

President: Alan Whitehouse Vice-Presidents: Mike Crowhurst & Alan Williams

Branch Annual General Meeting

By Mark Parry



Paul Barnfield – photo by Mark Parry

Paul Barnfield addressed our branch meeting on 1 April in Hull. Paul is the Regional Director East, of Northern. He outlined the changes made since the new ARRIVA franchise began. These changes include the staff having new uniforms and smart phones, there being more ticket gates, and some refurbished trains are beginning to appear. Whilst transforming the business with the huge investment being made, he is keen to keep an eye on the day to day operating issues. When comparing the East Region on its own against all other train operating companies and Northern Regions, it comes out top on performance. The East Region of Northern is bigger than some train operators.

But many bigger changes are yet to come and some developments due to start in December 2017 have been put back to May 2018 because of the rolling stock situation. In the meantime, some quick wins have been identified. An extra service at 16:59 from Leeds to Castleford, the use of the Grand Central Train from Halifax and later Sheffield to Leeds services on Fridays and Saturdays have been introduced. The doubling of the Harrogate Line frequency will still go ahead in December 2017.

The Pacers will be removed from late 2018 and late 2019 as the new trains appear. 140 two and three car diesel trains and 141 three and four car electric trains should be in service by 2020. These will run up to 100 miles per hour, have air conditioning, electric seat reservation system, free wifi and closed circuit television.

... continued overleaf...

Yorkshire Railfuture Branch Meeting

Speaker: Jonathan Brown, Transport for the North's Senior Rail Strategy Officer

13:00 to 16:00 hours

Saturday, 22 July 2017 @ St. Giles's Church, Market Place, Pontefract, WF8 1AT

See flyer for more details

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The new “Northern Connect” will provide faster journeys between 5 key cities and the places in between and 90% of those trains will be new. 628 new ticket machines are on order, and in addition, there will be more stations with staff and staff available for longer hours at some stations.

Members suggested some timetable amendments and Paul will investigate the feasibility of these and reply later. Northern is looking to beyond 2020, asking themselves if they will have sufficient capacity then, should passenger numbers continue to grow.

Hope Valley

by Andrew Dyson

The Hope Valley Railway Users Group is campaigning to improve the rail service at intermediate stations along the Hope Valley Line between Sheffield and Manchester. Most of the stations lie within the Peak District National Park (Britain’s most-visited National Park) and generate passenger traffic throughout the day in the form of commuter and leisure journeys to Sheffield and Manchester, and inward tourist traffic.

The Hope Valley Line suffers from severe congestion. As well as Northern’s all-stations stopping service the line is used by Trans Pennine Express’s hourly Manchester Airport-Cleethorpes service and East Midland Trains’ hourly Norwich-Liverpool service, plus several key freight flows to and from Hope, Tunstead and Peak Forest and further afield. Consequently, the all-station stopping service operates at a two-hourly frequency during the day on Mondays to Fridays. Despite such a minimal service, four of the five stations within the national park achieve annual footfall in excess of 50,000 passengers. At Chinley and Dore & Totley where a few additional fast services stop in the morning and evening peaks, the figures are over 100,000 and nearly 150,000 respectively, giving a total annual footfall of over half a million journeys.

Improvements are on the horizon. As part of the new Northern franchise, Arriva Rail North have committed to increase the frequency of their all-station stopping service to hourly throughout the day and have recently issued their May 2018 proposed timetable for consultation. Whilst this ‘filling in the gaps’ is very welcome, capacity restraints mean that several of the new services feature skip-stopping which can be a great disincentive as walkers often travel between intermediate stations. The Hope Valley Rail Users Group (HVRUG) is making strong representations to Northern to keep skip-stopping to a minimum as they believe at least some of the skips can be eliminated.

In the medium term, further improvements may be possible following implementation of the Hope Valley Capacity Improvement Scheme (HVCIS). This scheme, first unveiled by Network Rail in 2013, seeks to accommodate three fast trains per hour, one stopping service per hour and three freight trains in every two-hour period. The main infrastructure work involves the reinstatement of double track to the single line bottleneck through Dore & Totley station, extension of the single-track Dore south curve to allow staging of longer freight trains between the Hope Valley Line and Midland Main Line, and the construction of an eastbound passing loop between Bamford and Hathersage stations. Network Rail’s original timetable for the work envisaged completion in time for the December 2018 timetable change. This now seems rather unlikely as the Department for Transport has yet to approve the Transport and Works Act Order to enable work to begin. A public inquiry into the scheme was held in May 2016, the report from which was delivered in November 2016, yet the Department for Transport remains silent!

The HVCIS gives rise to a one-off opportunity to transform the rail service in the Hope Valley. HVRUG are campaigning for the additional fast train on the line to take the form of a limited-stop service between Sheffield and Stockport, calling at Dore & Totley, Hope and Chinley, thus providing two trains per hour from these key stations. Ideally HVRUG would like to see two trains per hour at all stations and believe annual footfall figures support this objective, but accept this is unlikely to be achieved due to capacity issues – even after the HVCIS has been implemented. Hope is HVRUG’s preferred choice of primary station in the national park due to its central location in the valley and because it is the nearest station for over 40% of Hope Valley residents. In the longer term HVRUG would like to see Hope developed into a hub station where ancillary businesses such as cycle hire, catering and outdoor pursuit supplies could be encouraged to locate.

Further HVRUG objectives include a much needed improvement to the Sunday service and the provision of earlier and later trains to and from Manchester and Sheffield. Visitors to the national park are at their highest at weekends, with slightly greater numbers experienced on Sundays than on Saturdays according to Peak District National Park Authority figures. Conversely, more than 3.5 times as many passengers use the train on Saturdays (the only day of the week with an hourly service) compared to Sundays when the service is much inferior.

First trains of the day give arrivals in Sheffield and Manchester at 0657 and 0734 respectively; late in comparison to incoming services on other routes and quite inadequate for making onward connecting journeys, particularly to London. Similarly, last trains leave at 2248 and 2228 respectively; far too early to return from most evening performances in the cities. Northern's proposed May 2018 timetable has an additional later evening train from Sheffield, but none of the other shortcomings are addressed. It should be noted that Northern's stopping service is operated from the Manchester end and that the first Sheffield-Manchester stopping train of the day and the last Manchester-Sheffield are both operated by East Midlands Trains.

Although the Hope Valley Line is not officially designated as a community rail line, HVRUG is a full member of the High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership and is grateful for the support provided by the partnership. HVRUG has also been able to help with the creation of 'Friends of Stations' groups at most stations on the line, each of whom are now members of the Partnership in their own right.

The next few years promise to be interesting times for the Hope Valley Line. Sheffield and Manchester are the worst connected cities of their size and proximity in Europe in terms of transport infrastructure – by rail and especially by road. With a projected maximum of just three fast trains per hour (as compared to six on the north trans-pennine route), train lengths will be critical. Trans Pennine Express have already strengthened some peak hour services to 6-cars and delivery of new stock to other routes in 2018 will enable all service on the route to be operated using 2 x Class 185 units, effectively doubling capacity at a stroke.

The next opportunity for capacity enhancement will arise with the re-letting of the East Midlands franchise and the accompanying decision over the future of the Norwich-Liverpool service. At present this service is operated by Class 158 units as 2-cars between Norwich and Nottingham and 4-cars between Nottingham and Liverpool, with extra units attached and detached at Nottingham. This has the benefit of providing a through service between East Anglia and the North West, but is inefficient from an operating point of view and still often fails to provide sufficient capacity over the northern sections of route, particularly in the Hope Valley. Whatever decisions are taken about the future of the Norwich-Liverpool service, HVRUG sees the use of 6-car formations for all fast trains in the Hope Valley as a minimum requirement.

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or by contacting our membership secretary***

***Paul Colbeck, 14 St Giles Way, Copmanthorpe, York, YO23 3XT,
Paul.colbeck@railfuture.org.uk***

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Five Towns Frustration

by Peter Cookson

There are only two services in the Leeds City Region that are unable to support a Sunday service: these are Huddersfield - Wakefield and Wakefield - Knottingley. The reason is quite clear and it is that both are intrinsically weak, because they are too restricted in scope and offer too few journey opportunities. The new Northern franchise has addressed the latter in extending this service beyond Wakefield, to Leeds, but it has only partly addressed the former, in proposing only an extension to Castleford. This has not been thought through and the franchise document is at fault. Surely, no one who had properly considered this would have proposed a service to TERMINATE about a mile or so BEFORE reaching a major national visitor destination, when it is not necessary to do so? For the sake of an extra three miles beyond Castleford, both Glasshoughton and Pontefract can be served without the need for extra resources. The Castleford – Glasshoughton - Pontefract corridor is the central part of the Five Towns and is only served by an hourly Leeds - Knottingley service, yet the complex at Glasshoughton attracts about seven million visitors a year, while Pontefract is also an important visitor destination, with its racecourse, castle and other historical attractions. The current proposal makes no sense at all and we strongly urge that the Huddersfield - Castleford scheme should become Huddersfield – Wakefield – Castleford – Glasshoughton - Pontefract. This would make much better use of scarce resources and greatly improve the viability of this service at marginal extra cost.

Selby Update

by Terry French

May 2018 Timetable Consultations

The Group, no doubt like other rail user groups, is busy formulating its response regarding the Northern and Trans Pennine Express consultations. Overall, the view is positive with many additional services planned including more services between Selby and York, later evening services between Selby and Leeds, and a Sunday stopping service between Selby and Leeds for the first time in many years. A later last service from Leeds and York to Selby appears to be in the mix and is also warmly welcomed. The Group however does have some concerns. The hourly Trans Pennine Express Manchester to Hull service is scheduled to pick up at additional stops between Leeds and Manchester as well as Garforth, which will increase timings and not be so attractive to passengers. Also, South Milford passengers appear to have an earlier last train from Leeds, Monday to Saturday, and if so we will be campaigning for this issue to be addressed.

Paul Barnfield Guest Speaker

At the Group's May meeting members were delighted to meet Paul Barnfield, the Regional Director for the East Region at Northern. Paul delivered an interesting and informative presentation on the franchise developments with some stop press news, before taking members' questions.

Two Trains an Hour for Penistone?

by Mark Parry

The Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users Association had the Head of Investment and Planning for Rail North, Jim Bamford, speak at their November meeting. He said the target was for towns of over 70,000 people to have a half hourly service. However, the single line operation on the Penistone line would restrict this to one all stops service and one service skipping some stops each hour. The Group's newsletter pointed out that Jim Bamford had said that these improvements are not expected anytime soon!

I was fortunate in attending as a guest at this interesting Institute of Mechanical Engineers Yorkshire Region event held in Pontefract on 23 March 2017.

The meeting was addressed first by Jon Clee, High Speed 2 (HS2) Project Development Lead for Leeds Station on how HS2 services would enter Leeds and the proposed layout of the new combined station. He reminded the audience that the interim report requested by the then Chancellor (Feb2015) was not just on the transport impact of HS2 and High Speed 3 (HS3) on Leeds but was to provide a city vision as well. Since then, things had moved on and the importance of interchange had been recognised – “A super-hub that works for the Region”. He stressed that the new station had to be forward-looking, with growth of 24% to 114% in rail passengers expected by 2043. It was a great public realm opportunity and they had to make sure that the new station fitted in with the City’s plans for developing the surrounding area.

As members may be aware, the current proposal is for the HS2 platforms (5 are currently envisaged) to be situated at right angles to the existing platforms at the same level. It was possible that Northern Powerhouse Rail (formerly HS3) could use some of the HS2 infrastructure for Sheffield to Leeds services. If that happens, only 4 platforms may be needed.

Jon was followed by a speaker from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) who echoed Jon’s point about taking a much wider view of the new station. Leeds City Council see the South Bank area as an opportunity to develop the city and have major plans for this. They want to move away from Leeds’s earlier image of ‘Motorway Capital of the North’ with its heavy highway infrastructure at the South end of the city. The regeneration of this area will include 35,000 jobs, 4,000 new houses and 3.5km of flood alleviation works.

The transport strategy will involve closing City Square to general traffic, cutting the Loop road and making other changes to enable through traffic to avoid this area. The West Yorkshire Transport Fund will enable the ‘upgrading’ of major roads – this means making them more ‘diversified’ that is, more suitable for pedestrians and cyclists. Key changes will involve provision of more green space and the clustering of land use. The Holbeck viaduct may become a walkway and a new city park ‘Central Park’ created. She listed the challenges brought by HS2 as:

- Access along the waterfront, they are looking at European examples;
- Permeability and Connectivity, for example, the use of suitable materials and a rethink of the Dark Arches;
- Integration - embedding the new station into the developments or keeping it as a separate icon;
- a ‘Front Door’ for Leeds – redevelop the HS2 station and the current station as a gateway to the city like at St Pancras and Kings Cross;
- Public Space – learn from previous Leeds developments which were relatively recent and now needed re-doing!

WYCA have commissioned consultants (Atkins) to provide an integrated design solution. This includes a separate study by DVA on how to capture the commercial value of the development, as there is a need to attract private investment to pay for the scheme, as was done for Crossrail. The Atkins work will include looking at a phased development starting prior to the arrival of HS2, including the possibility of a separate entrance to the HS2 platforms from the South side.

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KCFM, East Yorkshire's radio station quoted Don Grainger, our chair of the Hull and East Yorkshire Rail Users Association about his disappointment over the potential loss of the direct rail link from Beverley to South Yorkshire on 11 June. Northern Rail has been consulting on these proposals for May 2018 which would mean a change at Hull. Don pointed out the change at Hull would be half an hour. This was also reported in the Bridlington Free Press on 25 May when Eddie Parker of the Association was quoted.

The Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users Group have had most of their wishes come true though in Northern's proposals for May, Richard Rollins reports. They wanted timings to suit commuters and a later train from Leeds. However, an earlier train is still needed if workers are to get to Lancaster in time to start work.

The Friends of Dronfield Station are looking forward to two trains an hour during the daytime and later evening services phased in from 2018 to 2020. They are also hoping for further improvements when the East Midlands franchise is renewed.

The Harrogate Line Supporters Group are disappointed by the new timetable for May 2018, they have the four daytime trains an hour they have campaigned for, but they will not be the turn up and go 15 minute frequency all stops Metro type service they wanted. There will be two stoppers and two express trains an hour. The expresses will only save 6 or 7 minutes.

Friends of Baildon Station**by Mark Parry**

On 19 May Bradford's Telegraph and Argus reported on the work of the Friends of Baildon Station. They have been campaigning for more investment in the Station for the last 19 months and hope Northern will use some of their money from its Station Improvement Programme at Baildon. The Friends hope to see a ticket machine, a heated and leak proof shelter and access for the disabled amongst other improvements. They claim that Baildon station has the third fastest passenger growth across the Northern Network.

Branch Chair's Report**by Nina Smith**

I'm writing this just after the General Election and the Cabinet reshuffle. An election in which transport didn't feature aside from HS2, and Labour's renationalisation policy. An election in which climate change seemed to be mentioned only by the Green Party. We have the same party in government, albeit weakened. The Transport Secretary Chris Grayling stays in post, and at the time of writing it appears that the Rail Minister Paul Maynard remains in post. Neither has made much impact since their appointments, but there were worrying rumours before the election about further "postponements" to the electrification programme, and we can but hope that the Huddersfield Line electrification will go ahead in the next Control period. Despite the current fashion for bi-mode trains, electrification remains the key to a more efficient railway on the busier routes, and it's also important for the planet as electric trains have a much lower carbon footprint – and that will improve further as more renewable electricity comes on stream; the significant 50% of output level was reached on one, admittedly sunny and windy, day in early June. We need a commitment from the Government to accept the findings of the Electrification Task Force and to agree that implementation starts once the Huddersfield route has been electrified. The Calder Valley and Harrogate lines must be electrified in the middle part of the 2020s. The faster acceleration of electric trains enables more stops to be incorporated into journeys, and this is of critical importance for passengers using those stations that see many trains speed through, and for campaigners seeking the opening or re-opening of stations which will serve largish communities currently without a station.

We need a firm commitment from the government to the Northern Powerhouse, which has been on something of a backburner since Mrs May became Prime Minister. We need the Transport Secretary to state unambiguously that Northern Powerhouse Rail will go ahead. Policy North, a new “independent” think tank based in the north of England is opposing it, believing we should concentrate on connections between the northern regions and London, rather than within and between them (*Yorkshire Post* 3.6.17). Their view must be roundly condemned.

The draft Northern and Trans Pennine Express timetables from May 2018 are out for consultation at the time of writing. Many changes are proposed, some of which are welcomed by rail user groups and others considered detrimental. Rail User Groups and Railfuture Yorkshire will be responding to these consultations, and will both welcome planned improvements and make well argued cases for where the draft proposals need to change. It is rail user groups who appreciate adverse impacts for passengers in a way that centralised planners trying to put together extremely complicated “jigsaws” are unable to.

The Government’s approach to rail freight is worrying. Despite rail’s proven benefits in terms of emissions, road safety and road congestion and noise, the Government recently lopped some £4.2m of the paltry £19.7m per annum England budget for rail freight grants. As a result, at least one major logistics company has threatened to invest in more lorries rather than more or improved rail freight terminals. This is madness and just for £5million which, in terms of the size of the Government’s budget, is like ordinary people making a damaging decision to save a penny in the short term. Rather, we need an interventionist approach that transfers much internal long distance inter-modal traffic to rail.

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	www.hadrag.com
Esk Valley	http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdc.html
Harrogate Line Rail Users’ Group	Email: hlrug@live.co.uk
Harrogate Line Supporters’ Group	www.harrogateline.org
Hope Valley Rail Users’ Group	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
Stalybridge to Huddersfield	Email: MarkAshmor@yahoo.co.uk
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk
Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (Yorkshire Coast Wolds Coast Line)	www.yccrp.co.uk

Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 38**) will be out in September 2017.

Please email material, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry@railfuture.org.uk to arrive by **Saturday 5 August 2017**. Alternatively call or text 07941 642349.

Stories of campaigns and successes are especially welcome.

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Membership News: 190 as at June 2017

Paul Colbeck – Membership Secretary

114 receive the newsletter by e-mail, **73** by printed post and **3** supporters.

Welcome to our new members: Mr **M Coates** of Sheffield and **SELRAP** (part NW branch)

STOP PRESS

Congratulations to our member **Brian Dunsby** who was awarded an **OBE** for services to businesses and the community in Harrogate in The Queen's Birthday Honours List 2017.

Diary

10 July 2017 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at the Grove Pub, next to the Bridgewater Place Tower in Leeds LS11 5PL. Contact Mark Parry for more details.
22 July 2017 @ 13:00	Railfuture Yorkshire Branch Meeting at St. Giles's Church, Market Place, Pontefract, WF8 1AT. Speaker: Jonathan Brown, Transport for the North's Senior Rail Strategy Officer.
21 August 2017 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB. Contact Mark Parry for more details.
25 September 2017 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at the Grove Pub, next to the Bridgewater Place Tower in Leeds LS11 5PL. Contact Mark Parry for more details.
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