

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 19 January 2013

railfuture *Yorkshire*

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

Prospects Improve for Hull Electrification

by Graham Collett & Tony Ross

Pressure from businesses and MPs, combined with a possible offer of private sector funding, may provide the opportunity for electric trains to finally reach Hull.

Funding to electrify the North Trans Pennine route (Leeds to York) was announced in November 2011 (see also report on page 6). This complemented the already approved Liverpool to Manchester scheme (due for completion December 2014), allowing through electric TPE services from Newcastle and York to Liverpool via Manchester, once the former scheme is complete.



These Class 180 diesel units operated by Hull Trains could be replaced by new electric units if the electrification masts are extended east from Selby. (photo: Paul Colbeck)

But what of the current TPE services from Hull, Middlesbrough and Scarborough to Manchester and beyond?

It clearly makes sense to electrify as much as possible, to minimise the need for diesel units working "under the wires" and to avoid passengers having to change trains. Network Rail has recently completed a report to the Department for Transport (Dft) on the costs of electrification to Middlesbrough, Hull and Scarborough. We appreciate that the costs vs. benefits for Scarborough will not be as strong as for the other two routes. Hull does seem to have a very good case, especially since extension of electrification from Micklefield Junction (east of Leeds) to Selby has since been announced (July 2012) and it would make sense to continue the wires to Hull as part of that work.

Pressure is building for the electrification.

Humber LEP and Hull Chamber of Commerce have already criticised the decision not to include Hull in the Selby scheme (see YRC 18), vowing to work with MPs to force the Government to change its mind. Richard Kendall of Humber LEP said: "Fast, frequent and reliable rail services are important for economic growth, so it is disappointing that, under these proposals, electrification would stop 30 miles short of Hull. We are looking forward to seeing Network Rail's business case that justifies this decision and will work with our MPs to lobby Government to include Hull in its proposals." The Hull Daily Mail <http://www.thisishullandestrading.co.uk> has pointed out that, under the new proposals, Hull will now be the largest city in the UK without electrified railways!

Private Investment Proposal

A recent development has been a proposal by First Hull Trains to spearhead a possible investment of up to £100m - if suitable investors can be found - to electrify between Hull and Temple Hirst Junction, on the East Coast Main Line, 5 miles to the south of Selby. This would enable electric units to be used by Hull Trains on their London services, rather than the current arrangement of running diesels under the wires and would link with the Micklefield to Selby scheme. Reg French, Secretary of Selby & District Rail Users Group, has commented "I would be surprised if First Group at the present time would be prepared to advance considerable funds in view of some of the problems they face. However if it does get off the ground it would be great news."

Stop Press

A campaign to re-open the Malton to Pickering line has been started by Councillor Philip Trumper of Whitby Town Council who has set up an online petition <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/40539>. More details on the **York Press** website at http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/10102415.Petition_calls_for_Ryedale_rail_link_to_reopen/ (see also **Whitby to get an Extra Platform** on page 7)

Franchising Update

by Graham Collett and Mark Parry

Following the West Coast Main Line franchising debacle, all future franchising timetables have been torn up while the Department for Transport picks up the pieces. We have just seen the final Laidlaw enquiry report published (6 December) but still await the conclusions of Richard Brown's review of the future of the rail franchising programme, due by the end of December. So the East Coast Main Line (due to start December 2013) and Northern/TransPennine (April 2014) new franchises both look like slipping by at least a year, assuming that franchising is not radically altered or even replaced by a new system.

Railfuture Branch Chairman, Chris Hyomes said "The extra time this gives us is a golden opportunity for Railfuture and Rail Users Groups to influence the service specification, station improvements and choice of operator for these new franchises. Harrogate Line users and SADRUG have already shown excellent examples of RUGs taking the initiative on this." (see pages 4 and 7). The specification for the new franchises could include priced options for additional services and for the re-opening of stations or lines, as was done with the specification for the new Great Western franchise <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-great-western-franchise-to-deliver-new-express-trains>

A proposal to devolve the specification of rail services, their funding and management to local authorities (rather than from London) now offers a much greater prospect of a service which meets users' needs. It seems that everyone - the Department for Transport, local authorities and passengers - is in favour of this proposal, according to *Rail* magazine.

Devolution is of course already in operation in different ways in Scotland, Wales, Merseyside and London. West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and the City of York are included in RiNE - Rail in the North Executive - which could run a new franchise for 7 years with an optional extension for a further 3 years according to the *Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield Rail Users' Association*. However, the association is concerned that the remaining Northern franchise could become fragmented.

North of England Long Term Rail Strategy

by Mark Parry

Steer Davies Gleave, the international and independent transport consultancy; have been appointed to develop this strategy by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Integrated Authorities for South and West Yorkshire. According to their press statement, SDG will consult with local transport authorities and local enterprise partnerships across the whole of the North, to develop a strategy.

They have four objectives for this work:

- Supporting economic growth by delivering more capacity and better connectivity.
- Improving the quality of the railways in the North, encouraging greater passenger use and reducing carbon emissions.
- Making the railways more accountable to local people of the North.
- Delivering a more efficient railway, securing revenue growth and re-investing cost savings to improve rail services.

The views of representatives from across the North are now being sought as the Strategy is developed over the next four months. We trust Railfuture will be involved in this process.

Jim Steer, SDG Director, said: "This is a tremendous opportunity for the North. Recent decisions on electrification and the Northern Hub represent exciting opportunities, but also pose some as yet unanswered questions. The exercise will look forward as far as the 2030s to establish a consensus based vision for rail in the North."

Grand Central Tries Again

by Mark Parry

Grand Central has re-applied to operate a fourth daily return service to London, leaving Mirfield at 07:53 and calling at Brighouse, Halifax, Bradford Interchange and Doncaster, arriving King's Cross at 11:18, according to *Rail* magazine. This would involve running through Leeds without stopping and would be their fastest service. The return service is proposed to leave at 16:08 and would terminate at Wakefield Kirkgate at 19:55. The Access Disputes Resolution Committee has agreed in Grand Central's favour but Network Rail can appeal this decision.

[A fifth daily return service (not Sundays) to London now operates on Grand Central's NE route via York – Ed]

New Assistant Editor

A very warm welcome to our new Assistant Editor, Mark Parry, who has joined the YRC Production Team. If you feel that you could offer any help with editing or design/layout of the newsletter, please get in touch.

Chairman: Chris Hyomes 12 Monument Lane Pontefract WF8 2BE chris.hyomes@railfuture.org.uk	Vice-Chair: Nina Smith 14 Bank Terrace Hebden Bridge HX7 6BU nhrasons@gmail.com	Treasurer: Andrew Oldfield 14 Long Lane Worrall Sheffield S35 0AF
Press & Parliamentary Liaison: Peter Yates 26 All Saints View Woodlesford Leeds LS26 8NG scribe1@graduate.org	Newsletter Editor: Graham Collett graham.collett@railfuture.org.uk	Membership & Distribution: Paul Colbeck 14 St Giles Way Copmanthorpe York YO23 3XT ycr_membership@paulcolbeck.co.uk
Secretary: Peter Scott 7 Anderson Grove York YO24 4DX peter@scott3274.fsworld.co.uk	Assistant Editor: Mark Parry Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com	Branch Facebook Page: http://www.facebook.com/RailfutureYorkshire (available to all)

Railfuture is independent and voluntary. It is the campaigning name of the Railway Development Society Limited, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No 5011634. Registered Office: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingsstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND.

Chairman's Column by Chris Hyomes

50 Years of Railway Development

Shortly March 27th 2013, sees the 50th anniversary, of the publication of the report, *The Reshaping of British Railways*.

The report starts by quoting the brief provided by the Prime Minister from 1960, "First, the industry must be of a size and pattern suited to modern conditions and prospects. In particular, the railway system must be modelled to meet current needs". The proposals were accepted by the Government and sparked a prompt outcry from communities that would lose their rail services, many of which (especially in the case of rural communities) had no other public transport. The government argued that many services could be provided more cheaply by buses.

Annual railway line closures, which had been running at about 150-300 mile per year between 1950 and 1961 peaked at 1,000 miles in 1964 and had come to a virtual halt by 1970.

One of the last major railway closures was of the 98-mile long Waverley Route main line between Carlisle, Hawick and Edinburgh in 1969; the re-opening of a 35-mile section of this line has been approved by the Scottish Parliament.

While many people still view the Reshaping of British Railways report as the death knell of our railway system, had it not happened then far worse would have happened later. The Treasury at the time recommended closing 75% (13500 miles) whereas we actually lost approximately one third (6000 miles)

After the closures of the 60's, the dark days of the 70's (where the BR board went cap in hand to the Government annually to beg for money) the tide finally started to turn in the 80's.

2013 gives Railfuture the opportunity to celebrate the success of our rail network over the last 50 years and in particular the last 30 years. The reopening and success of many local stations, the electrification of the ECML and forth coming electrification of the MML, the success of the Kettering Corby reopening. The phenomenal success of the Ebbw Vale line reopening, it's not just the successful re-openings we will be celebrating, but how now railways are being brought back in to connect with other modes of transport Manchester airport Link, Heathrow express, and cycle hubs such as the recently opened one at Leeds and not forgetting the Battle to save the Settle – Carlisle line the original closure notices were issued in 1983.

As our name suggests, we will be looking to the future and how we can help reshape our rail network over the next 50 years, key areas being simpler fares, sufficient capacity, efficient customer service, Modal integration, network connectivity, better and faster schedules, investment to reduce costs, level playing field and fewer interfaces and improved team work, further ideas are more than welcome.

Plans to mark 50 years of pro rail development are beginning to take shape. Our AGM will be held in Skipton on March 23rd. Skipton was chosen for a number of reasons. It has the most modern rolling stock, the most go-ahead reopening campaign (Skipton – Colne) and may soon have a direct rail link to one of Yorkshire's most popular tourist destinations - Bolton Abbey. We are also putting together an exhibition of the developments that have taken place in Yorkshire over the last 50 years.

Opportunities to promote rail development like this do not come along very often, and I would urge, branches, and the general membership to exploit this to its full potential.

Railfuture Yorkshire Winter Meeting

Saturday 19th January

in the Mountbatten Suite at the Cairn Hotel Ripon Road Harrogate HG1 2JD starting at 2pm (tea/coffee served on arrival – donations invited)

<http://www.strathmorehotels.com/Cairn+Hotel/Home/> -for a map see <http://goo.gl/maps/SFYEM>

Guest Speakers:

Brian Dunsby, Chief Executive, Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce

Graham North, Policy Support Officer (Rail) North Yorkshire County Council

This special meeting (arranged in association with the Chamber of Trade & Commerce) will focus on the proposed electrification of the Harrogate line, with the aim of improving the quantity, quality and reliability of rail services and incorporating some new parkway stations (for news on the Harrogate line see below)

Directions from Harrogate Station (approx. 12 minutes walk):

Head north on Station Parade/A61 toward James St; turn left onto James St; turn left onto Cambridge Rd; turn right onto W Park St/A61; continue to follow A61 until reaching the hotel on the left.

Everyone welcome

Harrogate Line News

By Graham Collett



Knaresborough Station, on the Harrogate to York line. The semaphore signalling and single line sections restrict the service offered. (photo courtesy John Fielding via Creative Commons licence)

The Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce has produced an excellent paper on Harrogate to London East Coast services which justifies the need for extra through trains and calls for the speeding up of existing services. The paper also explains why Harrogate cannot be served via York.

The Chamber has produced a further document setting out their objectives for the Harrogate line, including a specification for the line and its trains. In it, they explain that electrification - ideally as an add-on to the Trans-Pennine scheme - is needed to achieve improved point-to-point times, reduce operating costs and meet value for money objectives. They see it as a prerequisite for additional stations and any possible future route extensions.

They also call for the restoration of the double-track section between Knaresborough and Cattal to improve reliability and to enable proposed new stations to be provided at Manse Farm and/or Flaxby Moor.

The need to electrify the Harrogate line between Leeds, Harrogate and York has now been fully endorsed by all of the Local Authorities concerned, following extensive research and lobbying by Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce, supported by Harrogate Borough Council and local MP Andrew Jones.

For more information see <http://www.harrogatechamber.org/harrogateline.htm>

Rail User Express

The December edition of this very useful Railfuture RUGs newsletter is now available from Tony Smale, Rail User Group Liaison Officer ruglink@railfuture.org.uk or you can download copies from the Railfuture website at:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=RUX>

Beeching Report 50th Anniversary – March 2013

To mark this event we are planning to produce a special supplement to the next issue. Were you involved in saving a line or service that was threatened by Beeching's proposals? Was your User Group formed as a direct result of the Beeching threat? If so, we would like to know about it! Send your (or your RUG's story) to the Editor at the address below (with photos if possible) as soon as you can to ensure inclusion in the supplement. Please don't wait for the copy deadline!

Press Date for March 2013 issue

Please email (preferred) or post material, news, feedback etc to:

Graham Collett (YRC 20), graham.collett@railfuture.org.uk to arrive by Saturday 9th February 2013.

Buses are Public Transport Tooby **Nina Smith****Railfuture is by definition a campaigning organisation for improving and expanding train**

services and the rail network. That is its strength. However, we should not neglect the importance of buses, mainly because they go where the railway doesn't. From Railfuture's perspective, better rail-bus integration is vital both for increasing rail ridership and because buses have a role to play in achieving modal shift from the private car. I'd like to make two suggestions:

- Train Operating Companies should run or commission bus services. These would run from particular stations to towns without a station – usually those that have lost their railway, and also to towns with a railway, but without a rail connection to important routes. These services would be in railway timetables, be covered by a through railway ticket, and seat could be reserved. Non rail users could also use them if there was no other bus service on the route. In our region, towns such as Wetherby (from Cross Gates), Market Weighton (from Beverley or York), Ripon (from Harrogate or Northallerton), and Otley (from Menston or Horsforth) are just some of the possibilities. Many of these destinations are ones which should eventually be rail connected again.
- Local bus services which terminate at railway stations should be timetabled wherever possible to connect with train services, and should be held if trains are running a few minutes late, at least in the evening peak and late evening. Early morning buses would be timed to enable passengers to catch their trains to work. Buses outside the rail peaks would not be held as this would inconvenience passengers using the buses for other destinations such as shopping areas, where these are the main passenger market at such times. A good example where this would be desirable is the local Hebden Bridger services in the Hebden Bridge area.

Nina Smith is Vice Chair of Railfuture Yorkshire Branch, and Secretary of the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group (which has recently affiliated to Railfuture), but the above article is written in a personal capacity

Membership Matters by Paul Colbeck

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

Mr Terence Digney from Scarborough; Mr Kenneth Guy from Pontefract; the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group.

We are also pleased to welcome the following **Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line** as **Railfuture supporters**:

Mr Roger Seddon from Otley; Mr Colin Priestley from Leeds; Mr Denis Read from Ilkley; Mr Roger Bastin from York.

Thanks again to those members who have agreed to convert to e-mail (thus saving us the cost and time of distribution). If **you** have an email address we could use, but still receive your YRC by post, please let me know.

Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all our Readers**Railfuture Branch and National Events Diary**

Monday 14 January: **SELRAP Open Members Meeting, Herriot's Hotel, Broughton Road, Skipton 19.00**

For details <http://www.selrap.org.uk/> or ring Andy Shackleton on 01282 814358)

Saturday 19 January: **Branch Meeting: Cairn Hotel, Harrogate** - for details see page 4

Wednesday 20 February: **Haxby Station Reopening Campaign Meeting, 1930 Wigginton Recreation Hall, Haxby, York** - for more details contact David Wells davidvaughanwells@btinternet.com

Thursday 14 March & Friday 15 March: Designated Community Rail Lines Seminar - for details <http://www.acorp.uk.com>

Saturday 23 March: **Branch Meeting: Herriot's Hotel, Broughton Road, Skipton (including guest speakers to mark 50 years since the Beeching Report)** - for details see YRC 20

Sunday 24 March: **Huddersfield Water Tower Official Opening and 20 years of the Penistone Line Partnership Station Gala** - for details <http://www.acorp.uk.com>

Saturday 11 May: **Railfuture National AGM: County Hall, Durham** – for details www.railfuture.org.uk/AGM+2013 or see *Railwatch*

Saturday 22 June: **Railfuture Summer Conference: Taunton** – for details <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/> or see *Railwatch*

Haxby Station Re-openingby **David Wells**

There has been a long running scheme (15 years plus) to re-open Haxby station on the York to Scarborough line, in order to give a fast direct service into York to compete against longer road journey times and relieve congestion on Wigginton Road and around the northern by-pass. As a first step we believe re-opening Haxby station is essential for improving access to York.

A meeting to kick-start the campaign will be held on 20 February (see above). The local MP, Julian Sturdy (York Outer) supports the campaign and will be attending; it is hoped that politicians from all parties will give their support.

TransPennine Electrification Update

by Graham Collett



Electric trains of this type (or a later development of them) could be running from York by the end of 2014. (photo: Paul Colbeck)

Recently attended a very helpful briefing by Simon Coulthard, Project Sponsor for the TransPennine East part of this scheme for Network Rail.

The project (approved in November 2011) is split into two parts, TransPennine West (which includes Manchester to Stalybridge) and TransPennine East (everything east of Stalybridge, including Leeds and the “electric horseshoe”).

The briefing was concerned with the TP East section (with the project team based in York) and stakeholder consultation had just started.

The assumption made in modelling the new electric service was that there would be 6 TPE trains and 1 standard freight path per hour between Leeds and Manchester, plus a contingency for future growth of electric passenger services. It was assumed that the TPE units would be new build and that Northern local services would be worked by cascaded electric units.

The current timetable assumes that TP West will be completed by December 2016 (to tie in with the completion of work on the Manchester – Preston route) and TP East by December 2018. However, there is the potential to speed up delivery of the East section by 3 or 4 years – especially east of Leeds where much less civil engineering work is required.

Northern Hub gets Amber Warning!

By Tony Ross & Graham Collett

The Northern Hub scheme has been given an “amber” warning light by the British Chambers of Commerce because they are concerned that it is not progressing quickly enough.

The BCC has recently updated their Business Transport Priorities map, which highlights the urgent need for action on a range of transport projects needed to boost business growth across the UK.

Their assessment shows progress on 13 priority transport projects – one business-critical investment in each region and nation, from a map first published by the BCC ahead of the 2010 General Election. The BCC say “While the government has taken important steps to boost infrastructure funding and delivery since the first budget, the updated assessment shows that too many transport projects, which are crucial to business growth, are stuck in the slow lane.”

This does seem a surprising verdict, given the government only approved the full scheme in July 2012.

Network Rail have been given the massive task of taking forward a substantial programme of work on the Hub, following some decisions apparently made at short notice by the government! In addition to the Manchester to York electrification project described above, the scheme includes major upgrades at Manchester Piccadilly and Victoria to improve through services to and from Liverpool (including the Ordsall Chord – see below); and improvements on the lines between Manchester and Bradford and Manchester and Sheffield. Electrification of the Manchester to Liverpool route via Chat Moss (due for completion in December 2013) will enable through electric services to Leeds, York, Newcastle and (we hope) other points east. Public consultation on the Ordsall chord (a viaduct connecting Manchester’s Victoria, Oxford Road and Piccadilly stations) commenced in 20 November. The chord is expected to be completed by 2017.

Yorkshire RUG Gains Newsletter Award

Congratulations to the Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield Rail Users Association, who were honoured at the Railfuture conference in Birmingham on 3rd November in the first awards for Rail User Groups.

The Association gained a silver award in the Newsletter category and group chairman Peter Marshall was there to collect the framed certificate from Railfuture president, Christian Wolmar. (photo courtesy Peter Marshall)



The New Wakefield Westgate Station

by Mark Parry



Wakefield Westgate has insufficient platform capacity, which could only be solved by moving the station further from the city centre. (photo: Paul Colbeck)

The current station was opened in 1867 complete with a clock tower and adjacent to the historic Orangery, so the Wakefield Civic Society has an interest in this re-development. They have raised some areas of concern, including potential issues for rail passengers.

The moving of platform canopies has not been specified and there is concern as these will need to be extended to match the moving of the station along the line. There are no escalators planned, despite a new bridge being provided – a golden opportunity to include escalators. However, lifts are included.

There will be no new platforms. Unless the station was moved even further away from Westgate, there is no space for additional platforms. This is a major issue but, on the other hand, we do not want the station to end up even further away from easy access to the Centre of Wakefield.

The toilets will continue to be free, but the Society wants to see a left luggage facility. They are also concerned that the new ticket barriers will limit access to the shops inside the station.

So the moving of this station does not seem to be taking full advantage of the need to rebuild it. At the same time the move away from Westgate brings disadvantages for connectivity. The city centre free bus will need to go up to the new entrance and we need to ensure Metro is planning for this. However, the main bus routes along Westgate will be several minutes walk away, discouraging rail passengers from continuing their journeys by public transport.

The Station was last modernised in 1967 when the old Italian style campanile Clock Tower was demolished. The Civic Society is keen to see a modern clock tower, in keeping with the new style of the Station, built. This would then complement the spires, towers and turrets that Wakefield is known for. The Society, along with English Heritage, is especially concerned that the current proposed layout is built right up to the historic Orangery, which has listed building status. It is likely therefore, that the current plans are set to change.

(Our thanks to our member Geoff Wood and the Wakefield Civic Society)

News from Around the Region

Meadowhall – Sheffield's HS2 Station?

Norman Baker has said Meadowhall should be the location for Sheffield's High Speed 2 station the *Sheffield Star* newspaper reported. Locally the site of the old Victoria station is preferred, but this would involve building a very tight curve. A government announcement on the routeing of HS2 north of Birmingham is due this month.

Whitby to get an Extra Platform

Rail magazine has reported that a second platform is to be provided at Whitby station, as part (we understand) of a funding package led by the North York Moors Railway. This will enable a more frequent heritage service into Whitby from Pickering and Grosmont. The second platform will be able to take an 8 carriage train and the work will include a loop to assist reversal. It will also make it easier for more regular and excursion trains to be run to Whitby. The work is due for completion by 2014.

Happy Birthday to Northern

Congratulations to Northern Rail, which celebrated its eighth birthday on 12 December. At the same time, it launched its new iPhone app to help keep customers updated. It is free to download and will allow passengers to plan any journey in Great Britain, check live running time information and purchase tickets. The app automatically finds the cheapest available tickets for any journey across the country. Tickets can be collected from over 1,000 stations 15 minutes after purchase, with no hidden charges, such as booking or credit card fees.

Proposed new Transport Interchange for York

City of York Council is proposing to create a new transport interchange at York Station. This would involve lowering the current bridge over the former rail lines into the old York station (soon to become the new Council Offices) and using part of the station car park.

West Yorkshire Metro Rail Plan 7

Metro has published the results of its consultation exercise on *Rail Plan 7*. These are available on its website at:

<http://www.wyrltp.com/NR/rdonlyres/39D7E6CF-7F60-4EE0-8461-EF072A6BAF3F/0/20120310RailPlanResultsandresponses.pdf>

Selby and District Rail Users' Group Update

by Reg French & Mark Parry



South Milford Station, showing the rather limited facilities for Leeds commuters at this open location. (photo: Terry French)

The Group sent a submission on the East Coast re-franchising exercise asking for at least one more direct London service, more investment in stations and the possibility of some local services being included in the Franchise. Controversially, the Group has proposed that the Open Access Services from Hull to London should also be included in the Franchise so that these are protected when Open Access agreements run out in 2016. With the uncertainty over these services, the West Coast Franchise fiasco and the problems with franchising generally, the Group has suggested the renewal of the East Coast Franchise is put back to 2016 at least. The Selby Group met with Northern Rail managers and discussed how they could improve the character, appearance and safety of South Milford station. The Group is especially concerned about pot holes, lighting, car parking and other amenities. They continue to campaign for more investment into this station. The Group has been disappointed with the quality of rail services affected by the weather and infrastructure problems. They are campaigning for improved information and contingency measures to counter these problems.

Finally, the group is disappointed that the fifth Trans Pennine Express train in each hour is not planned to go via Selby and has made representations to this effect.

Leeds to Morecambe (the Bentham Line) becomes a Community Rail Service

by Mark Parry



A ramblers group alights at Wennington, ideally located for walks in the area. (photo: Paul Colbeck)

Rail Minister Norman Baker said that passengers in the North West will have more say on how local rail services are run, after he approved the designation of the Bentham line as a community rail service. The Department for Transport <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rail-passengers-in-the-north-west-set-for-bigger-say--2> say that this move will enable train operating companies to work more closely with the Leeds, Lancaster and Morecambe Community Rail Partnership to tailor services to local needs.

Norman Baker continued: "I want to encourage communities to become more closely involved with their railways to help create the services and stations passengers deserve. That's why I'm delighted to announce this latest community rail service designation, Today's designation is a major step towards helping the Leeds, Lancaster and Morecambe Community Rail Partnership work closely with local groups

to provide innovative and more cost effective rail services for their community."

Northern Rail's Managing Director, Ian Bevan said: "The designation of the Bentham Line is fantastic news for the local community. As this route is integral to the area, its designation ensures it will be developed to benefit local people and visitors to the region. We look forward to working with the community rail partnership to enable the route to prosper as much as possible."

Counsellor Richard Rollins, Chair of the Leeds, Lancaster and Morecambe Community Rail Partnership said: This is excellent news. Designation will enable the Community Rail Partnership to work in partnership with the local community to make significant developments along the line. Key objectives include station improvements and service developments.

Currently 19 lines are community rail "lines", including the Penistone Line. There are also 14 community rail "services" (where the lines are not designated), these include the Mid Cheshire line, the building of which appeared in the drama series Cranford, which in the real world is Knutsford.

Why the Electrification Strategy needs to Go Further

Mike Crowhurst (Railfuture Chairman until 2012) has an excellent "blue sky thinking" article with the above title in the December *Railwatch*. In the same issue, Norman Bradbury, Secretary of Railfuture's Policy, Lobbying and Campaigns committee, reports on a recent response from the Dft about the High Level Output Statement: "I anticipate the industry would look at the Hope Valley route via Dore Junction to Manchester as well as Sheffield-Moorthorpe and Sheffield-Doncaster as freight linkages." Encouraging stuff!