

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

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railfuture *Yorkshire*

East Coast Route Renationalised – A Better Deal for Passengers?

by Graham Collett

It finally happened at midnight on November 13th. National Express East Coast was no more! The cash had run out and Transport Secretary Lord Adonis pulled the plug – a month earlier than the rumoured date of December 12th. As I boarded my train at York station, whilst en route to the Corby Conference, staff were putting up posters announcing the change and the NXEC branding on the carriages had already been removed. So now the trains are run by the government as East Coast – part of the Department of Transport's "Directly Operated Railways" (DOR) - for two years until a new franchisee can be found.



From the passengers' point of view, there are some hopeful signs. Lord Adonis announced a number of improvements to stations and train services on 13 November <http://nds.coi.gov.uk/clientmicrosite/Content/Detail.aspx?ClientId=202&NewsAreaId=2&ReleaseID=408536&SubjectId=36> These included: the end of seat reservation charges from January 1, 2010; £12 million of station improvements (including new cycle spaces) at Newcastle, York, and Peterborough; a review of on-board catering with a view to improvements from next year; better standards of cleanliness on board trains and at East Coast managed stations; further service improvements including a new Saturday evening service from King's Cross to Leeds and an additional Sunday morning service from Leeds to King's Cross; and the withdrawal of the planned gating of York station (see page 4). (continued on page 2)

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 16 January: Branch Meeting at Dewsbury (2pm) - see page 4 for details

Wednesday 3 February: Lecture by Peter Cookson on Bradford /Pontefract /Wakefield to London service 7.30pm Bishopgarth Police HQ, Wakefield - details from Geoff Wood (Tel 01924 371207)

Saturday 13 March: Branch AGM and Lunch, Knottingley with guest speaker Alan Whitehouse – details in February YRC

Sat 8 May: Railway Development Society Ltd (Railfuture) AGM Wrexham

Press Date for February 2010 issue

Contributions in the form of articles, letters or news snippets will be welcomed by the Editor. Please email (preferred) collettgh@talktalk.net or post to: Graham Collett (YRC 7), 16 Wilstrop Farm Rd Copmanthorpe York YO23 3RY by **Saturday 16th January**.



The celebrations included a railway drama on platform 2 at Selby Station (photo courtesy of the Selby Times)

Support Grows for Ministers Rail Campaign

by Tony Ross and Graham Collett

The Bridlington Hotel and Guest House Association are the latest organisation to join the Ministers Rail Campaign and will now work to advocate the case for the restoration of the line. George McManus, campaign chairman, said: "We believe reconnecting the resort with its traditional market by a direct link to the West Riding could bring an enormous boost to tourism".

Other recent individual members include **the new vicar of Beverley Minster, the Reverend Jeremy Fletcher** and **the Business Secretary, Lord Mandelson**. George McManus, commenting on Lord Mandelson's decision to join, said "His support along with that of such significant figures as the Transport Secretary, Lord Adonis and the Home Secretary Alan Johnson cannot be underestimated. This is great news." (Our thanks to the Ministers Rail Campaign www.minstersrail.org.uk and the Hull Daily Mail <http://www.thisishullandeastriding.co.uk/>)

Selby Rail Users Celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the opening of the Leeds to Selby Railway

by Reg French and Graham Collett

Selby Rail Users Group joined rail staff, teachers and nearly 100 children - many in Victorian dress - to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Leeds to Selby railway on **22nd September**. The celebrations included a railway drama with old railway songs, performed at the new amphitheatre on the river bank and also on platform 2 at Selby station.

RUG members and Booking Office staff were in old railway uniform and a raffle for the "Save the Children Fund" raised more than £200. Reg French (Selby RUG Secretary) said "A further 27 children, teachers, myself and a couple of colleagues travelled on the 10.43 train from Selby to Leeds to be welcomed by the deputy Lord Mayor. Northern Rail labelled the coach windows as the '*Anniversary Train*' and issued anniversary tickets for the children to keep. At Leeds station Network Rail had arranged a tour of the station including the old Control Room and Offices deep down in the Victorian Quarter. We were also provided with a buffet lunch and TPE reserved seats on the 14.38 to Selby." There has been considerable Press Publicity from the event and a souvenir brochure has been produced.

Freight Update

DB Schenker Rail has been awarded a new rail freight haulage contract to transport coal from Kellingley colliery to Ferrybridge Power Station. The trains involved (one or two per day) will be the heaviest ever to operate from the site (our thanks to Tony Ross for this report).

East Coast Route Renationalised (from page 1)

Lord Adonis has also been turning his attention to fares and filling empty seats "Adonis pushes for cheaper, faster east coast railway service" - Guardian 30 November

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/30/east-coast-railway-fares>. It seems that he has ordered a review of ticket prices and "expects to slash fares as well as simplifying the swath of ticket types on offer". He is also hoping that a faster - 4 hour - journey can be offered between London and Edinburgh in peak hours to compete with the airlines.

If the Adonis proposals all go ahead, the outlook under government control will seem a lot rosier for users. Make the most of it, before a new franchisee sees the route as a cash cow and takes control in 2 years time!

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Yorkshire Rail Campaigner on the Web

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki->

[index.php?page=Yorkshire%20Branch](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Yorkshire%20Branch)

Best Wishes for Christmas to all our Readers

Chairman's Column by Chris Hyomes

Since the publication by Network Rail <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/5892.aspx> of its preferred high speed route (HS2) to Scotland via the North West, the railway press has been dominated by the high speed rail story, with everyone having an opinion on everything from the precise routing to the siting of maintenance depots. It is a pity that, while the railway's latest must-have toy is being discussed in such detail, the problems of today's railway system appear forgotten!

Network Rail's plans for major electrification of our network

http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/rus%20documents/route%20utilisation%20strategies/network/working%20group%204%20-%20electrification%20strategy/networkrus_electrification.pdf seem to have virtually gone unnoticed, even though they would cost much less and could be put into action much sooner without the detailed planning and consultation that HS2 will require. Sadly - apart from electrification of the Midland Main Line to Sheffield - there are no other routes in the core scheme to benefit Yorkshire. However, the North TransPennine routes from Manchester to York and Hull appear as further options.

At least the campaign to save Woodhead <http://savethewoodheadtunnel.blogspot.com/> is still going strong, as is SELRAP www.selrap.org.uk - the campaign to reopen the Skipton to Colne line - with a third successful major conference taking place last month.

The only positive good news for the Region is that Grand Central are on track to start operating the new Bradford – Halifax - Wakefield – Pontefract service in May 2010.

Wakefield Kirkgate Update

by Graham Collett & Chris Hyomes

The first stage in the long overdue improvements at this station – improved CCTV coverage – is due to be finished this month. The further work includes a buzzer help-point system, improvements to the subway and better signage and is due to be completed by the end of March, subject to listed building consent being secured. The £300,000 scheme is being funded through the National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP) and follows investment by Network Rail, Northern Rail and Metro in August to resurface and remark the car park. Further funding is being sought to make improvements to the station building in order to attract tenants, remove the old canopy and installation of a footbridge and lifts.

Our thanks again to the Wakefield Express www.wakefieldexpress.co.uk for driving forward the campaign to get these much needed improvements which can't come too soon for the passengers! All we need now is for some staff to be provided. Will the new Grand Central service to London (due to start in May) be the trigger for this?

Railfuture Yorkshire New Year Meeting

Saturday 16th January 2010

**Dewsbury & District Women's Health Group, Wellington Street,
Dewsbury WF13 1LY starting at 2pm**

It is hoped to have a guest speaker from Grand Central Trains

Everyone welcome

Directions

From Dewsbury Railway Station proceed straight across the main road using the pedestrian crossing, continue ahead down Wellington Road past the **Dewsbury Reporter** building on your right, walk down the left hand side of the Reporter offices and the meeting room is there <http://www.multimap.com/s/T04FZkDi>

York Barriers: A Victory for Common Sense

Lord Adonis announced on 13 November that the plan to install automatic barriers at York Station had been dropped, in order to maintain the existing through access for non-passengers. This excellent news was welcomed by York campaigners and by those fighting a gating scheme for Sheffield Station which would create similar access difficulties.

Halifax and District Rail Action Group News by J Stephen Waring and Graham Collett

The autumn newsletter of the **Halifax & District Rail Action Group (HADRAG)** reports encouraging progress (not before time - Ed) on improvements to Halifax station. New clear glazing on the rebuilt roof lets in light making the place a lot more welcoming. Current work nearing completion is just the first phase. Northern were due to go out to tender in late August for waiting room improvements and a new retail/café unit. Toilets are included - probably attached to the enlarged waiting room on the platform. The shop/café will be next to the booking office under the modern entrance canopy, which looks even more ready for a clean-up and repaint when seen alongside the work done on the Victorian structures. Detailed plans are awaited and a planning application has yet to be made but work should begin this winter. Dare we hope everything will be complete when our London trains start? Hopefully all areas of the station will be spruced up to match this summer's job. "We expect nothing less" says their Chair, J Stephen Waring. "Full-size buses need to be able to get to the station entrance not least during periods of rail service disruption. A possible additional entrance to the station via the Eureka car park with lift/ramp access to the footbridge needs to be pursued. This could give rail users access to increased parking and get buses closer. Reinstatement of the third platform at Halifax could accommodate possible future service patterns for example terminating services, or an upper valley-Halifax-Brighouse-Leeds service reversing at Halifax." These comments were included in a written submission by HADRAG to Calderdale Council's open forum on future transport in August which fed into further working sessions.

In a refreshing (sic!) description of catering facilities at stations in the area '**Café Line**', HADRAG praise the newly opened **Whistle Stop Window** at **Sowerby Bridge station**. "Tasty morning snacks are offered from 7am on weekdays from the kiosk that's part of the new **Jubilee Refreshment Rooms** run by brothers Chris and Andrew Wright, both members of HADRAG." For details of HADRAG membership please contact: J Stephen Waring, 20 Manor Drive, Halifax HX3 0DU: js.waring@hotmail.co.uk

Late News: A New Station in a Week: Network Rail helps Flooded Town

A new station – Workington North - on the Cumbrian Coast line was opened on 30 November, so that trains could link the two halves of Workington which had been separated by the disastrous floods in the region. This simple two-platform structure was built in less than a week by Network Rail from scaffolding and planks, and is now providing a link between Northside and the main centre of Workington.

(A bit out of our Branch area, but a superb example of how quickly a new station can be opened – well done Network Rail and all concerned! – Ed)

Source: Rail News <http://www.railnews.co.uk/news/general/2009/11/30-trains-start-running-from-workington.html>