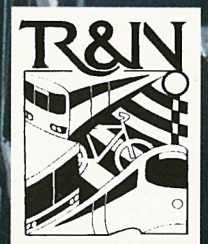


# BEECHING

The case for a programme **in reverse**  
of line and station re-openings

By Paul Salveson

Transport Research and Information  
Network

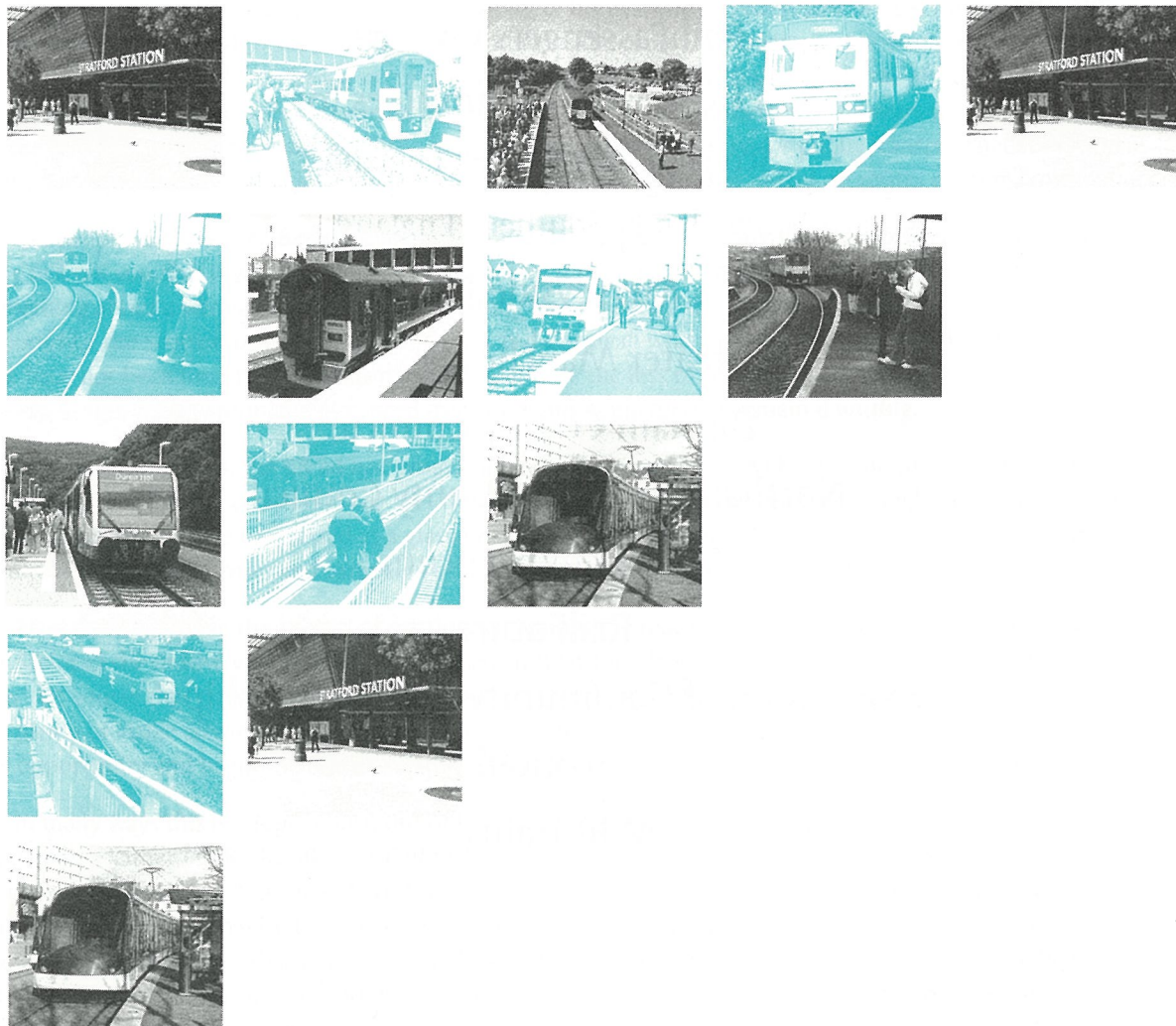




# Beeching in reverse

The case for a programme of line and station re-openings

By Paul Salveson



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# Preface

## -restoring opportunities and pride

Forty years ago Dr Beeching got it badly wrong in his pessimistic assessment of how much of the rail network deserved to survive. This report provides the proof by showing just how successful the many reopenings that have already occurred over the last two decades have been. Time after time forecast passenger numbers have been exceeded a few months after opening rather than the years that were envisaged by the planners with the revived rail link acting both as a backbone for wider public transport networks and as a spur for regeneration. Value for money is often exceptional - as track is re-laid on routes that are largely intact.

Ask people in towns like Bathgate, Mansfield and Maesteg what getting their station back meant to them and they will tell you that it was about more than a useful transport link it also meant something less tangible, something about a wrong being righted, something about putting the pride back into their towns. Conversely for regions like the Scottish borders or North Devon and Cornwall where railway lines remain closed the Beeching cuts have not been forgotten. Despite the passing of time the loss of their rail links is a wound that hasn't healed. The challenges for communities distanced from jobs and opportunities remain daunting.

As this report shows, the BR ad hoc programme of reopenings in the eighties came to a shuddering halt with privatisation. With the creation of the SRA the pace has picked up again but, frustratingly, reopenings remain ad hoc, and schemes are progressed at a glacial pace with only the dogged persistence, year in year out, of committed local authorities and campaign groups keeping schemes moving forward.

After demonstrating the success of existing reopenings the report makes a cogent argument for government, the SRA and the industry to get behind a focused strategy for a beefed up accelerated programme of rail openings. Of course that does not mean restoring the pre-Beeching network in entirety. But as the report shows there are plenty of viable schemes out there - all it needs is for the Government and the SRA to recognise the scale of the opportunity and begin the task of steadily and pragmatically, region by region, restoring key links.

In many ways this is a report born out of frustration - a frustration that despite the success of most reopenings neither DTLR, the SRA nor Railtrack promote reopenings as a specific policy goal or as a public good. Despite the enormous practical and symbolic benefits of most opening schemes - and their relatively low cost - they remain an occasional by-product of policy rather than an objective. We think that they're missing a trick. Look at the organisations that have supported this report - this idea has broad support. At a time when the public is sceptical about claims of a rail revival the industry desperately needs some symbols that rail is serious about its future. And as symbols go they don't come much more powerful than declaring an intent to put 'Beeching into reverse'.

Stewart Francis  
Chairman Rail Passengers Council  
September 2001





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# Summary

This report argues for a co-ordinated programme of railway re-openings, with a greater role for regional agencies and consortia, working with the railway industry and the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA). It argues that railway re-openings are good value for money compared with road building, with a typical double track railway costing in the region of £5 million per mile compared with a dual carriageway road at £6 million and a motorway at £14 million.

It is not backward looking. The report recognises that some of Dr Beeching's closures were inevitable. We are now in a very different world from the relatively traffic free early 1960s, when people travelled less often, over shorter distances. Rail is coming back into its own despite all the problems, with much-needed investment planned to upgrade the existing network. This report makes the case for looking at new railways and stations to fill in some of the more obvious gaps in the network which have appeared since the days of Beeching. In particular:

- New railway development needs to be based on partnership, with local and regional agencies working with national bodies, particularly the Strategic Rail Authority, to progress schemes which are robust and bring clear social, economic and environmental benefits.
- SRA to develop specialist unit for progressing new railways and line re-openings, closely linked to the SRA's funding officers. The SRA's role should move decisively from being 'gate keeper' to 'promoter' of railway development.
- The SRA should work with regional and local authorities, train operators and Railtrack to produce a more detailed programme of rail re-openings, developed out of its Strategic Agenda.
- Funding criteria needs to highlight social, economic and environmental benefits more strongly: regional development, and overcoming social exclusion, should be key aims.

- Regional assemblies should form links with local authorities and PTEs to identify and progress new schemes. In Scotland and Wales the respective devolved governments should do this.
- There should be closer links between regional and local agencies, user groups and industry bodies, both within and between adjoining regions.
- Regional transport strategies, and Regional Planning Guidance, should recognise the benefits from railway development and highlight potential schemes.
- Local transport plans should identify potential rail re-openings, even if at a very undeveloped stage. Structure plans and urban development plans should protect railway alignment and railway land from inappropriate development. DTLR should fund non-user benefits achieved through rail re-openings.





- Priority should be given to re-openings which develop the network, rather than 'branch-line' solutions which may be better served by feeder bus links. Borders Rail, the East-West Link and Matlock-Buxton are examples of re-openings which would have an impact on the national network.
- Regional agencies (RDAs and regional assemblies) should carry out audits of towns with populations of over 20,000 which do not have a direct rail service and consider a) short-term provision of a rail-link bus service and b) feasibility studies of potential for light or heavy rail links.
- Most road schemes do not represent 'value for money' compared with enhancement of the rail network, and are far more environmentally damaging.
- Developers should provide good quality rail facilities as part of new development permission: local authority



planners should encourage appropriate development at and around station hubs, and refuse development which is not in harmony with developing the rail facility.

- In more rural areas many re-opening schemes will be progressed by independent, community-owned enterprises, as a form of microfranchise. They should qualify for SRA funding as much as any other scheme. Countryside Agency funds should match SRA monies.
- The needs of all passengers should be fully taken into account with re-openings. All new stations must be fully accessible to all potential users. In today's age, where costs of any new station will be high, staffing should be provided as a matter of course.
- New rail and station schemes must be fully integrated with complementary transport: this means catering for substantial numbers of cars in safe, well-lit car parks with CCTV, cycle parking, and good access for buses and taxis to the station forecourt.
- Rail investment should aim for top quality, with stations designed to the very highest standards: the Jubilee Line Extension is the benchmark.
- The mechanics of progressing re-openings needs streamlining. The SRA's suggested 'special purpose vehicles' have strong relevance to re-openings, involving partners in the public and private sector with unified project management.
- A total approach to re-openings is essential, with modern signalling, electrification, new state-of-the-art trains and sufficient capacity to accommodate future growth.
- Regional agencies (RDAs and regional assemblies) should carry out audits of towns with populations of over 20,000 which do not have a direct rail service and consider a) short-term provision of a rail-link bus service and b) feasibility studies of potential for light or heavy rail links.
- Most road schemes do not represent 'value for money' compared with enhancement of the rail network, and are far more environmentally damaging.



# I. Introduction

## Why the network must expand

Railways are a big, heavy, expensive form of transport infrastructure. That's their strength! They were built in the nineteenth century to be around for a very long time, and they still are - despite the attempts of a certain Dr Beeching and his friends in government in the 1960s. New railways are a massive symbol of civic pride. Take the Jubilee Line Extension, the French TGV network, or Manchester's Metrolink. They are much more than a means of transport: they are symbolic of city, town, or even national revival. The recent opening of the TGV line to Marseilles was an occasion of national rejoicing!

There are few transport investments that make as much positive impact on local perceptions as bringing the railway back to a community. Line and station openings are hard evidence of the Government's wider ambitions for public transport expansion - there can be no better symbol of the rail revival that the Government is committed to. And symbols are important at a time of so much public scepticism over the future of the railway.

The situation in the industry following the post-Hatfield meltdown presents many new challenges. The role of Railtrack is changing, and the Strategic Rail Authority is taking on a more pro-active role, which is very welcome. The partners involved in any major rail investment project will vary, but it is clear that many of the re-opening projects outlined here are not, in themselves, commercially viable in the strict sense. Railway development can be a catalyst for economic and social regeneration, but this will not be captured through the farebox alone. The public sector - through local and regional authorities, and Government agencies - have a very important role to play in both developing projects and in funding them. The role of Railtrack should be that of partner offering technical support and assistance, not the lead agent.

A new railway is not like a new bus route that can change every so often. It has permanence, stability, certainty. People make investment decisions on the basis of a region's rail links. They make decisions about where to live - Manchester's Metrolink tram has done wonders for the property market in north Manchester! Railways are catalysts for regeneration: regeneration which is sustainable, inclusive - and classy. This report is about why

we need more of them, putting the work of Dr Beeching and his accomplices in the 60s, into reverse. As traffic congestion increases, and our towns, cities and countryside become increasingly clogged with road traffic, a programme of rail re-openings isn't a nice pipe dream. It's essential.

### Wounds that haven't healed

The reason we need to argue for re-openings is because so much of the country's rail network was destroyed in the 1960s, leaving many communities isolated from major centres. Some rural lines closed before Dr Beeching sharpened his axe, but most of the damage was done following publication of Beeching's report *The Re-shaping of British Railways*, in 1963. We are not suggesting that every closure should be reversed, and there is no doubt that many lines had outlived their usefulness, if indeed they ever were of much use. However, there is strong evidence that many communities suffered serious social and economic damage as a result of losing their railway. Mayer Hillman and Anne Whalley (*The Social Consequences of Rail Closures*) carried out a detailed study of communities along 10 routes which had lost their rail service in the 1960s and 1970s. The study, published in 1980, found lasting hardship. Today, over twenty years on, communities in the Scottish borders, parts of North Devon and Cornwall, are still suffering from isolation because they are not part of the national rail network.

It isn't just a rural problem. Many urban communities experience exclusion and peripherality because of inadequate transport links, in some cases with busy railway lines passing through them, but without a station. The work of PTEs such as Merseyside in addressing this side of the railway development challenge is outlined in this report. Several major local authorities are progressing imaginative light rail schemes which will bring major regeneration benefits, including Nottingham, Hampshire and Bristol.

### Revival of re-openings

This report sets out the case for a programme of rail re-openings across the UK, building on the success of earlier schemes. Many of these took place in the last decade of British Rail, when partnerships between local authorities,



BR and the Government saw a string of new services which brought significant benefits to local communities. Sadly, following privatisation, the pace of re-openings slowed down. However, there are now encouraging signs of a revival. The Strategic Rail Authority has given the go-ahead to re-opening the Vale of Glamorgan line between Cardiff, Barry and Bridgend. New stations have been approved for Beauy and Corsham. Howwood, Strathclyde, opened in March this year. Train operators, gearing up for franchise replacement, have announced ambitious plans such as Arriva's proposal to re-open the Woodhead Line between Manchester and Sheffield. Several independent, community-based groups are proposing imaginative schemes, such as the Wensleydale Railway's aspirations to re-connect Northallerton with Hawes and Garsdale, and Swanage Railway's project to have an established operator using their tracks to access the Dorset coast resort.

Re-openings are only part of the solution. The existing network needs investment to provide extra capacity to meet growing demand. The down side of having a new station is that it slows down end to end journeys: so there must be a well-argued case for the investment to be made. Many re-openings are conditional on enhancement of the existing network to allow access to major centres, such as Edinburgh Waverley, Birmingham New Street and restoration of four tracks between Glasgow and Paisley.

There are still many obstacles. Local authorities and passenger transport executives are often unhappy about the spiralling costs of re-openings, and the bureaucracy associated with rail re-openings. Whilst new funding mechanisms are available, such as the Rail Passenger Partnership scheme, these funds can be complex and difficult to access. New railways do not have to cost the earth. The cost of re-opening the line from Bleach Green (north of Belfast) to Antrim compares very favourably with some estimates for new railways in Britain. The 15-mile single line, with two stations, two passing loops and engineered for 90 mph running, cost £16.6 million, or less than £1 million a mile if the new stations are not included.(see chapter 3)

## Why do we need to argue the case?

So if the picture is so positive, why argue the case? There are a number of issues. Firstly, the post-Hatfield problems dented confidence in railways. We need to re-assert that rail is a safe, inclusive and environment-friendly form of transport. Secondly, the pattern of re-openings remains terribly ad hoc. Re-opening a railway is a complex business, with progress measured in years rather than months. It is major investment with a payback in terms of social and economic regeneration stretching over decades.



*Rail good news: a new railway for just over £1 million a mile - Northern Ireland Railways' Bleach Green-Antrim re-opening*

The main impetus for re-openings has come from local authorities or other locally-based organisations. Is this really the way we should be progressing the enhancement of the national network? Railways are above all the core element of a sustainable transport network on a regional and national level. They provide a complex web of services, which connect small villages with major cities, and the continent. They are very different from bus services, though the two must work together at the local level to form a seamless transport chain.

## Local authorities and the PTEs have been the champions

So if railways are primarily regional and national in their focus, why is it that much of the forward thinking is being done by local authorities? The answer is not simple, but part of it's must be that local authorities and passenger transport executives have recognised - more than previous governments - that railways bring major social, economic and environmental benefits. Re-openings such as Bathgate, Maesteg and Aberdare, the Robin Hood Line and the Cannock Chase Line have brought tangible benefits to communities which were suffering from decline of traditional industries. They allowed people from deprived communities access to new employment and training





*Templecombe station, between Exeter and Salisbury. A long campaign led to the station being re-opened. It has become an important hub for the surrounding area*

opportunities in the major cities. Other re-openings, including stations on the Settle-Carlisle Line and Okehampton, have allowed people without access to a car to discover some of Britain's finest countryside, as well as providing a much-needed link for rural residents to get into the urban centres. The passenger transport executives (PTEs) have an exemplary record in promoting line and station development, with Strathclyde's Howwood, for example, opened in March and Merseyside's Conway Park, Wavertree Technology Park and Brunswick having opened recently.

## Get re-openings enshrined in development plans

Many re-openings have brought significant benefits in reducing long-distance car commuting, such as the Ribble Valley Line and new light rail networks in Manchester, Sheffield and Croydon. Getting re-openings firmly embedded in local and regional planning and transport policy is crucial. Many Local Transport Plans (LTPs) have included major re-openings, such as East Sussex's aspiration for Lewes-Uckfield and the South Yorkshire LTP for re-opening the Woodhead Route. The Drake Line re-opening (Bere Alston - Tavistock) is in the LTP that covers the Plymouth travel to work area and is jointly sponsored by Plymouth City Council and the county councils of Devon and Cornwall. The alignment and station at Tavistock have been protected in the Local Plan and the Drake Line project is Structure Plan policy. Its role in enhancing the heavy rail network around Plymouth is enshrined in the Regional Transport Strategy.

Many local authorities have protected alignments of disused railways through their Local Plans, though in the past old railway formation was used for new roads, making re-instatement difficult if not impossible. Many former railways have been developed by national cycling charity Sustrans as cycleways which, if there is no conceivable future railway potential, is an excellent use for them. Sustrans have agreed that where one of their routes does have serious potential for re-opening as a railway they will take a co-operative approach. Some railway formations can accommodate both a railway and cycle track and common sense needs to be applied. Bikes and trains ought to be an ideal combination.

Whilst local authorities have kept the flame of re-openings alive, they would be the first to admit that they could have done more if they had the resources. Many local initiatives have been developed through consortia of local authorities, such as the East-West Link (see below). As regional government structures develop there will be a realignment of forces, with greater emphasis being given to the work of the regional assemblies and RDAs, in partnership with lower tier authorities.



## What has the Government been doing?

Why hasn't the Government championed these projects? Well to some extent it has, including the previous Conservative administration. However, promoters of new railways will testify to the enormous hurdles which rail projects have had to surmount, compared with the encouragement given to road schemes in the past. The picture is different today, with a presumption in favour of developing public transport. The Strategic Rail Authority is finding its feet, despite the recent setbacks following Hatfield. It has now published its Strategic Agenda which highlights many potential re-openings (see list at the end of this report). The Government has published an ambitious 10-year Spending Plan which features new heavy and light rail schemes. However, the situation following Hadfield has created a potentially dangerous situation, where much of the 'new' money in the 10-year plan risks being diverted into maintaining the existing network.

But no transport network can stand still - investment is needed to extend and improve the network. The reality is that most of the money for that must come from Government.

## The new regional agenda

If the position today is better than it has been for decades, there remain problems. Government is being more positive, and has given the green light to several



*Silverlink train on the refurbished North London Line to Richmond at Stratford - virtually a brand new station on the site of the old.*



*Young people have benefitted from station re-openings. Meadowhall, South Yorkshire, is a popular weekend attraction.*





*Many lines in Germany have re-opened because of investment from the regions. A train at the new Dettenhausen Station, on the re-opened branch from Boblingen.*

exciting new schemes, although the initiative is still coming from the local level. The hurdles are not quite as high, but they are still there. There is no strategy at either the regional or national level for a co-ordinated approach to re-openings. Some ambitious and potentially successful schemes cross many local authority boundaries, for example the East-West route between Oxford and Cambridge. Getting agreement from each local authority is not easy, but much has been achieved, despite the lack of a regional tier of government to promote a regional approach. That is starting to change with the growing intervention of the regional development agencies (RDAs), regional assemblies, and the possibility of directly-elected regional government following on from the proposed Government white paper later this year.

Let's not forget that many of the exciting developments in German railways have been a result of strong regional governments working in partnership with German Rail to develop new lines. The Government has placed a responsibility on the new Regional Assemblies to develop Regional Transport Strategies which must include 'a strategic steer on the role and future development of railways...in the region, for both passenger and freight, consistent with national Policy' (PPG11 Regional Planning). The Regional Assembly of the South-West has produced its Regional Planning Guidance and associated Regional Transport Strategy. It is clear that the strategy can only be delivered if the heavy rail networks around Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth are enhanced. Regional government throughout the country needs to come out of the cupboard and start to make the sort of difference which it has already achieved on the continent.

## What about Railtrack?

Railtrack was, before Hatfield, saying many positive things about re-opening some major regional routes, such as the East-West route and Matlock - Buxton. Its Network Management Statement for 2000 included some

imaginative schemes to enhance the network. Now, there are worrying signs that it has lost its nerve and many of its proposals are 'on the back burner'. If that is the case, the mantle must be taken up by other agencies, with Railtrack being a contractor who delivers projects, using its undoubted technical expertise. There are good arguments that the development of a national railway network is far too important to be led by a private company whose primary loyalties are to its shareholders rather than the best interests of the country as a whole. Yet Railtrack is a crucially important part of the industry and must play a key partnership role with other agencies in developing new routes and stations. The SRA's proposal to separate Railtrack's functions between routine maintenance and the design and implementation of major projects makes sense, but with the public sector leading projects which are of strategic importance to the country.

The SRA's proposed 'special purpose vehicles' (SPVs) may be a way to take projects forward with unified project management and the involvement of a range of partners including Railtrack, a train operator, local and regional authorities and developers.

## Pushing at an open door?

This report should, we hope, be pushing at a slightly open door. We want to push the door open a bit further, and argue that we need regional and national strategies for Britain's railway network - not just the big InterCity projects, but the schemes which will bring significant regional benefits.

There is a need for stability in the franchising map. Short-term franchises give operators no incentive to participate in re-opening projects, which are inevitably long-term.

Partnership remains the way forward, but with a new relationship of forces. The Strategic Rail Authority should be the champion of a regional and national strategy, working with regional and local government, and the railway industry, to map out a 20-year programme which is deliverable. And it should deliver the sorts of benefits in of reducing car and lorry dependence, improving access to the countryside, overcoming social exclusion and promoting a better quality of life for all which we all want to see.





## 2. Re-openings in the 1980s

### - a record of success

The former British Rail succeeded in re-opening a number of routes and stations during the 1980s and early 1990s. These provided much-improved access to employment, supported sustainable tourism, and also encouraged better long-distance links, including new stations at a number of regional airports. The benefits of courageous decisions made by BR in the early and mid-1980s are still being felt!

### Extending access to jobs and training opportunities

People are travelling further and further afield to work. The average journey to work has lengthened substantially compared with just twenty years ago. The implications for rail are enormous. Rail is an ideal mode of travel for longer distance journeys, whilst the bus often has the edge for shorter trips. Several re-openings have brought major benefits to local communities which have faced the devastating effects of pit closures and the run down of other traditional industries.

The Robin Hood Line, linking Nottingham with Worksop, Mansfield and several former mining communities of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire has been a great success story, with plans for the new line developed by local authorities and BR in the late 1980s. The line opened in stages between 1993 and 1998, resulting in eleven new stations along a 32-mile route. Today there are around 17,000 journeys a week, of which nearly half are journeys to work. A further 28% of journeys are for shopping and 17% are for leisure. A new light rail line - Nottingham Express Transit - is being constructed parallel to the line as far as Hucknall, offering excellent interchange to and from Nottingham city centre.

The Cannock Chase Line re-opened from Walsall to Hednesford, Staffordshire, in 1989, and was further extended until it joined up with the West Coast Main Line at Rugeley Trent Valley in 1998. Today, trains run through from Stafford via Rugeley, Hednesford and Cannock to Walsall and Birmingham. Patronage is now in the region of 7,500 journeys each week, most of which are for work journeys into Walsall and Birmingham, but with a high

proportion of shopping and leisure trips as well. Funding came from West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority, Staffordshire County Council and Cannock Chase District Council.

### Helping regenerate valley communities

Two major re-openings took place in the South Wales valleys in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Again, both were vigorously promoted by the local authorities, with strong backing from the former British Rail. Aberdare re-opened in 1988 followed by Maesteg in 1992. Several new stations were provided on both routes, with the introduction of what was then innovative bus-rail links. The new services offered a lifeline to former mining communities which were in headlong decline, permitting easy access to the centre of Cardiff.

### More than just a new train service.....

In the North of England, the Blackburn to Clitheroe Line re-opened in May 1994 after a campaign which stretched back to the 1970s! Passenger growth has exceeded all expectations. New stations were provided at Ramsgreave and Wilpshire, Langho, Whalley and Clitheroe. Funding for the re-opening came from Lancashire County Council, British Rail, the former Rural Development Commission and other sources. The success of the re-opening has been built on further, with an award-winning bus-rail interchange provided at Clitheroe, which is staffed by Lancashire County Council information officers. The county council invested £350,000 into the interchange which opened in May 2000. The funding was matched by the DETR's Rural Bus Challenge, and monies from the Countryside Agency and the East Lancashire Partnership. Support has also come from Railtrack and First North Western.

The interchange is linked up to the rail industry's TRUST computer system which gives staff reliable information on train running. This allows the county council staff to tell bus drivers to wait for delayed incoming trains, or make special arrangements to get passengers home late at night.



## Delivering sustainable tourism

The last ten years have seen an enormous growth in urban dwellers wanting to access the countryside. In so doing they have often helped spoil the very attractions they come to enjoy - the peace and tranquillity of the countryside, the traffic-free lanes and unpolluted towns and villages. Getting tourists out of their cars and on to public transport is even more difficult than changing travel to work habits, but it can be done. At the same time, several railway re-openings have given access to the countryside for people who don't have a car.

## South-west revival

In the South-West many rural lines succumbed to the Beeching Axe in the 1960s and 1970s. Services to the north coast of Devon and Cornwall were particularly hit, with places such as Ilfracombe, Bude, Padstow and Wadebridge losing their rail service. Through a pro-active approach led by the local authorities, transport access in the South-West has been improved. The Tamar Valley Line from Plymouth to Gunnislake now operates on Sundays, funded by Devon County Council as part of the 'Sunday Rover' promotion and buses operate between Gunnislake and Okehampton as part of the sustainable tourism initiative on Dartmoor. The line from Okehampton to Crediton is now operated by the Dartmoor Railway, with Sunday trains bringing in hundreds of visitors. Buses meet the trains at the superbly-restored Okehampton station.

## Can heritage railways provide transport services?

Some 'heritage' railways are also playing their part, and could do a lot more if they had the funding. Swanage Railway has worked with Dorset County Council and Purbeck District Council to develop a park and ride facility at Norden - currently the end of the Swanage Railway's operations. Tourists can leave their vehicles at the attractive and staffed car park and ride behind a vintage steam locomotive into Swanage - part of a very enjoyable day out, and reducing the enormous traffic problems in Swanage and Corfe Castle. The North Norfolk Railway provides a useful service for holiday makers staying at Kelling Heath Caravan Park. A small halt built by the North Norfolk Railway allows people to get into the centre of Sheringham without having to use their cars. The Keighley and Worth Valley Railway offers a free local residents' railcard which gives substantial reductions on fares.

Rail can play a much greater role in bringing visitors into the countryside - providing the rail service is fully integrated into local transport networks. Many city dwellers live long distances from the countryside, and rail offers an attractive alternative to a long drive. This is true



*Clitheroe: the Ribble Valley Line from Blackburn as been a successful rural re-opening*

for Londoners wanting to access the Downs and Cotswolds, and residents of cities like Leeds and Manchester wanting to get out to the Dales and Peak District. Once restrictions on access to the countryside due to the Foot and Mouth crisis are fully relaxed, rail should be there to offer an attractive and sustainable way for walkers to get out and about.

## Dales Renaissance

The re-opening of many of the small stations along the Settle-Carlisle Line which closed in the 1970s opened up opportunities not only for residents of the villages along the line, but also for growing numbers of visitors coming to the Yorkshire Dales for walking, hill-climbing or to sample the delights of rural village life - the pubs, craft shops and tea rooms so much a feature of Dales life today. The work of the Settle-Carlisle Development Company and its sister organisation the Settle-Carlisle Heritage Trust has helped to turn round the appearance of many of these stations so that they are now showpieces for how rural stations should look. Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line and the Settle-Carlisle Business Liaison Group bring an important element of community support and goodwill to the line. Several stations which re-opened now have excellent facilities. Ribbleshead is home to a visitor centre, and Lazonby has its 'Brief Encounter' tea room.

Several stations along the Settle-Carlisle Line have good bus links. Kirkby Stephen has its community-operated 'PlusBus' which connects with some trains, and Garsdale is linked to nearby Hawes with a demand-responsive minibus service.

## Flights of fancy: air and rail take off together

Some of the most successful new stations have been built to serve major regional airports. **Manchester** opened in 1993 and has been a massive success, with passenger numbers now running at around 1 million a year. The

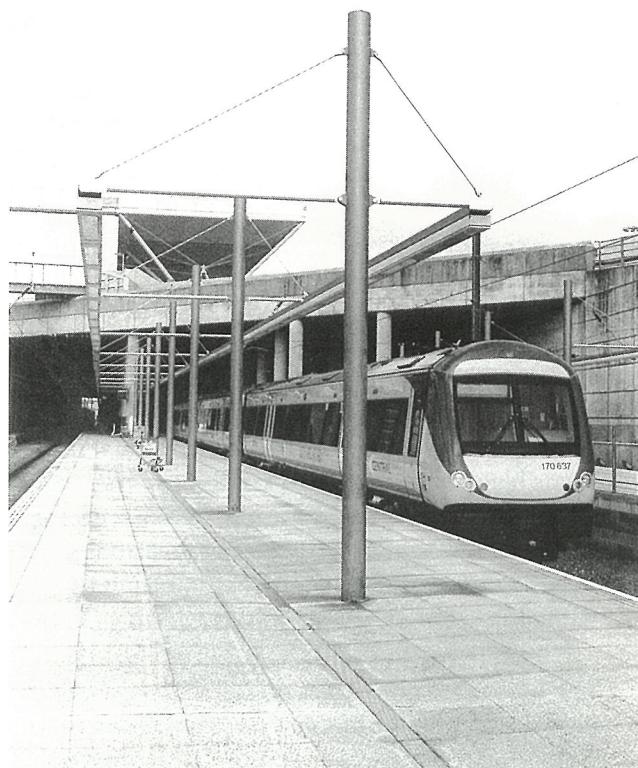


airport handles some 14.5 million passengers each year and the aim is to increase the proportion arriving by train to 20%. The local authority-owned airport company is developing plans to link the existing terminal branch from Heald Green with the Manchester to Chester line near Knutsford (the 'Western Link'. The company is also working with Greater Manchester PTE to bring Metrolink light rail services into the airport. The station was built in the face of pessimistic forecasts of passenger use by the former BR. Greater Manchester PTE forged ahead with the project anyway and growth has exceeded everyone's expectations - including the PTE's!

With a similar number of passengers as Manchester, **Stansted Airport** is another success. The new branch from the London - Cambridge line terminates at an impressive station which is fully integrated into the airport terminal. Luton Airport opened in November 1999 and is situated on the Midland Main Line between Bedford and London. It is served by frequent Thameslink trains and has again exceeded expectations. The four platform station cost £12.4 million.

**Heathrow** is linked by a new rail link from Paddington, which opened in May 1999. It is operated by Heathrow Express, a private company owned by BAA. A branch from the Great Western main line near Slough serves two stations in the airport complex, and this service runs at frequent intervals through the day and night, operated by state of the art electric multiple units.

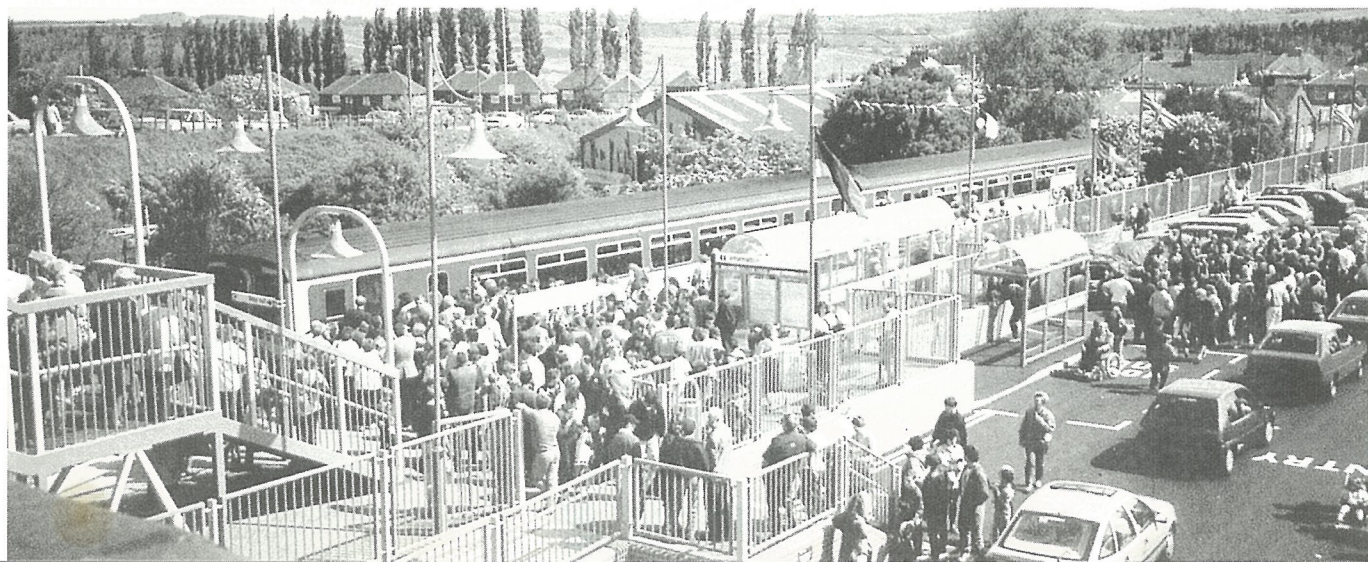
Not all airports need be served by massive new facilities. The relatively small **Newcastle Airport** is the terminus of for one of Tyne and Wear's Metro routes. The extension of the existing Metro service was completed in 1991 and the station now handles over a quarter of a million passengers a year. The re-opening of the Vale of Glamorgan Line, between Barry and Bridgend, will include a new station at Rhose which will have a link to **Cardiff International Airport**.



*Stansted: new station; new train: a Central Trains service to Birmingham awaits departure*

**Southampton Parkway** station is directly adjacent to Southampton Airport - a growing regional facility which benefits from frequent train services operated by South West Trains and Virgin. The station is a relatively modest affair but does its job, with growing numbers of passengers using the station for both commuting to London and for a range of European flights. The station opened in 1966.

*Let's Celebrate: The Robin Hood Line re-opens!*







# 3. The Coming of the Ice Age:

## did privatisation halt re-openings?

The number of station and line re-openings slowed almost to a standstill following rail privatisation in 1994.

Schemes which did succeed were, in many cases, ones which were already at a high level of development, such as the Robin Hood Line, and funding was in place. Some promising schemes, such as the Ivanhoe Line project from Burton-upon-Trent to Leicester via Ashby-de-la-Zouch, were shelved, despite strong local authority support and the investment of significant resources in developing the scheme. Many station schemes which had been high on the re-opening list slipped back down the agenda. The schemes which have gone forward, and we highlight some in the next section, happened because of the intervention of a strong agency with the resources to 'go it alone', or at least almost. Horwich Parkway happened because Greater Manchester PTE insisted on it and took over the project. Warwick Parkway is now open because Chiltern Railways took a commercial risk to build and operate it themselves.

### Making life difficult

Privatisation, with the complex matrix of management contractor, main contractor and sub-contractors, together with Railtrack's own overheads, have made the cost of capital projects about double what they were under BR.

Does this mean that Railtrack is the villain of the piece? To identify 'blame' in the situation following privatisation is not as easy as it seems. The rail industry went through the biggest upheaval in its 175 year history, including the 'grouping' in 1923 and post-war nationalisation. In years to come we will marvel that so much was achieved despite the turmoil that was taking place in the mid to late 1990s. A well-established structure

within BR which, despite many faults, could progress re-openings was destroyed. To re-create structures which can progress complex schemes such as railway re-openings takes years, not months. And few people would argue that the new structure (if it can be called that) was appropriate to meet the needs of a growing railway. The growth which started to take place in the late 1990s took many people, including the Government of the day, by surprise. The complex contractual arrangements between train operators, Railtrack and a host of sub-contractors was inadequate to meet the needs of an expanding railway.

Railtrack was only willing to progress schemes which would either bring a quick return (few rail projects do) or which would be funded externally. The franchises for the train operating companies were short, with no incentive to invest for the long-term. New railways represent a very long-term investment. Local authorities, finding that the cost of a simple new station had rocketed to over a £1 million were also forced to re-think their plans. That amount buys a lot of new cycle way, or tendered bus services. Railways suddenly seemed poor value for money. Projects that had once seemed relatively straightforward suddenly got bogged down in a mass of contracts, access

agreements, 'network change' procedures and much more. Actual construction costs seemed to form a small part of total costs which included profits for each sub-contractor, as well as costs for possessions, consultancy fees and the like.

### Northern Ireland offers an alternative

It doesn't have to be like this. Northern Ireland Railways, owned by the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company, recently re-opened 15 miles of railway between Bleach Green (north of Belfast) and Antrim, re-connecting a vital part of the Irish rail network, and





bringing time savings of over 30 minutes for the Belfast - Derry/Londonderry service. NIR is a fully integrated railway, responsible for both operations and infrastructure. Working with private sector contractors it completed the 15 miles of 90 mph single-track railway, with two stations and two passing loops, for the sum of £16.6 million. These figures would be simply impossible under the British system as it stands. It was completed within budget, and on time.

### Franchise replacement: little gain so far

There have been some recent disappointments in the franchise replacement process, with imaginative bids which would have seen significant re-openings being rejected in favour of more 'conservative' proposals. For example the Rail Passengers Committee for Southern England was very disappointed that GoVia, the successful bidder for the South Central franchise, did not sign up to the proposal for re-opening Uckfield - Lewes which was part of the failed Connex bid. East Sussex County Council and many local

stakeholders had been lobbying hard for this re-opening, together with Eridge to Tunbridge Wells, and there was much disappointment that the SRA did not respond to these aspirations.

To get where we are today, with a Strategic Rail Authority getting to grips with a range of development projects, is no mean achievement. We would all like to have gone further, and faster. The growing list of station and line re-openings being announced by the SRA, with partnership funding from local authorities and developers, shows that a thaw is starting to happen. However, the SRA should be giving more credit to bids which include imaginative re-opening proposals, which are well-costed and demonstrate public benefits. Re-opening projects will not be made any easier by short extensions to existing franchises. It is long-term certainty, through 20 years franchises, that is needed. The next section outlines some positive schemes which are being implemented, and highlights the benefits they will bring.

The cost of new roads	The cost of a new railway														
<p>Many road schemes which were either dropped or shelved are being revived. They hardly represent good value for money. Examples include:</p> <p><b>Lancaster Western By-pass</b></p> <p>This new access road from Heysham to the M6 is costed at £62.1m for the 'Northern' option, a mere 5.1km. The alternative 'Southern' route, 11.3km, would cost £59.4m</p> <p>Heysham is already on the rail network. With less costly improvements, such as a new curve to avoid reversal at Morecambe, a cheaper and more sustainable option could be provided. The new curve would cost in the region of £2million and help take thousands of heavy lorries off the roads.</p> <p><b>Dorchester - Weymouth Relief Road</b></p> <p>This 8km of single carriageway road has been costed at £25m. The road would parallel the existing, under-used, railway. For relatively small amounts of money - less than a quarter of the cost of the new road - the line could be upgraded to allow greater frequencies.</p> <p><b>Bodmin to Indian Queens dualling</b></p> <p>This dualling of an existing road would cost £25m for a mere 8km. A regular rail service from Bodmin to Bodmin Parkway, connecting into the Great Western main line to Bristol and London, could be implemented with little infrastructure work.</p>	<p><b>Bleach Green to Antrim Northern Ireland</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">Project stage</th> <th style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">Project budget</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Track relaying</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">£8.0 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Signalling</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">£4.0 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">New stations (2)</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">£1.5 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Additional infrastructure</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">£1.0 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Bridges, Viaducts</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">£1.0 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Project management</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">£1.0 million</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Note:</b></p> <p>The line was rebuilt as a single line railway with two passing loops. It is passed for 90 m.p.h. running. Additional infrastructure included fencing, signage, etc.</p> <p>The line is 15 miles in length and includes the 10 arch Bleach Green viaduct, which required blast-cleaning, repairs and repainting.</p> <p>Track relaying involved 110,000 tonnes of ballast, 37,000 sleepers, 53,000 meters of rail and 145,000 meters of cabling</p>	Project stage	Project budget	Track relaying	£8.0 million	Signalling	£4.0 million	New stations (2)	£1.5 million	Additional infrastructure	£1.0 million	Bridges, Viaducts	£1.0 million	Project management	£1.0 million
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# 4. Beginning of the thaw

Whilst privatisation slowed down the pace of re-openings, it did not halt them altogether. Some schemes were so far advanced that they would have been very difficult to reverse. However, some station re-openings have been developed since privatisation and have proved remarkably successful, despite a lot of headaches for the transport planners who steered them through to completion. Re-opening of complete routes takes even longer than station re-openings, but there are now a number of schemes which are going ahead under the new privatised regime.

West Yorkshire PTE, in the face of enormous problems, has progressed the re-opening of the Huddersfield to Halifax line to a successful conclusion, with a new station serving Brighouse. The route re-opened in May 2000 and allows an hourly Huddersfield to Bradford and Leeds via Halifax service. For the future, the infrastructure opens up much wider possibilities for new services, including Bradford - Sheffield via Huddersfield.

## New stations open up new opportunities

Many communities have benefited from new stations being provided along existing passenger routes. The advantages are clear: the main cost is the capital cost of building the station. The trains are already running and the new facility brings in additional passenger revenue to support the train service. A word of caution should be sounded though: new stations must be able to demonstrate a high level of use, otherwise the negative effect of slowing the train down for an extra stop could deter existing passengers by lengthening their journey. Stations need high standards of upkeep too, and this means having staff. It should be stressed that the cost of staffing a new station - with all the benefits this brings to the passenger in terms of assistance and information, security and general upkeep of the station - is a small price compared to the substantial capital costs. New stations need people!

There was a growing number of station re-openings by the former British Rail, up until privatisation in 1994. There followed a period during which few new stations were provided, though it looks like the drought is at an end. Several successful new stations have opened recently -



*Brighouse re-opens: May 2000.*

such as Dunfermline St Margarets, Warwick Parkway, and Horwich Parkway.

Dunfermline St Margarets was built to serve a large adjacent hospital and also to provide easier access for commuters travelling into Edinburgh. It opened in January 2000 and passenger use is rising at a rate of 6% each month. The station cost £1.8 million and was funded by Fife Council. It has 93 parking spaces, 10 cycle lockers, a phone, and CCTV. The station has a reverse flow of commuters, with many people travelling into work at the hospital, as well as people using the train to get to Edinburgh. At the end of December 2000 it was estimated that 1500 people a week were using the station.

Warwick Parkway, opened in October 2000, was a commercial initiative by M40 Trains which owns Chiltern Railways. It was a £5.2 million scheme which provides good quality passenger facilities, including a large car park. The station is served by frequent trains to London and Birmingham and can accommodate trains of up to eight car lengths. The scheme was promoted by M40 Train who designed and built the station as an 'outside party'. This is a Railtrack Group Standard which permits developer's to construct on or near a railway. It allowed M40 Trains to 'control its own destiny' and appoint its own designers, contractors and to manage the process from start to finish. Railtrack had a watching brief to ensure the integrity of their infrastructure.





*The re-opening of Northern Ireland's line from Bleach Green to Antrim had cross-community support. Minister Gregory Campbell unveils a commemorative plaque as Translink's chairman Joan Smyth looks on*

A local architect was used to ensure that the station design was appropriate as a customer friendly modern facility in a rural environment. The costs were split between M40 which contributed £4.2m and Warwickshire County Council which put in £1.15m.

Horwich Parkway serves a major new development on the outskirts of Bolton, including the re-located football ground for Bolton Wanderers, and a large shopping and office complex. It opened in May 1999 at a cost of £3 million. It is adjacent to the M65 motorway and offers a very handy park and ride facility for commuters driving into Manchester from the Chorley and Preston area. Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive shouldered most of the costs, with assistance from local developers. GMPTC came up with a novel solution to difficulties they experienced in recouping their investment in the scheme. Instead of Railtrack, GMPTC is the owner of the station and they charge the train operator, First North Western, an access charge for use of the facility. Use of the station has exceeded the PTE's expectations and the problems they now face are lack of sufficient car parking space and the need to get more trains stopping. There are plans to introduce a staffed presence at the station.

Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive has opened a number of new stations in recent years, with a strong emphasis on providing new opportunities to growing centres of employment. Brunswick was opened in March 1998 with funding from the PTE and Merseyside Development Corporation, with EC Objective 1 grant aid. The total cost was £3.1 million. The objectives were to support regeneration of the South Docks area and support initiatives to revitalise socially-excluded communities. The station has enabled people to access new and existing jobs in the area. Ridership has grown substantially, from total

weekday usage of 6,500 at the time of opening, to nearly 10,000 a week now. Conway Park was an even more ambitious project. Located in a part of Birkenhead which has experienced severe decline, the station was at the heart of a regeneration strategy for the area. It was situated in a particularly difficult position which meant construction costs were high, at over £15 million. However, usage has been very encouraging, with weekly usage starting at 17,390 on opening in June 1998, rising to nearly 26,000 now. Funding came from the PTE, Wirral City lands and Wirral Borough Council, and EC funds.

## New projects

Many local authorities and passenger transport executives are developing new programmes for new line and station developments. Some of these are at an advanced stage, and have already won funding - for example the Vale of Glamorgan Line (Barry - Bridgend) and Stirling to Alloa. In both cases, the existence of devolved national government for Wales and Scotland played a part in generating support for the schemes, in partnership with the Strategic Rail Authority.

## East Meets West

The East-West Link is one of the most exciting re-opening projects in the country, offering the possibility of an inter-regional link through some of the most rapidly growing parts of the UK. The entire route would stretch from Felixstowe to Ipswich, (with links from Cambridge and Norwich) to Hitchin, Sandy, Bedford, Bicester to Aylesbury and Oxford. The whole scheme has been costed at £170 million and the Strategic Rail Authority wants to see the project progress in stages. The first section could be from Bletchley to Bicester, with new stations at Winslow and possibly Calvert. The cost would be in the region of £30 million.

The project is being led by Ipswich Borough Council, which has done a remarkable job in welding together many different county and district councils, and winning Government support. But what an indictment of national government that it has been left to a borough council (not even a county council!) to take this project of national strategic importance forward.

## Key benefits:

- **Strategic links and regional development:** The railway would connect some of the fastest growing parts of the country with a high quality service.
- **Environmental:** Many of the roads in the Home Counties are at saturation point: the railway would relieve some of the pressure for longer distance cross-country journeys, and take some freight traffic off the roads.



- **Integrated transport:** The railway would intersect with some of the country's major InterCity routes as well as important regional lines, offering a much wider range of travel opportunities. Good bus links at major rail hubs, as well as park and ride, would be provided.

## The Borders Railway

One of the most ambitious projects in the UK is the Borders Rail project. The line from Edinburgh to Carlisle via Galashiels - the Waverley Route - closed in 1969, amid huge local protests. The line served the sizeable textile towns of Hawick and Galashiels as well as smaller communities such as Melrose and Newton St Boswells. The route was also used for diverted traffic when the West Coast Main Line was closed for repairs or in emergencies.

Since closure the character of the area has changed dramatically. The traditional industries are in decline, and there are growing numbers of commuters living in the Galashiels area and travelling to work in Edinburgh and Dalkeith. The development of local industry is limited because of poor transport access. The main road to Edinburgh is sinuous and dangerous, and the cost of upgrading is prohibitive.

Today there is strong support in the Borders communities for the line's re-opening, and the Scottish Parliament has voted £1.2 million for detailed design work on the first phase of the project, from Edinburgh to Galashiels (Tweedbank). This will involve several new stations and a half-hourly frequency of trains.

The re-opening is being promoted by several agencies, including an independent body, Borders Transport Futures. A strong local and regional campaign has been mounted by Campaign for Borders Rail, supported strongly by Borders Council and other local authorities. The ultimate backing of the Scottish Parliament, and the Strategic Rail Authority, are vital for the project to come to fruition.

### Key benefits:

- **Regional development:** this area of the Borders has suffered from decline of traditional industry. The railway will open up new employment opportunities available for people living in the Borders, as well as generating new jobs in Borders towns.
- **Overcoming social exclusion:** Anyone without access to a car faces a long and slow bus journey to employment and training opportunities in Edinburgh and Carlisle. The railway will provide the core of an accessible transport link to major centres.

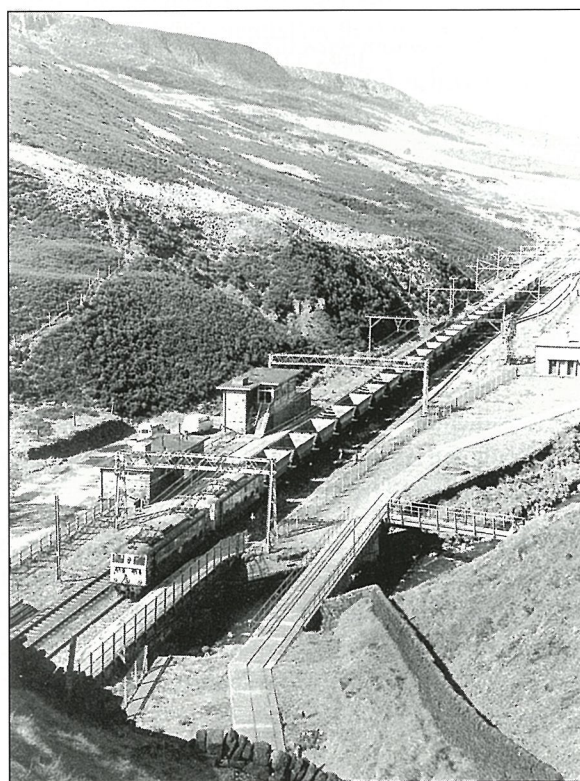
- **Environmental:** the railway will reduce pressure on the busy A7 from Galashiels into Edinburgh and relieve the single carriageway road to the south. The railway offers potential for carrying freight, including timber cut in the area, which would reduce the number of long distance lorry journeys.

- **Sustainable tourism:** The Borders is an area of great beauty with attractive towns set amidst superb scenery. The railway will dramatically improve access to and from the heavily-populated areas of central Scotland and the North of England.

- **Integrated transport:** The railway will act as the spine of an integrated transport network for the region, with good quality bus links from railheads such as Galashiels and, ultimately, Hawick.

## Light at the end of the tunnel? Re-opening the Woodhead Route

One of the great railway modernisation projects of the 1950s - postponed by the outbreak of the Second World War - was the Manchester to Sheffield via Woodhead route. This involved construction of a new tunnel of over three miles in length, and electrification at 1500 volts DC. A freight route diverging from the main line at Penistone, to Wath, was also electrified for the heavy coal traffic from South Yorkshire to the North-West. The line carried a



*An electric loco powers a freight through Woodhead*



through service to London Marylebone and regular electrically-hauled expresses from Manchester to Sheffield Victoria but closed to passenger traffic in 1969. The line was closed completely in 1982, after less than 30 years of operation of what was, in many respects, a new main line.

Since then transport campaigners, and indeed the Peak Park Planning Board, have not let possible re-opening fall off the agenda. The route is protected as part of the Trans-Pennine Trail, and the tunnel itself is maintained in good order by the National Grid.

Some years ago possible re-use of the route as part on a new freight corridor from the North-West to London and the Channel Tunnel was mooted by a private company, Central Railway Ltd. This ambitious plan, to be wholly funded through the private sector, envisaged electrically-hauled freight trains from Liverpool and Manchester being routed via Woodhead, Sheffield and parts of a re-opened Great Central main line to the south. Despite lack of success in winning parliamentary support in the last Government, the project is still very much alive. Much more recently, the prospect of using the route for frequent passenger services has emerged in dramatic fashion. Arriva, the existing owners of the Trans-Pennine Express franchise, has proposed re-opening the route to provide a fast Manchester - Sheffield passenger service, completing the journey in 35 minutes - with stops at enhanced parkway stations in Guide Bridge and Penistone.

Regardless of whom wins the franchise, the route has passenger as well as freight potential.

### Key benefits:

- **Strategic links and regional development:** The railway would link two of the nation's most populated regions with dramatically improved city centre to city centre timings and fast east to west coast services. It would form part of a major east-west freight artery as well as linking to the Channel Tunnel in the south.
- **Environmental:** The new railway would take cars off the very difficult and congested Woodhead Pass and open new opportunities for rail freight.
- **Integrated transport:** The proposed park and ride sites at Guide Bridge and Penistone would encourage motorists to use the train for the longer parts of their journey. Good links into the local rail network at Manchester, Guide Bridge, Penistone and Sheffield will open up much wider travel opportunities by train.



*The Woodhead Line is still a strong part of local culture in the Pennines: here it features as part of the Penistone Show, September 2000*

## Through the heart of the Peak: Buxton to Matlock

One of the most regrettable closures in the 1960s was the former Midland Main Line from Matlock to Peak Forest, near Buxton. Re-opening has long been the dream of the Peak Park and its partners Derbyshire County Council. A major breakthrough occurred when Railtrack included the scheme in its 2000 Network Management Statement.

### Key benefits

- **Strategic Links/Regional Development:** The route would complement a re-opened Woodhead Line, offering strong North West - East Midlands links for both passenger and freight
- **Environmental:** Many lorry journeys could be transferred to rail, especially for quarry traffic. The railway will provide an alternative to using the car for visitor access, allowing development of visitor management strategies by the Peak Park.
- **Overcoming Social Exclusion:** The railway would bring new opportunities for local residents in accessing Manchester and Buxton, as well as providing a way of accessing the countryside for those city dwellers without without a car.

### Do-it-yourself re-openings

Several railway re-openings are being progressed around the country by community-based organisations with strong local government support. These include the Wensleydale Railway Co., which is promoting the re-opening of the railway between Northallerton, on the East Coast Main-Line, and Garsdale, on the Settle-Carlisle Line. This route is still operational between Northallerton and Redmire, but sees only occasional MoD traffic. It currently belongs to Railtrack but the company and Railtrack are close to reaching agreement to transfer ownership to the



Wensleydale Railway Co. Beyond Redmire the track is lifted and there is severance at some locations. However, re-opening the entire route would bring major benefits to the Wensleydale communities, including Leyburn and Hawes, and provide a sustainable means of access to this part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park from both the North-East and West Yorkshire and the North-West via Settle-Carlisle.

The neighbouring Weardale Railway runs from Bishop Auckland to Stanhope and Eastgate, and was last used by cement traffic from Blue Circle at Eastgate in 1993. This route is also owned by Railtrack and negotiations are proceeding to purchase the trackbed and land. Weardale Railways Co. envisage a mixture of 'community' operations using modern traction provided by Arriva Trains (or a successor TOC) and some heritage operation.

Further south, the Swanage Railway has been working with its partners in Dorset County Council and Purbeck District Council to progress the re-connection of the Swanage Railway to the national network, at Wareham. The railway currently operates from Swanage to Norden, where there is a short gap before Railtrack's boundary at Furzebrook, an oil terminal. A full Rail Passenger Partnership bid is being prepared for the Strategic Rail Authority which would allow an established train operator, e.g. South West Trains, to run over Swanage Railway infrastructure.

## Key benefits

All these schemes share some common benefits. They include:

- **Regional development/Sustainable Tourism:** They will bring direct and indirect employment to local rural communities and act as catalysts to wider regeneration of their areas.



Swanage Railway: Norden is the current terminus, seen here. Beyond the loco, the track heads towards the main line at Wareham



Rugeley Town: a well-used station on the re-opened Cannock Chase Line - integrated transport in action!

- **Sustainable tourism/environment:** They will encourage visitors to come into the countryside - be it the Dales or Purbeck - by sustainable forms of transport. In some cases there may be freight potential on the lines, reducing the number of heavy lorries on the roads.

- **Overcoming social exclusion:** The schemes will, in addition to providing local jobs, offer an accessible form of transport as well as a 'heritage' experience, allowing local people to access jobs in larger centres.





# 5. Investment is for the long term

We need to move away from the outdated approach which says that new railways should be pared to the minimum to meet funding constraints, and instead see them as a worthwhile investment which justifies quality design and top class facilities. In particular, we would argue for:

- A total approach based on new infrastructure and stations with capacity for future expansion, not pared down to meet today's needs. It costs a lot more to have to do it all again a few years later.

- The presumption for line re-openings should be in favour of modern signalling which allows for plenty of capacity, now and in the future, and electrification. This may not be appropriate where there is no adjoining electrified networks, but a decision not to electrify when advantage can be made of existing networks and supplies is folly.

- Building new stations is expensive. Once they are there, they must be used to the maximum, and incorporate a range of facilities which include staffing throughout the period trains run; retail facilities; good quality car and cycle parking; real time information.

- We should be bold and imaginative in the design of our stations, incorporating the highest standards of design, and building in works of art which add a warm and welcoming feel to stations, which help celebrate their role as centres of the community.

## How do we fund all this?

New railways bring a range of benefits which are far greater than getting people out of their cars - important though that is. They can become the catalyst for a much wider regeneration of a town, city, or an entire corridor.

These benefits need to be built in more firmly to decision-making processes about investment, so that rail's potential for leading urban (and rural) regeneration is recognised. Existing cost-benefit analysis of transport schemes takes too narrow a focus about what major rail investment can deliver, and works to a

short time-horizon.

The first principle must be that it makes sense to go for quality in railway investment: the payback is over decades, and short-termism will cost more in the long run. Investing in extra capacity now means that future growth can be accommodated comfortably. Station life will be enhanced by building in staffed facilities including

ticket and information services, a café, toilet and other forms of friendly public space.

There is no going back to funding from one single source, but we do need to re-assert the primacy of accountable, public sector-led development. Funding packages which can capture the priorities of local and regional government, the SRA, as well as the private sector make sense. But the public interest has got to come first!



*Straford: quality combined with function*



## Getting re-connected:

There are many large towns in Britain with no rail service. In many cases, local authorities are already pursuing re-opening projects. There are good arguments for looking at the potential on a regional level. Regional development agencies and regional assemblies, in partnership with local authorities, should carry out audits of all towns with populations of 20,000 without a direct rail service, and consider the potential of, in the short-term, a dedicated rail-link bus service to the nearest major station, and also carry out feasibility studies of the longer-term potential to link the towns with a direct rail service.

Towns with a population of over 20,000 without a direct rail service include:

- **Washington, Co. Durham (population 49,000)**

Railtrack is supporting the proposal to re-open the Durham – Newcastle via Leamside line which would include a station serving this large new town. The cost has been estimated in the region of £2m for the station.

- **Blyth, Northumberland (30,000)**

Blyth, a large former mining town, is already on a freight line. A new Newcastle to Ashington service is being pursued by local and regional authorities.

- **Gosport, Hampshire (75,000)**

Plans for a wider £147 million Hampshire LRT would put Gosport on the map.

- **Dunstable, Bedfordshire (40,000)**

£8 million would be the cost of opening up the disused 5 mile freight line between Luton and Dunstable. This was part of Network SouthEast's strategic development plan prior to privatisation.

- **Corby (48,000)**

This major industrial town is on the route of a freight line. It did have an experimental service between 1987 and 1990. A new station would cost around £1 million.

- **Ilkeston, Derbyshire (34,000)**

The Nottingham – Sheffield line runs through Ilkeston. Reinstating the station would cost between £3 million and £4 million.

- **Burntwood, Staffs (25,000)**

Requires reinstating for passenger use an existing 5 mile freight route to Lichfield.

- **Leigh, Lancashire (40,000)**

There is currently a busway proposal which would use some abandoned trackbed to provide Leigh with improved bus services to Manchester. There is also a plan to reopen Kenyon Junction station (2.5 miles from Leigh) on the Liverpool-Earlestown-Manchester Line. The cost of a basic station is around £1 million.

- **Skelmersdale, Lancashire (35,000)**

Reopening two miles of a disused rail line would give this 'New Town' a rail connection to the Liverpool – Wigan – Manchester line.

**NOTE:** Definitions of 'rail served' and of 'towns with populations of 20,000 or more' can be interpreted in different ways. So for example there are major centres within conurbations (with populations of well in excess of 20,000) that have no railway stations but are on disused or freight lines. We have chosen to concentrate on towns which we consider to be free standing.





# 6. Conclusion:

## Why we need a strategic programme

There is an exciting range of initiatives taking place around the country. Surely it's best to let local initiative flourish and not lay down a heavy-handed steer from the national level? Well, yes and no. Many of the re-openings we have looked at cross numerous local authority boundaries, and getting agreement from each partner can be difficult. One authority may have quite different priorities from another, and railways are, as we have argued earlier, part of our strategic transport infrastructure, working best at a regional and national level. Planning an expansion of railways by solely relying on local authorities is a bit like a team of parish councils planning the extension of the motorway network.

The Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales are already showing a strong commitment to developing railways as part of their nations' strategic infrastructure. After an uncertain start, the Northern Ireland Assembly is promoting major investment in the long-neglected rail network, with new trains on order. In England, where there is currently no elected tier of regional government, re-openings risk becoming bogged down through red tape and the lack of a strong strategic push at the regional level.

The English regional assemblies and development agencies can play a role here, and a useful start could be for regional assemblies, RDAs and regional consortia of local authorities to identify potential line re-openings - or even new lines. This would fit in with the RDA's brief on sustainable economic development. Railway re-openings, as we have seen, bring significant economic benefits.

The push for re-openings in England should come from the regions, but they should meet with a sympathetic response from central Government, through the Strategic Rail Authority. The SRA has access to substantial public funds to support new railway development, through its Rail Passenger Partnership scheme (RPP) with the weight of the Government's 10-Year Spending Plan behind it. The

SRA needs to integrate its RPP scheme with a small team of SRA officers who have specific responsibilities to develop the network. This may involve re-assessing the very complex structure of the RPP scheme and simplifying it, whilst protecting the public purse from schemes which do not bring identifiable social, economic and environmental benefits. Such a team could be based on existing officers involved in network development, but providing a 'one stop shop' within the SRA to assist with new development.

Such a team would work with regional and local agencies to help them develop schemes which do bring substantial local, regional and in some cases national benefits. It would need to work closely with the Railtrack zones, but in some cases look for other partners to develop particular schemes (e.g. Wensleydale Railway, Dartmoor Railway). RPP funding should be available to any promoter of a railway project, rather than purely existing train operating companies.



### Overcome the hurdles

Railway re-openings bring major regional benefits, which should be recognised by local and regional planners. How many times in the past have potentially successful re-openings been rendered impossible by planning permission being granted to re-develop track beds? This is now more difficult, following publication of Planning Policy Guideline 13, which urges local authorities to refuse permission for development which could inhibit future transport uses of former railway alignments. Yet mistakes are still made: valuable space around stations which could meet growing needs for park and ride is being lost because of ill-considered permission for warehousing and light industry. Local planning policy needs to re-assess zoning policy: a former railway goods yard may be light industry but it makes far more sense in today's world to use the land for extensions of a station car park, or for other development which would benefit from its proximity to a station - notably housing and retail.



Developers need to become far more positive about promoting railways as part of their plans. There are precious few examples where developers have gone out of their way to embrace new rail facilities - Digby and Sowton station on the Exmouth branch being one. The message will only sink home if local authority planners are far tougher in what they want to get out of developments which are potentially served by rail. Where developers are positive about incorporating rail facilities in new developments - and there's a growing number of them -

they should be given every encouragement, with avoidance of unnecessary delays in the planning process.

We believe the time has come to join up the railway so that existing services can be improved, and new services and facilities delivered which represent both quality and value for money. This will only happen if there is a clear lead from the top, which can pull together both public and private sector agencies to help put Beeching into reverse

## Re-openings checklist: making a start

Any new rail development, be it a re-opening or entirely new facility, must combine strong local support, contribute to clear social, economic and environmental criteria, and form part of a sustainable regional development strategy. These points are intended as general guidance for local authorities, interested politicians or local campaigning groups who may have a project in mind. Its purpose is to help get a project off the ground. Seeing the project through to completion is a lengthy, complex process. Be content with the role of catalyst, and leave the complicated stuff to people who get paid for it!

- A local lobby group is essential to drum up local support amongst politicians, the media and the general public. Get a group of committed people who are willing to be 'do-ers'. Be prepared for a very long haul, and lots of disappointments and frustrations!
- Set up an open, inclusive organisation which brings in different skills and experiences involved. Try to avoid being seen as a bunch of middle-aged male railway enthusiasts!
- Present clear, understandable arguments and avoid railway jargon. The local authority is your most important ally at this stage; build links with both officers and elected members
- Identify potential corporate supporters in the area: businesses, large employers (e.g. hospitals, colleges) and tourism agencies
- Get advice from people who have been involved in similar campaigns to yours, such as Railway Development Society, Transport 2000.
- Build wide public support, through public meetings, fun events, well-produced publicity

- At an early stage there will be a need for an initial feasibility study which can identify the costs and benefits of the scheme. Someone will need to pay for it. Funding can come from various sources including local authority, private sector developers, train operators or other sources. For guidance contact Transport 2000 or AcoRP (see contact list).
- Make sure the feasibility study asks the right questions; incorporate social, economic and environmental issues into the brief, as well as likely commercial revenue. Be involved in any steering group set up to oversee the study.
- Don't assume consultants are always right: make sure you see a draft of the study before it is finally accepted.
- Get the project enshrined in the Local Transport Plan and the council's Local Plan (or Unitary Development Plan if you are in a metropolitan area).
- Get your train operating company in support. There's no point having a new station (or railway) if the train operator is unenthusiastic about serving it.
- Don't expect Railtrack to be immediately supportive: get the local support in the first place and leave Railtrack for later! Railtrack and ATCO have produced an excellent booklet Partners in Railway Development - it takes you through the various stages of project development. Make sure you get a copy!
- Even if the project gets strong support from the local authority, don't relax the pressure. A strong, well-organised and vocal campaign will help ensure the project stays at the top of local and regional authorities' agendas, and helps to ensure that when the great day comes the new facility will be well used by the public.



# Appendix I

## Select Bibliography

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# Appendix 2

## Select list of possible re-openings, by region

The following regional lists represent some of the stronger contenders for line re-openings. Some, though not all, feature in the relevant Local Transport Plan, and Regional Transport Strategy. Some - which we highlight - are included in the SRA's Strategic Agenda. We stress that it does not pretend to be comprehensive, and simply highlights a representative selection of schemes across the UK, indicating what their possible benefits may be.

## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:

Table 1 - Scotland

Route	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential	SRA
Airdrie - Bathgate	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Alloa - Dunfermline	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Dumfries - Stranraer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Edinburgh - Galashiels	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Edinburgh South Suburban	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Galashiels - Carlisle	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Glasgow Cross-Rail	✓		✓		✓	✓		
Hamilton - Larkhall	✓		✓		✓	✓		
Paisley - Airport	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
St. Andrews - Leuchars			✓	✓		✓		
Stirling - Alloa	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:

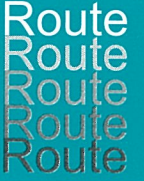
Table 2 - Wales

Route	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential	SRA
Barry - Bridgend	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Newport - Ebbw Vale	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Caer-na-for-n - Bangor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Amlwch - Gaerwen	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Aberystwyth - Carmarthen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Gowerton - Pontarddulais	✓		✓		✓	✓		



## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:


Table 3 - North West England



	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential	SRA
Manchester - Sheffield	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Manchester Airport West Link	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Penrith - Keswick	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Runcorn - Frodsham	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Colne - Skipton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Burscough Curves	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northwich - Sandbach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blackpool South - Central	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:

Table 4 - North East England and Yorkshire/Humberside

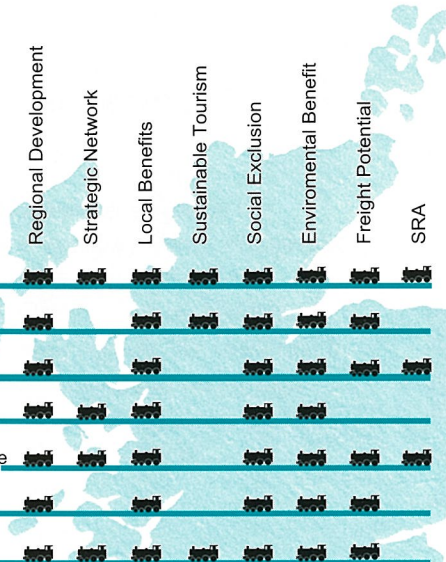


	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential	SRA
Stockton - Ferryhill - Pelaw	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alnwick - Alnmouth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bishop Auckland - Stanhope	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leamside Line	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newcastle - Blyth - Ashington	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nunthorpe - Guisborough	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northallerton - Garsdale	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Malton - Pickering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:

Table 5 - The Midlands



	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential	SRA
Buxton - Matlock	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Duffield - Wirksworth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leicester - Ashby - Burton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kettering - Corby - Oakham	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Walsall - Dudley - Stourbridge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Walsall - Lichfield - Burton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stratford - Honeybourne	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:

Table 6 - South West England

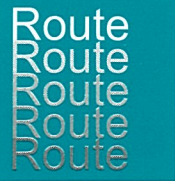


	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential	SRA
Portishead - Britol	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
St. Austell - St. Dennis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tavistock - Bere Alston	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wareham - Swanage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:

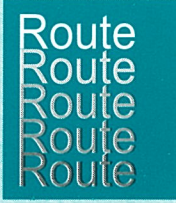
Table 7 - South East England



	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential	SRA
Bedford - Sandy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bicester - Bletchley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bletchley - Aylesbury	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hythe - Southampton	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lewes - Uckfield	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Princes Risborough - Aston Rowant	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Romsey - Eastleigh	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shanklin - Ventnor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Turbridge Wells - Eridge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leighton Buzzard - Dunstable	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:

Table 8 - Eastern England




	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential	SRA
Braintree - Stansted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cambridge - St Ives - Huntingdon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dereham - Wymondham	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Holt - Fakenham -Dereham	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
March - Wisbech	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:


Table 9 - London



	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential	SRA
Chelsea - Hackney	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
East-West Crossrail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
East London Extension	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heathrow - Feltham link	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heathrow - St Pancras	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heathrow Western Crossrail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Woolwich - S. Tunnel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Suggested New And Re-opened Rail Routes:

Table 10 - Northern Ireland



	Regional Development	Strategic Network	Local Benefits	Sustainable Tourism	Social Exclusion	Environmental Benefit	Freight Potential
B/fast - Newtownards (poss LRT)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Derry City - Strabane (n/gauge)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Portadown - Armagh	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Portadown - Strabane- Derry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



# BEECHING

in reverse

