

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

Number 52 – April 2021

Yorkshire **railfuture**

President: Alan Whitehouse: Vice-Presidents: Mike Crowhurst, Alan Williams & Chris Hyomes

National Award to Hunmanby

By Mark Parry



The last of the new Class 195s diesels to be delivered to Northern in the Spring. See the Northern update article. Picture by Mark Parry.

On 9th December, the Friends of Hunmanby Railway Station were awarded 1st prize in the National Community Rail Awards, Small Project Award (£500 or less) 'Attracting passengers to Hunmanby's new hourly train service. Details of all the awards can be seen here: Communityrail.org.uk with the Hunmanby award on page 13. Hunmanby Railway Station is between Bridlington and Filey on the Hull to Scarborough line and the Friends are affiliated to Railfuture.

The path to an hourly train service started in 2009 with a consultation document by Network Rail called the Draft Yorkshire & Humber Route Utilization Strategy.

The document was at a time when passenger use was rising dramatically. The Hull to Scarborough Line was not listed for improvement, but a wide range of community organisations wrote in asking if an improved hourly service could be considered. They ranged from NHS Yorkshire, Filey School, Bridlington Renaissance, The University in Scarborough, Filey Tourism Association, Filey Town Council and RSPB Bempton. Network Rail reported their findings, but at that time it did not meet the funding criteria, but as growth on the railway network continued it formed the base for a regular hourly service to be put into the new Rail Franchise for Northern Rail. The end result was that all those organisations who contributed to the Network Rail consultation now share in the success. Many others have helped in this work, individuals and councillors for example, and this is a reflection of the involvement the Friends have engendered.

A date to note: 14:00 17 April 2021 Yorkshire Branch Online Business Meeting

When Hunmanby was shortlisted for the National Community Rail Awards the Friends thanked those in Local and National Government, the Rail Industry, voluntary groups and local traders. Winning this award was a tribute to all who have helped get Hunmanby and other stations like Filey and Bempton the best train service in their history.

Northern Update

by Mark Parry

Tony Baxter, the North East Regional Director of Northern Trains, addressed sixty Railfuture members from the Lincolnshire, North East, North West and Yorkshire branches on 30 January 2021. He gave an update on Northern's progress during "Challenging Times". Tony previously worked in the Royal Mail and has Pete Myers as his deputy and Stakeholder Manager. Northern moved to being a DOHL (Department for Transport Operator of Last Resort) in March 2020 which involved changes to the senior management structure.

Key areas of concern for Northern have been:

- Staff shortages because of the Pandemic.
- A need to focus on the cleaning regime.
- The need for six timetable changes at short notice. This has involved planners working long shifts and cancelling their holidays.
- Re-instatement of crew training by managing safety restrictions.
- Train operating companies were asked to focus on the key changes during the Pandemic.
- A change in travel patterns which a big reduction in commuters and business trips, but increased coastal flows as people chose to spend their leisure time within the UK.
- The suspension of much community and commercial activity which especially affected Northern Trains.

Northern has lost much revenue although not as much as the train operating companies operating longer distance services. It is predicted that work journeys will be down by up to 31%. During the Pandemic performance has improved. Northern has provided schemes to help those women who are having to seek refuge from abusive relationships exacerbated by the lockdown. Work has been ongoing to improve accessibility at more stations including provision for mobility scooters. Meanwhile trains are still being refurbished and the last of the new trains will be arriving in the Spring.

For the future, the immediate priority is the recovery after the lockdown restrictions have been eased. More work is needed to improve performance. Northern hopes to contribute to the sustainable economic recovery of the North. The older fleet will need replacing in the near future and there is a need for training simulators.

The key future concerns are:

- Changing travel patterns.
- Covid 19 will have an ongoing impact on the business.
- There will be cost challenges.
- There will be a need to use the available technology.
- Northern will need Railfuture's help in rebuilding confidence to encourage passengers to return to the railway. Leisure travel is expected back first.

Castlefield Corridor

by Mark Parry

The Castlefield Corridor is the line from Deansgate to Piccadilly in Manchester, so it's not on our Yorkshire patch, but the problems this stretch of line has, impact on many services across the north of England. In central Manchester, the Windsor link was built and then the Ordsall curve, enhancing the connectivity options across the city. The original plan when the Ordsall curve was approved, was to four track the Castlefield corridor to enable it to cope with the additional rail traffic generated by using the Ordsall curve. But the cost of enhancing the Castlefield corridor is thought to be high and the Government has delayed a decision on this work. Network Rail tried to operate a large number of trains through the Castlefield Corridor, which led to delays and unreliable services across Northern England.

We now have the unacceptable situation of Network Rail consulting with users on how to reduce the number of trains through the Castlefield corridor, and in so doing, reducing the use of the long awaited Ordsall curve. This will trim the

number of services and limit connectivity. Railfuture Officers from both the Yorkshire and North West branches have been discussing the options for what we hope is a temporary arrangement. Network Rail came up with three options and we have gone for an amended version of option C.

Meanwhile, at our joint branch webinar on Saturday, 27 February, a suggestion to alleviate this difficulty, more cheaply, was made by Railfuture's Phil Smart, of the National Freight Group. He pointed out that there are many freight trains using the Castlefield corridor from the Trafford Park freight terminal, bound for ports such as Felixstowe. Andy Burnham, the Greater Manchester Mayor, has said that he wants freight off this corridor. Typically, a freight train path can take the place of three passenger train paths. Phil also pointed out that with more freight terminal space the amount of freight carried by rail is likely to increase, with much of it transferring from the road network.

Phil's suggestion is that another freight terminal is built at Carrington to complement Trafford Park. Carrington can be linked to the Hope Valley line using an old freight line and a former landfill site can be used to build a junction to link the line to the West Coast mainline. He has also mapped out a suitable route for a link from Carrington to Trafford Park which could also have new stations for passengers, at Partington and Timperley West. These new freight routes are a longer way round, but will be free of delays by passenger trains. Most importantly is the calculated cost benefit ratio of 4.35 – mainly because of the huge saving of not having to quadruple the Castlefield corridor.

Comments from a Vice President

by Mike Crowhurst

Climate and travel

Twice in the January Campaigner I noticed comments that prompted the question: In the light of the Climate Crisis, should we be promoting travel of any sort? The first was in Mark's report of the October Webinar (p5) which mentions the contribution from Jacqueline Starr, CEO of the Railway Development Group, who is quoted saying "rail needs to be more attractive to get people back from home working apparently. The second was in Nina's column (p10) when after noting that rail has lost passengers to home working (and to cars), she says "Winning these people back to rail must be a priority" for operators. Well, I ask: *Should we be targeting home working* to fill trains? I suggest not.

All privately owned transport undertakings promote business to fill available capacity, and generate more profit. That is part of the price of private ownership. The airlines take it to extremes with wheezes like Air Miles and Frequent Flyer deals (which should be in environmentalists' firing lines) with no thought for the consequential demand for airport expansion. Railways do it too - even notionally nationalised British Rail - remember the two-for-one deal with Persil? Of course, we should be campaigning for the *transfer* of passengers and freight to rail from road and air etc, but from home working? Not so sure!

The Commuting peak into cities, whether by road or rail, has always been the most costly - segment of demand to cater for. On bus and rail it defines the rolling stock requirement, much of which lies idle for the rest of the day, and in the case of rail ultimately it determines the need for infrastructure investment. Now (as Nina notes) not everybody is going to work from home, and many will split their working week between home and office days, or go part time. This could be in everyone's interest. if it leads to "flattening the peak" with a more even spread of demand through the day. We should be careful not to belittle this for the sake of an excessive zeal to promote rail travel for its own sake. That is not environmentally sustainable.

Climate and Covid

Nina goes on to make a different point, linking the climate crisis with the Covid crisis. She is right to do so - Greenpeace have made the same connection. Just as everyone {except the minority of flat earthers} now accepts that the increased frequency of extreme weather etc. in the last few decades is linked to global warming, so too it seems to me that the increased frequency of viruses in both humans (SARS MERS, Ebola) and animals (BSE, foot & mouth) in the same period has to be connected to the exponential growth in populations, travel etc. and that these things often seem to start in overcrowded, underprivileged communities in large emerging economies of China, India, and increasingly Africa and Latin America. Conditions in these places are conducive to diseases. which then spread like wildfire worldwide. Followers of the Gaia theory would say this is Planet Earth's way of telling us that we are overloading the planet. and should do less of everything, travel less and slower, consume less. and so on. They may not be so far from the truth!

Our case should be not just more travel *per se*, but that (electrified) rail is the least environmentally damaging mode for the local and middle distances it serves best, - always provided of course that it is powered with sustainably

generated electrical power (as Stephen Waring eloquently explains in the same issue.) We have to take the power generation issue on board. The pity is that Great Western electrification was not linked with a tidal barrage scheme on the Severn, to provide the power. There is a fine example at St. Malo in Brittany, France.

Knottingley

On a separate matter, I was puzzled by Peter Cookson's article on routes east of Pontefract. He tells us his group have concluded that the Askern line can be served only by Huddersfield trains, not Leeds ones, because of the layout at Knottingley. That is difficult to understand, given that both Leeds and Huddersfield services would approach Knottingley on the same tracks to/from Pontefract. The problem at Knottingley is of course that there are no platforms on the Doncaster lines, but this applies whichever service is extended to Doncaster. New platforms could presumably be built at Knottingley (as they would need to be at Askern and any other intermediate stations, but this involves removing or replacing some of the sidings and depot tracks currently occupying the space, - possibly expensive. Equally puzzling is his objection to the Huddersfield service continuing to York. Personally, I always thought a Sheffield – Barnsley - Castleford -York service this way, complementing, not competing with that via Pontefract (alternately), was the best idea, - but then I was living in Wakefield! Seriously, surely the main thing is to get the direct Castleford - York link back?

Mike kindly forwarded me an advance copy of his article, and we have since discussed it on the phone. I am afraid Mike has misinterpreted part of my views in the Chair's Column in YRC 51 about getting people back onto trains. For the record, whether home workers return to working in offices, full time or part time, is a matter between them and their employer. I do hope those who return to offices work will commute by train if they did so before, and it is also important that carrot and stick approaches are used to encourage those who commute by car to transfer to public transport if there is an available service. The planet needs this! NINA SMITH.

Round the Region

by Mark Parry

Electrification: The Halifax and District Group HADRAG wrote to Andrew Haines at Network Rail about the need for further electrification in December 2020. Stephen Waring suggested completing the Midland Mainline electrification to Sheffield at least, full electrification for the trans Pennine Line and also for the Calder Valley Line. In reply Andrew Haines offered to set up a meeting between Network Rail and HADRAG in 2021. HADRAG have also been working to set up a Calder Valley Community Rail Partnership by liaising with local authorities and other rail user groups in the area.

Delays to Investment in the North: David Hagerty of the Slaithwaite and Marsden Group SMART got a letter published in the Yorkshire Post on 17 January about delays to rail investments in the North. He highlighted the trans Pennine Line Upgrade decision being put back by 6 months to mid 2021.

Extra Service for the Settle to Carlisle Line: Consultants have been asking people to complete a survey on a new Manchester to Clitheroe service going onto to Hellifield and possibly as far as Garsdale every two hours. The Friends of the Settle to Carlisle Line were quoted as saying this prospect was exciting in Bradford's Telegraph and Argus on 23 February.

Congratulations to HPSRUA: the Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Group on reaching 40 years of campaigning for local rail services. Our Branch Chair Nina Smith said, *in the 1980s, your early efforts stopped the proposed withdrawal of train services between Huddersfield and Sheffield. You are an active rail user group which truly represents its members and holds the rail companies to account. You excel in communications, and your newsletter "Track Record" has twice won Railfuture's national award for the best newsletter produced by a local rail user group. Happy Birthday HPSRUA, and I wish you many more years of effective campaigning. The Penistone Line needs a half hourly service!*

Rail Fares Increase

National Railfuture Press Release

The usual annual punishment for rail passengers - rail campaigners condemn inflation-busting fare hikes

Monday March 1st saw fare rises of 2.6% kick in across England and Wales. "This is the usual annual punishment for rail passengers, just slightly delayed" said Bruce Williamson from the campaign group Railfuture. "In fact, it's worse than that as the government is screwing the public with an extra 1% over and above inflation. As part of the government's announcement of a gradual easing of lockdown, they should be encouraging the public to start using

trains again, but instead they're gradually pricing the railways out of existence. It just doesn't make sense to kick the rail industry when it's down".

"Even without the extra 1%, it would still be an inflation-busting increase, because the government continues to base fare rises on RPI, which is a higher measure of inflation than CPI, yet CPI is widely regarded as a more realistic figure".

"We really need to get the economy moving again and get people travelling back to work, but pricing passengers off the railways really isn't going to achieve this. Why are they charging us extra to do the right thing? There are many other jobs which are indirectly supported by rail users in city centres too. The potential knock-on effects are huge if we don't get this right".

"This latest price increase won't generate much cash for the government in itself, but it may have the effect of deterring passengers so much that it actually ends up costing the taxpayer more in the long term."

Chair's Column

by Nina Smith

The last three months have been a mixture of positive and negative. On the **positive** side, we have had the roll out of the vaccine. At the time of writing (27th February), some 20 million people in England have had at least their first jab, and that will include the great majority of members of the Yorkshire Branch of Railfuture. We are reasonably positive that we will be able to hold the September meeting in person in Sheffield, assuming no major setbacks such as a more deadly new variant that is immune to the current vaccines. Let's hope that doesn't happen!

A major **positive** development has come from the **West Yorkshire Combined Authority**. In late January, they published **their Connectivity Plan, together with the Rail Strategy and the West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision 2040**. When you get to my age, 2040 seems a long way off, but ambitious plans take time to implement. After all, it is 27 years since the Sheffield Supertram started, whilst Manchester Metrolink is 29 years old. That West Yorkshire has had to wait so long is a disgrace. Leeds is the largest city in Western Europe without a tram system or a metro. It is essential that work on the West Yorkshire system starts before the middle of this decade. In passing, let me say that Sheffield's system needs expanding too. The West Yorkshire proposals are out for consultation. The West Yorkshire system may not all be trams and tram-trains, as parts may be rapid bus transit, and ultra-light rail could be suitable for some areas. Railfuture Yorkshire has not yet responded to the consultation, but my initial view is to be strongly supportive of the vision whilst stressing that this must primarily be a steel rails system. Nine routes are proposed, including bringing rails back to **the Spen Valley**, but a major gap in the proposals is the exclusion of **Wetherby** – an affluent area that needs fast, efficient and comfortable rail based public transport into Leeds to get commuters and leisure travellers out of their cars.

Another piece of **good news** has been the awarding of funding from the Department for Transport's **Restoring Our Railways Fund** towards progressing a long needed new station at **Haxby**, in the York commuter zone on the Scarborough Line.

Staying **positive**, the Department for Transport has been consulting on a revised pattern of trains from May 2022 through **the Castlefield Corridor in Manchester**, so as to minimise the risk of delays. This follows on from the disastrous timetable changes of May 2018. Yorkshire Branch Committee members have been working with members from the North West and North Wales under the leadership of North West Branch Chair Trevor Bishop to agree a response to the consultation. A special mention here to Mark Ashmore of "SHRUG", Stephen Waring of "HADRAG" and Andrew Dyson of Hope Valley Rail User Group for their major contributions. An excellent example of Railfuture branch collaboration for the benefit of passengers!

Also, **potentially positive** has been the **Union Connectivity Review**. National headlines have been about impractical and unaffordable ideas for a bridge or tunnel between Scotland and Northern Ireland. Railfuture has made a submission to which Yorkshire Branch offered its views. The Yorkshire Rail Campaign has issued its priorities, focussing on the current lack of direct links between Yorkshire and both South and North Wales, and the opportunities for extending some Settle and Carlisle line services into Scotland, possibly taking the Dumfries/Kilmarnock/Barrhead route to Glasgow (the old Glasgow and South Western route)

Unfortunately, this has also been a period of **negative news**, and not just about the country needing a lockdown. Two developments in the Department of Transport are particularly worrying, and that concern is further backed up by our still awaiting details of when and **how the Trans Pennine route** through Huddersfield will be upgraded, and

when the railway between **Skipton and Colne** will finally be restored. The first **major area of concern** is the current lukewarm (at best) view towards electrification from the Secretary of State, who appears to be under the delusion that decarbonisation of the railways can be done with battery and hydrogen trains. That is la-la land! As several reports, most notably **Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Study (TDNS)**, have made clear, a massive programme of overhead wire electrification is the way forward. Stephen Waring wrote an excellent piece on this in YRC 51. In January, we had the welcome announcement of the go-ahead for a further section of the Oxford to Cambridge railway, but without electrification, at least initially. Quite extraordinary at a time when the sale of new petrol and diesel cars is to be banned after 2030.

The second major backward decision from the Department for Transport has been the cutting of £34million for Transport for the North's budget that was earmarked for the development of an "Oyster-style" smartcard for the North, forcing Transport for the North to close this programme. This was followed by Mr Shapps postponing the submission by Transport for the North to the Department for Transport of the proposals for Northern Powerhouse Rail, including a new line between Leeds, Bradford and Manchester.

So much for levelling up! So much for the Northern Powerhouse! Words fail me!

The **National Infrastructure Commission's Report on railway investment in the Midlands and the North** was published in December, and their report is badly flawed in that it is driven by financial considerations rather than need. Even a budget of base plus 50% (the maximum the National Infrastructure Commission considered) will not deliver the railway infrastructure improvements and developments that the north needs. If we are to tackle the climate emergency, if we are to move to level up the economy, if we are to undo decades of neglect of the north's railway system, then we need a much more ambitious plan than the National Infrastructure Commission is proposing!

The Yorkshire branch Committee has developed its own list of the railway **infrastructure** developments we feel that Yorkshire needs by 2040. A major challenge will be finding the funding at a time when the economy is reeling from the twin impacts of the Chancellor's vital support during the pandemic and, conversely, the self-afflicted damage of a hard Brexit outside even the Customs Union.

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION RAIL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR MIDLANDS AND THE NORTH

Version 6 - VIEW FROM RAILFUTURE YORKSHIRE BRANCH COMMITTEE

A OVERVIEW COMMENTS

- a. Base +50% inadequate for long terms needs – economic, social and environmental. Additional funding above this level essential.
- b. Do costings include HS2 London to Birmingham? They should not as HS2 Phase 1 primarily benefits London and the West Midlands, as well as freight (which should be considered nationally, not regionally).
- c. These recommendations are confined to heavy rail, and thus do not include the vital need for major investment in new and existing light rail/tram systems in Yorkshire (West Yorkshire; South Yorkshire; and consider Hull and Holderness).
- d. These recommendations do not include new stations.
- e. As this is about infrastructure, it excludes the need for new services to run over existing lines. There are several examples in, and serving, Yorkshire, and some of these may require small infrastructure expenditure such as improving stations (for example Castleford).

B. SPECIFIC INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT NEEDS FOR YORKSHIRE'S RAILWAYS.

UPGRADES – BY 2025

- Complete Trans Pennine Route Upgrade in full, with 4 tracking and grade separated junctions at key locations including as planned between Huddersfield & Dewsbury; passing loops on 2 track sections; and full electrification from Liverpool to Colton Junction on the East Coast Main Line, and from Micklefield Junction to Hull.
- Full electrification of the Midland Main Line to 125mph standard from St Pancras to South Kirkby Junction (for Leeds) and from Swinton Junction via Mexborough to Doncaster.
- Substantial upgrade of the Hope Valley route to increase line speed and provide additional capacity for passenger and freight trains, including four tracking from Sheffield to Dore junction, restoration of double track through the bottleneck from Dore Station Junction to Dore West Junction, provision of passing loops, major work to increase line speeds at Edgeley and Slade Lane Junctions at the Manchester end of the route, and electrification.

- Capacity enhancements at key hubs, specifically Doncaster (grade separation and additional platforms on the west side to enable enhanced regional service); York (additional platforms and third line from York to Skelton junctions to remove conflicts between the East Coast Main Line and the Harrogate line); Leeds; and Manchester.

UPGRADES BY 2030

- Implement the recommendations of the Northern Sparks Report (2015) to electrify railways in the north of England, starting with the Calder Valley routes and Leeds-Harrogate-York.

REOPENINGS/REINSTATEMENTS/RESTORING YOUR RAILWAY

- Reopen the railway from Skipton to Colne, with double tracking from Skipton to Gannow Junction (South West Burnley), and electrified throughout. (By 2025)
- Reopen the railway between Sheffield and Stocksbridge for passenger traffic, and extend to Penistone (expanding commuter town) which also restores the direct route between Huddersfield and Sheffield (By 2027)
- Re-open the railway from Beverley to York (By 2030)
- Restore the Crigglestone Curve to enable direct services between Sheffield, Barnsley, Halifax and east and central Lancashire (By 2030)
- Re-connect Ripon to the railway system as part of a reinstated through route for passenger and freight traffic between Yorkshire and the North East. (By 2035)

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE –BY 2035

- New Northern Powerhouse Rail Route Leeds-Bradford-Manchester, with new city centre station in Bradford integrated with Calder Valley and Airedale/Wharfedale routes (that is to join up the two railway lines into central Bradford with each other and Northern Powerhouse Rail); and a station in Calderdale.
- Complete HS2 Eastern section, rerouted to provide high speed Leeds to Sheffield service; and so routed as to facilitate a new high speed route between Sheffield and Manchester.

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE – BY 2040

- Construct a new high speed line linking Sheffield and Manchester

Diary Contact Mark Parry if you would like your meeting advertised here.

17 April 2021 14:00	Railfuture Yorkshire Branch Online Business Meeting.
17 May 2021 19:30	Action for Yorkshire Transport Rail Group online meeting – Contact Mark Parry for further details.

Railfuture subscriptions start from £14 a year. See: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join/> or contact our membership secretary Andrew Dyson: andrew.dyson@platform5.com. Please let him know if you join online.

Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 53**) will be out in June 2021. Please email photos, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry294@gmail.com to arrive by **Saturday 8 May 2021**. Alternatively, text or call 07941 642349. **Having your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email saves us time and money. Please contact Andrew Dyson to request this.**

New Editor Wanted

Mark Parry has edited this Yorkshire Rail Campaigner newsletter for coming up to 8 years and is resigning as he is busy elsewhere on transport issues. We are looking for someone to volunteer to take over this job. The distribution and printing are not part of this job. Word processing skills and confidence in computing would be beneficial. Support can be provided. If you are interested then please contact Mark by email: Mark.Parry294@gmail.com

Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

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

Branch Committee and the small print

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