which was achieved in November. Wales will now control

the granting of the 2018 franchise, and our campaign for a government-owned rail company may pay off.

In November, we met two officials of First Great Western in Bridgend and in another wide-ranging, hard-hitting but friendly exchange of views, we put what we see as

ways of improving their services.

Branch membership figures have held up well and the group campaigning to build Magor & Undy Walkway station in Monmouthshire has affiliated to Railfuture. Most branch committee members are also involved in their own local line's user group, which stimulates a valuable two-way input of ideas and information. Members also represent us at a variety of meetings of other organisations involved in transport.

The twice-yearly RAIL WALES magazine (free to all Welsh members) is as popular as ever and now includes colour. Past copies are available at www.railfuturewales.org.uk



Saturday 14th February 2015 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the last major closure in Northern Ireland, the Portadown to Londonderry line. A commemoration event in Omagh, attended by the group who are lobbying for part or all of the link to be restored, will give us an opportunity to distribute our literature and recruit.

Clongriffin is a new station 6 miles north of Dublin on the main line to Belfast. It was intended to serve a prestigious development beside it, but that project disintegrated in the financial crash of 2008. But there may

be new life for Clongriffin - the station has an extra platform so could act as a junction station, and the intention to build a four mile spur from there into Dublin airport has just been announced.

Whilst the Enterprise service stock is being refurbished, three of the eight daily Belfast – Dublin services are being operated by multiple units. This raises the question of whether more frequent multiple unit operated trains would provide a better service for what is only a two hour journey. Multiple units would also be more appropriate for a potential direct

service from Belfast to Dublin airport.

We asked the owners of Belfast International Airport to comment. They stand to lose most if more Northern Ireland passengers used Dublin for international flights, and immediately pointed to the fact that a disused rail link runs past the end of their runway.

Watch this space – airport rail link wars are about to explode in the island of Ireland!

Rail User Groups campaign for improvements to services in their particular area. Railfuture provides a forum in which they can exchange ideas, coordinate rail development priorities, and contribute to the argument for a better rail service nationally. Many groups are affiliated to Railfuture. One of the benefits of affiliate membership is access to our Fighting Fund.

Their often-unsung successes are recognised and rewarded on the national stage in Railfuture's annual RUG Awards. The 2014 RUG Award winners, announced at our national conference in London on the 1 November, were:

Best website:

- ❖ Gold award: Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association <http://srta.org.uk>. The judges commented that it was “easy to navigate, relevant and engaging with latest news, a rail user’s one-stop shop”.
- ❖ Joint silver award: Trains for Deal/Kent Coast <http://www.trains4deal.com> and <http://trains4kentcoast.co.uk>

- ❖ Joint silver award: SENRUG – The South East Northumberland Rail User Group <http://www.senrug.co.uk>

Best newsletter

- ❖ Gold award: Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield RUA. The judges said it was “engaging, deals with range of topics, addressed to wider community and explains in lay terms, passes ‘the platform test’!”
- ❖ Silver award: South East Northumberland RUG
- ❖ Commended: Friends of the West Highland Lines, which the judges described as “a quality magazine”.

Best campaign

- ❖ Winner: Trains for Deal/Kent Coast. Judges’ comments: “success in achieving key goal and identifies next steps to continue campaign”.

New Group

The Oliver Lovell Award in memory of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group founder who died in 2013

- ❖ Commendation: Friends of the Brigg & Lincoln Lines. Judges’ comments: “deserves recognition, look forward to hearing more in development of this local campaign”.

Judges special award

- ❖ Highly Commended: SENRUG Schools competition and the winning entry from Hirst Park Middle School. Judges’ comments: “quality campaigning engaging younger generation using one form of social media. This and another entry point to a new Awards category next year!”

Railfuture’s Vice-President and Awards judge Roger Ford said “Judging these awards is a great insight into the ways committed local volunteers can promote and make a real difference to their stations and services. Making these awards on a national stage recognises these achievements and encourages the continued efforts of around 300 rail user groups across the country.”

JOIN US

Railfuture is the independent campaign for better passenger and freight services over a bigger network. We campaign for less crowded trains, fairer fares, quicker journeys, efficient customer service, new stations and lines, and shifting freight from road to rail. Railfuture welcomes new members to share practical ideas.

yes I want to join Railfuture!

The more members we have, the stronger our voice will be. You can choose to play an active

role in our campaigns, meet fellow campaigners your local branch or our national conferences, and you will receive the quarterly magazine Railwatch free.

Subscriptions start from as little as £14 per year.

Join online at www.railfuture.org.uk/join

or contact us at:

Railfuture Membership, 6 Carral Close, Lincoln LN5 9DB.

Email: membership@railfuture.org.uk

HOW MEMBERS CAN HELP Railfuture

Almost all Railfuture campaigning is funded by our members. As well as making a donation with your subscription there are other ways of helping Railfuture.

Can you recruit a new member? Online enrolment is available or a membership leaflet can be downloaded from www.railfuture.org.uk/join, or by contacting the Membership Secretary, 6 Carral Close, Brant Road, Lincoln LN5 9BD. membership@railfuture.org.uk

Why not volunteer to take an active role in national or local branch activities?

Try to attend one of Railfuture's national events. Full details (and online booking) available at www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

Join the Railfuture Lottery. 50% of the net receipts are paid out as prizes each month, with the remainder allocated to our Fighting Fund.

Details can be obtained from the Railfuture Lottery Organiser, 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND or visit www.railfuture.org.uk/lottery

Consider making the Railway Development Society a beneficiary of your will. Please consult your solicitor for advice on how to do this.

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