

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

Number 32 - March 2016

Yorkshire **railfuture**

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

Transport Minister Speaks at Annual General Meeting By Mark Parry



Picture by Brian Dunsby. From left to right: Nina Smith (Chair), David Horne (Managing Director, Virgin Trains East Coast), Chris Hyomes (Vice Chair), Andrew Jones (MP Harrogate & Knaresborough & Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport).

Transport Minister and Harrogate MP Andrew Jones addressed us at our Branch Annual General Meeting on 23 January 2015, along with David Horne, the Managing Director of Virgin Trains East Coast.

Andrew Jones began, using the following notes:

It is over 150 years since the north helped pioneer the railway.....which created the first Northern Powerhouse. We have made a renewed commitment....to build a world class railway for the north that will....

- Transform connectivity and link up northern cities;
- Speed up journeys and improve performance;
- And make the new Northern Powerhouse a reality.

Railfuture – Yorkshire Branch Meeting – 9 April 2016

13:00 Saturday Swarthmore Centre, Leeds with buffet

Speaker - Alex Hynes - See flyer for more details

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First, we're finding the right franchise partners who share our vision to transform services for passengers and before Christmas we announced two new contracts... Northern and TransPennine, who will together oversee a £1.2 billion programme of investment. Among the benefits will be 500 new carriages with room for 40,000 more passengers into the north's five biggest cities every weekday. Also an extra 2000 rail services a week along with the scrapping of the antiquated and unpopular Pacer trains.

Rail commuters into Leeds will see an almost 52% increase in seats in the morning peak on TransPennine Express trains and a 40% increase in capacity on Northern trains. Bradford will get new direct links to Liverpool, Manchester Airport, Wakefield, Sheffield, Chesterfield and Nottingham using brand new trains. While York will benefit from faster trains to Liverpool and Manchester, and more trains to Newcastle, Hull and Scarborough.

We are continuing to invest in the infrastructure too by completing the Northern Hub and modernising stations. Work to electrify the Transpennine line has resumed after Network Rail's upgrade plan was reorganised and we expect the scheme to be complete by 2022. It will mean faster journeys and more capacity transforming services for passengers across the north.

A new body, Rail North Limited, representing 29 northern local authorities, will take joint-control of the new franchise contracts, to be managed from Leeds. But on a wider scale, the creation of Transport for the North represents a radical devolving of powers away from Whitehall so the north has control of its own transport destiny. Work is currently underway to put Transport for the North on a statutory footing. Transport for the North will also have access to a new national transport development fund earmarked for schemes like those proposed by the Chancellor last summer: the Northern Powerhouse Rail and an east-west high-speed rail network from Liverpool to Hull; offering dramatically reduced journey times and improved frequencies between the great cities of the north.

There are many other rail schemes in Yorkshire I could talk about. I recently visited Leeds Station for example, to see the stunning new southern entrance. There are the new intercity express trains for the East Coast Mainline - and then there's HS2 which we're due to start building next year. We've spoken at length about the transformational benefits that HS2 will bring to the North, but now the focus is moving towards individual cities. HS2 Ltd is working closely with Network Rail and Leeds City Council to design and deliver a long-term, integrated rail plan for the city. On 30 November 2015 Sir David Higgins published his "*Yorkshire Hub*" report setting out his recommendation for a new hub station in Leeds. It's really encouraging that the report has got the backing of Leeds City Council, local authorities across West Yorkshire, the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership, the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, and Network Rail.

So to conclude: in the last Parliament we made a pledge to build a modern transport system for the north and to create a new Northern Powerhouse. Now we are starting to deliver on those pledges. The two new rail franchises, upgrading the Transpennine line and brand new trains are just the start. The goal is to develop a rail network in the north of England that can compare with any other region across Europe.

After questions to Andrew Jones, David Horne followed.

David Horne, of Virgin Trains East Coast, showed a video of the launching of the new Virgin service. They took over a good business with good customer service, but they are refreshing this to keep it at its best. Passenger demand dropped over the decades until the mid-1990's, since then there has been huge growth. But Virgin's West Coast route has grown faster than the East Coast, and they want to repeat the transformation made in the West on our East Coast line.

This transformation will include 65 new Hitachi trains able to run at 140 miles per hour. They have plans to improve ticketing and catering, and to serve Sunderland, Middlesbrough and Huddersfield. However, in the meantime, the existing trains need to keep going for another 3 to 4 years, so a refurbishment programme is going ahead.

They recently cut 10% off their standard anytime fares and watched the demand for their services grow. A "low fare finder" page has been introduced on their website, and later in 2016 new technology will be launched to make buying tickets simpler and easier.

Of course Virgin would say how good they are, but what do others say. Well the Institute of Customer Service say Virgin is the top performing rail operator. They are also rated in the top 50 Employers.

Staff now have i-phones to help them serve customers and there is a new team of regional managers. There are 3,100 staff across Great Britain with their main base in York. There will be new services introduced in 2019 using new trains, with 3 trains an hour from Leeds, one of which will be a 2 hour journey, and a similar offering from York.

Our affiliated Harrogate Supporters Group supported Virgin's increase of services from Harrogate which will now get a 2 hourly service.

Finally we held our Branch Annual General Meeting:

All of the existing committee was re-elected with the addition of Steve Brady as the Technical Engineering Officer. The list of officers is on page 7.

Pontefract Civic Society Disappointed

by Peter Cookson

Our belated response to the Arriva Franchise is one of considerable disappointment. It seems to be the same old story of good services getting better and poorer services remaining poor. The Pontefract area remains as isolated as ever. Of the Country's relatively small number of unusable services, we have not one, but two! It is tempting to paraphrase Oscar Wilde - to suffer one such service is unfortunate, but to suffer two seems downright careless. There is no suggestion of improvement to either, but it could have been so different.

The proposal to introduce a new hourly Scarborough-York service should surely have been incorporated into the useless Dearne Valley service to produce an hourly Scarborough-Sheffield direct service. There is very little intermediate population served between York and Scarborough and this extension would have opened it up to a much larger population and solved the Sheffield-Pontefract-York problem at the same time. The outcome for Scarborough would be hourly direct services to both Leeds and Sheffield, the principal cities of West and South Yorkshire. Now that would have been an improvement in connectivity!

And then there is the Leeds-Goole service. It is interesting to compare the Leeds-Selby service with the Leeds-Goole service, which is very similar in character. The former (with Trans-Pennine Express) supports two trains per hour, while the latter supports one train per day and yet serves a population three times as large! Moreover, the Goole line has at its centre (Glasshoughton) one of the North's largest visitor attractions drawing in some 7m visitors per year and soon to rise to about 10m when the new rugby ground and retail centre open. What carefully constructed business case could conclude that this is a satisfactory situation- and yet there is no hint of improvement to the Goole service?

Finally, the service that this document appears to have forgotten: the Invitation to Tender specified the extension of the Huddersfield-Wakefield service to Castleford, which is good as far as it goes, but why terminate there? It should be extended the extra three miles to take in Glasshoughton and Pontefract, which could be done without extra resources! The principal economic axis of the Five Towns is Pontefract, Glasshoughton and Castleford and it makes no sense to ignore two-thirds of it by terminating at Castleford. This short extension to create a Huddersfield-Wakefield-Castleford-Pontefract service would double the service at Glasshoughton at a stroke and at virtually no extra cost. We regret to say that many opportunities have been missed and we are not impressed.

The Pontefract Civic Society responded to the Invitation to Tender for the Northern Franchise and to Rail North's Emerging Rail Strategy.

The View from the Esk Valley

by Alan Williams

Here we go again! No mention of the improvements to the service on the Esk Valley Line, which, like Whitby itself, is most certainly in North Yorkshire! The new franchise provides the additional early morning commuter service from Whitby for which the Community Rail Partnership has been pressing and a year-round Sunday service (at the moment it is summer only). The franchisee is also asked to recognise that there is Section 106 funding in place for additional infrastructure work to allow up to three further daily services to be provided during the life of the franchise.

The mention of reopening the Malton - Pickering line needs to be put into context. The Department for Transport have made clear that the re-establishment of a level crossing across the A170 in the centre of Pickering, necessary for through services, would not be permitted. Thus, any new line would have to await the construction of the Pickering by-pass which isn't at present on anybody's agenda. Also, North Yorkshire Moors Railway's (NYMR) recently-retired General Manager made clear that NYMR would not welcome national network trains on its tracks between Pickering and Grosmont. Quite apart from the need to increase line speed, there are no spare paths.

Pickering Council may be keen to re-open the line (ironic given that their predecessors didn't even want NYMR in the town!) but Whitby Town Council simply want a faster, direct service to York. An alternative option, supported by both the Community Rail Partnership and (as you can imagine!) by NYMR is re-opening of the nine or so mile line from Battersby Junction through Stokesley to the Middlesbrough - Northallerton line south of Yarm. Most of the trackbed is still extant but it would require a new southward curve towards York. This would allow direct services from Whitby and all Esk Valley stations to Northallerton and York, with the present services coming down from Nunthorpe terminating in a restored bay at Battersby to provide cross-platform connections to Whitby.

Alan Williams writes as the Chairman of the Esk Valley Railway Development Company

Community Rail

by Mark Parry

Arriva Rail North, our new Northern Rail franchisee from 1st April, is to establish a new community rail group to provide support and advice for their engagement with community rail partnerships. This new group will be called the Community Rail Executive Group and will consist of 15 industry professionals along plus local community representatives and sustainability experts. Arriva hope to engage closely with local communities, work with them to deliver rail projects and provide funding for community activities.

The group will be chaired by our friend, Arriva's Professor Paul Salveson, who set up the successful Association of Community Rail Partnerships in 1997. Arriva's Managing Director, Chris Burchell, hopes to build on the work of the 19 community rail partnerships and over 30 station friends groups the new franchise is inheriting.

Settle to Carlisle

by Mark Parry

The Yorkshire Post reported, on 12 February, the landslip which has led to the closure of this line between Carlisle and Appleby in early 9 February. Network Rail could only say that it would take several months to resolve this. The landslip was at Eden Brows and involved 500,000 tonnes of earth causing damage to the tracks. Trains will only run from Leeds to Appleby and buses will fill the gap for the rest of the journey.

The Friends of the Settle to Carlisle Line are disappointed that the Line was not designated one of the new "Northern Connect" services which will connect key Cities with faster and more frequent services. Nonetheless they are looking forward to working in partnership with ARRIVA, the new franchisee for Northern services, to secure further developments for the Line. Community partnerships for rail lines are to be developed further nationally (see previous article) and the Settle to Carlisle is a possible pilot for this. The Friends are hoping this will be a key way in which they can direct the development of this iconic line.

Sheffield to Rotherham Tram Train

by Mark Parry

The Department for Transport reported on 10 December, the official unveiling of the South Yorkshire pilot tram train by Transport Minister Andrew Jones. The new trams, a variant of the existing Sheffield trams, will use both heavy and light rail tracks to link Rotherham to Sheffield. Although Tram trains are a concept long used in Germany, this is a first for the UK. This concept could help boost many of our shorter rail routes. One of their key advantages is that they can provide a link to the very centre of our

towns and cities, in this case many central Sheffield tram stops. It will be possible to make trips from tram stop to rail station and vice versa.

Before the route to Rotherham is established, the tram trains will be tested and then used on the tram network. Prior to this, the tram trains will undergo a period of testing, before being introduced on the Supertram Network. This pilot involves a partnership of the Government, South Yorkshire Transport Executive, Network Rail, Stagecoach who operate the existing Supertram and soon to be Arriva Trains North.

On the 25 November, the Sheffield Star reported on the journey of the first 37 metre long tram train from Valencia in Spain, via Santander and Southampton. Three Tram Trains an hour will run between Sheffield and Rotherham from 2017 in the Supertram Stagecoach livery and seven tram trains are required. The Railway Gazette also reported on the journey of the new vehicles.

The core objectives of the pilot, according to the South Yorkshire Passenger Executive are to:

- understand cost changes that lighter vehicles on the national network would bring;
- develop relevant technical standards and examine the practicality of tram-train operation;
- gauge passenger perception;
- understand the technical and operational challenges.

The Railway Gazette reported that the Transport Works & Act Order was approved so the 400 metre Tinsley Chord between the Supertram network and a Network Rail freight line at Meadowhall could be built. The freight line is to be electrified at the tramway's 750 Volt Direct Current, and the tram trains will be able to run under 25 kilo-Volt wires should this be required in the future. There are to be new platforms at Rotherham Central and Parkgate along with 160 metres of new track. The wheel profile of the tram trains is different to the existing trams and so the existing tram track needs to be modified.

Leeds Bradford Airport Link – Road or Rail?

by Mark Parry

Leeds City Council has opened a consultation on three options to link Leeds with the Leeds Bradford International Airport. The problem is all three options are road based. A familiar sequence has begun, we increase road capacity at one point, which encourages more traffic and this creates greater congestion at other points in the road network. So we then have to increase road capacity at these new pinch points. By building a mass transit option first, we could attract passengers off the roads and avoid this vicious circle of increasing car traffic.

There have been several suggestions for a rail link. The Harrogate Line Supporters Group propose, "a Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway ... above the Bramhope Tunnel southern portal, where the existing Airport Long-Stay Car Park shuttle bus could easily pick-up or drop-off rail passengers arriving or departing by air. This is much more economical and technically feasible solution than suggestions for a new heavy rail line from Horsforth to the Airport and on to Guiseley. This station could also serve many commuters into Leeds." Meanwhile the West and North Yorkshire Campaign for Better Transport are pushing for a rail link and suggesting, as an example, a link from Horsforth up to the Airport with an estimated costing coming in below two of the road options.

The road consultation has generated much opposition from local politicians, local residents as well as transport groups. Back in July, the Ilkley Gazette reported the concerns of the Rawdon Greenbelt Action Group who do not want the greenbelt land damaged by new road building. The Campaign for Better Transport refused to complete the consultation form as it didn't allow for a rail option, but at the time of going to press are to deliver their response suggesting a rail link would be better. In November Greg Muholland tabled an early day motion. It said there were concerns at the high cost of the road links proposed, the social and environmental impact and proposed a rail link from the Harrogate line. The Motion also highlighted that currently over 93% of journeys to the Airport are by car. By the time you read this the consultation will have closed.

On the 16 February, the Campaign for Better Transport local bus group raised this issue with Councillor Keith Wakefield, the Chair of the Transport Committee on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Councillor Wakefield

said that research into a possible rail link was being conducted, but that the gradients involved could lead to high costs for building a rail link. So, all may not be lost.

New Franchises in Brief

by Mark Parry

Much detail has appeared in the press, emails and social media about the new franchises and what they are to implement. Some of these aspirations will leave some rail lines little affected, but others transformed. The following is a brief outline of the situation from 1 April 2016.

Arriva Rail North

The franchise is awarded to only ARRIVA. They can be contacted:

Web site: www.arrivarailnorth.org

Email: enquiries@arrivarailnorth.org

Telephone: 0333 005 1948

Managing Director: Alex Hynes

The franchise will begin on 1 April 2016 and last for 9 years. They have already placed an order for 281 new carriages from CAF in Spain, these will start arriving in October 2018 and will replace the Pacers. Arriva Rail North will introduce 12 enhanced city links in 2019 and 45 more stations will be staffed.

Transpennine Express

The franchise is awarded to only FIRST, the former partner will no longer be involved. They can be contacted much as now:

Web site: www.TPExpress.co.uk

Email: tpecustomer.relations@firstgroup.com

Telephone: 0345 600 1671

Managing Director: Leo Goodwin

New franchise contact – Mike Katz – Head of Public Affairs

Email: mike.katz@firstgroup.com

Telephone: 020 7291 0514

The franchise will begin on 1 April 2016 and last for 7 years with a possible 2 year extension. They intend to acquire 44 new 5 car trains to be introduced from 2017 (really?) to 2020. These will be capable of reaching 125 miles per hour. 29 of the class 185s will be refurbished and retained in the Franchise.

Branch Chair's Report

by Nina Smith

This is probably my shortest ever Chair's column. I'm going to New Zealand early tomorrow (10 February) and the amount of planning and organisation has been astronomic. I still have to pack! It's my first trip overseas for eleven years so I'm hoping it lives up to expectations!

Since the last Yorkshire Rail Campaigner, we learned which companies would be operating the Northern and TransPennine Express franchises. I was very pleased with the outcome. Arriva impressed me greatly during the consultation period and were the most pro-active bidder in engaging with stakeholders. I have high hopes for their stewardship of the franchise. There are many plusses in their successful bid compared to the Invitation to Tender; we look forward to these being implemented, and it is fantastic news that 283 carriages have already been ordered. The appointment of Alex Hynes as Managing Director designate is a welcome and shrewd move. Alex is young, energetic and forward looking, and has done much in the past two years at the helm of Northern Rail and we look forward to a fruitful working relationship with him and his team.

First Group have been awarded the TransPennine express franchise, having put in a bid with considerable growth, including new 125mph trains and extending Newcastle services to Morpeth, Berwick and Edinburgh. The new Train Operating Company will build on the considerable success of the First/Keolis partnership, which in many ways has been a victim of its own success such as been the increase in passenger number. A young new Managing

Director designate, Leo Goodwin, has been appointed and again we look forward to a fruitful working relationship with his team.

We will continue to make the new Train Operating Companies aware of where we consider further service enhancements are necessary, not least in the Pontefract/Castleford/Glasshoughton area. What is now needed is for a really strong programme of infrastructure enhancements that enable the Train Operating Companies to deliver ever-better services.

Our last branch Meeting, which was also the Annual General Meeting, was one of our best ever. We were fortunate to have two high calibre speakers. Andrew Jones MP, Under Secretary of State for Transport, impressed as a man who will listen and who is committed to significant future improvements to railways and rail services in the North of England. He was also refreshingly candid in his answering of questions, something that cannot always be said for Government ministers. He also stayed to listen to the next presentation, which was from David Horne, Managing Director of Virgin Trains East Coast, who cogently put across his company's philosophy, its commitment to customer service and its plans to increase the number of both services and destinations. The meeting happened thanks to generous financial help and organisation from the Harrogate Chamber of Trade and Commerce, and we are very grateful to them and their Chief Executive Brian Dunsby for this.

Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

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.harrogateline.org
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	https://www.facebook.com/minstersrailcampaign/info?tab=overview
Selby and District Rail Users' Group	http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/
Settle-Carlisle Line, Friends of the	www.foscl.org.uk
Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership	www.selrap.org.uk
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: nhrasons@googlemail.com

Branch Key Contacts

Chair: Nina Smith 14 Bank Terrace Hebden Bridge HX7 6BU nhrasons@gmail.com	Vice-Chair: Chris Hyomes 12 Monument Lane Pontefract WF8 2BE chris.hyomes@railfuture.org.uk	Branch President: Mike Crowhurst 0113 286 4844
Parliamentary Liaison Officer: Graham Collett graham.collett@railfuture.org.uk	Newsletter Editor: Mark Parry 07941 642349 Mark.Parry61@virginmedia.com	Membership & Distribution: Paul Colbeck, 14 St Giles Way Copmanthorpe York YO23 3XT Paul.colbeck@railfuture.org.uk
Secretary/Conference Organiser: Dr. Mike Troke Michael.Yorkshire@talktalk.net 07947 062632	Treasurer: Ian Wood 11 Langdale Drive Ackworth Wakefield WF7 7PX ianwood@hotmail.co.uk	Assistant Treasurer: Geoff Wood, 6, Westfield Terrace, Wakefield, WF1 3RD esperanto11@hotmail.co.uk
The views in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of Railfuture.	Technical Engineering Officer: Steve Brady, 07973 481516 Arhingtonsag@aol.com	Freight Lead: Tony Ross, 01482 842150 tony@ross53.karoo.co.uk

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 Railfuture web-sites: www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Yorkshire%20Branch>
 National Twitter Accounts: www.twitter.com/Railfuture

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Membership News:

Paul Colbeck – Membership Secretary

The Yorkshire branch would like to welcome the following members who joined recently:

Mr Michael Robinson of **York**, Mr Steven Brady of **Otley**, Dr Peter Haywood of **Dronfield**, Mr M J Dolan of **Harrogate**, Mr David Rockliff of **Knaresborough & Esk Valley Development Co.**

On a sad note we lost: Brian Slater of York, Brian Line of Doncaster & Steve Waring of Bridlington
Railfuture Yorkshire sends condolences to their family and friends.

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 33**) will be out in June 2016. If you would like to have your news included please email material, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com to arrive by **Saturday 7 May 2016**.

Alternatively call or text 07941 642349.

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

- **29 March 2016 Tuesday 19:30:** Campaign for Better Transport Rail Group – The Grove Inn, next to Bridgewater Place tower, Leeds.
- **9 April 2016 Saturday 13:00:** Railfuture Yorkshire Branch meeting – The Swarthmore Centre, Leeds – See flyer for more details.
- **12 April 2016 Tuesday 19:30:** Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Annual General Meeting – Oxford Place Methodist Mission next to Leeds Town Hall.
- **21 May 2016 Saturday 10:00 for 10:45:** Railfuture's Annual General Meeting – Milton Keynes. Guest Speaker on East West Rail.
- **18 June 2016 Saturday 10:00 for 10:45:** Railfuture Summer Conference – Scottish Mining Museum, Newtongrange.
- **12 November 2016 Saturday 10:00 for 10:45:** Rail User Conference – Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham.

Attending our branch meeting in the Swarthmore Centre in Leeds on 9 April? Want your lunch in the Café? Then don't forget to order your food, drinks don't need to be ordered. The Flyer has full details. You need to contact the Editor on [Thursday 31 March](#) to order.

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