

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

Number 28 - March 2015

Yorkshire
railfuture

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

Alan Williams Addresses Branch AGM

By Mark Parry



From left to right: Alan Williams of Modern Railways magazine, Richard Gibson of ARRIVA Cross Country and Nina Smith our re-elected branch chair: Photo by Mark Parry

Our branch Annual General Meeting had no less than three speakers on 31 January in York. The best known of these was Alan Williams, a regular contributor to the magazine Modern Railways, speaking in support of improving the Esk Valley line. He described this line as probably the prettiest line but also the line with the worst service with only 4 trains a day at times unsuitable for workers. The Esk Valley line has a pilot Community Rail Partnership which wants to see a reversion to running 8 trains a day and with a Sunday service. Currently an estimated half a million passengers use the service each year – a significant increase resulting in some severe overcrowding over a 90 minute journey. In order to ensure the many school children who use the service have a seat, North Yorkshire County Council run duplicate bus services! All this is set against an untapped potential demand, particularly from nearby hospitals. But there is hope on the horizon. Yorkshire Potash are being encouraged to avoid lorry movements and they hope to make use of the line to the extent of funding additional train services for three years and paying for a passing loop to improve services.

Continued overleaf...

Next Branch Meeting in Selby on 28 March – new start time – 13:00

See the flyer sent with this newsletter for further details of this event

Please also note the conference planned for 7 March has been cancelled

Pass this newsletter to a friend when you've finished and help advertise Railfuture.

Annual General Meeting continued...

Richard Gibson of ARRIVA Cross Country said the franchise had the largest geographical area with the Aberdeen to Penzance journey being the longest taking over 13 hours. They do not manage any stations. There has been an emphasis on time keeping, but much late running is because of infrastructure issues and Cross Country only has responsibility for 10% of the infrastructure they use. Since the franchise began 8 years ago an extra 4,500 seats have been provided. A "direct award" or extension of the franchise is about to be confirmed taking the franchise to 2019. Although ARRIVA is the only bidder for this extension, they still have to bid to demonstrate they can meet the Department for Transport's aspirations. There has been much concern about the introduction of seat reservations during the journey, whereby seated passengers in unreserved seats have to move as the seat becomes reserved mid journey. However, Richard pointed out that this only happens in coach C and notices forewarn passengers that this could happen. Train Managers can reserve unreserved seats during a journey for you.



David Pennie (pictured) updated us on the campaign to open the 34 mile Minsters Line from Beverley to York closed in 1965. The campaign began in 2002 and has made commendable efforts to engage with the five local authorities involved, but unfortunately with many set-backs. We hope to report further on this campaign as it develops. In 2015 they hope to engage the Local Enterprise Partnerships involved, continue working with the Local Authorities and learn from other reopening schemes.

Elections for the Committee took place, the new committee is listed on page 7. Dr. Mike Troke is now our secretary with Peter Scott moving to become our Technical Officer. Mike Crowhurst, our branch president, takes on the role of Conference Organiser.

Nina apologises for the misunderstanding over the start time of the Annual General Meeting. The meeting actually began at 13:00 hours instead of the 14:00 hours originally advertised. It appears those not on email were not informed of this change. However, all the constitutional business was undertaken after 14:00 hours. Please note the new start time for all future branch meetings will be 13:00 hours unless otherwise advised, and that meetings will finish by 16:00 hours at the latest.

Priorities for 2015

by Mark Parry

In her list of external priorities for 2015, Nina mentions a long list of organisations we need to maintain and develop constructive working relationships with. Operators include the obvious current Northern, Trans-Pennine, Cross Country, East Coast and other franchises. But there are also the bidders for the new franchises, open access operators and Railfreight.

Then there are the government bodies, Rail North, Transport for the North, Combined Authorities, Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Network Rail. Finally, don't forget our cousins in the Campaign for Better Transport, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships and Bus Users UK.

In communicating with all these we are trying to get better rolling stock, later evening trains, better Sunday services, affordable fares, more electrification, input to the northern England route study, new stations and lines, and effective plans for HS2 and HS3.

Internal priorities involve getting Railfuture working even better. Improving our links with our neighbouring branches in the North West, North East and in Lincolnshire fits well with the move towards the Government's policy of integrating regional developments across the North. For this reason we still hope to hold a pan Northern conference in 2015.

But we also need to investigate the need for new Rail User groups and to encourage more people to become members of Railfuture. We need more of our existing members to attend meetings and to be active in our campaigns. To help with this we should consult with our members to see what they want. The branch officers have been given lead responsibilities for liaison with the bodies mentioned above, such as the Train Operating Companies and other rail groups.

How long has your rail user group been going?

SADRUG (Selby and District Rail User Group) has been in existence for about 25 years.

What have been your group's main achievements in the last few years?

The most recent major achievement has been to persuade the Government and the Department for Transport to extend electrification from Micklegate Junction to Selby and electrify the link between Hambleton West Junction to the East Coast Main Line. This resulted from a Meeting with the Minister for Transport following a report prepared by the Group on the Cost Benefits Analysis. The announcement by the Secretary of State in confirming the extension stated the decision had been largely due to the case put forward by the Selby Rail Users Group. Privatisation was a big challenge particularly to press the Companies involved to improve services to take account of growth in the District. In the 1980's the late night service from Leeds to Hull departed at 23.05 and the one from York left at 23.00. The position deteriorated to the extent the two departures were at 21.48 and 22.03. A prolonged campaign has been partially successful with the Leeds departure now being 22.21 and the York departure at 22.29. The Villages in the District have benefited from pressure on Trans-Pennine Express and Northern Rail. South Milford has a much improved Sunday service and Sherburn-in-Elmet with additional weekday trains and, for the first time, services on Sundays, which allow residents to spend time in York, has the fastest growing percentage footfall in the District. Following the withdrawal of through trains from Selby to London in 1983 when the main line between Templehirst Junction and Colton Junction was opened SADRUG mounted a campaign to have the Hull Executive service to London diverted via Selby as because of Platform constraints it could no longer call at Goole. Following a meeting with Chris Garnett the Managing Director of "GNER" this was agreed and shortly after we started discussions with Anglia Rail and together with two former British Rail General Managers the now First Hull Trains service commenced. The Great Heck Disaster was a tragic event that will be long remembered by the local community and all those involved. SADRUG was allowed to place flowers at the crash site to remember all those who lost their lives including the rail men on the train and the driver of the freight train who lived locally.

What is your group's current main challenge or concern? What do you need to succeed with this?

The main challenge is the electrification process. Due to be completed by December 2018 a number of obstacles have to be overcome. The Group is working with Network Rail and the Local Authorities to consider the different alternatives available to find a solution. However discussions with the Government and Network Rail have resulted in agreement being reached to include in the process the provision of much needed lifts for the disabled and others crossing to Platforms 2 and 3

Any amusing moments during the life of your group?

There have been many amusing incidents. The Group has always been interested in involving children in the railway. Many had never been on a train before and wondered how the driver could see where he was going in the dark! In September 2009 the 175th Anniversary of the Leeds Selby Railway took place. The second passenger service in the country was celebrated. Northern, First Trans-Pennine Express and Network Rail were contacted and all agreed to make this a special day for schoolchildren in the Selby District. Northern and Trans-Pennine each designated one service train as the Anniversary Train. The trains were decorated, Special Tickets were given to each child to keep as a memento and the laughs and singing were a joy. A tour of Leeds Station including a visit to the bowels of the Station which included the first Control Centre, took place and the kids thought they were in a secret dungeon! SADRUG has now to consider what should be done on July 1st 2015 to celebrate the opening 175 years ago of the Selby to Hull Railway. One thing will be to see if we can get children involved again.



The Huddersfield, Penistone, Sheffield Rail Users Association (HPSRUA) was formed in Huddersfield on 21st March, 1981 at a meeting arranged by the Yorkshire Branch of the Railway Development Society. The event preceded the Transport Users Consultative Committee public hearing into the proposed closure of the Penistone Line between Nunnery Junction Sheffield and Denby Dale.

In the 34 years since our creation, the group has pressed for improvements in the service, which was eventually routed from Penistone to Barnsley and then via Meadowhall to Sheffield.

The shadow of closure remained and the HPSRUA kept up pressure. We continued to present our case to both South and West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executives as well as British Rail, resulting in an hourly service being introduced in May 1989.

Recent successes have been pressure for an hourly Sunday service and three-car Pacers.

Our aspirations are for an earlier train into Sheffield, before 0729, and a later evening departure from Huddersfield as well as a full hourly service on Sunday. Four-car trains would enable capacity improvements but these are constrained by short platforms at the West Yorkshire end of the line.

With our ultimate aim of a half hourly service, more infrastructure improvements are needed and this needs Network Rail support. Both Passenger Transport Executives would like a half-hourly service on the line.

We have two lively public meetings each year usually addressed by a senior representative of the rail industry.

Yorkshire Branch User Groups Meet Abellio

by Mark Parry

Starting 2015 off on 6 January, ten of our user groups met with Northern Franchise bidder Abellio. This event co-ordinated by the Branch involved the bid leaders listening to many suggestions to improve the service. The key themes that emerged from the day held in the Queens Hotel in Leeds were: Rolling stock shortage especially the short term need for diesels; More Sunday and late night services needed and disabled access improvements.

Other major improvements were encouraged such as: re-opening the Minsters Line, Skipton to Colne and the Spenn Valley line; linking Ripon to the network and Whitby to the East Coast line; new stations at Haxby, Elland and the White Rose Centre.

At this stage Abellio were not allowed to outline their plans.

Elland Station – A Step Closer

by Mark Parry

In January the Huddersfield Examiner reported some good news on the progress to build a new station at Elland. The West Yorkshire Combined Authority's transport committee considered many options to build new stations and develop existing stations, they decided to progress four options. Elland and East Leeds Parkway are the two stations in West Yorkshire to be recommended for further study. Options to build or develop such as Golcar, Hipperholme, Ravensthorpe and Thornhill Lees in Dewsbury are not to proceed.

The Halifax & District Rail Action Group (HADRAG), a member of Railfuture, has campaigned for 30 years for a station at Elland attracting support from some local councillors including the Chair of the Transport Committee, James Lewis, visiting the site. The cost is likely to be around £10 million which could be found from the Combined Authority's capital programme. However, the construction costs could be high given the elevated site.

Railfuture member and Chair of HADRAG Stephen Waring, pointed out that the old Elland Station closed in 1962 and Elland's link should have been included in 2000 when the line and Brighouse Station were reopened to passenger traffic.

Harrogate to London 7 Times a Day!

by Brian Dunsby

This is marvellous news on Harrogate to London Rail services!

I am really delighted to pass on the great news that the new Virgin/Stagecoach Franchise for the East Coast Main Line includes SEVEN trains a day each way between Harrogate & London Kings Cross - just as we had proposed in our detailed submissions to all three bidders and to the Department for Transport and the Office of Rail Regulation.

This news comes after our five years extensive research and campaigning to upgrade Harrogate rail services. It forms part of the official announcement of the award of the East Coast Franchise to the Virgin + Stagecoach consortium and the Government's acceptance of their proposals.

I was interviewed this morning (27 November 2014) by both BBC Look North TV and BBC Radio York, with extracts from the interviews being broadcast by both services this evening.

The announcement includes the following specific benefits for Harrogate-London services - via Leeds:

- **an additional 6 trains to and from London per day from 2019**
- upgraded train interiors introduced between 2015 and 2017

- Harrogate now served by new high speed IEP trains from 2020 providing: more reliable services, more seats, more luggage space, faster journey times, improved wi-fi and mobile coverage.

Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway Option

by Mark Parry

The following are extracts from a plea from Brian Dunsby, Chief Executive of the Harrogate Chamber of Trade and Commerce, for support for the proposed Leeds Bradford International Airport (LBIA) Parkway Station.

The Government commissioned consultants “WSPPB” to study the alternative ways of improving surface connectivity to Leeds Bradford International Airport. Their report was published on 5th December 2014.

Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce has made repeated efforts to propose a cost-effective solution at Airport Consultative Committee and Transport Forum meetings and at earlier meetings about the electrification of the Harrogate Line. We proposed a new Parkway Station on the existing line, near the southern portal of the Bramhope Tunnel, close to the long stay car park.

We believe the Consultants’ report into rail connectivity options for Leeds Bradford International Airport has too many flaws and inconsistencies in the assessment to provide adequate objectivity in support of the deployment of significant public funds on this potential project. The Consultants rejected our proposal for a LBIA Parkway Station on the existing Harrogate Line and instead they favoured a new heavy rail link from Guiseley via the Airport to Horsforth - at enormous expense - and when the lines each end of that route are already full!

Our proposal for a LBIA Parkway Station on the existing Harrogate Line scored equal first with a proposed new rail link amongst the ten different rail options considered by the consultants. However it was then dismissed at a late stage in the assessment process on the grounds that an “interchange” between the train and the shuttle bus to the Terminal was not recommended. The use of buses within airports and adjoining facilities is commonplace world-wide and this does not influence passenger choice whether or not to use an airport

We challenge several technical details in the assessment process and the scores allocated to each option. Furthermore the assessment takes no account of the very high capital cost of a new line with new stations and new rolling stock, compared with making use of the existing Harrogate Line services which only requires a new station – and no new track or new rolling stock.

Likewise the assessment appears to ignore the fact that the existing Harrogate Line services are already fully resourced in terms of on-train and on-track staff, whereas the proposed new line would require new staff on the new trains and the new track and any new stations. Furthermore the Harrogate Line is on the Government short list for electrification, so it would seem logical to maximise the use of this investment which could provide a 15 minute frequency service between Leeds City Station and the Airport. The proposed direct rail link with a 30 minute frequency would require new paths into Leeds Station and through Armley and Shipley Junctions which are currently not available.

South Yorkshire Developments

by Mark Parry

Our member Andrew Oldfield has written in with his views for rail improvements in South Yorkshire. The tram-train scheme is due to start running in 2017, but Andrew is concerned for the longer distance options linking to the areas beyond the Sheffield Combined Authority area.

He says, “In the grand scheme of things it is intended that tram-train is extended to Dore when in fact what is needed is track quadrupling between Sheffield and Dore. Instead of sweeping through the Sheaf Valley rail should be serving it by opening new stations at Heeley and Millhouses plus the reinstatement of the main line platform at Dore. This would then allow for the introduction of a local Sheffield to Chesterfield electrified service to secure maximum benefits from Midland Main Line electrification. It would be the catalyst for electrification across South Yorkshire and on all routes into West Yorkshire.”

He goes on to say, “Rotherham, in the headlines this year for reasons well documented, wants help with recovery and regeneration. Rail would provide that by Swinton to Dore corridor investment, including the doubling of the Holmes Chord. Rotherham could then enjoy express services to both Doncaster and Leeds, as well as figuring in the Manchester Airport service.”

Andrew has also been active on the Woodhead route. “After spending a year or more trying to get Nick Clegg to support maintenance of the Woodhead Victorian tunnels, he now proposes a Woodhead road tunnel which will never see the light of day. Reopening Woodhead is the only solution, for the Hope Valley can never offer the improved links so badly needed.

Over the years, the Government’s HS2 project has attracted a huge amount of controversy, with passionate views for and against. But there’s one aspect in which the criticism has been almost unanimous – the lack of any trans-Pennine connection. In June of last year, the Government belatedly recognised this deficiency with their announcement of the HS3 initiative. So far, there’s little detail on HS3, and the signs are not encouraging. All the focus appears to be on the Manchester-Leeds axis, rather than Manchester-Sheffield, no-one’s quite sure whether it’s supposed to be a new high speed line or an upgrade of the existing route, and there’s no explanation of how HS2’s proposed terminus in Leeds will cater for HS3 through services.

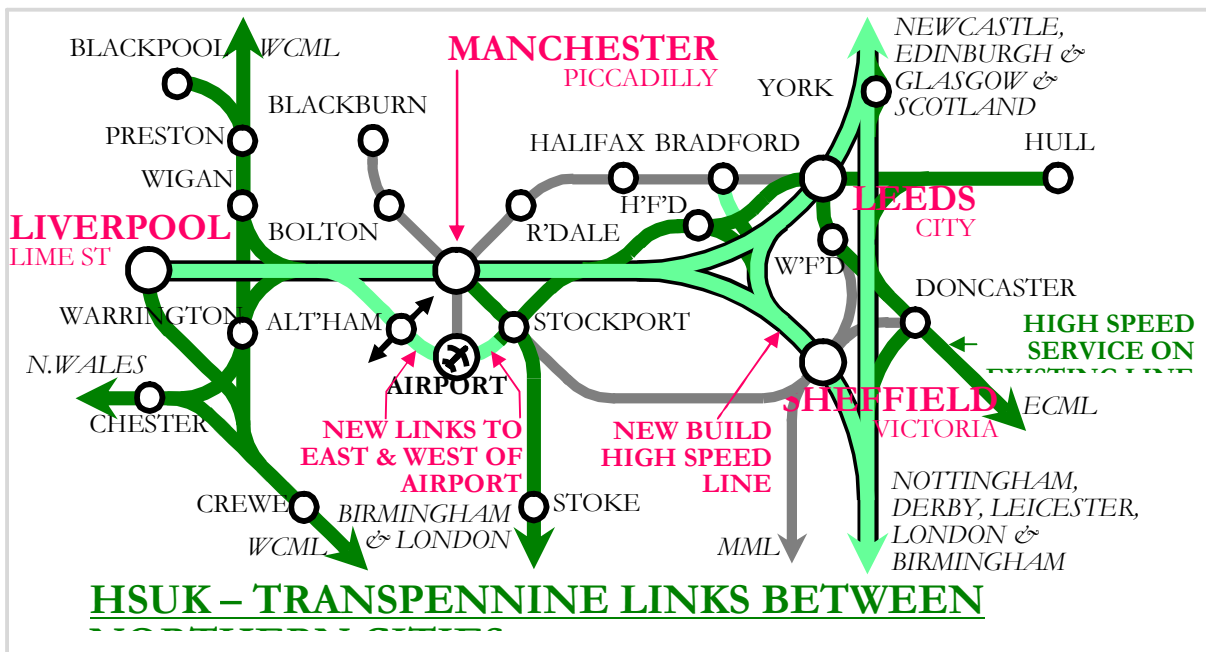
In July, the primary cities of the North – Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds and Newcastle – put forward their own ideas. Their ‘One North’ initiative is a much more balanced concept, with a clear requirement for enhanced links between all cities; Manchester-Sheffield is as important as Manchester-Leeds. Radically improved journey times between city centre stations have been specified on all these intercity routes; huge improvements are also demanded for rail links to Manchester Airport. The ‘One North’ concept extends to freight; the new route must also cater for Trans-Pennine railfreight and even Channel Tunnel-style lorry shuttles.

No route has yet been specified for the new Trans-Pennine railway required by ‘One North’; but there’s really no other option for a railway linking Manchester to Leeds and Sheffield except to follow the corridor of the Woodhead Line, unwisely closed by British Rail back in the 1980s.

At High Speed UK, we’ve been watching these political developments with great interest. Our proposals, launched as High Speed North back in 2008, always had a Woodhead aligned high speed railway at its core, and it’s nice to see the world catching up. But we haven’t just been spectators in recent months; our proposals are now drawn up to 1:25,000 scale, with straights, transitions and curves defined, the vertical alignments have been calculated, and we’ve developed detailed city centre station solutions in all the major cities.

High Speed UK’s Trans-Pennine scheme is well developed, including not just high speed passenger links but also local services linking Longdendale and the Don Valley, a new coast-to-coast freight route and proposals for a lorry shuttle service, linking the M60 at Bredbury with the M1 at Tinsley. But in other respects, High Speed UK’s plans are still developing; the Sheffield station will now be located at the redundant Victoria site, and a new east-west through route is planned for Manchester Airport.

Overall, the High Speed UK plans are now fully aligned with the ‘One North’ initiative, meeting or beating the specification for improved intercity journey times and all the other requirements for airport access and Trans-Pennine railfreight. Check out our plans on www.highspeeduk.co.uk. High Speed UK is ready to go – who needs HS3?



Colin Elliff, is the Civil Engineering Principal of High Speed UK and a member of our branch.

Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

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| Aire Valley Rail Users' Group | www.avrug.org.uk |
| Bradford Rail Users' Group | www.bradfordrail.com |
| Halifax and District Rail Action Group | |
| Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group | Email: hlrug@live.co.uk |
| Harrogate Line Supporters' Group | www.harrogatechamber.org/harrogateline.htm |
| Hope Valley | www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk |
| Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association | Email: hpsrua@btinternet.com |
| Hull and East Riding Rail Users' Association | www.hullrailusers.co.uk |
| Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group | www.lasrug.btck.co.uk |
| Minster Rail Campaign | www.minstersrail.net |
| Selby and District Rail Users' Group | www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/ghost-page/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 |
| Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group | Email: nhrawsons@googlemail.com |

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The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of Railfuture

Branch Chair's Report on 2014

by Nina Smith

Nina Smith took over as Yorkshire Branch chair at the Annual General Meeting in March. The previous Chairman, Chris Hyomes, stepped down to concentrate on his national duties as a Board Member and is now Branch Vice Chair and Media Spokesman. The Branch has a new Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Graham Collett, and its first Freight Officer, Tony Ross. Our quarterly newsletter Yorkshire Rail Campaigner, under the capable editorship of Mark Parry, continues its campaigning role.

The year was dominated by the forthcoming new franchises for Northern Rail and TransPennine express. The branch had input into the national response to the Department for Transport/Rail North consultation. Most affiliated groups in the region made their own submissions, detailing required local improvements. Subsequently, both branch and user groups have been engaging with short-listed bidders to influence the detail of their bids, and to develop a good relationship with the eventual winner.

Our priorities for the new franchises include later evening services, much improved Sunday services, greatly increased capacity, high quality modern rolling stock, greater resilience, affordable fares, new stations and new

routings. Rail usage in the north has grown rapidly, but there has been little investment in Northern Rail because of the existing no-growth franchise. This must change.

One spin-off from the consultation process has been closer working between the Yorkshire, North West and North East branches; the geography of the franchises makes this very important.

Our affiliated user groups perform the vital role of making the case for service improvements on their local lines. All would welcome younger new members to ensure succession. The Hope Valley Rail Users Group, whose interest spans the Yorkshire, East Midlands and North West Branches, affiliated to Railfuture during the year.

The Branch has developed its relationship with Northern Rail, First Trans-Pennine Express, Grand Central, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Rail North. Passenger Focus, Campaign for Better Transport and the Department for Transport. We see collaborative working as essential to gain a better deal for passengers.

Membership News:

Paul Colbeck – Membership Secretary

Please welcome the following new members to the Yorkshire branch: Mr Tim Chapman of Wakefield; Mr Antony Plumbe of Bingley and Ms Anne Robinson of Bamford.

Interested in Joining Railfuture for just £18 a year?

You would receive the national magazines as well as this Yorkshire Rail Campaigner and meet like-minded people at our meetings.

You can find out more and join by clicking on <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join/> or by contacting our membership secretary

Paul Colbeck, 14 St Giles Way, Copmanthorpe, York, YO23 3XT

Paul.colbeck@railfuture.org.uk

If you join online please email Paul to let him know.

Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 29**) will be out late May 2015. If you would like the work of your group to be included please email material, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com to arrive by **Saturday 25 April 2015**. Alternatively call or text 07981 339558.

Would you like your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email? It would save us money and you can enlarge it on your screen to read it more easily. You can always revert back to the post if you decide you don't like it.

Diary

- **7 March 2015:** The Railfuture joint northern branches conference in Leeds has been cancelled.
- **10 March 2015:** Campaign for Better Transport – another chance to listen to Pete Myers of Northern Rail. Oxford Place Methodist Mission, next to Leeds Town Hall at 19:30 hours.
- **14 March 2015:** Saturday. Railfuture North East AGM in Newcastle from 14:00. Guest speaker from ACoRP.
- **28 March 2015:** Railfuture Yorkshire branch meeting at Selby Community Centre from 13:00. See flyer.
- **30 March 2015:** Campaign for Better Transport Rail Group: Held in the Grove Pub in Leeds, next to Bridgewater Place at 19:30. This group now has a new chair.
- **18 April 2015:** Saturday. Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line at Victoria Hall, Kirkgate, Settle, from 12 noon.
- **16 May 2015:** The Annual General Meeting of Railfuture will be held in Blackpool.
- **18 May 2015:** Campaign for Better Transport Rail Group: Held in the Grove Pub in Leeds, next to Bridgewater Place at 19:30. This group now has a new chair.
- **20 June 2015:** Railfuture's Summer Conference will take place in the Town Hall, Newark, from 10:45 with speakers representing train operators and local authorities in the area.
- **7 November 2015:** Saturday. Railfuture's Rail User Conference at The Mercure Hotel, Bristol, just a short walk from Temple Mills station.