

President: Alan Whitehouse Vice-Presidents: Mike Crowhurst & Alan Williams

## Inspiring a Green Sparks Effect

By Stephen Waring



*Editor:* Members of the Electric Railway Charter got major articles in the Halifax Courier on 8 January and 4 March which featured our branch committee member Stephen Waring. Below is the latest from Stephen on this Charter.

*Photo: Class 319 Electric at Liverpool Lime Street by Stephen Waring.*

The [Electric Railway Charter](#) has the environment at its heart - decarbonising transport, stopping health-damaging emissions, supporting good growth.

We call for a rolling programme of electrification. We are frustrated by lack of progress to implement the Northern Electrification Task Force *Northern Sparks* report (March 2015). Chaired by Andrew Jones MP (Harrogate & Knaresborough), the Task Force shortlisted 12 routes for an initial 5-year plan. Ranked on economic, business and environment criteria, top scheme was the full Calder Valley Line (Leeds to Manchester & Preston via both Bradford and Brighouse).

The Electric Railway Charter is an initiative of HADRAG (Halifax & District Rail Action Group), STORM (Support the Oldham, Rochdale Manchester rail line), Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group, and Bradford Rail Users Group. Joint coordinators are Stephen Waring, retired physics teacher who is Chair of HADRAG, and Richard Lysons, community rail activist and chair of Friends of Littleborough Stations.

### **Railfuture, Yorkshire & North West Joint Branch Meeting**

**The Williams Review, Blueprint for the North, TfN Rail Strategy & Cross Border Routes**

**13:00 to 16:00 hours, Saturday, 6 April 2019**

**Yorkshire Children's Centre, Brian Jackson House, Huddersfield, HD1 5JP**

**See flyer for more details**

The Charter rejects “re-dieselisation”. Diesel bi-modes are bad for the environment, bad for business. Trains with both diesel engines (plus fuel tanks) and electric collection equipment are overweight and wasteful: underpowered on diesel, inefficient on electric; more complex; costlier to buy and maintain; reliability unproven. The Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade proposal to leave the most steeply graded Huddersfield-Stalybridge section unwired seems perverse and short sighted.

Full electrification is ideal for strategic routes like the Calder Valley curving through the hills with frequent stops. All-electric trains with low mass, high pulling force and high acceleration (it’s in the physics!) will cut journey times. Electrics recover energy through regenerative braking. And electric freight trains would be less damaging to the performance of the frequent passenger service. The capital cost of electrification pays back through future operational savings.

Trains with modest battery capacity might be a solution to short sections that are not “live” within a fully electric railway. Hydrogen-powered trains, keenly advocated by government and train builders eager to profit, may have an application on minor routes. But transferring electrical energy to hydrogen to fuel trains and then converting it back to electricity via fuel cells (or turbo-generators) is less efficient than batteries. Beware false prophets claiming “zero-emissions”. Almost all current hydrogen production is directly or indirectly from carbon-based fuels with carbon dioxide, with the greenhouse gas, as a by-product. Other issues might include distribution, and (rarely mentioned) safety. A recent [Institute of Mechanical Engineers report](#) on prospects for hydrogen trains opens with a recommendation to rethink cancellation of electrification schemes and move forward with rolling programme of wiring, building project skills with a national centre of excellence. We see a rail industry fightback against Department for Transport anti-electrification bias.

So, the Charter wants smart electrification with innovative technology, and effective planning to cut disruption and costs. Recent news (see Roger Ford’s “Informed Sources” in Modern Railways, March 2019) suggests Network Rail could grab a challenge to wire the full York-Huddersfield-Manchester within the Department for Transport’s budget for a discontinuous Trans-Pennine Upgrade scheme. UK wiring costs could come down from £3.5M/track km (the cost of the Great Western Main Line electrification) to under £1M/track km. Good news for future schemes including the Calder Valley Line which the Charter wants to be next on the list after the Trans-Pennine Upgrade.

The Charter was founded by four Calder Valley Line rail user groups and Yorkshire and North West Railfuture branches. Supporters at May 2018 launch included the Halifax MP, Holly Lynch. Last autumn Calderdale district council signed up to the Charter and launched its own campaign for electrification of the Calder Valley Line. The council has started a petition on Change.org. We hope readers of this will sign the petition! [Petition](#)

The challenge is to refute the argument that electrification is too difficult, and instead promote a clean, high-performing railway, fulfilling the moral imperative to decarbonise transport. The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report sets a deadline to tackle climate change. In 2017 East Midlands environmental campaigners took a giant “electric plug” on the train in protest at cancellation of Midland electrification. More recently teenage activist Greta Thunberg took time off school to persuade the so-called grown-ups at a global level of the need for action. Thunberg must inspire us all.

The “sparks effect” attracts passengers to electric railways. But trains are not automatically “green”. Road will clean up its act, and so too must rail. Consumers will make environmental choices, giving us a green sparks effect.

The environment is at the heart of the Charter and it must be at the heart of every Railfuture campaign.

## **Branch Annual General Meeting – Transport for the North Talk**

**by Mark Parry**

David Hoggarth, the Strategic Rail Director at Transport for the North, gave us a detailed presentation on rail developments past, present and future. As a regular traveller he accepted that 2018 has been a tumultuous year. The may timetable was meant to bring improvements rather than the chaos that turned lives upside down for 6 months. The Transport for the North Chief Executive, Barry White, has said this must not happen again. They are hoping the railway will get back to where it was by December. Meanwhile 13,000 passengers have had compensation. Richard George is conducting an independent review and is recommending on the recovery process. His view is that some efficiencies have gone too far leaving an unreliable system.

Transport for the North intervened on the strikes affecting Northern services, by stating they are in favour of retaining the second person on each train. They do not see Northern’s franchise contract as being a barrier to retaining the second person.

The Transport for the North strategic plan is focused on improving the economy and creating many jobs. Their vision is for the North to be considered as one place, where someone can live in one part and work in another by commuting efficiently. The 5 Cs outline the strategy:

Connectivity: improve journey times between the main centres.

Customers: both passenger and freight needs are to be met.

Community: Rail to work better for and to be more integrated into the community.

Cost Effectiveness: Subsidy levels for the train operating companies to reduce.

Capacity: More seats and more tracks.

They have set standards such as 2 trains an hour as a minimum and 30 minute journeys between cities.

Smart ticketing is being introduced in phases. Phase 1 includes season tickets, and flexible season tickets are available based on a discounted fixed number of journeys. Phase 2 is about improving information and integrating it across all operators, including buses. Phase 3 is a few years off yet, but is about introducing account based travel, similar to the Oyster card system in London.

They have £1.5 billion to spend on rail enhancements, including 500 new carriages and track improvements. Their hopes include a move away from diesel trains. Huddersfield is to become a hub for Northern inter-city trains and Castelford could become a hub for West Yorkshire tram trains.

A key question asked was about recent advice from Transpennine Express that we should consult through Transport for the North rather than the operator. David said we can consult directly with the operator as we always have. In answer to a question on accommodating long distance and stopping services, he said there needs to be a separation between the two. Climate impact was raised and David pointed out there was a significant section in the plan on the environment. *(Editor: the plan was changed to include this after the Yorkshire and Humberside Transport Activists Round Table campaigned for it).*

Transport for the North's vision is to have a rail network that can be relied upon, cashless ticketing for those who want it and better quality and cleaner trains. Speaking personally about the forthcoming Williams review of the recent rail disruption, David made the following points. The rail system needs stitching back together so it works as one network, passenger interests need to be met and there should be a local say and influence on the development of services. He also feels a need for a better balance between providing enhancements and operating the railway. Finally, he said we need to have a pride in our railways.



At the start of the meeting, Alison Cosgrove, a Director of Railfuture, presented Graham Collett, one of our branch vice chairs, the Clara Zilahi Award for best campaigner at the Railfuture Annual Rail User Group Awards. This was for his response to the Office of Rail and Road on the impact of the May timetable on Northern and Transpennine Express services and their passengers. It cited some shocking problems on the Stalybridge to Huddersfield line.

Photo by Mark Parry

## New Flaxby Park Station

## Harrogate Line Supporters Press Release

Plans are on track to reopen a historic North Yorkshire railway station after the development company behind a major new village community at Flaxby, completed the acquisition of Goldsborough's former station house. As part of the scheme, Goldsborough Railway Station will be reopened as a new park and ride station, called Flaxby Parkway Station. In addition, train operator Northern has shown its support for the development with a letter backing the proposals. This follows Network Rail confirming there are "no significant technical obstacles to the delivery of a new station" at Flaxby.

**Introduction**

The route of HS2 (High Speed) from Birmingham to Leeds has never received widespread support. It bypasses Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield then serves Leeds City centre, although of those four cities, Leeds is the only one with a good London train service at present.

HS2 modified their original route in the Sheffield area, which had a station for Sheffield at Meadowhall, moving the line east of Rotherham and providing a spur to serve Sheffield. This is an improvement on the original proposal, although some Rotherham residents would disagree. From Sheffield the line to rejoin the HS2 main line at Thurnscoe is an existing line which is to be upgraded and electrified to take HS2 services. This work is not being carried out by HS2 but by Transport for the North. The junction at Thurnscoe is the responsibility of HS2.

Transport for the North then started planning cross-Pennine rail routes, sometimes referred to as HS3. It is clear that they were told that the HS2 route was a given and that it was not up for discussion. As a result they have come up with a proposal which makes some sense if you accept their criteria, but little sense as a whole. This proposal is Northern Powerhouse Rail, of which the most significant and expensive part is a new line from Manchester to Leeds via Bradford, which will involve extensive and expensive tunnelling between Manchester and Bradford.

The problem is that this leaves the current plans for Sheffield to Manchester services relying on improving the Hope Valley line.

There are now rumours in the press that Chris Grayling has suggested that the Leeds to Birmingham part of HS2 may never be built. This is unsurprising in view of the poor route, and the opposition to it which has built up.

**Existing services**

There is a shortage of capacity from Manchester to Sheffield and Leeds. The Manchester to Sheffield service, which uses the Hope Valley line, is slow and overcrowded, with two fast trains per hour. It is not unusual to leave passengers behind on this service. I recently had to stand from Sheffield to Manchester on a mid-morning service.

Transport for the North has a target of 30 minutes journey time between Manchester and Sheffield. The current best time is 49 minutes. I feel that 45 minutes is achievable, and maybe 42 if grade separation was provided at Edgeley junction, which would not be easy. The Hope Valley route has three of the longest tunnels in the country, and has many sharp curves which cannot be straightened. It joins the London main line at Edgeley junction south of Stockport, which is a flat junction with very tight curves. The route from there to Manchester is congested. The alternative route from New Mills to Manchester via Romiley is no faster and also congested.

The Hope Valley line has considerable local traffic justifying at least an hourly service. In addition, there is substantial freight traffic from the cement works and quarries on the line.

Demand on the Manchester to Sheffield line is suppressed by overcrowding, along with extensive late running, and not infrequent diversion of East Midland Trains services via the Dore South Curve missing Sheffield altogether. Many also travel without tickets as trains are frequently too crowded for guards to check tickets.

Longer trains are planned for this line, which is appropriate, but the plan by Trans Pennine Express to use paired 185 units without corridor connections means that ticket inspection will remain poor, and there will be problems at intermediate stations such as Dore and Topley, which cannot accommodate six car trains. They will not offer faster journeys.

The HS2 spur to Clay Cross, and the electrification and upgrade from there to and including Sheffield station is being carried out by HS2, although it would appear that there is a very limited budget for this work. The works to Bradway tunnel and the replacement of the main footbridge at Sheffield station, which is too low for electrification, will both eat into this restricted budget.

There is a proposal to reopen Woodhead as a freight only route carrying trucks from Manchester to Sheffield. This seems unlikely to happen.

**Woodhead**

The Woodhead line used to provide the main service from Manchester to Sheffield, but was closed in the 1970s. From Manchester to Guide Bridge, there is space for four tracks, and from Guide Bridge to Hadfield the line is still open. From

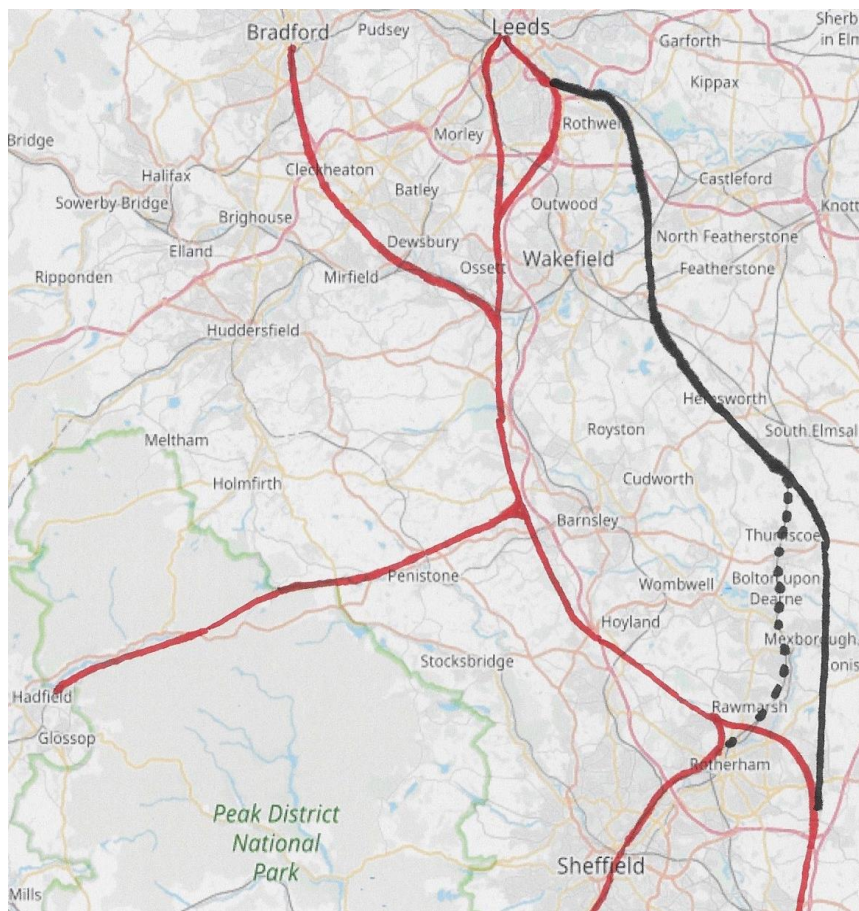


Hadfield to Penistone through the Woodhead tunnel, the track bed is still in place. From Penistone to Deepcar, the trackbed is in place, and from Deepcar to Sheffield the line is open for freight.

I propose that the HS2 route between Leeds and Staveley be diverted west of Barnsley. This should incur no additional cost as the new line is of similar length to the current HS2 proposal. The current proposed HS2 route has attracted much criticism, and involves demolishing many houses. I propose a junction with a re-opened Woodhead tunnel route near Penistone, which would then provide high-speed routes between Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester. There would, as currently proposed, be a loop through Sheffield Midland station.

To serve Midland station rather than Victoria at Sheffield a link would be required to the new HS2 alignment from the existing line running north out of Sheffield Midland station. This should cost no more than the current proposals. The Woodhead tunnel would probably need re-boring with twin tunnels.

The main HS2/3 route would join the current proposed HS2 route to the proposed terminal platforms on the south side of Leeds station. There would be sense in providing a link to the Doncaster to Leeds line to allow trains from Manchester to run through Leeds to York or Hull. There would also be sense in providing a high-speed link to Bradford avoiding Leeds, with a possible station at Dewsbury. There would also be a good case for a link from Woodhead to Barnsley to allow a Manchester to Barnsley service.



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The journey time should be around 30 minutes from Leeds and from Sheffield to Manchester assuming 125mph running, at proposed HS2 speeds it would be less. Trains going into Liverpool could not use the HS2 station at Manchester but would need to use a new underpass to reach the through platforms 15 and 16, which would take slightly longer.

There are high voltage cables running through Woodhead tunnel, but as there are three tunnels at Woodhead, it should not be difficult to put the cables in one of the other two.

Woodhead is the solution which will not go away. Its reopening is the only sensible solution to the Sheffield to Manchester problem, and if it were reopened then this would provide a fast route from Manchester to Leeds. My concern is that Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 to Leeds will never be built and instead we end up with no investment in high-speed lines in Yorkshire.

## Classes 68 & 88 Locomotives

by Graham Collett

This was the subject of a very interesting - and not too technical - presentation in Leeds to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (IMech) on 10<sup>th</sup> January. It was given by Andy Grundy, Head of Fleet Management and Stores - Direct Rail Services.

**Background:** During the last 4 years, the Stadler class 68 and 88 locomotives have been introduced into the UK railway system by Direct Rail Services. The locomotives are mixed traffic, 100mph-capability units that combine excellent capabilities with the flexibility to cover a variety of roles. 2019 will see a new role for the class 68 fleet as it enters service

on First Trans Pennine Express services as part of the 'Nova 3' fleet in combination with CAF-produced MK5a coaching stock.

**Why Class 68?** Andy explained that Direct Rail Services needed a diesel locomotive with a top speed of 100 mph (160kph) with the ability to haul a 1600 tonnes intermodal train. A key aim was to reduce fuel costs, as these can make up around 20% of freight operating costs for classes 20, 37 and 47, and to increase efficiency. There was also a requirement for reduced emissions to meet their customers' "green credentials". The Class 68 was designed to meet all these requirements and fitted with an electric train supply forms part of Vossloh/Stadler's 'UK Light Platform'.

**A particular advantage of the Class 68** is that 90% of the equipment needing day-to-day access is inside the locomotive, with very little underneath (battery box, fuel tank etc). The loco has a smaller diesel engine than a Class 57 but provides 1000 horsepower more (ie 3755hp). It is EU111A compliant and can be modified to EU Class 111B with additional equipment.

**Class 88:** The UK Light Platform was always designed to be adapted into further designs. The Class 88 contains 75% of the same parts as a Class 68, but is fitted with an electric engine producing 5500hp plus a small 950hp diesel engine for short trips off the electrified network - 'last mile' operation. In essence, it is an electric Class 68.

**Both locomotives are designed to be easy to maintain** and all major components are modular to allow for ease of removal. They are both fitted with Stadler's TWC System – on-board equipment which continuously monitors the locomotive's operation and uses a Global Positioning System feed based on previous experience to flag up any potential problems.

**Current Use:** The Class 68 is regarded as a modern day Class 47. It is used on 100mph seven coach Chiltern 'Silver Trains' (express commuter services from Birmingham to London), on charter services and to haul Mountsorrel stone trains (where it outperforms the Class 66), on infrastructure monitoring trains and on nuclear flask trains. It is also used in push/pull operation on ScotRail's 5 coach Fife Local commuter service and on Anglia Railways and Northern's short sets to cover for diesel multiple units, where it has provided massively improved reliability over the Class 37s formerly used. The Class 88 is used on 1800 tonnes Tesco/Stobart Express trains instead of two Class 66s.

**First TransPennine Express Operation:** Direct Rail Services has a contract to supply fourteen Class 68s (twelve are expected to be in service each day) to March 2023, with a possible extension (Direct Rail Services were requested to support all bidders for the new Trans Pennine Express franchise). The planned introduction into service is with the May 2019 timetable, with the first workings expected to be on Liverpool to Scarborough.

**The locos have required modifications** to make them compatible with the Mark 5A coaches being supplied by "CAF" (Beacon are the leasing company for both the locos and the coaches). The modifications include: push/pull operation, auto-select door operation (with door controls which the driver can operate), diagnostic equipment and forward facing CCTV. Maintenance facilities will be provided at Longsight (Manchester), Leeman Road York and Scarborough – all of which are under construction. Andy commented on the much higher reliability expectations these days. To meet these, maintenance would be carried out on a fourteen day 'balanced' cycle rather the traditional monthly examinations.

**The Future:** Direct Rail Services have now moved from a freight operating company to a train operating company. There was the potential to substitute Class 88s for Class 68s as routes were electrified and the possibility of converting existing 68s to 88s. The future development of the UK Light Platform was the Class 93, which was essentially a Class 88 with slightly more power.

Our thanks to Andy and IMech colleagues for providing such a helpful insight into these locomotives and their uses.

**Askern Station**

**by Graham Moss**

Askern Station was situated on the Askern Branch which is now primarily used by freight but as of late does have a regular Passenger service running through it from Bradford to Kings Cross. The branch is also a diversionary route for the East Coast Main Line and the Doncaster to Leeds Line. The station was closed to regular passenger traffic in the

late 1940s but was still used for occasional passenger service up till the early eighties until the platforms were partly removed making them unusable.

In its heyday the station was served by the Liverpool Boat train into the Spa Town of Askern with its beautiful Hotels and Spa Baths and also a regular service between Doncaster and Leeds and Wakefield, but with the sinking of the Coal Mine in Askern it signalled the end of Askern Town's Spa Days. The population increased dramatically with the building of a large estate (Instoneville) to house the miners and their families and in the 1920s this was further increased by the opening of the Coalite and Chemical plant in Askern.

Both the mine and the Coalite plant have long gone, closing in the 1980/90s, decimating the area with unemployment, forcing residents to find work in surrounding towns and cities, a situation which remains the same to date.

The last of Askern's major employers, Askern Sawmills, left the town just before Christmas 2018 leaving the town with little or no prospects for gainful employment.

The town of Askern is the most northern town in the Doncaster Metropolitan Area and situated on the A19 Trunk Road, a road notorious for its congestion with no hope of improvement because of its history of housing being constructed right up to the highway boundary, therefore making it impossible to widen.

Askern currently has a population of 11500 with another 5000 plus in the surrounding villages, and recently had another 1000 houses constructed with there are more in the planning stage. Because of its geographical position, a recent survey revealed a lot of people travelling into West Yorkshire as well as South Yorkshire to work. Re-instating the station in Askern, and providing a service between Doncaster and Leeds via Askern, Pontefract, Leeds etc would not only provide a wonderful opportunity to get people to and from work, but also have a massive impact in reducing pollution by literally taking thousands of cars off the road.

The land needed for the station platforms and car parks has already been secured and a costing of 1.1 million pounds has been provided by Railway Engineers "Megatech".

Come on Department of Transport, Transport for the North, Sheffield City Region and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, **LETS GET THIS PROPOSAL ON TRACK**

## Chair's Column

by Nina Smith

A column with a difference. A look across the Channel. Ironic, perhaps, with the disaster of Brexit looming over us.

I visited France in early February. It was my first visit for some twenty years and my first trips on Eurostar and "TGV". What were my impressions?

**EUROSTAR.** Eurostar is, of course, a minor miracle, but it seems ridiculous that you have to go to London to catch it. What happened to the original plan for Eurostars from Manchester and Leeds? Why is no-one, such as Transport for the North, advocating them now? And who should take the greatest blame for the lack of connectivity between HS2 (high speed) and HS1/Eurostar? Very London-based decisions, and all the more reason why we need the "One Yorkshire" proposal. This has just been rejected by James Brokenshire, Secretary of State for Local Government and MP for Old Bexley and Sidcup, born in Southend on Sea, and educated in London and Exeter. Clearly a man who understands the North of England!

But back to Eurostar. My advance ticket to Paris on the 16.31 train cost a very reasonable £44. When I came to check in at around 3pm, I found that that train had been cancelled. The very efficient Eurostar enquiry desk booked me instead on the 15.31, so I reached Paris an hour earlier. Excellent! I asked for a window seat but was allocated seat 4, which is part next to a window and part next to a wall. Not good. But this was an express to Paris, and after we had left London, the train manager helpfully announced that passengers were free to move to other empty seats. UK Train Operating Companies please note! What of the train itself? It was one of the new Siemens sets. The interiors looked great, but I had a shock when I sat down. Although the backs were well designed, I found the seat squab was very hard. Why is it that so many seats in new trains are so uncomfortable? However, there was ample legroom. After half an hour, I went and stood in the buffet for some time. The buffet had a reasonable selection and, most importantly, I was able to buy a carnet of Metro tickets (you can buy Oystercards on the London-bound services). For some reason, the seats on my return journey were more comfortable – was it my imagination, or do some of the new Eurostar sets have more comfortable seats than others? Seating comfort apart, Eurostar is most impressive. A smooth two hour journey



connecting two of Europe's great cities 490 km apart via a 50 kilometre long undersea tunnel. Truly one of the modern wonders of the world!

**TGVs.** The two TGVs (high speed French trains) I travelled on were mighty impressive trains, but somewhat different from each other. I travelled from Gare de l'Est to Strasbourg on a OUIGO. OUIGO is a wholly owned subsidiary of "SNCF" (French railways) which is run like a budget airline. Seats can only be booked online. Large baggage is extra. There is no buffet car (the space is used for extra seating). But it is cheap and efficient. Paris-Strasbourg one-way was 30 euros, plus 5 euros for my rucksack. The TGV unit was a double decker. I chose an upstairs window seat in a quiet coach. My seat (2+2) was very comfortable and there was ample legroom. (I understand some carriages are 3+1, but I didn't sample these). We arrived in Strasbourg bang on time, and my regional service to Mulhouse was waiting on the other side of the platform. The 500km journey took two hours! My only criticism of OUIGO is that they only email tickets four days before travel, and you can be surcharged if you do not print them off. This is very awkward if you are not near a printer, and I would urge SNCF/OUIGO to change its policy and email tickets as soon as you book.

On my return from Strasbourg, I travelled on a conventional SNCF TGV. I chose First Class which, booked in advance, was 61 Euros. Again, I was upstairs by a window. Needless to say, the seat was very comfortable with excellent legroom. There was a decent buffet, with a wide choice of menus – a much better choice than on GB trains. Again, the two hour journey was completed on time. Full marks to SNCF.

**TER regional trains.** TER is a train and coach service operated by SNCF and regional governments across France. Is this a model for the UK? TER Grand Est serves Alsace, Lorraine and Champagne-Ardenne. I travelled from Strasbourg to Mulhouse on a semi fast service calling at Selestat and Colmar. It was an old fashioned train with an electric loco and a rake of older coaches. I travelled First Class (22 Euros for 100km in one hour) in a very comfortable seat. But, and here is my biggest criticism of my SNCF experience, the windows were filthy. Given that this route is used by tourists and the Vosges are visible to the West, this was not good enough! Fortunately, the windows on my return service were spotless. This was on a modern Electric Multiple Unit, all stations to Colmar and then fast to Bollwiller and Strasbourg. I was in Standard Class and the seats were very comfortable. I had hoped to visit Basel in Switzerland whilst I was away, but a storm on February 10<sup>th</sup> caused me to change my plans.

#### Trams in Mulhouse.



Mulhouse is a city of 120,000 people. Its agglomeration population is 280,000. Mulhouse is a former leather and cotton town ("the Manchester of France"). Today, its major employer is Peugeot-Citroen. Within the city itself are three tram lines, the first of which opened in 2006. There is also a tram train service into the agglomeration at Thann St Jacques.

Tram (yellow) and tram-train outside Mulhouse Gare Centrale, *photo by Nina Smith*

The trams are Alstom Citadis 302 and very smooth and efficient, although I was caught out when Line 3 was suspended in the storm on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Tram Lines 1 and 3, and the tram train serve Gare Central, with an easy interchange at Porte Jeune for Line 2 passengers. If Mulhouse has a modern tramway, why hasn't Leeds-Bradford? A rhetorical question, but one which shows just how the UK is behind most mainland European countries when it comes to modern urban transport. It is worth mentioning, too, that a comprehensive tram and bus timetable booklet is freely available in Mulhouse. If only West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Sheffield City Region would reconsider their lamentable cessation of combined rail timetable booklets!

**Le Cite du Train.** This is the new name for the French National Railway Museum, situated in Mulhouse. How does it compare to York? It is a little bigger, but appears not to have an easily accessible library area. Whilst much of the museum is well laid out, the same cannot be said for the main hall. It seems that the "let's make a spectacle brigade" have won out here. The hall is lit with spotlights which, together with train headlights being on, makes photography difficult. Too many of the exhibits are in partial shadow, and only some of the carriages have observation platforms by them. The museum scores highly for a tribute to the Resistance and for the two goods wagons that are poignant reminders of the transport of hundreds of thousands of Jewish and other people to concentration camps in Germany.



The museum also scores in having a lot of TV screens showing old newsreel and SNCF films. The rest of the museum has normal lighting. The exhibits themselves are superb, with strong presence of steam and electric locomotives, and passenger and goods carriages. There are Presidential saloons too, and a fabulous Art Deco Bugatti diesel railcar. Attendance on the Sunday I visited was low, perhaps due in part to poor weather, but Mulhouse's position very close to the Swiss and German borders is perhaps not the ideal location for a national museum. Nevertheless, Mulhouse is a city with several other museums, the finest of which is the Cite de l'Automobile. This is the largest motor museum in the world and is in Mulhouse because the bulk of the collection was assembled by the brothers Schlumpf who owned the textile mill that is now the museum building. This is a treasure trove of some 500 mostly pre-1950 vehicles. Mulhouse is well worth a visit for anyone interested in historic transport.

**Paris Metro and RER.** Little to say here that isn't well known, other than that the Paris Metro is a very comprehensive and efficient system with relatively modern trains whose seats are not as comfortable as those on the London Underground. Two lines (1 and 14) have or shortly will have driverless trains. 14 is the newest line (1998), whilst Line 1, the oldest is being converted. I also travelled a short distance on one of the partially underground SNCF "RER" inner suburban lines; this Line C train was formed of comfortable double-decker stock.

I will not be leaving it another 20 years before I return to France!

## Diary

6 Apr 2019 @ 13:00	Railfuture Joint Yorkshire & North West Branch Meeting. The Yorkshire Children's Centre, Brian Jackson House, Huddersfield, HD1 5JP; see flyer for more details.
29 Apr 2019 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB.
13 May 2019 @ 19:00	SELRAP Conference Room (downstairs) Herriots Hotel, Skipton
18 May 2019, a fee is charged.	Railfuture National Annual General Meeting, Bute Suite, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff CF11 9SW. Registration opens at 10:00 and conference from 11:00 until 15:00. See <a href="https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/#2019_cardiff">https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/#2019_cardiff</a> for more details.
18 May 2019 @ 12:00	Friends of the Settle to Carlisle Line, annual general meeting, Victoria Hall, Kirkgate, Settle, BD24 9DZ.
21 May 2019 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport Speaker meeting on "Rail Strategy", James Nutter from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. St. George's Conference Centre, Leeds LS1 3DL.
3 Jun 2019 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB.
22 Jun 2019, a fee is charged.	Railfuture National Conference. Dolphin Centre, Central Hall, Horsemarket, Darlington DL1 5RP. See <a href="https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/#2019_cardiff">https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/#2019_cardiff</a> for more details.
8 Jul 2019 @ 19:00	SELRAP Community Centre, Earby.
15 Jul 2019 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB.
<b>Want to advertise your meeting here? Contact Mark Parry: <a href="mailto:Mark.Parry294@gmail.com">Mark.Parry294@gmail.com</a> 07941 642349.</b>	

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Our next issue (Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 45) will be out in June 2019. Please email material, news and feedback to: [Mark.Parry294@gmail.com](mailto:Mark.Parry294@gmail.com) to arrive by **Saturday 18 May 2019**. Alternatively call or text 07941 642349. **Stories of campaigns and successes are especially welcome. Having your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email saves us time and money. Contact Andrew Dyson to request this.**

## Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.avrug.org.uk">www.avrug.org.uk</a>
Bradford Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.bradfordrail.com">www.bradfordrail.com</a>
Esk Valley	<a href="http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdoc.html">http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdoc.html</a>
Halifax and District Rail Action Group	<a href="http://www.hadrag.com">www.hadrag.com</a>
Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group	Email: <a href="mailto:hlrug@live.co.uk">hlrug@live.co.uk</a>
Harrogate Line Supporters' Group	<a href="http://www.harrogateline.org">www.harrogateline.org</a>
Hope Valley Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk">www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk</a>
Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association	Email: <a href="mailto:hpsrua@btinternet.com">hpsrua@btinternet.com</a>
Hull and East Riding Rail Users' Association	
Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.lasrug.btck.co.uk">www.lasrug.btck.co.uk</a>
Minster Rail Campaign	<a href="http://www.minstersrail.com/">http://www.minstersrail.com/</a>
Pontefract Civic Society Rail Group	<a href="https://en-gb.facebook.com/PontefractRail/">https://en-gb.facebook.com/PontefractRail/</a>
Selby and District Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/">http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/</a>
Settle-Carlisle Line, Friends of the	<a href="http://www.foscl.org.uk">www.foscl.org.uk</a>
Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership	<a href="http://www.selrap.org.uk">www.selrap.org.uk</a>
Stalybridge to Huddersfield	Email: <a href="mailto:MarkAshmor@yahoo.co.uk">MarkAshmor@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: <a href="mailto:Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk">Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk</a>
Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (Yorkshire Coast Wolds Coast Line)	<a href="http://www.yccrp.co.uk">www.yccrp.co.uk</a>

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