

Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.

As always, feel free to forward RUEx to a colleague, or to reproduce items in your own newsletter (quoting sources). If you want further details of any of the stories mentioned, look on the relevant website or, failing that, get back to me so I can send you the source material.

For details of group affiliation to Railfuture, see website [here](#) (from the "Membership Type" menu, select "RUG or similar").

Lips are still being licked in anticipation of the improvements to both services and rolling stock that the new Northern franchises will bring. However, one senses that 2018 will herald a transformation of rail travel right across the country. Congratulations are therefore due to everyone whose unstinting time and effort has helped to make this happen. Well done, indeed!

Roger Smith

We continue with the usual roundup of news items from groups around the UK. Please keep your contributions coming: they are all gratefully received.

Levenmouth Rail Campaign – Lobby for change

With elections to the Scottish Parliament on 5 May, LMRC urges anyone from Levenmouth & the East Neuk to raise the issue of the rail link in any dealings with prospective candidates. The capital cost of the new Queensferry crossing is some £1 billion less than initially estimated, a saving that could be used to improve the Fife rail network. LMRC believes that reinstating the Leven link is in pole position as far as the planning process goes, but upgrading the Dunfermline-Alloa line, reopening Newburgh station, and advancing the St Andrews link would also be affordable for a fraction of this sum, and take heavy traffic off the roads. Average fares to/from Fife stations are a third higher than for journeys of equivalent length elsewhere in the Central Belt - another raw deal for the Kingdom.

Rail Action Group, East of Scotland – Making its voice heard

Among the issues discussed in a meeting with ScotRail were: fares from Dunbar; an application to the ORR regarding Edinburgh to Berwick Local Service Train paths, and options to enhance various loops as part of the ORR Track Access Agreement. A local meeting addressed overcrowding on local services into Edinburgh, as well as the reopening of East Linton and Renton stations, whilst one with Virgin Trains East Coast called for more through services to Dunbar, and a later Saturday evening service from Edinburgh.

Furness Line Action Group – Pain before gain

FLAG welcomes the new trains due to be delivered in 2018/19, but anticipates a painful transition, with a reduction in stock levels from the May 2016. Until the new trains arrive, existing and cascaded rolling stock will plug the gap, including another diesel locomotive hauled set. The stresses and strains of 50-year old locomotives start-stopping along the Cumbrian Coast are taking their toll. Late running and cancellation continue to plague reliability: problems with the push-pull driving coaches have caused reversion to the less efficient top'n'tail working, whilst skip-stopping to make up time has left passengers waiting an hour for the next service. In consequence, Northern did freeze fares as a gesture of appreciation to its customers.

Community Rail Lancashire – *Building on achievement*

On 11th February 2016 Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) was established as a not for profit company. The bulk of its work will be to continue to support the work of the four CRPs.

2015 saw the launch of a direct Manchester-Burnley service via Burnley Manchester Road and the new Todmorden West curve, but also the demise of Citizens' Rail, an EU project, that helped to fund it. The partial redoubling at Darwen will enable a half-hourly service between Manchester and Blackburn.

A CRL educational programme introduces key stage 2 pupils to rail travel, and includes a trip by train to either Preston or Accrington. Every pupil who completes the programme is given a 'Passport to Safe Rail Travel' that encourages them to use the train again with their parents: provided they have their Passport with them, the child travels free.

Skipton – East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership – *Local authority support*

The Lancashire County Council 'Outputs Definition' Report is an important step forward in the SELRAP campaign to reopen the line between Skipton and Colne. With the support and approval of North Yorkshire County Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the LCC has formally recognised the high priority of better connectivity within the Burnley to Leeds corridor. It will use the report in discussions with Network Rail, Transport for the North and other relevant bodies. A more detailed study is now required to firm up the options and assess the business case.

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group – *Signs of improvement*

LASRUG welcomes a long-awaited shelter on the narrow Platform 2 at Giggleswick, and state-of-the-art information kiosks at Bentham. The DfT Train Service Requirement has been further enhanced, and will offer commuting services to Leeds next year, and to Lancaster by 2019. Wennington, Bentham, Clapham and Giggleswick have been designated gateway stations to the Forest of Bowland AONB. The first signs are already in place, and large themed information panels at each of the four stations will feature walking and cycling routes from that station.

Leeds - Lancaster - Morecambe Community Rail Partnership – *New horizons*

The CRP, which also covers the Bentham line, is looking forward to working with Arriva Rail North to promote services on the line, and further develop links with the communities it serves. From December 2017, the service between Leeds and Morecambe will increase from 5 to 7 or 8 trains each way Monday to Saturday (including commuting and later evening services), and from 4 to 5 trains on Sundays.

The CRP has made an innovative bid to the DfT for funds to help people living with dementia, and their carers and supporters, to have a far better experience of rail travel as a vehicle for tourism. Specially trained volunteers from local dementia groups will be able to take their members to tourist destinations along the line free of charge, helping with regenerative care, and providing respite for carers. Employees of Arriva and representatives from local tourism groups would also be trained to offer appropriate support.

Support the Oldham Rochdale Manchester Lines (STORM) – *A mixed blessing*

Paul Salvesson is very positive regarding the new Northern franchise. As well as the transformation of stock and services, it will herald extended booking office hours; many more stations gaining a staffed presence; more apprenticeships, with a better gender and ethnic balance in the workforce, and improving the lot of the lowest paid. However, a detailed analysis suggests that the Calder Valley line and Rochdale are losing out to West Yorkshire stations. Transport for Greater Manchester refutes the idea, but may have seriously underestimated the required footfall.

Paul also reports on scenic journeys on the Cumbrian Coast Line, and on the Heart of Wales Line between Shrewsbury and Swansea. Arriva Trains Wales is helping to create a series of trails incorporating everything from walks for health and wheelchair access, to sections that would challenge experienced walkers.

Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association – *What does the future hold?*

SARPA bemoans the current lack of rolling stock, and wonders what the new franchise due in 2018 will mean for the future of the Class 158 trains that were retrofitted with ERTMS, the European Rail Traffic Management System, currently being trialled on the Cambrian line. West Coast Rail hope to resume excursions next year if ERTMS trials on two Class 37 locomotives are successful, though bringing back steam would be more problematic. Although a Class 37 could pilot a steam excursion, the steam loco could only run at the front if NR relaxed its rule that the leading vehicle must have the ERTMS detector.

The Welsh Government has published a scoping report on reopening the Aberystwyth to Carmarthen line. To bypass development at the northern end, it is proposed to tunnel under Penglais Hill from the original alignment in the Ystwyth valley, and cross the River Rheidol, the Vale of Rheidol Railway and Cambrian Mainline on a flyover, before descending into Aberystwyth station. All interested parties agreed to proceed with a formal appraisal to inform the decision on whether or not to commission a full feasibility study.

Friends of the Barton Line – *Triumph of experience over hope*

The FBL expressed its appreciation to Northern Rail for the new customer information screens that were being installed along the Barton line, and looks forward to the new franchise. Meanwhile, however, it would be a disservice to prospective users to recommend the service when it continues to be so unreliable.

Stourbridge Line User Group – *What about the Midlands powerhouse?*

SLUG made a considered response to the West Midlands franchise. [See the News section below for the short-listed bidders. Ed]. The winner will need to work closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority. Investment in Worcestershire and Warwickshire benefits passengers in the metropolitan area of Birmingham in terms of service reliability.

In response to a consultation held at Walsall Railway Station, it was stated that the 12 mile link to Wolverhampton would reopen to passenger use following electrification of the Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley, which is due for completion in December 2017.

Roger Davis gives examples of significant savings to be had by splitting a journey, and buying separate tickets for each leg. Some are to be expected, such as for the off-peak section of an early morning journey, but others less so. Split tickets are sometimes cheaper even than an Advance fare booked on the day that it becomes available, which you might reasonably suppose to be the cheapest option. So do your homework!

Cotswold Line Promotion Group

Proposed upgrades of the Cotswold line are long overdue and need to be speeded up – journey times are currently longer than they were ten years ago. However, this should not be at the expense of the service to intermediate stations such as Pershore and Hanborough. Partial redoubling will allow First Great Western to deliver two trains per hour from Worcester to London, and three tph from Hanborough to Oxford. CLPG has also made proposals for more services to call at Ascott-under Wychwood, following its upgrade as part of the 2010/11 redoubling project. Flood prevention work at Hinksey will see the Didcot – Oxford line close from 30 July to 14 August. The GWR Winter timetable will see the introduction of Sunday morning services on the Worcester-Gloucester-Bristol route, building on the 25% increase in the Saturday service between Worcester and Gloucester.

CLPG Committee members visited Vivarail at the Quinton Rail Technology Centre at Long Marston for a demonstration of a Class 230 train. D78 stock retired prematurely from the District Line is being fitted with new diesel engines to produce a three-coach train costing just £1.7 million, some 70% cheaper than a brand new equivalent. Although being trialled on the Cotswold line, with a top speed of 60 mph, the train is designed mainly for urban/metro services with frequent stops.

Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group – TfL puts profit before service

During the blockade of the Barking-Gospel Oak line (BGO) for electrification, BGORUG wants rail replacement buses covering the entire length of the closures; all tickets, including Pay-as-YouGo and contactless, to be valid on rail, Underground, and all normal bus services within a wide area; and fares capped at the price of a normal journey, regardless of the alternative route and the number changes. Network Rail and TfL are holding "drop in sessions" at each BGO station, where staff will offer advice about alternative routes. TfL have confirmed that passengers will be able to travel via Zone 1 at no extra charge.

The BGO is not due to reopen until June 2017, but then it is planned to revert to the 2-car diesel units until a new fleet of Class 710 trains enters service in May 2018. However, from May 2017, new Crossrail trains will replace Class 315 trains on the Shenfield line, also operated by TfL - but TfL maintains that the cost of transferring these to the BGO for the short length of time that they would be in service would not be viable. BGORUG believes that to persist with overcrowded 2-car trains when suitable 4-car electric trains are sitting idle is indefensible. [Couldn't the diesel drivers be retrained on the Shenfield line during the blockade? Has TfL factored in the increased revenue from operating an adequate service? Ed.]

Bedford Commuters' Association – Working with the new franchise holder

The BCA Chairman met with Govia to discuss various concerns with the new station gateline being installed at Flitwick, prior to the timetable change in September. GTR were generally sympathetic, subject to the necessary funding and, where required, permissions.

On Thameslink, Class 700 trains are now regularly seen on driver training runs; there is a demonstration run for stakeholders on 10 May. A new £40 million train care facility has opened in Cricklewood; work on new platforms and alignment at London Bridge was completed over Christmas; the foundations for the Bermondsey dive-under are complete, and the Canal Tunnel linking Thameslink to the East Coast Main Line is due to open shortly, albeit only for stock transfers, eg for access to the new Hornsey depot.

Association of Public Transport Users – Thameslink North – A cautious welcome

A new approach to rail passenger services in London and the South East would transfer to TfL all of those that operate mostly or wholly within the Greater London boundary. The growth in multi-operator terminals will require shared control rooms for coherent overall operation. Important flows between inner suburban intermediate stations and outer suburban destinations (eg Elstree to Luton Airport Parkway) must also be adequately served: it would be a retrograde step if service patterns were strictly segmented.

Fares and Ticketing should have national scope, not just London & the South East. Rather than "Smart Cards", "Oyster" etc, the emphasis should be on a "National Ticketing Account" – to which passengers can evidence their entitlement to travel by various means – Smartcard (including Oyster), bank contactless card, phone (NFC and/or App) etc. Notwithstanding, APTU emphasises that it strongly supports the types of improvement described in the paper. Regarding the Hendy report, APTU believes that investments in resilience / reliability would allow the capacity improvements outlined in the programme to be more fully utilised, as less contingency would be required to recover from any disruption.

Chesham & District Transport Users' Group – Facilitation and frustration

From Monday 16 May until late 2018 the Metropolitan line between Baker Street and Finchley Road will close from around 22:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays for track and drainage replacement, which will increase reliability and shorten journey times. Meanwhile, DfT has directed London Underground to open the Metropolitan Line Extension (Croxley Link) no later than the year 2020.

A draft Memorandum of Understanding between CTUG and Chesham Town Council was discussed at its meeting on 5 April. Another issue was step-free access at Amersham Station. The Group had been made aware of a DfT scheme to offer grants for such projects; a similar scheme had enabled one for Wendover.

However, although there was strong local support, applications had to come from a transport authority, and Bucks County Council had declined to act within the deadline, so the proposal has stalled.

Windsor Lines Passengers Association – Tfl hands off!

WLPA believes that any TfL franchise should not extend as far as Windsor: whereas Overground services call at all stations, Windsor trains are semi-fast and need to remain so. The Class 485/5 stock has the best seating arrangement for their service; sitting sideways is a strain on the neck, and potentially dangerous in the event of an accident. They also foresee ticketing issues.

Its response to the SWT franchise consultation notes that journey times from Bracknell, and the Frimley branch compare unfavourably with those of stations a similar distance from other city termini; the latter also needs more through services. Once Waterloo has been reconfigured, travel times from Clapham Junction could be shortened. Rolling stock could be better utilised by reducing dwell and turn-round times. The aim should be for a quarter-hourly service on all lines throughout the operating day. Finally, the new franchisee should work with NR and TfL to produce proposals for a rail link from Heathrow Airport to South West London and North Surrey.

Salisbury to Exeter Rail Users Group – Getting to know you

The first of a series of newsletters introduces the stations on the line and their various friends groups, SWT as the train operating company, and Network Rail. It explains the service limitations caused by long stretches of single line, particularly when used by Great Western Railway as a diversionary route when its own line via Taunton is closed. Doubling Wilton Junction (Salisbury) to Tisbury, and Yeovil to Crewkerne would be a good start. It welcomes the additional services between Yeovil Junction and Pen Mill, and thus connections to the Heart of Wessex line between Bristol, Bath and Weymouth.

Friends of Wareham Railway Station – Those who could can't!

The Friends are thwarted at every turn. Firstly, the Swanage Railway was unable to access its turn-back siding at Wareham due to issues concerning the pedestrian railway crossing. Then, the station adopters could not install their water butt for health and safety reasons, as “the water would have to be tested routinely for Legionella bacteria”. Now a new type of ticket machine cannot be sited under the canopy where the current machine is located, as the station is a listed building. As a result, passengers will have to queue in the wind and rain to buy their tickets!

Avocet Line Rail Users Group

ALRUG welcomes the year-round half-hourly Sunday service starting on 15 May. Also, the Directly Awarded franchise should eventually lead to the Avocet Line getting more stock, allowing four carriages on most services. When electric commuter trains to run into Paddington, the diesel trains will cascade to Bristol, allowing Class 150/2 trains to move to Devon and Cornwall. Unfortunately, however, the electrification is running late, so it is not yet clear when the extra carriages will arrive.

ALRUG was fortunate to have two successful bids for GWR Customer and Communities Improvement Funds: £30,000 for information and access improvements at Polsloe Bridge, and £20,000 to provide more on-platform seating, an improved shelter and cycle parking at St James' Park.

With the support of Exmouth Town Council (taking on board ALRUG comments), East Devon District Council has approved plans for a Marks and Spencer store with cafe and customer car parking on the bus depot next to the station. However, work to provide a larger concourse and better access arrangements at the station, which was due to start in March, has been delayed, although funding is secured.

PASSENGER GROUP

A final version of the Railfuture report on handling disruption has been published. Problems are generally understood, but many questions remain. The rail industry needs to tell passengers how it is tackling the problem, and involve them in the solutions. Much work is going on across the rail industry to change the way tickets are sold, and what information is given to purchasers so that they can be sure that they are getting the best value for their journey/ies. Thus discounted tickets may be withdrawn during periods of high demand such as the Rugby World Cup. Regular travellers may not always need such information, but more casual users and those who need to be encouraged to use rail do. There is also much confusion about what through tickets are available from UK stations to Eurostar destinations, and how to obtain them.

Refranchising continues apace; the Group was disappointed in the lack of improvement to the service frequencies on the Ipswich to Cambridge/Peterborough routes, and there were rumours of plans to truncate the Liverpool to Norwich service at Peterborough. Another issue was the number of diesel trains operating on electrified lines, given that they were in short supply.

Gloucestershire County Council has plans to improve passenger access and car parking facilities at nine of its stations, whilst in Devon, funding has been secured to reopen the Bere Alston to Tavistock line. New stations at Ricoh Arena and Bermuda Park have opened on the Coventry to Nuneaton line - but trains do not call at Ricoh Arena on match days, as the single-car Class 153s could not cope!

Railfuture could promote good practice by individuals, groups, TOCs and others in the rail industry by having Passenger Best Practice Awards similar to the RUG awards that Roger Blake has established, and with the opportunity for publicity for both the winners and Railfuture itself. Nominations would be submitted through branches and/or TOC liaisons, but volunteers are required to organise such a scheme.

NORTH WEST BRANCH

The Spring 2016 edition of Rail North West that reviews the new Northern and Trans-Pennine franchises is available on its website: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=North%20West%20Branch>.

NORTH EAST BRANCH

CrossCounty's is launching a pilot scheme in Wales that will see barcoded tickets sent to smartphones and tablets. Its APOD tickets (Advanced Purchase on the Day), available up to 15 minutes before departure, have been well received, and now embrace Birmingham-Standed Airport and Cardiff-Nottingham services.

Closure of the Severn Tunnel between 12 September and 23 October for electrification will see additional stops at Severn Tunnel Junction in most services between Nottingham and Cardiff, whilst in December, grade separation of the Norton Bridge junction should significantly improve journey times between Birmingham and Manchester, and allow additional calls at Stafford and Stockport on Sundays.

SOUTH EAST BRANCH

A report suggests devolving rail services south of London to TfL. The South Eastern franchise starting in June 2018 is firmly in TfL's sights, with Dartford, Swanley and Sevenoaks as the outer boundary points. A joint DfT/TfL/Mayor of London prospectus adds the Thameslink-Southern-Great Northern inner suburban services. Contract renewal is in September 2021 and the process is due to begin in November 2019. Caterham, Tattenham Corner, Epsom/Epsom Downs, St. Albans, Welwyn Garden City, and Hertford North are likely boundary stations. Railfuture remains a consistent advocate of rail devolution. Its 'Rail Manifesto for London' can be found on its Branch web page: www.railfuture.org.uk/London+and+South+East

The Hendy Review proposes that completion of the following schemes in the region be deferred to CP6 (2019-2024): Gatwick Airport station concourse redevelopment, Victoria station concourse decongestion, remodelling of Bow Junction (Stratford), the Western Rail Link to Heathrow, Queenstown Road Battersea extra platform, South London High Voltage (Wimbledon Grid), Waterloo suburban lines stations capacity increase, Stevenage turn-back facility, and Acton-Willesden and Reading-Basingstoke electrification.

WESSEX BRANCH

Wessex Branch is exploring the possibility of a new station to serve Welborne, a major development on the north side of Fareham; it was included in the plan adopted in 2015. Opportunities are limited by line access, single track operation, level changes and the proximity to Fareham Station, but proposals for development in the far west of the site, north of Funtley should be followed up. Meanwhile, anything that would inhibit the delivery of a rail halt in the future needs to be resisted. Policy WEL42 (Safeguarding Sites for Specific Development) provides guidance on this matter. Strong public transport links between Welborne and Fareham Station would provide evidence of the demand, whilst smart ticketing would assist in providing a seamless journey for passengers.

...and now the rest of the news ...

DfT has published clause-by-clause assessments for compliance with accessibility standards for Class 150, 321 and 322 units, as well as the final report by Nicola Shaw into the future and financing of Network Rail, and updated rail franchise agreements for Virgin West Coast and First Great Western:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shaw-report-final-report-and-recommendations>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/virgin-west-coast>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/first-great-western>

A new operator is due to take over the West Midlands franchise in October 2017, with contract award expected in June 2017. The DfT has shortlisted the following bidders:

- London and West Midlands Railway Ltd, a subsidiary of Govia Ltd (a joint venture between Keolis and Go-Ahead Group)
- West Midlands Trains Ltd, currently a wholly owned subsidiary of Abellio Transport Group Ltd, with East Japan Railway Company and Mitsui & Co Ltd as minority partners
- MTR Corporation (West Midlands) Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of MTR Corporation (UK) Ltd

Network Rail has announced that Sandy, rather than Hitchin, is its preferred choice of corridor for the Central section of East West Rail between Bedford and Cambridge, although the rationale for this decision will not be published until May, nor was it clear whether the Inner or Outer Bedford sub-option had been selected. Further analysis and consultation is ongoing to determine the precise route.

Network Rail and the Homes and Communities Agency have agreed to work with local councils in England to develop any opportunities to develop the land around railway stations. York, Taunton and Swindon councils have come forward with proposals to spearhead the new initiative, and have identified railway sites that could be pooled to deliver housing and other local regeneration.

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has lifted the Prohibition Notice on West Coast Railway Company Ltd reported in the March issue. The company has taken steps to remedy the issues it identified, including the introduction of clearer governance structures with proper accountability for safety; more robust risk assessments; and enhanced processes for managing staff, with a focus on safety culture.

The ORR has published the [final version of our approach to the enforcement of the Competition Act 1998 in relation to the supply of services relating to railways](#). Its Final Competition Act Guidance, Chapter 1Aii, Para 1.9 states that “When applying and enforcing the prohibitions in Articles 101 and 102, we are bound by the fundamental principle of the primacy of EU law. We must therefore follow the case law of the European Courts in interpreting the scope of the prohibitions in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.”

Many user groups have responded to Govia's proposals for "station hosts" to replace ticket offices. The consensus is that they lack the detail needed to form a reasoned judgment. Ticket office users have little trust in the ability of ticket vending machines (TVMs) to offer the lowest price. Changes would require much longer than the time allowed in the current proposal.

The East Surrey Transport Committee recorded the number of passengers who engaged with the booking clerk at most of its affected stations in the morning peak. Transactions lasted from 30 seconds to 10 minutes, and were often faster than those on ATMs. Those that did not involve a sale included information on travel at other times, or on types of tickets for later travel, and forms for lost season tickets. The number of engagements with the booking clerk far exceeded the number being quoted by Govia.

Meanwhile, in the latest issue of its stakeholder magazine, Govia state that:

"We have received a large amount of feedback from our passengers and stakeholders both into London TravelWatch (LTW) and Transport Focus (TF) and ourselves directly. We will review this feedback and discuss with LTW & TF the issues they have raised, to identify the full extent of the concerns together with the actions we need to take to address them. We will be updating our website with more station specific information shortly, including ticket availability. We will be upgrading ticket machines, new smartcards and an improved on-line booking system." Stations not listed in the proposals are unaffected by the changes.

Letter in the Daily Telegraph (17 March): "it is unhelpful when government sources or the media generalise and say that annual rail transport spending per capita is much greater in the South than in the North. While this is true in London (£774 per head compared with £337 in the North West), the same cannot be said for south west England, where spending amounts to a mere £212 per head. This has left the Devon and Cornwall peninsula with little transport resilience and starved of growth opportunities."

The 34th edition of Barry Doe's rail franchise map - National Rail Passenger Operators' map (April 2016) - shows the revised Northern and First TransPennine routes following their new franchises, plus the summer Saturday extension of SWT services to Weymouth via Yeovil. There are also significant changes in the operator list. Copies may be downloaded from the 'Rail Operators in the British Isles' section of www.barrydoe.co.uk, for private or commercial use, including printing any size, without further permission. This facility is courtesy of his sponsors: Great Western Railway, HaCon, National Rail, ScotRail, Severn-Dee Travel and TAS.

...and finally

Transport Minister Andrew Jones has set out "A smarter vision for transport": "And what better place to host a smart travel conference than Milton Keynes...home to the [Transport Systems Catapult centre](#)". [Well, I suppose that's one way to get around! – Ed.]

James Beckingham, a Southern Rail driver, was nominated for Driver of the Year in the annual Rail Staff awards. His witty gems included: "Please mind the gap between [@SouthernRailUK](#) timetable and reality."

SLUG report that CrossCountry Trains have discovered a way to get the 0812 train to Paignton into Birmingham New Street sideways! According to the information screen (photo supplied), the train is on platform 12, but 1st Class is on platform 9B!

EVENTS (See also the [Events listing on the Railfuture website](#))

Coloured blobs indicate the various types of event...

- National & regional rail events.
- Railfuture (Rf) events (rail user group representatives are welcome to attend).
- Local Group events.

April

- 18. Monday. Avocet Line, Malthouse, The Globe, **Topsham**, 1900. Also 17 Oct (AGM); 16 May, (Special Meeting with Neil Harris and Christian Wolmar, **Exeter**); 3 Jul (Outing – Barnstaple); and 12 Dec (Christmas Social, **Lympstone**, TBC).
- 19. Tuesday. Bedford-Bletchley Rail Users Association AGM, St John's Church Hall, St John's Street, **Bedford**, 1930.
- 19. Tuesday. Association of Public Transport Users, Friend's Meeting House, 7 Upper Lattimore Rd, **St Albans**, AL1 3UD, 1930.
- 23. Saturday. London and South East Branch, International Hall, University of London, Lansdowne Terrace, Bloomsbury, London, WC1N 1AS, 1030 for 1100 (open meeting), 1400 (AGM).
- 28. Thursday. Tarka Rail Association AGM, **Umberleigh** village hall, 1915.

May

- 5. Thursday. London and South East Branch, Sussex & Coastway division meeting. 1800. Also 2 June.
- 9. Monday. Bexhill Rail Action Group, Hastings Direct, **Collington**. 1900-2100. Also 13 Jun, 11 Jul, 8 Aug, 12 Sep, 10 Oct, 12 Nov. December in a local hostelry. <http://www.bexhillrailaction.org.uk/>.
- 10. Tuesday. Stourbridge Line User Group public meeting / AGM, **Kidderminster** Town Station (SVR) Railway, 1930.
- 14. Saturday. East Suffolk Travellers' Association AGM, Gannon Rooms, Station Approach, **Saxmundam**, 1400.
- 14. Saturday. Cotswold Line Promotion Group AGM, WI Hall, New Road, **Moreton-in-Marsh**, 1030.
- 14. Saturday. Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association, **Shrewsbury** Station, 1100. (Also, 7 June, 1 November, Newtown, 1850; 9 July, 1145 and 8 October (AGM), 1100, Machynlleth; 13 August, Borth, 1215; 10 September, Welshpool, 1130; 10 December, Aberystwyth, 1145.)
- 18. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton line, No 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes** Station, 1900. enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk. (Also 21 September, and 20 Jul (AGM) and 16 Nov at the *Sloop* inn, **Barton**, 2000.)
- 19. Thursday. Edenbridge & District Rail Travellers' Association AGM, WI Hall, **Edenbridge**, 1900 for 1930.
- 21. Saturday. Railfuture AGM, **Milton Keynes**, 1000 for 1045. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>.

June

- 1. Wednesday. Association of Community Rail Partnerships, Station Adoption Seminar, venue TBC. Also, 13 Jul, Members' Seminars North; 20 Jul, Members' Seminars South; 29 Sep, Community Rail Awards, **Southport**. <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>
- 6. Monday. Ribble Valley Rail, New Inn, **Clitheroe**. Also 4 July and 8 August.
- 7. Tuesday. TravelWatch NorthWest Conference, Town Hall, **Blackpool**.
- 15. Wednesday. Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton RUG, Village Hall, **Foxton**, 1930-2100.
- 18. Saturday. Summer Conference at the Scottish Mining Museum, **Newtongrange**, 1000 for 1045-1700. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>
- 25. Saturday. East Anglia Branch, St Mary at Stoke Church Hall, Stoke Street, Ipswich, 1400.
- 25. Saturday. Passenger Group Meeting, International Hall, Lansdowne Terrace, London WC1N 13:00. Also 24 September (Birmingham) and 10 December.

July

- 18. Monday. Harrow Public Transport Users' Association, Baptist Church, College Road, **Harrow**, 1930. Also 26 Sep (AGM).

Further Ahead

- 12 November. Saturday. Rail User Conference at the Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, **Birmingham**, 1000 for 1045. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

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This bulletin has been sent by...

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