

Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.

As always, feel free to forward RUG to a colleague, or to reproduce items in your own newsletter (quoting sources). If you want further details of any of the stories mentioned, look on the relevant website or, failing that, get back to me so I can send you the full text.

For details about group affiliation to Railfuture, see website [here](#) (from the "Membership Type" menu, select "RUG").

I'm sure that every reader of Rail User Express would wish me to begin by thanking Tony for his sterling service over many years. He set the bar at a very high level, and will be a difficult act to follow. Accordingly, I have retained the format that I inherited, with one minor refinement: to save repetition in the List of Events, all of the entries for each Group are now consolidated with its first. Please note that copy received shortly after one edition may not be used for up to a month, so any events within that period will have passed before the next. I realise that some Groups (including mine!) set the date of each meeting at the previous one, but if you do wish it to be included, I need the date in good time.

Having begun with thanks to Tony, may I conclude by thanking all of you who have contributed copy for this edition; I hope that I've done it justice. Like Tony, I fully appreciate the tireless work done by hundreds of volunteers around Britain on behalf of its rail users. Keep it up!

Roger Smith

We continue with the usual roundup of news items from RUGs around the UK. I'm always very grateful to those that send me their magazines and bulletins.

Levenmouth Rail Campaign – Bringing the East Neuk in from the Cold

The Campaign hopes that a motion in the Scottish Parliament urging support for reinstatement of rail services to Leven will engage cross-party support

A Network Rail Route Study to inform rail industry investment choices for Control Periods 6 and 7 (2019 to 2029) makes no reference to the Leven rail link. Supporters are urged to respond to the Consultation at <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/scotland-route-study/> with a recommendation that Leven be reconnected.

The extended closure of the Forth Road Bridge for emergency repairs in December highlighted not only the inaccessibility of Levenmouth and the East Neuk, but their fragile reliance on poor road connections and a monopoly bus operator. Though seriously inconvenienced, the rest of Fife had alternative options.

South East Northumberland Rail Users' Group – New Franchises. What next?

SENUG welcomes the new TransPennine Express (TPE) franchise specification of an Edinburgh service stopping at Morpeth – the group would also like to see Cramlington included. The Northern franchise awarded to Arriva Trains promises evening and Sunday services for Morpeth and Cramlington, as well as a commitment to help secure the re-introduction of passenger services to Ashington. However, Network Rail's 8-stage planning process is a concern (Stage 2 has only just begun): "...we need to move fast before other schemes reserve all the available capacity." SENUG will also press for better integration of bus and rail services, now that Arriva will be running both in the North East.

The group notes that, of the three contenders for each of the Northern and TPE franchises, only the winning bidders in each case took the trouble to meet them to hear their aspirations. “Maybe there’s a lesson here for all rail companies that bid for new franchises.”

For 2016, SENRUG is calling for Cramlington Station to be moved 200 yards to the south, where there is room for a transport interchange with a larger car park and better access. Also, a new station is required at Killingworth to support housing development, served by the local train service between MetroCentre / Newcastle and Morpeth / Chathill.

CKP Railways – *Getting Together to Pick up the Pieces*

Following the Beeching Report, the line from Workington to Keswick via Cockermouth closed in 1966; following a public outcry, the Keswick – Penrith section was reprieved, but only for another six years. In 1988, CKP Railways was formed to reopen that section of the line.

CKP plc is now seeking to drive the project forward in consultation with Cumbria’s Local Enterprise Partnership, and a nascent North Lakes Railway Action Group, together with Arriva and First Group, the new franchise holders for Northern and Trans Pennine respectively. The Local Authority links should help to integrate land and transport planning, whilst there is more freedom under the new franchising arrangements to develop new stations and routes to meet local demand.

Unfortunately, the storms on 5th and 6th of December wrought havoc in the section between Keswick and Threlkeld: the River Greta changed course dramatically while in spate, completely submerging part of the trackbed. One bridge was completely washed away, and two others sustained serious damage. However, the damage is recoverable, being concentrated in a relatively short section of the 18 mile (30 km) route. Overall, this remains mostly intact (except of course for track), and would be much easier to rebuild than the Borders Railway.

Lancashire Community Rail Partnership – *Recovery first, then Looking to the Future*

The LCRP acknowledges the heroic efforts of the rescue services, the armed forces, local authorities, Network Rail, etc. in the aftermath of Storm Desmond, together with some graphic pictures; Frank was yet to come! However, it was less forgiving about over-running engineering works on three consecutive Mondays - not helped by closure of the Farnworth Tunnel for widening to accommodate electrification, but which has since reopened - and called for CRPs to be more closely involved in the planning of such works, and the contingency arrangements when things go wrong.

It welcomed the new franchise awards for Northern and Trans Pennine, but with the caveat that the detail was still subject to contract. Additional services and new trains are planned in Cumbria and through Preston, whilst Accrington, Barrow, Blackburn, Blackpool North, Burnley Manchester Road, Chorley, Grange-over-Sands, Poulton le Fylde, Ulverston and Windermere will all become Northern Connect stations, to be staffed 0600 to 2200 daily, and with catering outlets and free Wi-Fi.

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group – *Two New Stations and Aspiration of a New Link*

Apperley Bridge, West Yorkshire’s first new rail station in 10 years, opened on Sunday 13 December. Two trains per hour run between Leeds and Bradford Forster Square, calling at Apperley Bridge in each direction, all day Monday to Saturday, and hourly on Sundays, whilst the half-hourly Monday to Saturday service on the Airedale Line between Leeds and Skipton is reduced to hourly in the evening, and two-hourly on Sundays. Another new station, Kirkstall Forge, should open by Easter 2016.

LASRUG also supports the ambition of the Yorkshire Dales Railway Museum Trust to reconnect the working heritage railway between Embsay and Bolton Abbey with Skipton, where it could terminate in what used to be the Ilkley platform.

Support the Oldham-Rochdale-Manchester Line (STORM) – Stakeholder Involvement

STORM made detailed comments to Arriva on the rail service and facilities at a number of stations on the Calder Valley line, and received a very appreciative response. Another response to a service improvement consultation on the rochdaleonline web site noted the mix of commuter, long-distance services and freight, and the lack of passing loops.

There was some confusion regarding the Rochdale – Manchester fare, as the Network Rail journey planner was not listing the off-peak fare; this has since been corrected. However, the peak fare rose by over 8%, and now compares unfavourably with others in the area.

STORM's comments on the new franchisee received a very positive response from Transport for Greater Manchester, which is working closely with stakeholders to understand the specific commitments of the new franchise. Rochdale passengers will benefit from up to 6 trains per hour. Three of these will be Northern Connect services using brand new trains: one to Manchester Airport, one to Liverpool and one to Warrington and Chester. 4 trains per hour will run to Bradford and Leeds. However, detail of timetables, service patterns and rolling stock plans would not be available until well into January, when the services had been contracted, and the deal signed off.

Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passenger Association – Boom time on the Cambrian Main Line

According to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), the Top 5 Station in Powys for station usage in 2014/2015 were Welshpool (133,744), Newtown (130,306), Machynlleth (120,804), Caersws (49,250) and Llandrindod Wells (43,706). The Welshpool figure was up 9% on 2013/2014, overtaking Newtown as the busiest station between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth, and fully justifying the extra services from May 2015. SARPA confidently predicts an even greater increase in 2015/2016, and wants further improvements on the line, such as those recently announced for the North of England.

Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers' Association – User friendly Timetables and Services

The PRTA has republished the current timetables for the area in what they believe to be a clearer format. Arriva Trains Wales have accepted several of their ideas. Thus, for journeys beyond Carmarthen, travellers may now return to a different Pembrokeshire station, which is useful for tourists walking the coast path: from Neyland, you can leave via Pembroke Dock, and return to Johnston or Milford; in N. Pems, you may go from Fishguard, and return to Haverfordwest, whilst the last train to Carmarthen from stations between Milford and Clunderwen is 2 hours later.

Cotswold Line Promotion Group – Make the Most of Service Improvements

The Group welcomes the rebranding of First Great Western to GWR, and the timetable improvements from December, including an additional mid-afternoon service. However, this would be even more attractive if Cheap Day Returns were restored and/or the restrictions on the Super Off-peak ticket relaxed to include the 0826 from Worcester to London, returning at 1521. Indeed, the whole ticketing structure needs to be drastically simplified: there are currently over 100 different fares from Worcester to London!

From May 2017, the introduction of Class 800 trains will allow an hourly service from Paddington. However, this will put even greater pressure on many Cotswold Line car parks. Doubling of the North Cotswold route has been referred to the National Infrastructure Committee, whilst an aspiration to reopen the line to Stratford-on-Avon has been given a boost with the offer of substantial funding from a housing developer, subject of course to the grant of planning permission.

However, the Group has concerns regarding the new Worcestershire Parkway station, both in regard to a paucity of connections, and the threat that it would pose to existing, smaller stations. The Group supports the development of a Cotswold Line manifesto to resolve the conflicting interests.

East Suffolk Travellers' Association – *A Past and a Future to Celebrate*

ESTA's 50th birthday on 13 November was celebrated at a buffet reception in Saxmundham, and by the naming of a Class 156 two-coach diesel train "ESTA 1965-2015" on the previous Friday.

ESTA has produced a new set of laminated A4 posters to advertise the changes to bus service 88A between Southwold and Halesworth, and the connections from there to Ipswich.

At ESTA's autumn meeting in Aldeburgh, Peter Meades (Abellio Greater Anglia's Media Manager) observed that the past five years had seen a 92% rise in passenger numbers on the East Suffolk Line, and commented, "the service is in a very healthy state, but there is still a lot more that we'd like to see done. The foundations are there for further improvements."

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group – *Smart, not so Smart and Smarten Up*

Smart ticketing has now gone live, and can be accessed on both platforms at all three stations. Over the last five years, their footfall has increased by an average of 31.3%. However, the eight-month delay in correcting the faulty level crossing gates at Foxton was unacceptable, and then three more faults occurred in the first week after installation.

A key aim of the Group's 'Community Rail Partnership' is to facilitate bringing disused railway station buildings back into use. The National Association's lead representative on old station buildings has examined Shepreth Station building, and is helping to put the case to Network Rail, who own the building. A rental income to Network Rail should be a no-brainer, and it would make an ideal office/business space. Local businesses are invited to get in touch.

Hitchin Rail User Group – *Kings Cross bombshell!*

At a Govia Stakeholders' meeting, it was confirmed that, when the Class 387's recently introduced on the Thameslink line were replaced by 700's in 2016, they would move to Great Northern to replace the aging 321's, and not be redeployed as was originally intended. Govia understood that ERTMS (the in-cab signalling system) would not be implemented from Kings Cross to Doncaster South as announced, but start at Finsbury Park. So, at some time in the future, Kings Cross would have to close for up to 16 weeks to replace the conventional signalling, although it had yet to be decided whether this would happen before or after December 2018, when most GN services would transfer to Thameslink via the Canal tunnel.

The Group has yet to receive any feedback on the Herts CC Rail Strategy consultation. However, work to improve access to the Station Forecourt should start in August, although there was no final plan as yet. It now awaits consultation on the December 2018 timetable, which will herald through services to Gatwick, Horsham and Brighton.

Chesham and District Transport Users' Group – *A Step in the Right Direction*

Following its evidence to the Buckinghamshire Transport Review last July, Chesham TUG has been invited to participate in a review of all Council-supported transport provision.

The Group's major project is the provision of step-free access at Amersham station. MP Cheryl Gillan had confirmed that no funding would come from Bucks CC, Chiltern District Council or Amersham Town Council. However, London Underground had agreed to approach Network Rail to see whether any other funds might be available, as the Station served both LU and Chiltern Railways jointly. A draft LU budget totalled £10.5m, although the actual construction cost was only £6.2m.

Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail User Group – *Safety in Numbers*

Following the takeover of London Fields and Cambridge Heath stations by London Overground in May, the ORR figures for their footfall increased by 24% and 29% respectively over the past year, and 32% and 38% in the evening peak. Staffing them seems to have given passengers more reassurance that they were safe to use, particularly in the evening. However, based on its own observations, the Group believes that these “official” estimates are only about half the actual numbers, and that the disparity seriously undermines the case for improving both the stations and their rail services.

In that respect, the RUG has made various suggestions to Transport for London, including a more frequent service at both stations over an extended period of operation, a direct service to Walthamstow, lifts to help mobility impaired passengers (including those with cycles, and parents with buggies and prams), and access improvements at Cambridge Heath.

Bexhill Rail Action Group – *Fast Forward!*

There were two key events in 2015: following the general election, the continuity in key personnel on whom BRAG’s aspirations for High Speed Javelin trains depended; and the development of the constructive relationship with Govia, that was needed to take forward the issues on which it had been working closely with Southern.

For the future, BRAG emphasises the need for HS1 to operate between St. Pancras International and Bexhill via Ashford International. It is concerned at the lack of long-term planning by Network Rail for East Coastway services, whilst the cessation of train splitting and re-coupling at Haywards Heath, and grade separation at Keymer Junction, are critical to a reduction in journey times. Extending the catchment area for Gatwick Airport staff following any expansion would drive major improvements to railway infrastructure, including both the capacity and resilience of the Brighton Main Line, and a rebuilt “Willingdon Chord” to allow faster journeys from Bexhill and Hastings.

Committee member Chris Wheeler successfully pursued a complaint regarding the car park ticket machines at Hastings line stations: they now take the newer 5p and 10p coins. Travellers had been paying over the odds because of the machines’ refusal to accept them, or to give change.

Swanage Railway – Project Wareham – *Good News and Bad News*

The project to reconnect Swanage with the main line at Wareham comprises three distinct elements: the infrastructure upgrade, the refurbishment of four Diesel Multiple Units (DMU) to mainline standard, and administration and training to support mainline operation. The infrastructure work is progressing well; much of it is behind the scenes, but two very visible elements have been completed: the Norden level crossing and the Rail-Road Interchange. The latter had a stern test when Battle of Britain class locomotive ‘Manston’ was transferred onto a low-loader en route to workshops at Herston.

The news regarding the DMUs is not so good. As well the upgrade needed for mainline running - signalling interface equipment, radios, monitoring & recording equipment and secondary door retention locking (to prevent slam-doors being opened on the move) – each wheel-set had to be assessed. Unfortunately, all sixteen failed and, being non-standard, have to be replaced by specialist contractors in the United States, South Africa and England. Accordingly, the completed units will not now be tested and delivered until the autumn of 2016, so that trial running has slipped from June this year into 2017.

Tarka Rail Association (formerly the North Devon RUG) – *Wider Still and Wider*

The Association is seeking views on a proposal to extend its remit to include Exeter – Axminster. This would complement Exmouth – Paignton, as part of the Devon Metro Service proposed by Devon County Council. In the upcoming Devon and Cornwall/Westcountry franchise consultation, they will be pushing for direct services from North Devon to London, both to offer the prospect of day-returns, and to boost the tourist industry. A longer-term aspiration, when Great Western electrification finally reaches Exeter, as they believe it must, is to extend it to Barnstaple.

...news from Railfuture follows...

RAILFUTURE NORTH WEST BRANCH

According to the Department for Transport (DfT), two TPE Anglo-Scottish services are the most overcrowded in the UK, with yet another in the top 10. The problem is especially serious south of Lancaster, even off-peak, between Manchester and Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool and, in the summer, Scarborough. The success of First TPE in developing its services has led to a serious shortage of rolling stock, that Railfuture is seeking to address: whereas passenger numbers have increased by 123% over the past 10 years from 13m/year to 29m, the fleet size has grown by only 20% - and the four remaining class 170 DMUs are shortly to move to Chiltern Railways.

Meanwhile the situation on some Northern services is just as bad, with passengers giving up on the train as commuters from stations further out turn increasingly to rail travel. Thus morning peak trains at Mills Hill are arriving already full, forcing passengers left behind to squeeze onto the next train. Longer station stops then result in late running, to which Northern Train Control in York often reacts by omitting many Greater Manchester station stops, resulting in very unhappy would-be travellers.

Manchester Airport is seeking to release the land reserved for the Western Link from Mobberley, which would provide the Mid Cheshire line with a much faster route into Manchester. The Airport claims that HS2 would serve this purpose, but the Mid-Cheshire Rail Users' Association disagrees, as the respective lines have very different markets.

RAILFUTURE WESSEX BRANCH

The South-West Franchise seeks to serve four markets (London commuter, long distance, leisure & local), and is being planned on a 40% growth in passenger numbers. The Branch is working with numerous other Groups to draft a comprehensive response to the consultation, embracing rolling stock, station facilities and tickets, as well as the following services: Waterloo to Exeter, Weymouth, and Portsmouth via Guildford; Lymington-Southampton; Portsmouth-Salisbury, and the Island and Alton Lines. They would also like the Totton-Hythe and Swanage branches reopened, as well as Rail-Link bus services integrated with national rail ticketing.

They also invite consideration of new routes from Weymouth-Salisbury via Westbury, and Yeovil to Reading via Salisbury, as well as a metro service radiating from the Solent conurbation. However, it is recognised that many service improvements would depend on infrastructure works outside both the bidders' control and the length of the franchise, as well as, in some cases, an extension of permissive working, ie admitting a train into a block section already occupied by another.

One operational issue that they have identified is the variation of procedure when two portions of a train (both carrying passengers) are combined. On Southern, the second portion stops briefly to allow passengers to alight before attaching to the front train, whereas on SWT the doors are not released until the attachment has been made, which can take up to 3 minutes. This is particularly galling at Portsmouth Harbour, where the extra time can make the difference between catching the ferry to Ryde, or having to wait an hour for the next one.

CLASS 700

2016 will see the gradual introduction of Class 700 stock on the Thameslink route. Railfuture has drafted a critique of this design, which has been optimised for rapid ingress/egress. Here is the link: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1616-Standing-Room-Only>. For the services from Moorgate to Welwyn GC, Hertford North and Stevenage starting in 2018 (when the hourly off-peak extension to Letchworth is withdrawn), a variant of this design has been ordered that includes the 13Amp and USB power points throughout, which are so conspicuously absent from the Regional design, where the need is so much greater!

CONSULTATION ON RAIL REGULATION

Regarding changes that might be required in the remit and governance of ORR, considering the new status of Network Rail, one member commented that "there needs to be a continuing body (such as ORR) to rule on issues such as track access for "Open Access" operators...Placing these responsibilities with the DfT or Network Rail could leave the Government free to discriminate against such Operators, in order to protect the Franchised operators."

RAIL MAGAZINE EDITOR AWAITS YOUR INVITATION

Nigel Harris, Managing Editor of Rail Magazine, intends to mark the 21st anniversary of his editorial team with a number of initiatives. To start the ball rolling, he wants to get out and about with regular columnist and Railfuture President Christian Wolmar to meet railway groups around the country.

"If any groups, companies, societies or clubs fancy getting together with Christian and me for an evening of railway chat, please email me via nigel.harris@bauermedia.co.uk. We're up for doing at least one of these evenings a month, or we could do corporate daytime sessions. We'd like to travel to all corners of the country to meet and talk with railwaymen and women, plus Rail readers and contributors. If this idea has 'legs', I'll see if I can find someone to chair and referee the to-and-fro between Wolmar and I. So, over to you! A daytime company session? An evening club or society meeting? It would be great to meet as many of you as possible."

...and now the rest of the news ...

The Department for Transport (DfT) and Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DDAC) have updated the List of Rail Vehicles Built or Refurbished to Modern Accessibility Standards: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-rail-vehicles-built-or-refurbished-to-modern-accessibility-standards>

Commuters in Leeds will enjoy quicker, easier journeys following the opening of a new £20 million southern entrance to the city's railway station. Situated over the River Aire on the south side of the station, the £20.4 million entrance includes a brand new concourse, escalators, stairs and lifts to improve accessibility, and new cycle storage for easier, connected journeys from door to door.

The 29-mile route between Ely and Peterborough has been designated as a 'community rail service'. Councillor Simon King, Chairman of the Hereward Line Community Rail Partnership observed that, in the 3 years since its launch, the CRP had already achieved a great deal, both in securing better train services and improving facilities at local stations. Having this more formal status would undoubtedly help them build on those achievements. (Hopefully, including the Railfuture campaign to reopen the Wisbech branch, with a Cambridge service via March, Manea and Ely – Ed.)

ScotRail has launched a new £5 Advance fare - its biggest discount ever. Discounts will be offered on a first come, first served basis - meaning greater savings for customers who book in advance. On certain routes, up to five levels of Advance fares can now be reserved, against only two previously.

Passengers travelling between Gatwick Airport and London are now able to 'touch in and out' with the introduction of pay as you go using Oyster and contactless cards as new payment methods. The new technology is available for Southern, Gatwick Express and Thameslink services from London to Gatwick Airport, and on Great Western services between Gatwick Airport and Redhill. Ticket facilities at 5 other stations along the route — Horley, Salfords, Earlswood, Redhill and Merstham — have also been upgraded to support pay as you go.

Transport Focus reports that GWR has proposed changes to the ticket office opening hours at 43 of its stations, 35 in the Transport Focus area, and 8 in the London TravelWatch area. Comments on the proposals are invited respectively via stakeholders@transportfocus.org.uk, with "GWR" and the name of the relevant station in the subject line, or enquiries@londontravelwatch.org.uk, with 'GWR ticket office changes' in the subject line.

...and finally

Many station names are mispronounced, both by pre-recorded systems and train conductors. Among the examples cited are Stow on the Borders line, which should rhyme with "wow", not "toe"; Sowerby Bridge in Yorkshire, which locals pronounce "Sore-bee"; Man-ee-uh for Main-ee (Manea), and Ee-lie for Ely.

EVENTS

Events that may be of interest to RUG members are listed below.

Further events are shown in the [Events listing on the Railfuture website](#)

Coloured blobs indicate the various types of event...

- National & regional rail events.
- Railfuture (Rf) events (rail user group representatives are welcome to attend).
- Local Group events.

January 2016

- 23. January 2016. Saturday. Railfuture Yorkshire Branch joint meeting (with Harrogate Line Supporters), Cedar Court Hotel, **Harrogate** from 13:00. Guest speaker: Transport Minister and local MP, Andrew Jones. Booking essential. nina.smith@railfuture.org.uk
- 28. Thursday. Minehead Rail Link Group meeting from 19:00 at the Marston Lodge Hotel, St Michael's Road, Minehead TA24 5JP. contact@mineheadchamberofcommerce.co.uk
- 29. Friday. Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways AGM. Guest speaker: Author and Railwatch columnist Chris Austin. Halo Cafe, 141 Gloucester Road, Bishopstone, Bristol BS7 8BA. 18.00. <http://www.fosbr.org.uk/>
- 30. Saturday. Railfuture Severnside branch meeting from 14:00 in Meeting Room 3 at the Cheese & Grain Community Centre, Market Yard, Frome BA11 1BE. Joint meeting with the North Somerset Railway campaign group. Details: severnside@railfuture.org.uk

February

- 1. Monday. Railway Correspondence and Travel Society, Thames Valley branch. "Great Western electrification". **Didcot** Civic Hall, OX11 7JN. 19.30.
- 3. Wednesday. West Midlands rail franchise consultation, public meetings: **Coventry** station, 15.30-18.00; 9 Feb, **Birmingham** Snow Hill, 11.00-13.30 and New Street, 15.30-18.00; 12 Feb, **London** Euston 15.30-18.00; 16 Feb, **Crewe**, 15.30-18.00; 18 Feb, **Stafford**, 15.30-18.00; 24 Feb, **Northampton**, 10.00-12.30 and **Worcester** Foregate, 15.30-18.00; 1 Mar, **Walsall**, 15.30-18.00; and 9 Mar, **Liverpool** Lime Street, 15.00-17.30.
- 8. Monday. Bexhill Rail Action Group meet at Hastings Direct, **Collington**. 19.00-21.00. <http://www.bexhillrailaction.org.uk/>. Also 14 Mar, 11 Apr, 9 May, 13 Jun, 11 Jul, 8 Aug, 12 Sep, 10 Oct, 12 Nov. The December meeting will be an informal Christmas meal at a local hostelry.
- 9. Tuesday. **Cardiff** University Institution of Engineering and Technology, CF24 3AA. "Electrification from London to Cardiff and Swansea". 17.30 for 18.00 - 19.30.

- 11. Thursday. NorthWest TravelWatch Conference, Offices of Transport for Greater **Manchester**: admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk
- 11. Thursday. London and South East Region, Sussex & Coastway division, **Eastbourne**, 18.00. londonsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk
- 13. Saturday. Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Assn meets at the Cambrian Hotel, **Aberystwyth** from 11:45. sarpa@sarpa.info. Also at the Unicorn, **Caersws** from 18:30 on 1 March.
- 15. Monday. Friends of the Lymington-Brockenhurst Line AGM. 19:30 at the Community Centre, Cannon Street, **Lymington**. <http://www.lymington-brockenhurstcrp.co.uk/friends.asp>
- 16. Tuesday. Chesham & District Transport Users Group, **Chesham** Town Hall from 19:30. <http://www.cdtug.org/>. Also 5 April, 17 May, 21 June, 9 August, 20 September, 25 October and 13 December.
- 18. Thursday. North West Branch AGM, Mechanics Centre, Princess Street, **Manchester** M1 6DD 10.30. northwest@railfuture.org.uk (**NB change of date and venue**)
- 20. Saturday. East Suffolk Travellers' Association, Methodist Church Hall, East Green, **Southwold**, 14:00. Also 14 May (AGM), **Saxmundham**, and 15 October in **Woodbridge**.
- 20. Saturday. London and South East Region, Kent division, 18.00. londonsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk
- 24. Wednesday. Policy-UK conference "UK Future Rail Network". **London**. 08.30-13.00.
- 26. Friday. Rail Summit: upgrade of rail network in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. **Downham Market**
- 27. Saturday. East Anglia Branch AGM, Friends Meeting House in **Bury St Edmunds** from 14:00. eastanglia@railfuture.org.uk

March

- 9. Wednesday. London and South East Region, Eastern division meeting, **Stratford**. 18.30. londonsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk. Also 11 May.
- 10. Thursday. London and South East Region, Sussex & Coastway and Surrey divisions, joint meeting, 18.00 at **Haywards Heath**.
- 12. Saturday. Wessex Branch AGM in **Winchester**. wessex@railfuture.org.uk
- 14 & 15. Association of Community Rail Partnerships, <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>: DfT Designated Line Seminar, **Norwich**. Also 11 May, Community Rail in the City; 1 Jun, Station Adoption Seminar; 13 Jul, Members Seminars North; 20 Jul, Members Seminars South; 29 Sep, Community Rail Awards, **Southport**
- 15, Tuesday, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton RUG, 7:30-9:00, Elin Way Sheltered Housing Room, **Meldreth**. Also 15 June at **Foxton** Village Hall.
- 16. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton line meet at the Sloop, **Barton-u-Humber** from 18:00 for 20:00. enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk. (Also 18 May and 21 September at the No 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes** from 19:00.)
- 19. Saturday. Lincolnshire Branch AGM, at **Saxilby** Methodist Church. lincolnshire@railfuture.org.uk

April

- 7. Thursday. London and South East Branch, Sussex & Coastway division meeting. 18.00. Also 5 May, 2 June.
- 16. Saturday. AGM of the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line in the Hallmark Hotel, **Carlisle** at 11:15 for 11:45. Guest speakers pm from Northern Rail and the Campaign for Borders Rail <http://www.foscl.org.uk/>
- 16. Saturday. Railfuture Devon & Cornwall AGM at Unitarian Church, Notte Street, Plymouth PL1 2AQ. 13.30-16.15. devon-cornwall@railfuture.org.uk
- 19. Tuesday. Bedford-Bletchley Rail Users Association AGM.
- 23. Saturday. London and South East Branch AGM. 14.00. Preceded by open morning meeting with guest speakers. Details to be confirmed.

Further Ahead

- 21 May. Saturday. Railfuture AGM, **Milton Keynes** from 10:00 for 10:45. Guest speaker on East West Rail. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>
- 18 June. Saturday. Summer Conference at the Scottish Mining Museum, **Newtongrange**, 10:00 for 10:45-17.00. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>
- 12 November. Saturday. Rail User Conference at the Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, **Birmingham**, 10:00 for 10:45. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

Please say if you no longer want to receive Rail User Express, or if someone else in your organisation wishes to be included on the circulation list.

This bulletin has been sent by...

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