



January 2019

Welcome to the Rail User Express.

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I am indebted to Tom Lowe, a retired Area Signalling Inspector, for explaining why multi-aspect signals are not, and never have been, used to slow trains for an emergency speed restriction. The Emergency Indicator (very bright flashing lights) with an automatic warning system (AWS) alarm on the approach, followed by the warning board with AWS on approach acts in a similar way as a double yellow signal and a yellow signal, giving the driver sufficient warning whatever the line speed to slow the train in time before reaching the speed board. Signals are not used as there may not be any in the right locations, and the brilliant flashing indication is very different to a normal signal. ESRs are not uncommon, and drivers are used to obeying them. The system has worked well for many years.

Roger Smith

We continue with the usual roundup of news items from groups around the UK. Please keep your contributions coming: they are all gratefully received.

Friends of the Far North Line

2019 marks FoFNL's 25th anniversary, and from its inception FoFNL has pushed for improvement with the Highland Rail Partnership, its successor HITRANS, and other agencies. The railway feels very different to how it did in 1994, most noticeably the increased number of daily full-length services from three to four, and the introduction of a 'commuter service' at the southern end. Two stations have also re-opened. Currently, FoFNL is optimistic that it will hear some good news about plans for the future of the line very soon. All the right things are being said, and the rail arm of Transport Scotland is well aware of the various problems, and would love to fix them all.

LevenMouth Rail Campaign

Local stakeholders and Transport Scotland officials were briefed on the Findings from the Interim Report, a reasonably comprehensive summary of problems and opportunities. For example, travel to Edinburgh from Levenmouth requires separate bus and train tickets, and Fife rail fares are already disproportionately higher than elsewhere in Scotland. Improved bus services feature among the dozen preliminary options identified, but there is deep mistrust of any solution reliant on the whims of private bus operators. The next stages - Preliminary Options Appraisal and Detailed Options Appraisal - are due to be completed within the next two months for inclusion in a Final Report now scheduled for spring 2019, several months later than planned.

LMRC met local councillors, MPs and MSPs to review progress and discuss how to move forward from the final Study. The unanimity and determination to see the rail link restored was encouraging, but the delay in completing the latest Transport Study, and the complex process required to move an open-and-shut case into the next stages of NR, Transport Scotland/Scottish Govt planning and budget cycles, including the new 'pipeline' approach, was seriously frustrating. If Levenmouth's rail link cannot progress, how can any other, with a weaker case and more challenging cost and feasibility?

Scotrail depots for the Fife circle are currently those in Edinburgh and Perth, while the new Borders line and the Airdrie-Bathgate line have depots at Tweedbank and Bathgate respectively. A depot on the Leven branch or at Thornton would mitigate the expensive and inefficient running of empty Fife trains - especially early and late – and facilitate both replacements for failed trains, and driver recruitment and retention.

Campaign for Borders Rail

The last scheduled services to run on the former 'Waverley Route' were overnight sleepers that departed Edinburgh and London on 5 January 1969. The southbound train was famously blockaded at Newcastleton in the early hours of 6 January, in a demonstration of civic dismay at the loss of rail services. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the closure, and lobby for extension of the Borders Railway through Hawick to Carlisle, CBR arranged a photocall at Tweedbank Station at 1335 on 5 January, the scheduled arrival time of a special train commemorating the last through working. CBR office bearers and supporters then retired to Stow for the launch of David Spaven's new book "Border Union Dream", on the early attempts to save the line from closure.

Cumbrian coast Rail Users' Group

CRUG has been led to believe that guards will be retained on its local trains, as stated by Trudy Harrison in Prime Minister's Questions. However, addressing a trades council in Lancashire, Craig Johnson of the RMT union is reported to have said that only the Whitby line would keep them. CRUG will seek clarification at the Cumbria Community Rail Partnership meeting in February.

On 11 January, a "farewell to the Class 37 train" ran from Carlisle to Carnforth and back, top 'n' tailed with Class 37 locos. Almost all services are now run by Class 156 Sprinters. Peak services should normally have four coaches and off peak two, with all having four carriages by the end of 2019. Seats on the refurbished trains are reportedly more difficult to clean.

Lakes Line Rail User Group

Cancellations due to crew shortages are now mostly due to problems elsewhere on the network, which prevent the train crew reaching Oxenholme. At the AGM, Chris Jackson, Northern's Regional Director West, said that training staff on its new trains was his priority, and he was confident it could be achieved without putting the timetabled services at risk. ASLEF recognises the need for training, and its members' contracts include training needs.

Regarding the new trains, Class 769 bi-modes will not come to the Lakes Line. By the time they have been tested and released for service, the Class 195 trains should be available. On punctuality, Chris explained that problems in the Castlefield corridor in Manchester are destabilising the whole of the North West; Lakes Line trains themselves may be delayed in the Manchester area, or their crew held up there. NR has assigned a Director to work with Northern in an attempt to solve this problem.

Weighing half a ton, the new ticket vending machine at Staveley was too heavy to be carried up the steps, so it was delivered by train.

In October, LLRUG members who had stewarded on the West Coast Railways' service in June visited the company's base at Carnforth. It was a revelation, and made clear how WCRC could set up such a smooth operation so quickly. The company has real strength in depth, in particular the variety of high-level skills. For example, the diesel locos used on the Lakes Line were BR designs dating back to around 1960, well beyond their design life. Though some have since had new engines, much is original. Many spare parts are no longer available new, so WCRC has to refurbish cast-off stock for parts, painstaking but essential. So if, as your train passes Carnforth, you wonder what those old coaches and locos are for, most are repositories of valuable spares, though some are candidates for reincarnation.

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group

Unfortunately, the former nineteenth century warehouse on the old quayside adjacent to the WCML's Carlisle Bridge across the Lune north of Lancaster was demolished in November, despite proposals to incorporate it into the residential redevelopment. Once served by a siding off the Glasson Dock branch, its historical significance was as a last remnant of the town's once flourishing linoleum industry. However, the busy Greyhound road bridge across the Lune has reopened after extensive renovation – a tribute both to the railway engineers who originally built it, and to the highway engineers who purloined it half a century ago - with adverse results for the local rail network!

At Low Bentham, NR contractors have completed some extensive renovations on the Punch Bowl viaduct over the River Wenning, whilst at Steeton and Silsden, at which some Leeds-Morecambe trains now call, the growth of passenger numbers has led to plans to extend the car park.

Northern Weekly Salvo (Prof Paul Salveson)

The Bolton Station Community Development Partnership's aim of making the station a nationally recognised community hub is progressing, with support from NR, Northern, TfGM and local partners, including the Council and University. Discussions continue about refurbishing the former Training Academy upstairs from Platform 4 and 5, together with space at platform level.

Support The Oldham Rochdale Manchester lines (STORM)

Plagued by delays and cancellations, Northern has warned that passengers they are not likely to see an improvement until May. The train operator, which has put its fares up by 3.2%, made the admission after the latest performance statistics showed that just 40% of its services were on time, with many passengers unable to board trains that arrived with too few carriages. Figures for the month to 10 November showed 3,306 Northern trains were "short-formed" (5.4%) and 2,406 were cancelled (3.8%). Services in north Manchester were worst affected, with 14.4% of trains short-formed. On some services, only one carriage arrived during rush hour, leaving many passengers stranded.

Trains on the Calder Valley line serve seven stations within Greater Manchester (GM) and ten in West Yorkshire. On Sunday 30 December, GM stations Smithy Bridge, Castleton, Mills Hill and Moston, had no service before 1000, whereas every West Yorkshire station enjoyed its normal hourly Sunday service, even the little used stations at Walsden and Mytholmroyd. If these had had a two hourly service instead, two very busy GM stations, Mills Hill and Castleton, could also have had a two hourly service. However, following an outcry, the four GM stations are now seemingly being served.

Eighteen months ago, Low Moor station opened near to Bradford in West Yorkshire, supposedly to serve local passengers to and from Leeds, Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield. But the only development of rail services on the Calder Valley line proposed for 2019 is for Low Moor to get a through service to Manchester. At every turn West Yorkshire gets a better service than GM. Little surprise, though, when Rail North, the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and Northern rail are all based in Leeds!

Local MPs, TfGM and Rail North can only censure, cajole, advise or request. The decisions affecting passengers so adversely are taken by Northern staff, acting in accordance with Arriva's ethos. The only way that passengers' interests will be served is by a step change on the part of Arriva. There are rumours of Arriva losing its franchise, which would be a great tragedy, not just for Arriva, but also for the credibility of the process in the franchise award. If this did happen, due process would entail a fresh round of expensive bidding with another unquantifiable result. But if the process has failed once, it may fail again. Better all round just to award the franchise to Serco-Abellio, which made a far better job of it than Arriva.

A Pendolino test train has travelled the newly energised overhead line between Preston and Manchester. Next comes Manchester Victoria to Stalybridge, and then possibly Wigan North Western to Lostock Junction. Originally, Northern planned to have the first new DMUs in service by the end of 2018, with a phased introduction to put them all into traffic ahead of the May timetable. However, spokesman Glyn Hallam told RAIL on 14 December that this could no longer happen due to various mechanical issues discovered during testing, which was ongoing. So far 3 two-car DMUs, 6 three-car DMUs, a three-car EMU and 4 four-car EMUs have been delivered. Hallam said this would not present a problem until May, when Northern planned to launch new services, including Northern Connect routes, with the CAF trains.

Harrogate Line Supporters Group

Plans are on track to reopen Goldsborough Station between Knaresborough and York as a P&R station called Flaxby Parkway. Serving Flaxby Park - an old golf course being transformed into a village community - the station will offer commuters, shoppers and tourists off the A1(M), and employees at Flaxby's business and science park a direct rail service to Harrogate, Leeds and York. Train operator Northern has shown its support, and NR has confirmed that there are "no significant technical obstacles".

Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association

Due to NR's belated notification of delays to the Bolton electrification, the current "interim" Mid Cheshire Line timetable was put together at very short notice and without the usual planning. However, the embargo on substantive changes means that the line is stuck with a timetable that doesn't work, possibly until this time next year. However, MCRUA is pleased that Northern was able to meet its request for the 2240 Monday-Friday from Piccadilly to call also at Navigation Road, as it does on Saturdays. Regrettably, the introduction of Sunday services at Acton Bridge on the Crewe-Liverpool line has been postponed, although Vicky Cropper, London Northwestern's Stakeholder Manager, told a meeting of Acton Bridge Parish Council that it was now looking to introduce them from May 2019.

Many users wrote to their MP regarding Transport for the North's statement that the "Two Trains an Hour" service, which was due to start in December 2017, was untenable, with extra Altrincham - Chester trains in its place. The respective MPs forwarded the letters to the DfT, but almost two months later no responses have been received.

Head teachers and local MP Mike Amesbury have complained about the trouble scholars are having getting home from Greenbank on the 1502 from Chester. This used to be formed of four Class 150 carriages with about 260 seats, but from last May the service has been reduced to two carriages. Worse still, there are days when it is formed of only two Class 142 (Pacer) carriages with a mere 110 seats. Then 30-40 scholars are left waiting for an hour on a platform where there is shelter for only 5 people.

Whenever there is major disruption on the Mid Cheshire Line, Northern seems to abandon the service, and leave passengers to fend for themselves. On 9 November a failed freight train caused the last three services from Piccadilly to be cancelled, with two units stuck at Altrincham. Under previous franchises these would have been used to maintain the service between Altrincham and Chester. Instead, the two units were coupled, and ran empty back to Chester.

Then, around 0500 on 29 November, a freight train came to a stand between Knutsford and Plumley, and a points failure trapped empty stock in Newton Heath Depot. NR Enquiries stated there were delays of around 30 minutes, but the first train from Manchester was actually the 0941, 3½ hours after the first service should have run. No Northern management arrived to care for passengers, something that would have happened under the Northern Rail franchise when a "CSL2" was called (Customer Service Level 2 – a delay to services of over an hour).

Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association (SARPA)

The SARPA Chairman responded robustly to the Keolis consultation on penalty fares, pointing out that half the trains between Shrewsbury and Birmingham will have run through from the Cambrian line, where paying the conductor was the norm. ATW's heavy-handed "Buy Before You Board" campaign saw threatening posters on Cambrian line stations with inadequate ticket buying facilities - or even none at all! It caused much anxiety, especially to the elderly and vulnerable, even as the Cambrian Railway Partnership is working on a 5-year plan to establish its lines as a Dementia Friendly Community.

Whilst new Cambrian line trains are on the way, with features such as tables and luggage racks, for which SARPA has campaigned, a combination of staff and stock shortages on the has resulted in a level of performance that can only be described as appalling. The SARPA Chairman expressed its disappointment to Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport, in particular with the August Bank Holiday service, when many passengers travel to Cardigan Bay. The AM said his office would forward SARPA's letter to TfW; they intended to tackle the driver shortage at Shrewsbury as soon as possible. Ken looked forward to the introduction of new DMUs in 2022, an hourly service between Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth, and additional Summer Sunday services between Tywyn and Pwllheli from May 2023.

Transport for Wales is committed to Community Rail: four Stakeholder Liaison Managers will cover Wales and the Borders. Within five years, TFW aims to increase the number of CRPs from 5 to 12. However, effective communication has been a long-standing problem that will take time to reverse.

Friends of the Barton Line

In November, members were absorbed by an insightful and wide-ranging talk by Pete Myers (local Stakeholder Manager at Northern Rail), who also offered advice on how FBL should liaise with the new operator when the Barton line transfers to the new East Midlands franchise in August. As a mark of appreciation for his valued support for FBL since its inauguration, Pete was presented with a copy of "The Railway Comes to Barton on Humber".

TPE is fitting its trains with Selective Door Operation equipment that, with line-side sensors, will enable train crews to open automatically only platform-facing doors. This will enable long trains to call at stations with platforms that would otherwise be too short. The 20mph TSR on the approach to Barton station might be to allow for a stricter ten-second sighting requirement of road traffic on the Pasture Road crossing, or could signal deterioration in the track. The FBL committee was concerned that the restriction might become permanent. There were no changes to the train times in the winter timetable, except that some trains will no longer call at New Clee and Ulceby.

The Great Grimsby Ice Factory Trust has secured funding for a feasibility study on the best way to preserve this listed railway heritage site. Uniquely, the factory still contains most of its machinery. It is hoped that the study will be completed early this year.

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group

The Group has received more casework on wrongful parking charges at Meldreth, Shepreth and Royston stations. At Royston, if you wait in the car park for an arriving passenger for more than 20 minutes, Automatic Number Plate Recognition will trigger a significant fine. The Group is endeavouring to pool these concerns and provide basic advice – feel free to get in touch. (*ANPR at Hitchin covers the disabled parking spaces, so you now have to register as well as displaying a blue badge, even though parking is free – Ed.*)

English Regional Transport Association

There should be a rolling programme of re-openings across the English Regions akin to modernisation, electrification and station upgrades. Alas this component isn't happening, and the queue grows amidst locked-in congestion and associated issues. Bedford-Cambridge, Guildford-Horsham, Great Central and rail links to Northampton are among its top priorities. The call is for others to join the campaign and be part of the solution, not just a consumer bewailing the problems!

Barking-Gospel Oak Rail User Group

BGORUG has issued what it describes as a Crisis Bulletin. The sublease of the eight Class 172 2-car DMUs will progressively expire, with the last departing in March, yet none of the Bombardier Class 710 4-car EMUs is ready to enter service. Each unit must accumulate 2,000 fault-free miles before being handed over to London Overground, so that driver training can start. BGORUG has issued a six-page review of the crisis, and concluded that TfL could have acted to prevent closure of the service, but has not done so.

Chesham & District Transport Users Group

In the new timetable from 30 December, the early closures on Mondays to Wednesdays between Aldgate and Wembley Park have now ended.

The weekday parliamentary train which ran from South Ruislip to Paddington returning to High Wycombe to maintain Chiltern Railways' running rights into Paddington was discontinued on 7 December, as HS2 needed to block part of what is known as the "New North Main Line" from Old Oak Common to South Ruislip via Park Royal. However, a replacement service into Paddington via the Greenford Loop will preserve these rights. (*Aren't any such rights enshrined in the franchise agreement? – Ed.*)

RAILFUTURE

Railfuture welcomes new members, both individual and groups: the more we are, the more effective our campaigns. Join Railfuture [here](#). From the "Membership Types" menu top right, select either the appropriate category of individual or, to affiliate, select "RUG or similar". Read the latest from Railfuture and its Campaigns by clicking on [News and views](#), [Press releases](#), [Railfuture in the news](#), and [Railfuture consultation responses](#).

In its New Year message – [Rail Challenge 2019](#) – the Railfuture Board of Directors set out ten challenges for the rail industry and government to address in 2019. However, Railfuture itself is not immune: its challenge is to continue to be seen as competent campaigners for sustainable improvements to the rail system in Britain, and the services this provides; it cannot command the rail industry to listen.

Railfuture Policy Director Ian Brown CBE hails the transport system in [Athens](#). Stimulated by the 2004 Olympics, the city uses innovation to compensate for the lack of finance; there are lessons to be learnt for the ongoing Rail Review. And in [Blueprint for the North](#), Ian contends that rail cannot meaningfully contribute to growing the North's economy, or even realise the benefits of new rolling stock and services, without the investment in core routes and core stations needed to enable a further doubling of journeys over the next 15 years. Railfuture's three Northern branches ensure geographical coverage, on the ground contacts with the rail operators, and direct dialogue with stakeholders.

Finally, in [Ticket gateline furore](#), Tony Smale highlights the confusion as South Western Railway installs ticket gates across established rights of way, citing examples at Fratton and Portsmouth Harbour.

RAILFUTURE YORKSHIRE

Graham Collett's response to ORR on the impact of the May timetable on Northern and TransPennine services and their passengers helped him win the Clara Zilahi Award for best campaigner at the Railfuture Annual RUG Awards. It cited some shocking problems on the Stalybridge to Huddersfield line. First Transpennine Express (TPE) trains were often trapped behind a Northern train at Manchester Victoria, but allocating TPE its own platforms from July made a significant improvement.

However, the "Transpennine Express Service Recovery Arrangement" agreed between TPE and NR seems designed to maintain the timetable between Manchester and Leeds at the passengers' expense. For example, a TPE train due into Piccadilly just after 1700 with just six passengers was turned back at Stalybridge, while there were probably several hundred waiting for that train to get home after work. Special Stop Orders are not being implemented when Northern would have used them. Finally, other than on Sundays, the local Manchester, Huddersfield and Leeds service from December is significantly worse than at the beginning of 2018.

HS2 is planned to reach Sheffield in 2033, and partly covers the Northern Powerhouse Rail network from Sheffield to Leeds and to Newcastle. Consideration is being given to a parkway station at one of four sites in Sheffield, and possibly Rotherham or the Dearne Valley. Both the Midland and the East Coast Main Lines will be upgraded, and an electrified Doncaster-Sheffield Airport rail link has been proposed from the latter. The Hope Valley Line from Sheffield to Manchester via Stockport will also be upgraded, with extra loops at Bamford, and track doubling at Dore and Totley. Several new stations are being considered: Waverley on the Worksop line, Askern, and three others likely to be served by tram train.

As an alternative to HS2, Robert Burrows suggests electrifying the Sheffield - Moorthorpe - Leeds line, and replacing the Pacers with Class 319 or Class 321 stock. A decent service to York could be implemented within the new schedules. Closure of Ferrybridge C power station and Kellingley colmine, and the mothballing of Eggborough power station have drastically reduced the amount of rail traffic through Knottingley, allowing many more paths for passenger traffic. The redundant land would be very suitable for a depot, which could incorporate those at Knottingley and Crofton. The sidings just beyond Eggborough at Sudforth Lane are also largely unused. Pontefract would benefit from complete refurbishment of Baghill Station, as at Moorthorpe. Relocating Knottingley station back into the triangle of lines would allow easy transfer to all routes without having to change at Wakefield or Leeds, whilst re-doubling the line from Knottingley to Goole would improve access to Sheffield and Leeds from the east coast area.

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS

The Centre for Transport Studies, University College London, is studying the link between the type and length of an individual's commute on their physical and emotional well being. The research will also explore the experiences of commuting for pregnant women, and the effectiveness of the TFL Baby-on-Board badge.

NR's Railway for Everyone study seeks to identify and address the barriers that customers face when using the railway, or that prevent them from using it altogether. A series of workshops will take place at the following locations:

- 23 January | Mercure Glasgow City Hotel, 201 Ingram St, Glasgow G1 1DQ (1000 – 1530)
- 30 January | Radisson Blu, Meridian Gate, Bute Terrace, Cardiff CF10 2FL (1000 – 1530)
- 5 February | Jurys Inn, 245 Broad St, Birmingham B1 2HQ (1000 – 1530)

Each workshop is limited to 50 places and a full itinerary for the day will be available early in the New Year. If you are interested in attending, please email john.mannion@networkrail.co.uk.

On 10 January, the Leeds-Morecambe CRP formally marked the local involvement of both Arriva Rail North (Northern) and Carlisle Support Services in promoting dementia awareness on the Bentham Line. Gerald Townson, CRP chair, presented framed certificates to John Kitching, the Northern station manager in charge of ticket office staff at Shipley, Bingley, Keighley and Skipton stations, and also to Paul Kemp from Carlisle Support Services who provide gate-line and revenue-protection staff at those stations. The certificates will be displayed in the work offices to reflect their staff's keenness to be actively involved.

CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT

CBT works for decent, affordable, accessible transport, so that everyone can all spend time in their communities, and with their friends and families. Sadly, many vital bus services are under threat, and increasing fares mean our railways are becoming unaffordable. CBT wants to protect and open up these precious links.

Its latest newsletter focuses on the January fare rise, and cites three cases where commuters feel it is unjustified. They would welcome further examples of how rising rail fares are affecting passengers, and can be contacted by email at communications@bettertransport.org.uk.

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

A keynote seminar organised by the Westminster Social Policy Forum on the Next Steps for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Corridor attracted a range of speakers including Rob Brighthouse, Chairman of the East West Rail Company and Martin Tugwell, Programme Director of England's Economic Heartland (EEH), that aspires to become a sub-national transport authority. The consensus was that housing, supporting infrastructure and transport links had to be planned in unison, rather than piecemeal. In conclusion, Councillor Philip Smart from Ipswich gave a lively justification for the Eastern component of EWR, ending with two "take home" messages:

- If the National Infrastructure Commission needs reminding of its 'mission statement' then the clue is in the word 'National'!
- If East West Rail is to become a nationally significant project then the clue is in the word 'East'.

On her EEH blog, Naomi Green, its Technical Director, said that its transport strategy had to be flexible. In the world of strategic infrastructure planning, it is necessary to project into the future: EEH's emerging transport strategy will run to 2050, by which time the economy could have doubled or even tripled. Growth on this scale is transformational, not 'business as usual': two-thirds of today's children will end up doing a job that doesn't yet exist! So can we plan as far into the future as we need to? The short answer is yes; there are risks, but they would be even greater if we failed to do so.

A new Millennial Railcard offers four million rail travellers aged between 26 and 30 a one-third discount on rail fares, more than the cost of the card in just one long journey. It follows a trial last year, when a limited number of the cards sold out immediately. In September, another new railcard will be launched for 16- and 17-year-olds to buy half-price train tickets. Railfuture research in 2003 showed that a national railcard available to all would make economic sense for the rail industry.

Pacer trains will continue to operate in several parts of Britain during 2019, but should not survive into next year as, by 1 January 2020, all train carriages must be fully accessible thanks to the 15 year old Disability Discrimination Act. However, only a quarter of Britain's stations are step-free, so the prospect of disabled people being able to "turn up and go" remains distant. And of course, this lack of accessibility affects anyone with impaired mobility, such as the elderly, parents with young children, and anyone with heavy luggage. Instead, people have to travel by less environmentally friendly and less safe modes, including the car, which leads to isolation and loneliness, congestion and pollution.

EDF Energy has launched a Stage 3 consultation on the construction and operation of Sizewell C nuclear power station (see below). Two strategies are proposed: road-led and rail-led. Both would require use of existing rail lines, with upgrades to nine level crossings on the Saxmundham - Leiston branch. However, the rail-led strategy would also require significant improvement of the East Suffolk line, including upgrades of up to 33 level crossings and closure or diversion of 12. There is also a choice between using the existing terminal known as Sizewell Halt or the construction of a new rail siding off the branch line.

...and finally

Historic England has awarded Grade II listed building status to a disused Air Raid Precaution Railway Control Centre designed to survive a nuclear attack in the Cold War. One of five completed out of 25 around the country, the Centre was built in 1954 close to Bricket Wood station between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey, some 14 miles from the centre of London. Key rail workers from London Euston would have manned it to keep the trains running.

CONSULTATIONS

- ORR: [Holding NR to account policy](#), closes 25 January.
- ORR: [Approach to assessing the quality of NR's stakeholder engagement in CP6](#), closes 25 January.
- City of London Corporation: [draft City Plan 2036](#), closes 28 February.
- EDF Energy: [Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station](#), closes 29 March.

Please advise [Roger Blake](#) of any other consultation, eg that of a local Transport Authority.

EVENTS

Do please keep your events coming, both to me and to [Roger Blake \(Railfuture\)](#), who maintains the Railfuture [List of Events](#) to attend, and now a [List of key Rail Dates](#) for consultations, franchise changes, official publications, CP6 planning, service alterations for major rail projects etc. As a Calendar of Events embedded in a document may be discarded, and that is a problem if the venue changes from month to month, a stand-alone copy would be very helpful.

Blob colour indicates the various types of event:

- Railfuture events (RUGs are cordially invited).
- National & regional rail events.
- Local Group events.

January 2019

- Saturday 26. Railfuture East Midlands branch open meeting. **East Midlands Parkway station**, First Class lounge. 13.30.
- Saturday 26. Railfuture Lincolnshire branch committee meeting; other members and guests welcome with prior notice. St. Swithins Community Centre, Baggholm Road, **Lincoln**, LN2 5AX. 10.45.
- Thursday 31. South East Northumberland Rail User Group and Rail Action Group East of Scotland at Berwick Regeneration Commission-hosted event with Northumberland CC and Northern. Berwick Town Hall, Marygate, **Berwick-upon-Tweed**, Northumberland, TD15 1BN. 19.00.
- Thursday 31. Levenmouth Rail Campaign, Fife College, Methilhaven Road, **Buckhaven**, KY8 1EA, 18.30 (also last Thursday of every month, except July and December) **NB** change of weekday from Tuesday to Thursday, AND new website.

February

- Tuesday 5. Cheshire Best Kept Stations Awards, The Grange Theatre, Bradburns Lane, Hartford, **Northwich**, 19.00.
- Tuesday 5. Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association, The Unicorn, **Caersws**, 18.45 (also 5 March, 6 April, 18 May, 8 June, 2 July, 6 August, 7 September, 5 October, 12 November, 7 December – various locations and times).

- Thursday 7. Railfuture London & South East regional branch, Sussex & Coastway Division. Perrymount Methodist Church, Pinewood gate, 28 Perrymount Road, **Haywards Heath**, West Sussex, RH16 3DN. Network Rail speaker on Brighton Main Line Improvement Project. 18.00.
- Saturday 9. Cumbrian coast Rail Users' Group, Methodist church hall, **Seascale**, 13.05 (also second Saturday each month, AGM 9 March).
- Saturday 9. East Suffolk Travellers Association, Station House, **Beccles**, 14.00 (Also, 18 May AGM, Saxmundham; 5 October, Lowestoft Station).
- Monday 11. Bexhill Rail Action Group, Hastings Direct, **Collington**, TN39 3LW. 19.00. (also every 2nd Monday).
- Tuesday 12. Felixstowe Travel Watch, Salvation Army Church, Cobbold Road, **Felixstowe**, 14.30 (also 7 May (AGM)).
- Wednesday 16. Railfuture North East Branch, **Newcastle-upon-Tyne** (venue TBN).
- Saturday 16. Railfuture London & South East regional branch, Kent Division.
- Tuesday 19. Chesham & District Transport User Group, Town Hall, **Chesham**, 19.30 (also 2 April, 14 May, 18 June, 6 August, 17 September, 22 October, 10 December).
- Thursday 21. Magor Action Group On Rail, Golden Lion, **Magor**, 19.30 (and the 3rd Thursday every month).
- Saturday 23. Railfuture East Anglia branch AGM. **Bury St. Edmunds**. 14.00.
- Saturday 23. English Regional Transport Association Rugby Forum, Rupert Brooke, 8-10 Castle St, **Rugby**, CV21 2TP, 14.00.

Further Ahead

- 9 March. Railfuture Lincolnshire branch AGM. **Lincoln**.
- 9 March. English Regional Transport Association Olney Forum, The Bull, 9 Market Place, **Olney**, MK46 4EA, 14.00.
- 11 March. Skipton & East Lancs Rail Action Partnership AGM, The Lesser Municipal Hall, Albert Road, **Colne**, 19.00.
- 16 March. Railfuture North East Branch AGM, Newcastle Art Centre, 67 Westgate Road, **Newcastle-upon-Tyne**, 14.00.
- 16 March. Railfuture Devon & Cornwall Branch AGM. **Plymouth**. 13.30.
- 20 March. Friends of the Barton Line. The Sloop Inn, 81 Waterside Road, **Barton-upon-Humber**, DN18 5BA. Non-members welcome. 18.00 optional meal for 20.00 meeting.
- 23 March. Railfuture East Midlands Branch AGM. **Mansfield**.
- 23 March. English Regional Transport Association, The Bell, 40 Market Square, **Aylesbury**, HP20 1TX, 14.00.
- 29 March. Marlow-Maidenhead Passengers' Association AGM. Bourne End Community Centre, 2A Wakeman Road, Wooburn Green, **Bourne End**., Buckinghamshire, SL8 5LX. 19.45.
- 12 April. Friends of the Barton Line, a two-part lecture on the Barton line to mark the 50th anniversary of Barton Civic Society and the 21st anniversary of FBL, Joseph Wright Hall, Queen Street, **Barton-upon-Humber**, DN18 5QP. 19.30.
- 27 April. Railfuture London & South East Branch AGM. **London**.
- 27 April. English Regional Transport Association, Campanile Hotel, 40 Penn Road, **Fenny Stratford**, Milton Keynes, MK2 2AU, 11.00.
- 18 May. Railfuture national AGM. **Cardiff**.
- 18 May. East Suffolk Travellers Association AGM, **Saxmundham**.
- 18 May. Friends of Settle-Carlisle Line AGM, Victoria Hall, Kirkgate, **Settle**, BD24 9DZ, 12.00.
- 22 June. Railfuture Summer Conference, Dolphin Centre, **Darlington**.

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