

# Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

Number 53 – June 2021

## *Yorkshire* **railfuture**

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

### Bradford Station in Wrong Place

By Nina Smith



195009 1E68 15:17 Chester - Leeds @ Bradford Interchange on 23 Jan 2020 *Picture by Paul Colbeck.*

Bradford needs a new **city centre** station – not one on the other side of the busy inner ring road! Business people, commuters and leisure travellers arriving from Leeds and Manchester want easy city centre access.

Bradford Council's proposals for a new Northern Powerhouse Rail station on the site of the wholesale fruit and vegetable market will compound the folly of the city already having two unconnected railway stations half a mile apart. People come to Bradford to work, shop and be entertained.

They visit the Alhambra, St Georges Hall and the National Science and Media Museum. They will come for music events at the restored former Odeon/New Victoria Cinema when it reopens. They shop in the Broadway centre, visit city centre banks, and work in the Town Hall and city centre offices. They catch buses to the hospital and the suburbs. Both Interchange and Forster Square stations are convenient for this. The proposed Central Station is not. Who, and especially women, will want to walk up Bridge Street and across the A647/A650 Ring Road after dark?

The proposals include linking the Calder Valley line with the Northern Powerhouse line (NPR) near the proposed new station - an excellent proposal as the proposed seven minute Bradford - Leeds journey time on the new NPR line will also mean Halifax to Leeds in 20 minutes, and Hebden Bridge to Leeds in under 35 minutes, providing much faster train journeys for Calderdale residents. But those residents need to be able to access Bradford city centre as easily as now.

**A date to note: Yorkshire Branch Meeting 25 September 2021**

**Either 14:00 online or 13:00 in Sheffield**

Presumably, the interchange would remain as a terminus station for stopping services from the Calder Valley lines and Huddersfield. That would mean a reduced service to Bradford.

What Bradford needs is a new combined station underneath the city centre, to aid public transport connectivity across West Yorkshire. The existing Calder Valley and Airedale/Wharfedale routes need to be joined together underneath Bradford city centre, connecting there with the new NPR line. In that way, not only will NPR serve central Bradford, and speed Calder Valley travellers to Leeds, it would also enable people from Keighley and Ilkley to have both a direct fast NPR service to Manchester, Manchester International Airport and Liverpool. It will allow direct trains between Baildon and Halifax, Menston and Huddersfield, Todmorden and Saltaire. This will give West Yorkshire people the direct public transport currently lacking, replacing many car journeys, and contributing to lowering carbon emissions, reducing congestion and speeding up journeys.

Why is Bradford Council, a passionate advocate of NPR, proposing this remote site? I can only think it is because the council owns it, thus reducing costs to please HM Treasury. But if this country is to spend over £30 billion on a very important new NPR railway line, then it needs to spend the extra billion or two that would truly transform West Yorkshire's transport network for the next 100 years, giving people first class public transport in the zero carbon future, and really giving Bradford the economic boost that it needs.

## Accessible Stations Project

by Graham Collett

Yorkshire, North-West, North-East and Lincolnshire Branches are working with colleagues in Northern on this major project, involving a detailed accessibility audit of 160 of their stations.

I wrote to Rail User Groups in February to inform them about the project and it was also featured in the April issue of Railwatch. As I explained in that article, a pilot of six stations was undertaken as a first step - including Meadowhall and Morley in the Yorkshire Branch area. Northern asked for our help in reviewing the assessments and we (and the other Branches) have fed comments back to them. They would also like our input to the remaining 154 assessments.

Northern's assessments have continued, but they have not yet reached the stage where they can share any of them with us. As soon as they are able to, we will be seeking local feedback from all members, as well as Rail User Groups, on any specific issues you feel may have not been covered by the assessment. In particular, there is an interest in less obvious issues, (for example, how far is the nearest bus stop, is the route to that covered?)

The next project meeting is scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> May and we hope to receive the first batch of assessments around that date. I will be writing to all members as soon as we receive these, and will enclose a copy of the Roll-out Programme (in spreadsheet form) showing the dates for further assessments. We will be very grateful for any help in providing comments and suggestions about the accessibility arrangements at as many of the stations on the list which you feel able to. To this end, a feedback form (which is currently being finalised) will be attached.

The project is now being used as a template by the Department for Transport (Dft) for future assessments, so there will also be scope to suggest accessibility improvements for stations not managed by Northern. The form can also be used for these. We will collate the information for future use in contacts with Northern, Dft and the Office for Road and Rail. We think there is a window of opportunity here to promote accessibility at all stations. For information, the Dft's design standard for accessible stations is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accessible-railway-stations-design-standards>

My thanks to colleagues in North-West, North-East and Lincolnshire Branches for their support with this important project.

*The following appeared in Yorkshire Post Letters on the 30 March.*

The recent chequered history of the Penistone Line reveals a rough ride over the past four decades as a result of earlier decisions and the twin 1980s closure proposals. The survival of the Huddersfield-Penistone section confirms such. January 5, 1970, saw the closure of Sheffield Victoria and the loss of the Sheffield-Manchester electrified link. The 'streamlined', to quote British Rail (BR), Huddersfield-Penistone-Sheffield service began in January 1970.

In September 1980, BR issued the Sheffield (Nunnery Junction) – Denby Dale Closure Notice. On September 8, 1983, BR issued the Huddersfield (Springwood Junction)-Denby Dale Closure Notice. Yorkshire "TUCC" (*Editor - A body looking after passenger interests*) Chairman James Towler came to the rescue in 1984 by securing a 'priceless' year through his determination for parity from BR on closure notice reissuing to match that of Settle-Carlisle and Goole-Gilberdyke. He knew that the best hope for survival would be in a post Metropolitan County Council era.

On January 22, 1987, The Yorkshire Post revealed that the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority would be recommended to resume support for our line from the October timetable and full support for an hourly timetable would commence in May 1988. By the end of the 1980s, our line hobbled from survival to stagnation. Retention had yielded 15 years of drift and this prompted the launch of our Eight Point Plan for the Penistone Line on January 18, 2002. The key to line development was infrastructure after the rationalisation measures. Reversing route rationalisation was vital.

A railway pared back to the bone was incompatible with housing expansion in the communities along it.

How relevant are Transport for the North, Northern Powerhouse Rail, build back better and levelling-up agendas to the Penistone Line? Will any of them help to transform our line so that it can realise its full potential? What can be expected from the Sheffield City Region and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority? Penistone is an expanding town that is set for further growth, so why is rail excluded from the expansion process? Who will deliver a Penistone Line fit for the 21st century?

As we mark our 40th anniversary we welcome new members. Membership costs just £2 and cheques should be made payable to "HPSRUA". Contact The Membership Secretary, HPSRUA, 8A Ridings Fields, Brockholmes, Holmfirth HD9 7BG.

**Feedback on Previous Articles****by Peter Cookson**

I was very surprised that Mike Crowhurst was puzzled by my recent contribution to YRC 51; I had hoped that it was clear, but it occurs to me that if he misunderstood, it's possible that others may also have misunderstood. May I try to clear this up?

1. Everyone knows that there are no platforms on the Doncaster line at Knottingley, so it follows that the extension of an existing Leeds - Knottingley service would deprive the town of one of its services by diverting it to the Doncaster line, thus bypassing the station. This is unacceptable - so an existing Leeds service can't be used.
2. It follows that the Doncaster connection can only be achieved by means of a new service or the extension of an existing service that doesn't stop at Knottingley, so that it is not deprived, although it would not stand to gain.
3. It is much more economical to use an existing service, if one is available. The Huddersfield -

Castleford service is the obvious candidate for this, since it is intrinsically unsatisfactory in that it connects with nothing at the Castleford end and no services should terminate here. This service is a wasted opportunity when a simple extension to Doncaster could achieve so many objectives. It would link a good swath of Central West Yorkshire with the East Coast Main Line and it would double the service through the central part of the Five Towns which contains the major visitor destination of Glasshoughton in addition to the main towns of Castleford and Pontefract. In short, it would be a counterpart to the Huddersfield - Sheffield service.

4. We are not against a service to York via Castleford per se but we feel that one could not be justified in the near future. We are told that paths into York from the South are scarce and, that being the case, the Sheffield - York service, which is very poor should have the prior claim on these. In any case, the main towns of Huddersfield and Wakefield already have direct services to York via Leeds. In our view, it makes much more sense to link Huddersfield with Doncaster rather than with York via Castleford.

I hope this makes our position a little more clear.

## David Walsh Rest In Peace

by Mark Parry



Our Chair Nina Smith said: I was so sorry to learn of the death of David. So very sad, and such a loss for his wife and the rest of his family. My heart goes out to them.

I knew David through his work for "SELRAP". He and I would often meet at conferences and seminars, where we would strongly advocate for a bigger and better railway. David was a powerful and passionate advocate for the reopening of the railway between Colne and Skipton. He made the case with calmness, evidence and conviction. He ensured that policy makers and influencers were aware of how important that rail link is.

David was a regular at Railfuture Yorkshire Branch meetings. Not only would he report on how SELRAP's campaign was going, he would also make thoughtful and well argued contributions to discussions about our priorities and methods. Meetings will feel different and slightly emptier without him.

*Following David's death we received the following news also affecting the SELRAP group.*

The Committee Members of the rail campaign group SELRAP were saddened to hear of the death of Lord Tony Greaves. Tony was a tireless supporter of the campaign and would ask questions in the House of Lords about SELRAP to raise awareness of its social and economic benefits. He was very aware of all the support we had not just from politicians but the rail industry and business too. Tony would also contact the media on our behalf to challenge why the project was taking so long to be progressed when Andrew Stephenson MP himself described it as 'a no brainer'. It is to be hoped that there will an announcement soon to say the line should go to the 'develop' stage and the project be given the 'green light'!

**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](mailto:andrew.dyson@platform5.com). Please let him know if you join online.**

*The following appeared in the Friends of Hunmanby Railway Station newsletter May 2021.*

Trans Pennine Express offer grants to communities within 8 miles of the stations they serve. Trans Pennine Express run trains across the Pennines to Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool from Scarborough and Seamer. The Friends group applied for a £600 grant for a healthy walking map for the village. Trans Pennine Express were so impressed with the bid that Hunmanby has been awarded £600 for the map and a further £900 for station flowers and plants. This generous offer will last many years, it costs around £120 each year to plant up the hanging baskets with annual flowers, purchase some bulbs and a few bedding plants to add a bit of 'wow factor' to the flower displays. Further information:

[Funding for a healthy walking map for Hunmanby Village - Friends of Hunmanby Railway Station \(e-voice.org.uk\)](https://www.e-voice.org.uk)

**Zooming in on Meetings****David Pennie**

When the pandemic began well over a year ago, and meetings involving face-to-face attendance became impossible, many people must have wondered whether meetings would be able to happen at all. But the pleasures of taking the train to another part of Yorkshire for a Railfuture Branch or Committee meeting were soon to be replaced by sitting at one's computer screen taking part in the meeting online by means of the video conferencing software Zoom. Railfuture has also held "webinars" – online events with a speaker and the possibility of questions or discussion. Branch events held online have usually had a good number of participants.

But how has the Zoom or webinar experience been for you? If you have "attended" Railfuture Yorkshire events in this way, what were the good points and the bad points? Or did you simply hate them? Do you prefer being able to take part without having to travel to the venue? Or do you miss the informal conversations with others that can happen during the tea-break in a face-to-face meeting? What about members who don't have online access?

The Branch Committee is evaluating how this past year of Zoom has been for members, and whether some meetings or other events should continue to be held online even after meeting face to face becomes possible again. Your thoughts and suggestions on all this will be greatly appreciated. Please send them to me by email: [davidpennierail21@gmail.com](mailto:davidpennierail21@gmail.com)

**Chair's Column****by Nina Smith**

**WEST YORKSHIRE METRO MAYOR:** The big news this quarter is that West Yorkshire now has a Metro Mayor. Despite the role having inadequate powers and funding devolved from central government, certainly as far as rail is concerned, we do hope that Mayor Tracy Brabin will be able to make real difference to public transport in West Yorkshire. She made it very clear in her election campaign that one of her two top priorities as Mayor was to fix public transport and connectivity, by bringing **buses** back under public control through a franchising system. Franchising will allow the Mayor to cross subsidise, saving smaller and less profitable bus routes and, hopefully, restoring abandoned routes and timetable cuts. Like trains, buses have an important role to play in achieving the modal shift out of private cars that is essential to reduce carbon emissions, reduce congestion, reduce social isolation and get people smoothly and efficiently to work and leisure destinations. Railfuture will stress to her the **importance of connectivity between bus and train services**, which she will have some control over, and connectivity between different train routes, where she will have influence rather than control. Mayor Brabin wants cheaper fares and contactless ticketing and whilst this may initially only be for buses, it is vital that it is extended to trains as well. **We need a West Yorkshire "Oyster" as a forerunner to a Yorkshire one, and then a pan-Northern one.**

Another priority for the Mayor as far as Railfuture is concerned will be for her to work with the neighbouring Metro Mayors and Transport Authorities to end the price barriers to cross border travel colloquially known

as the “**tunnel tax**”, although expensive fares apply even where there is no tunnel, resulting in fares that cause people to drive across the border or indeed for the whole journey. Tracy Brabin said little during her election campaign about trains or trams. It will be vital for her as Mayor to ensure that the Combined Authority proceeds with plans for **West Yorkshire Rapid Transit** at the fastest possible pace. For far too long, Leeds has been the largest city in Western Europe without a tram system; construction needs to start by 2025. Railfuture Yorkshire responded to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Connectivity consultation broadly welcoming the proposals, but asking for the system to be extended to serve Wetherby; for a circular service to be introduced between Horbury and Ossett; and for a tram train to run from Bradford via Otley to Leeds and Harrogate via the Harrogate Railway Line. The Yorkshire Party candidate, Bob Buxton, emphasised the need for a West Yorkshire tram system in his election campaign, and he came third with almost 10% of the vote. He attributed this to the popularity of his emphasis on a tram system.

As far as **trains** are concerned, the Mayor’s role will particularly be about advocacy, and also providing funding to enable important gaps in service provision to be rectified. As Railfuture’s thinking is very similar to that of WYCA’s excellent rail team, we are confident that she will be receiving plenty of good policy advice! Railfuture sent all Mayoral candidates a twelve question questionnaire about train services and railway infrastructure development; only the Green Party’s Andrew Cooper responded. We have therefore re-sent it to the Mayor, and we look forward to her response.

**YAW DAMPERS AND ALL THAT:** At the time of writing (mid May), train services in and serving Yorkshire have been hit by a lack of rolling stock caused by hairline cracks on yaw dampers, which I understand are rather like the shock absorbers on a car. Some 30 Northern units, Class 195 diesel and class 331 electrics have been temporarily removed from service in late April, and the remaining units are subject to daily safety checks. The manufacturer “CAF” and Northern have developed a short term fix, whilst a longer term solution is being worked on. The reduced pandemic timetable has enabled this to have had only a modest impact so far. Then, in early May, a similar fault was discovered on the Hitachi units used by operators GWR, LNER, TPE and Hull Trains. The latter two have been able to return their stock into service speedily. A number of LNER Azumas are temporarily withdrawn, with the rest subject to daily checks. LNER has been able to return two Class 225 sets to service, but at the time of writing, it is short of serviceable stock, resulting in reduced timetables. GWR is affected far worse.

**STRATEGIC RESERVE: This country needs a strategic reserve of serviceable trains.** Whilst it is to be welcomed that the Train Operating Companies have introduced new trains, it is well known that new designs sometimes have design or build problems that only become apparent during the rigours of squadron service. The trains the Hitachi units replaced were, generally speaking, still serviceable, yet many have taken their last journey to the scrapyards. With hindsight, and frankly there should have been foresight, a good number of the withdrawn class 91 locos, Mark 4 carriages and Class 43 High Speed Trains, should have been put into warm storage as a **strategic reserve**, able to be returned quickly to service if needed. **Staff competencies** would be retained via simulators refresher/ training runs.

**BACK TO NORMAL? NOT YET:** I am writing this just before the easing of some lockdown restrictions on 17<sup>th</sup> May. Demand for travel will increase as people will be able to go away and stay with friends or relatives. Hotels and “B&Bs” will reopen, as will a range of visitor attractions. So, we can expect an increase of leisure journeys by train, although social distancing restrictions and mask wearing will suppress demand. Currently, ridership levels are well below pre Covid levels. Leisure travel rates depend on the weather. There are signs of an increase in commuting. The ending of all restrictions on June 22<sup>nd</sup> is now in some doubt due to concerns that the India variant is spreading rapidly. This will clearly have an impact on the confidence of some people who were preparing to return to public transport use, and will also delay the reopening of offices.

## **TOURISM**

One of many Webinars I have attended over recent months was on tourism in Yorkshire. To state the obvious, pre-pandemic, many people were using their cars for leisure journeys because public transport

was either not available or too expensive – especially for families. **Post-COVID, there must be a much greater effort to get leisure travellers to use public transport.** This requires, *inter alia*, combined train and bus fares, combined public transport and attraction tickets, city one to seven day public transport and attraction passes, new bus routes to connect attractions with railway stations, and, a familiar hobby horse of mine, **Train Operator's to operate (or rather, contract) bus services as the last part of a train journey, as part of the train timetables**, and with guaranteed connections both ways. In Yorkshire, examples would include Malton-Pickering-Whitby; Hull-Withernsea; Beverley-Hornsea; and Wakefield and/or Barnsley to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Outside our region, obvious candidates include Penrith-Keswick-Cockermouth-Workington; Matlock-Bakewell-Buxton; and Stoke-on-Trent to Alton Towers. Some of these are candidates for future railway re-openings, but in the meantime, let's have integrated multi-modal journeys.

**VERY LIGHT RAIL (VLR):** This refers to railway or tram systems using lighter vehicles, which in turn reduces the capital and maintenance cost of the permanent way. Prototype VLR vehicles are being developed for both urban tramways (Coventry) and rural branch lines. The VLR trams could enable tram systems to be developed in areas that could not justify a normal system. Hull and Holderness, and York, could be candidates in our region. The Rural VLR concept could bring down the cost of operating some rural routes, hopefully resulting in more re-openings.

**DAVID WALSH:** An obituary of David appears elsewhere in this issue, but I will end my column by paying tribute to David, who has been taken from us far too soon. David was the roving ambassador for “SELRAP” (the campaign to reopen the railway between Skipton and Colne and upgrade the Colne branch to join the main line in west Burnley). David was a familiar face at our Yorkshire Branch meetings, and will be remembered for talking sound common sense with a passionate underpinning. I often came across David at external events, where he would seize every opportunity to make the case for the overdue reopening. We will miss him, and my heart goes out to his nearest and dearest. RIP David.

**Diary** email [Mark.Parry294@gmail.com](mailto:Mark.Parry294@gmail.com) if you would like your meeting advertised here.

17 July 2021	Railfuture Annual General Meeting, Priory Rooms, Birmingham to be confirmed.
19 July 2021 19:30	Action for Yorkshire Transport Rail Group online meeting – email <a href="mailto:ActionforYorkshireTransport@gmail.com">ActionforYorkshireTransport@gmail.com</a> for further details.
25 September 2021	Railfuture Yorkshire Branch meeting either online from 14:00 or in Sheffield from 13:00.

Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 54**) will be out in September 2021. Please email photos, news and feedback to: [Mark.Parry294@gmail.com](mailto:Mark.Parry294@gmail.com) to arrive by **Saturday 7 August 2021**. **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](mailto:Mark.Parry294@gmail.com)

## 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>
Askern Station, Friends of	Contact Graham Moss on <a href="mailto:graz.moss@sky.com">graz.moss@sky.com</a> or 07510 555722
Bradford Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.bradfordrail.com">www.bradfordrail.com</a>
Esk Valley Railway	<a href="http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdc.html">http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdc.html</a>
Halifax and District Rail Action Group	<a href="http://www.hadrag.com">www.hadrag.com</a>
Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group	Care of <a href="mailto:billymms@btinternet.com">billymms@btinternet.com</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	<a href="mailto:davidpennierail21@gmail.com">davidpennierail21@gmail.com</a>
Hunmanby Railway Station, Friends of	<a href="https://e-voice.org.uk/friendsofhunmanbyrailwaystation/">https://e-voice.org.uk/friendsofhunmanbyrailwaystation/</a>
Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group	
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:markashmore@yahoo.com">markashmore@yahoo.com</a>
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: <a href="mailto:Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk">Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk</a>
Upper Wensleydale Railway	<a href="https://upperwensleydalerrailway.org.uk/">https://upperwensleydalerrailway.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>

## Branch Committee and the small print

<b>Chair:</b> Nina Smith, 07984 670331 <a href="mailto:Nina.Smith@Railfuture.org.uk">Nina.Smith@Railfuture.org.uk</a>
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