



# AUTUMN 2008 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Held on 15 November 2008 at the Charity Centre, Stephenson Way, Euston, London

## THE FUTURE OF RAILWAYS



**High Speed**

**Electrification**



**Freight**

**Intercity Express**



**Re-openings**

**Light Rail / Tram Train**

# CONFERENCE REPORT

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*Leader of Green Party*



**Simon Montague**  
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**Chris Green**  
*Chairman, Railway Forum*



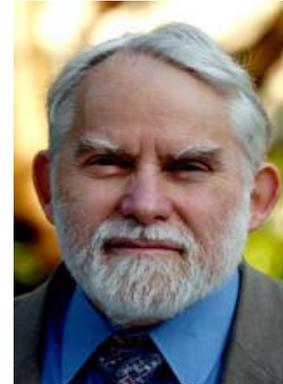
**Chris Austin OBE**  
*Head of Public Affairs, ATOC*



**Lord Tony Berkeley**  
*Chairman, Rail Freight Group*



**Professor Lewis Lesley**  
*"Tram Power"*



These are the ten speakers. For profiles of some of the speakers see the final page of this report.

**Norman Baker**  
*Liberal Democrat Transport  
spokesman*  
**Concluding Thoughts**

[www.normanbaker.org.uk](http://www.normanbaker.org.uk)



## Caroline Lucas MEP, *Leader of Green Party* Promoting rail at European Level

1.1. Caroline thanked *Railfuture* for appointing her as one of its Vice-Presidents. She promised to do all she could to promote the cause of rail, both here and in the EU. She is a frequent user of Eurostar and believes High-Speed Rail has an important role to play in the future.

1.2. Speaking without the use of slides, she said that high-speed is a more environmentally sound mode of travel than air, which should be reduced not expanded. She referred to her efforts to get the EU to agree to tax aviation fuel, even if countries outside Europe will not, but this argument had not yet been won in the Parliament, because of the fear of loss of custom to non European carriers. However, there was a common concern expressed by some that high-speed rail projects just encouraged longer journeys, and tended to benefit the rich rather than the poor.

1.3. Rail regulation is one of the EC's roles, and inter-operability between different national rail administrations was being encouraged, while open access, for freight now and passenger traffic from 2010, were being pushed. Consumer rights for rail passengers were also being advanced, similar to those for air passengers.

1.4. Explaining that only the unelected European Commission has the power to bring ideas to the table, but then they get debated by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, Caroline said it is worth lobbying MEPs on railway matters.

1.5. She emphasised that sustainable and accessible transport, with reasonable fares, was far more important than just liberalisation, if rail was to play its proper role. She agreed with a questioner that there should be greater encouragement given in the UK to carrying cycles on trains. In response to other questions she also agreed with the need for proper interchanges with local buses and with a need to address gaps in the availability of cross-border local travel.

## Simon Montague, *Director of Communications Eurostar Ltd* High Speed 1 and Beyond

2.1. Simon Montague, who admitted he was new to the railways, described the progress in building and completion of HS1 (CTRL), by London & Continental Railways. The section from near Ebbsfleet to Folkestone opened first, and the whole route from St Pancras completed on time by November 2007. A decision was taken to move all Eurostar services from Waterloo to St. Pancras, and depot operations from North Pole to Temple Mills, in a single mid-week night on 14 November. Dress rehearsals took place in advance, and all staff trained for the move, including face-to-face meetings as well as written communications. Ebbsfleet opened a week later.



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2.2. There was a 12-month PR campaign, with 50 regional "roadshows", generous

media advertising, and public awareness polls conducted. The emphasis was on overall new journey times (now 2h15min to Paris compared with 2h55min on opening in 1994), through fares now from 130 towns and cities, and the environmental aspects including that Eurostar passengers generated only 10% of the CO2 emissions that air passengers did on similar journeys. This figure would be even better if renewable energy was generated in the UK. He revealed that HRH Prince Charles now only travels by Eurostar [when going to Paris and Brussels].



2.3. Passenger numbers of 7m had increased by 13.9% by September 2008, and revenue by 17.1%, (by 100% from East Midlands stations). However he referred to the fact that track access charges by Network Rail in the UK were "massive"! He expressed the hope that HS2 would get a Government go-ahead; it was natural that the Greens and Liberal Democrats supported it, but surprisingly the Tories also!

2.4. In answer to questions, he said that thanks to a 30% increase in Brussels passengers there would be an extra Brussels service, with an Ashford stop, as soon as the recent fire damage was repaired. He also said that SNCF wanted a line via Amiens which would cut Paris journeys to 2h, that the cheapest return fare has been £59 for some years compared with an original £90+, and that possible new destinations were Amsterdam and Lyon, subject to making a commercial case, but Eurostar wouldn't run beyond London without HS2 being built.

**HIGH-SPEED PANEL OF THREE SPEAKERS**

**1 - Julie Mills, Director of Greengauge 21**

3.1.1. Julie Mills explained that, like Railfuture, Greengauge 21 is a "not for profit" company limited by guarantee. The directors are Jim Steer and Julie Mills. They are proud of HS1 [the high-speed line from London to the Channel Tunnel], but ask whether there will be another HS line? Greengauge 21 believes there is a case for a network of HS lines in the UK to provide:

- (a) extra capacity to relieve overcrowding;
- (b) shorter journey times to deliver a modal shift;
- (c) environmental carbon-reduction benefits;
- (d) economic growth and regeneration.

3.1.2. The proposed HS2 line would run north from London and include a spur to Heathrow and a link into the WCML north of Birmingham as well as a branch into Birmingham city centre. Services would extend to Glasgow and Edinburgh, and there would also be extensions to the continent via HS1. There could also be regional express services, for example from Kent to Oxford via Bicester and the East-West link.

3.1.3. Other people have developed other ideas and Greengauge welcomes the debate. The estimated cost including contingency is £11bn, based on HS1 costs. A realistic fast timescale is construction of the 150 new line from 2015 to 2019, which would cut 30min from a London to Birmingham journey, and more from Heathrow.

Route Corridors



3.1.4. In addition to London-Birmingham-Manchester, looking to the long-term future, there could be four more HS corridors:

- (a) London to the North-East via Cambridge;
- (b) London to Bristol and Cardiff;
- (c) A Trans-Pennine route across the mountains (making extra challenges);
- (d) An Anglo-Scottish line, via either east Coast or West Coast.

3.1.5. Greengauge 21 has raised £0.75m from a public industry group including the rail industry and key councils, and gradually getting more consensus. One aim is to identify key sites needing development.

## 2 – Colin Elliff, “2M”

3.2.1. Colin Elliff, who works for a major rail consultancy, spoke first about the importance of demographics: we want high-speed not only for extra capacity but also for increasing population and regeneration from improved connections. Therefore it should link population centres, especially the major northern cities. He said that the Eddington report equates prosperity with connectivity, but Greengauge 21 just has a route from London, which isn't so good for going north starting from Birmingham, especially as most major cities aren't on the WCML.

3.2.2 Another crucial element is sustainability: oil is running out so we need to get away from oil-dependency. Electric railways are the only transport not needing oil. The government policy of air expansion is silly in view of this. Although economics have driven transport in the past, it should be environmentally driven in future.

3.2.3 Like many rail campaigners, he argued that Heathrow expansion has no logic, given that one quarter of flights are to places potentially reachable by HS, and that could be up to half if you allow for up to 4h journey time. There are also poor local flight connections with infrequent services, causing a lot of sitting around at Heathrow. The current concept is everything terminating at Heathrow, including the future Airtrack and Crossrail services. Rail is also a superior travelling experience.

3.2.4 Colin insisted that the HS Specification must be for a whole network, not all funnelling into London, with maximum network for minimum new build. There should be a single spine with triangular junctions, to cover London - Birmingham - Sheffield - Manchester - Liverpool - Newcastle. Don't follow the WCML; the Greengauge scheme gives no benefit to the East Midlands. It has got to be built incrementally, so start like Greengauge but without Heathrow and follow an M1 alignment. People living by the M1 might even welcome being bought out.

3.2.5 The HS 2nd stage should be an ECML route in Yorkshire, again following the M1 corridor. HS would get into Manchester via the Woodhead route, as that is a better route into Manchester with lots of redundant track. HS would go via Leeds and Newcastle to Edinburgh and then Glasgow, making all major cities within a few hours of each other. Using the same trains to both Scottish cities would give a more frequent service than now. Heathrow could be reached with only one change of trains. Then we should look at links to the West Country and at Cross-Country services, including creating a path for new trains on existing lines.

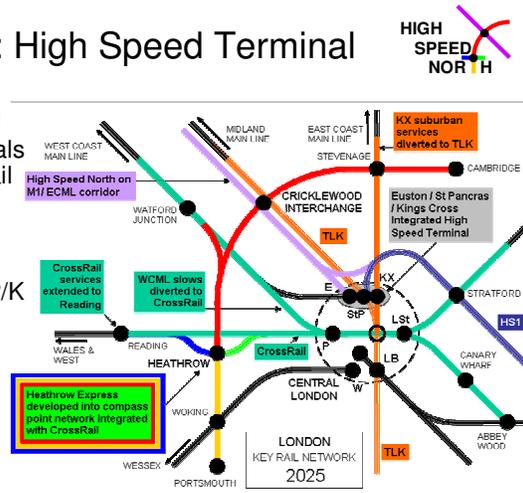
3.2.6 The WCML would then become a premier freight corridor cleared to W10 gauge, with two tracks for regional passenger trains and two for freight. Going alongside a motorway reduces the environmental impact.

3.2.7 The choice of London terminal matters: use of Euston would be advantageous as St. Pancras is filling up and Euston has the largest ground space of all north-facing terminals. The Euston buffer stops could be pulled forward to get 400m trains like Eurostar into the station. Crossrail should cope with local travel displaced from Euston, by extending Crossrail trains currently planned to terminate at Paddington. The Euston approach to Primrose Hill should be re-engineered.

### Euston : High Speed Terminal

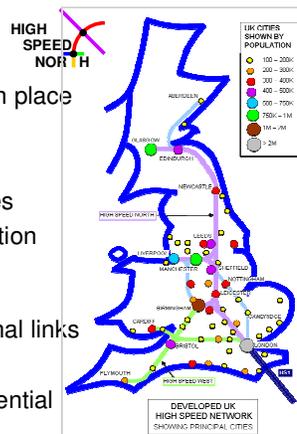
#### My Solution

- Euston locals to CrossRail
- CrossRail now balanced
- Euston/StP/K X now integrated terminal
- HSN to MML/M1 corridor



### Completed Network

- UK high speed network in place
- Economy of new build
- All major cities linked
- Addresses regional issues
- Network matches population distribution
- Heathrow rail access revolutionised with regional links
- Better rail network
- Links to Europe also essential



3.2.8 Heathrow isn't the focus: whilst Greengauge achieves specific links to the North-West, it fails to serve the ECML. Look at Arup's "Heathrow Hub" proposal remote from the airport, involving 20km of tunnel for a new route and a deviation via Heathrow if going north from London. This is a £4.5bn waste of money. Colin Elliff proposes to go south as per existing Airtrack proposals, with also a spur to the GWR to get to Reading, and a new route north curving east to get to other lines. We should also look towards European continental extensions.

## 3 – Kelvin Hopkins MP, "Eurorail"

3.3.1 The politics: Kelvin Hopkins is a traditional Labour Party MP who believes in government-controlled railways. He has been working with Tony Berkeley on a Railfreight link to Europe and believes that rail is now the future. He says the Thatcher objection to railways being socialist because people travel together is now behind us.

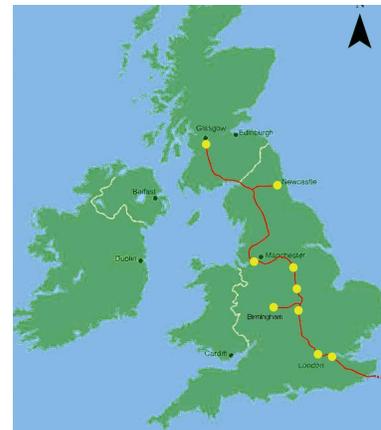
3.3.2 Freight growth: the volume of freight traffic is much increased but is still only a small proportion compared with passengers. For this to change needs a step-change in capacity. Passengers and freight don't mix easily owing to different speeds so we need dedicated freight lines. To build new passenger lines to free up old passenger routes doesn't help freight in good quantity because the routes aren't suitable for freight and you can't run continental gauge. Britain needs a new freight network.



3.3.3 Railway engineers Andy Berry and Tim Brown, Scottish road freight haulier Ken Russell and Kelvin Hopkins lead the EuroRail Freight Group promoting a new

"Euro Freight Route" (EFR). It would provide a link from the continent to the north, mostly re-using existing trackbeds, so it would be cheap at £4bn, even £3bn having been suggested, compared with Crossrail at £16bn. HS1 should also be accessible to freight traffic, serving one terminal already available north of the Thames. But we need a second route round the east and north of London to a second terminal.

3.3.4 North of London the new freight line should include use of the Woodhead route and should go further north via the Settle & Carlisle line. Terminals will be small, solely for transshipment of lorries or trailers onto and off the trains. There should also be a dedicated line from north of the Thames to the Channel Tunnel to bypass HS1. The Channel Tunnel will accommodate double-deck freight trains with modification to the catenary.



3.3.5 Freight using the EFR will free up other routes for passengers and will link with dedicated freight route developments on the continent, such as Rotterdam to the Ruhr and also a new tunnel under the Brenner Pass.

He says that we need good transport links from Scotland to the continent in order to stop the Scottish economy from withering. Maps are available showing where the route will go. We could run trains from the north through the Channel Tunnel within a year if allowed.

## Questions and Comments to High speed Panel of 3 Speakers

**Q1.** Mike Crowhurst on money and possible premium fares.

**JM** said that HS clearly is a premium service and can have sophisticated pricing with yield management by time of day. But the existing railway pricing system plays an important part, and it is down to government policy. But there is a role also for private sector financing.

**CE** said we should build lines as cheaply as possible and that there would anyway be new capacity for slower non-premium services.

**KH** believed his scheme was commercially viable. For example supermarkets want to put traffic on trains, such as wine from Bordeaux. All we need is for government to say yes with implicit underwriting.

**Q2.** Chris Burton on long-distance travel: there is no such thing as a non-stop train over long distance [possible exception Paris - Marseille 750km]. Who is to say a

*person doesn't want to get there non-stop as quickly as possible?*

**Q3.** *Peter Wakefield of Cambridge: to have HS alongside M1 seems a good idea, but would it have greenfield-site stations when city centre would be desirable? Also what about East Anglia and the South Coast?*

**CE** said there would be an S-bend into and under Leicester London Road station, whilst Nottingham is off the first route but may be on a later East-Coast route. HS is intended to serve major centres of population but Cambridge is small in that league although it would benefit by less congestion at Hitchin.

**JM** said HS stations should be in city centres where there are local transport networks, although maybe there is also a case for parkway stations, some of which are good, but some not so. Cambridge and Peterborough are in the eastern corridor, but she wasn't sure if HS was a solution to the South Coast, where it would be difficult in what is a well developed area that anyway needs to divert pressures away.

**Q4.** *To Greengauge: what about towns not mentioned in the East Midlands? What are the benefits for places not served?*

**JM** hoped East Midlands would have benefits, pointing out that Nottingham was on corridor 2, and that Greengauge were engaged in consultation with key cities around the country. She noted the need for links to adjacent regions, and accepted that London - Birmingham - Manchester won't necessarily be the final optimal solution.

**Q5.** *Tim Shaw of Woking: Heathrow doesn't need HS but does need connections to Reading and Southampton because of charter holiday flights going from elsewhere.*

**JM** said airlines were dropping some flights from the regions to abroad and Heathrow is the arrival hub, so there are benefits in serving Heathrow.

**KH** said freight has enormous CO2 benefits on rail, with road transport using 12 times as much CO2 [presumably for the equivalent same load and journey]. But he shares some HS rail scepticism as much faster travel has disproportionate energy use. We are not as big as France, so we don't need vast sums of money just to save half an hour going to Edinburgh. Running non-stop on conventional rail might be cheaper.

**Q6.** *Norman Bradbury (SW London) asked about the government's mindset. The biggest difficulty is shifting the government mind, but now the vast increase in rail use is making politicians listen.*

**CE** said "hard-wiring" oil burning is wrong [presumably a reference to the building of new inter-city diesel trains], robbing our children, as oil supply is most critical.

**JM** was not convinced the government ministers were so bad, now that Geoff Hoon has set up a new commission under Lord Adonis who is certainly not agnostic on rail.

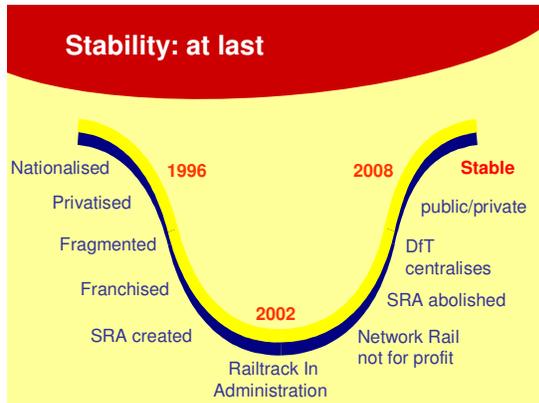
**Q7.** *A.Gee from Felixstowe, who worked for a shipping line there, said the port had to fund part of the development of the rail branch, but asked if the emphasis on Eurotunnel had gone off target and what about the container traffic on the East Coast, which had the biggest growth, so is our focus wrong?*

**KH** said congestion is so great that we need everything we can get, so he is also supportive of freight going to ports, but it should be putting trailers on the train rather than the tractors. There should be no competition [with Eurotunnel], as everything is needed.

## AFTERNOON FORUM - PANEL OF THREE SPEAKERS

### Chris Green, Chairman of the Railway Forum

4.1.1. Chris Green gave a four-part presentation starting with Restoring the Basics:



(a) He said that Britain has gone from a nationalised stable state through sheer hell and have now again reached a new stable state. A stable industry delivers benefits. Overall safety is now improved. SPADs are down 90% by TPWS; broken rails are down 80%, now at a record low, probably in the world; punctuality has a 90% moving annual average (MAA), with only two TOCs below, and passengers now taking it for granted.

(b) 5-year funding is now robust, with £29bn for 2009-14. RUSs once signed by the government can't be taken away, whereas BR used to be uncertain in February about what it could spend in April. The 30yr strategy was all analysis and no solutions, so not a great success, but is nevertheless not dead.

(c) Investment is increasing vastly, with £22bn renewals and maintenance and another £8bn for enhancements, e.g. Reading, Rugby, and Hitchin flyover. We have the youngest train fleet in Europe, with an average age of 16yr, which is about right for a life-span of 30yr.

(d) There's 80% customer satisfaction, but only 40% value for money [according to customer surveys], which implies the railway is a forced sale for people who have to use it.

4.1.2. What is to be done:

(a) There is life beyond WCML upgrading, recruiting new teams, to achieve a 7-day railway. We upgraded the ECML with electrification on time and on budget. The WCML closes down [i.e. completes] March 2009.

(b) Next comes Reading £600m most inspired, taking most of the 5yr period. We probably can't cope with more than 1 big project at once. But going to a 7-day railway makes engineering work more expensive. WCML will pilot 7-day railway, with investment in weekend reliability, by use of 2 tracks, with electric light for night work at junctions, and quicker replacements.

(c) 7-day railway means freight keeps running at night, and weekend service is same as on weekdays. This could be part of the perceived value for money. Our fares are high at full price. We need either to reduce costs or get more subsidy, but neither seems very likely.

(d) We need more trains and longer trains, and to expand our station car-parks to get you into the station. This is a difficult area in between TOCs and NR, although there are new clever schemes to help. We must lengthen 900 platforms and re-double tracks, e.g. north and south Cotswolds, and build flyover at Hitchin in 2yr time.

(e) Then after that create new capacity and build for speed, to release old lines for freight and commuters, justified by increase in capacity. NR is studying 5 new HS lines at behest of government, so everybody is now saying the same thing. The study will show which lines we want first, and which are no-hoppers. HS2 should be London Heathrow - St.Pancras - Birmingham - Manchester - Leeds, and run on to existing lines beyond that, which you couldn't do with Maglev.

#### 4.1.3. Recession Strategy:

(a) Public infrastructure projects must spend money in next 5yr to give employment, e.g. 30,000 for Crossrail. Thameslink is "recession virtuous" as it already has approval and money, so let's get on with it. We should also restore axed schemes, e.g. double-track Kemble - Swindon and Worcester - Oxford, including adding extra loops around Oxford.

(b) But the big one must be electrification, albeit not in the 5yr plan. It would however be nice to start sooner than 2014. We need a rolling programme, doing a few miles a day with mobile factories. EWS need 31 electrification fill-ins to start going from diesel to electric traction for freight. If we electrify 20 miles from Crewe to Chester, then we can cut out diesels at Euston. With rolling elimination of diesels, the focus should be on an electric IEP train. We could start much earlier if government wishes to plan in recession.

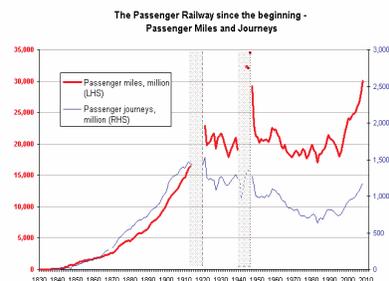
(c) Add freight access, a rolling W10 gauge network, and better port access, also well worthy of a recession programme. We need a 3yr plan, starting again in 2012, to be about transport rather than just rail, to trade off one mode against another.

(d) Our new energy plan is much more pro-railway with more use of nuclear energy which is only available to rail. But it will be about strategic links rather than just rail, involving energy and the environment. But note that railways do need less land than roads to move the same loads. We must keep planning HS lines, as they will take until 2016 to 2020 to build.

4.1.4 His conclusion on a very upbeat presentation was that Britain's railways are consistently getting the basics right and are entering a period of historic investment.

### Chris Austin OBE, Head of Public Affairs, ATOC

4.2.1 Chris Austin asked attendees to consider the growth chart ever since the start of railways in 1830. Apart from high war-time blips, we now have the highest level of traffic all time, a step ahead of the 1930s, partly due to congestion on other modes. Even with recession blips, the long-term trend is upwards. The network is much the same size as 10yr ago apart from HS1. The fleet size is also much the same, but there is 20% more mileage and 43% more passengers.



4.2.2 He said that we do now need new coaches and infrastructure. See ATOC on the internet for figures, e.g.

Mode	emissions	% change in 1ye	% change since 1995/6
rail	58	-5%	-25%**
car	104	-1.5%	-9%
air	227	+6%	+11%

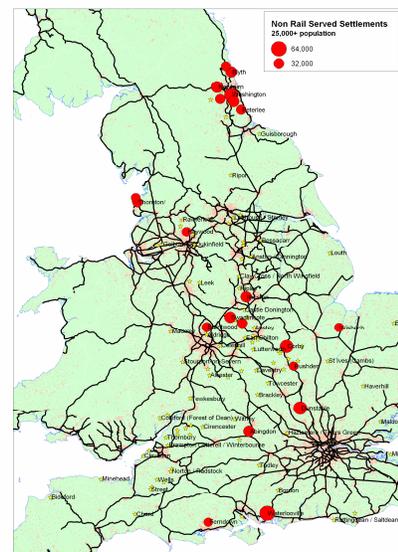
\*\* largely due to trains being fuller, but also some regeneration and improved diesels (e.g. Great-Western power cars).

4.2.3 Rail is good for the economy. Eddington listed key priorities: growing city centre catchments, key inter-urban corridors, international gateways. NR spending is now much higher than under BR or Railtrack, but this is due to catching up what wasn't done in the past. Payments to TOCs decline to zero at 2012, then TOCs contribute to government funding: there will be a political choice between giving back the money or using it for investment. Rail has regional development impacts. You can continue spending on the existing network and/or build new lines.

4.2.4 The White paper provided a funded approach. New ministers (in the new team) actually want to do things, not merely keep things going. So politically things are quite encouraging. Electrification benefits are now back on the agenda for ATOC / NR work and lobbying. There might be reduced access charges with electrification.

4.2.5 Connecting communities:

In the 1960s and 1970s it was fine when people started rail-heading after branch line closures, hence Corby and beyond, and other missing links. Of towns not on rail, the biggest is now Waterlooville (pop. 60,000) near Havant. Maybe it needs a bus link [it has one by SWT - HTJ] or light rail or a new station on the mainline. Also out of “eco-towns” proposed, whilst some are near stations, others are more than 5km from the railway, so these need thinking about. But there's a problem putting a railway back through a conservation area, e.g. at Bramley [on the Guildford to Cranleigh route]. So there is an issue of safeguarding alignments, whether for local links or for HS lines. There is now recognition in government that this is sensible in principle, but with a question about how.



4.2.6 Main threads:

Capacity increase is now the key objective, to cope with more passengers and trains, rather than to create new HS lines per se. We need priority corridors, connecting communities, with speed and capacity, including for freight. But we must not lose momentum on renewals and enhancements of the classic network, as the earliest we could have new HS will be 2020. We need incremental funding for any new lines. This needs proper analysis for money to go where it gives the most good for the greatest number of passengers and amounts of freight.

4.2.7 Train Operators' views:

Chris closed by saying that operators are in it for the long run; each wanting to re-own their franchise. Even the short-term Southern has transformed the Brighton line. Success for TOCs means growing the business, as can't achieve it by cost-cutting, but only by carrying more people and more freight. Capacity is the priority over speed.

## Lord Tony Berkeley, Chairman of Rail Freight Group

4.3.1 Lord Berkeley explained that the ORR just completed its periodic review a week earlier [early November 2008]. The main freight issues were to require another 21% efficiency saving from NR, to lead to lower access charges for freight down 35%, with freight delays down 25%. But 7-day working might not be so effective for freight.

4.3.2 The asset register recording condition of the network allows operators to look up in the book to see what you can run. The most important for freight is to know the loading gauge. But it's incomplete. Sometimes you have to measure the actual gauge. When tamping is done, it is important to measure and record the gauge afterwards.

4.3.3 Freight operators are delighted with the planned new works at Reading. But important investment is the filling in of little bits that make lots of difference. He asked if NR can deliver. Can they do more single-line working, which contractors say can be done perfectly safely if only they are allowed to?

4.3.4 He questioned if the BAA payment towards Crossrail is perhaps an inducement for the government to support a third runway at Heathrow? See a complicated website questionnaire about the corporate governance of NR. Incentives are wrong. There needs to be a bonus for running more trains rather than simply for not crashing them.

4.3.5 Rail freight has grown better than elsewhere in Europe. All can be seen on the RFG website. Coal traffic is going down due to government energy policy. But most people think that we will continue to use coal rather than turning all the lights out. Port and international non-bulk traffic is growing very fast. In 2015 there will be 200+ freights per day on the WCML, rising even more by 2030, with more also on other lines, on same main routes as used by passengers. There will be excess demand over capacity by 2030, even assuming there

### Rail freight traffic

grown by >60% in ten years

RFG/FTA forecasts – August 2008

	2006	2015	2030
Tonnes (millions)*	123.7	130.3	197.8
Tonne km (billions)	23.5	31.0	50.4
Trains ('000s)	409	434	634
% surface t/km by rail	12.6	15.0	20.7



are no passenger train number changes. So we need to check the sensitivity of what happens if things change.

4.3.6 For freight we need longer trains, requiring longer loops, and we need faster trains, and faster turnouts on/off the main lines. Off-track we need terminals for building materials, coal, inter-modal traffic, and interchange. Supermarkets are talking, but their usage of rail would involve road travel from a rail freight terminal to a supermarket distribution centre. There is the potential for a through freight train from Valencia in southern Spain.

4.3.7 The current Planning Bill is to provide a new way of getting planning permission for nuclear power stations, but it applies also to other things such as railways and airports. The policies that the government will have to write should trickle down to little things too. If the Swiss can do possessions quickly, why can't we? There is a graph of bi-directional signalling occurrences per 4-week period: why are they not well-used in some places?

4.3.8 Funding the future of freight: rolling stock is fantastic. A "W.H.Davis" wagon can carry 9ft 6in boxes within W8 gauge. There are problems in Europe to have to do a noise test requiring taking a wagon by road to the Czech republic. There is a special facility to stop wheel flack, but it is not approved and so can't be used. Brake blocks have to have spark guards even though they are composite rather than cast iron ones. All wheels in this country are P6 when they should be P10. There is a question of the time taken to ask Brussels for a derogation. We will need a locomotive for freight.

## Funding the future of freight

- Terminals can be funded privately, provided planning is not too onerous  
Infrastructure – EU and HMG policy - rail freight pays marginal cost in order to compete with road freight.
- Freight benefits also from smaller infrastructure projects.
- Rolling stock in private sector – order books full – but costs and delays in testing inhibit innovation and growth!



4.3.9 Once Crossrail is finished, the throat of Paddington will again have to be rebuilt for IEP. The new service to Corby has no access rights despite being in the timetable, but it is a marginal seat, so some freight trains will have to be cancelled. HS1 is a disaster for freight with six-times the access charge compared with NR. The DfT and Eurotunnel think they will get more revenue if they put the charges up, which actually results in lorries on a parallel road. In France freight is down 40% whilst our freight is up 60%. In France the TGV is good but the classic network is a disaster. Open access is being fought for. But our new minister is thought to be good.

## Questions and Comments to Afternoon Panel of 3 Speakers

**Q1.** Mike Crowhurst asked about a) gauge enhancement; b) the benefits of NR taking a percentage of revenue.

**TB** wants a network of gauge enhancements to allow for diversions, although there will always be places not reached, so we will still need wagons to cope with non-enhanced routes. On revenue he TB considers this a step too far. He doesn't want changes, but stick to what we've got. We need to incentivise NR to want to run more trains and have 7-day working.

**CG** agrees: 5 years ago there was dislike as freight only got marginal access charges.

**CA** said the TOCs are now more interested and should be more involved in procuring and specifying trains than in the past, and they get passenger feedback.

**Q2.** Graham Nalty on strategic links: what about economic development and what about freight stimulating economic development?

**CG** explained that the Secretary of State has set up a group to take a complete strategic economic view across all transport.

**CA** said there is a link, but it is difficult to put a figure on the relationship between rail and economic development. There is a more specific formula at the community level.

**Q3.** John Dixon: (1) electrification will reduce oil-dependency; (2) the sea-wall route at Dawlish sometimes stops service, so what about inland routes? (3) Crossrail not

*reaching Reading to connect with the Birmingham to South Coast route.*

**CA** was very impressed with what NR has done at Dawlish, with underpinning, bi-directional track, and glued ballast. But in the very long term, who knows? This would probably not be the Teign valley as that is mostly built on. But there is an active scheme to extend the Tamar Valley line to Tavistock, where the only obstruction on to the existing line at Okehampton is Tavistock Council Offices.

**CG** said that Crossrail is bound to get to Reading, which is having passive provision put in both for Crossrail and also for through trains from Oxford to Gatwick.

**Q4. East Midlands person:** *there was a PF survey on-line about 2-car class 158 trains on EMT being overcrowded, yet EMT were only to get 2 or 3 new carriages.*

**CG** thought we may need more than the 1,300 new coaches promised by government. **TB** observed that all proposed new HS lines were to London, but asked why not build in phase1 a Manchester to Leeds line.

**Q5. William Whitney about Halesowen in W/S Midlands:** *passenger satisfaction is unconvinced, based on talking to people, e.g. Cross-Country.*

**CA** said that Passenger Focus do a survey of over 20,000 people twice a year, specific to the last journey you made, and broken down by TOC. This shows value-for-money has big regional variations, being worse south of the Thames. Regular passengers are more concerned about reliability and overcrowding rather than the fare.

**Q6. Norman Bradbury:** *NR might possibly develop its own generation [of electricity], with reduction in carbon.*

**TB** saw a reduction in coal, which is heavy.

**CG** thought perhaps NR could have its own wind farm in the Highlands.

**Q7. How well does rail attract people from the best universities?**

**CG** mentioned the 250 new apprentices; 1% is very low wastage. NR is doing graduate recruitment. It is harder for the TOCs. There are excellent training schemes for middle managers, and there is also cross-fertilisation between bus and rail.

**TB** said that manager quality is getting better now; not having a training scheme for 5 years was a disaster. People in the railway are better than health service managers.

## **Prof. Lewis Lesley, "Tram Power" – Affordable Light Rail**

5.1 Professor Lesley, who is the technical director of Tram Power Ltd., discussed why governments give approval to schemes. For example, Swiss railways was electrified during 1919-1939 after coal supplies had been disrupted in World War I.

5.2 Elaborating on affordability, he said that according to the National Audit Office. All tram services require subsidy, except Sheffield (bought by Stagecoach for £1). Is a tramway the best use of public money at £300 million when that equals 4 hospitals, 20 schools or 1000 miles of cycleway? Light Rail isn't the only way of achieving those benefits: cycling is carbon and oil free and promotes health and fitness.

5.3 Prof Lesley gave his SWOT analysis on Light Rail as follows:

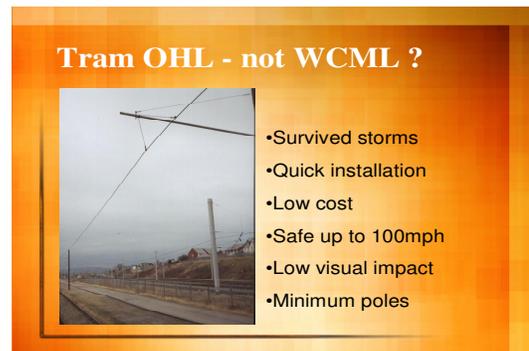
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Incremental developments over 150 years	Complex procurement process	High bus fuel and staff costs	Only 1 scheme built every 4 years
>400 systems worldwide	Legal costs > engineering design	Social of the bus is poor	UK needs a new tramway every 4 months
Attracts 30-40% car users	Multiple objectives rarely achieved	50% of UK bus journeys are in London	
Increases road capacity for passengers		Buses pollute and are dependant on oil	
Reduces central area for parking		Bus companies could upgrade to trams	

5.4 Answering the National Audit Office he said that trams should be used sensibly:

- Tramways should target high car traffic flows.
- Tramways are not the best way to reduce unemployment
- Taxis and bikes are cheaper
- Tram routes are direct, fast and frequent
- Strategic park and ride sites

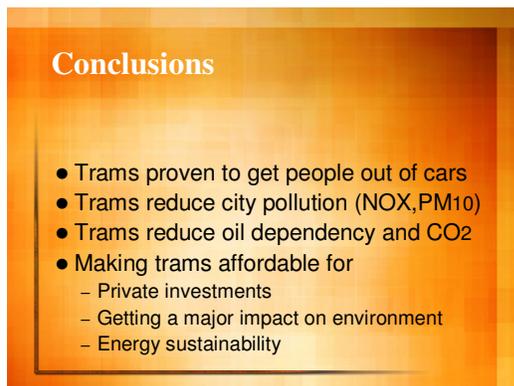
5.5 Technology

Trams are not mini versions of main line railways – and don't need to be constructed as such. They are road vehicles that run on rails. The track installation should be made much less expensive, and overhead wires are light and can be strung from buildings



5.6 Prof. Lesley stressed the need for tramways to be commercially successful:

- Revenue must be operating costs
- Trams are insensitive to bus competition
- A London cross-river tram on its own doesn't stack up, but if it was put together with an Oxford Street tram sharing a depot, then it would stack up.



5.7 In answer to a question "How does a tram compare with a trolleybus?" he said the trolleybus does not attract passengers like a tram – it is still a bus.

To other questions, LL said his group was working with Parry People Mover but only for a small number. He was critical of busways; in connection with reverting busways back to tramways, he said damage is done by road vehicles, as trams typically have lower axle loads than road vehicles.

## **Norman Baker MP, Liberal Democrat Transport Spokesman**

As the final speaker of the conference, Norman Baker, a committed supporter of rail, provided attendees and those speakers still present with some concluding thoughts.

6.1 Rail is continuing to increase in numbers and is not expected to be affected by the recession. There is no rail strategy at present; we need a proper 30-year strategic plan, but hopefully Lord Adonis will move things on.

6.2 Britain must develop a high-speed railway network – creating modal shift is more important than speed – WCML is still congested and high-speed rail is the best way to increase capacity.

6.3 We should re-open some lines and stations, e.g. Uckfield to Lewes, which is in his constituency, and an alternative route to Cornwall via Okehampton. He asked: can these be done quickly and cheaply? Rail is successful as Alloa and Ebbw Vale rail lines quickly showed by attracting more custom than expected. The NATA formula should be ripped up, where getting someone out of a car is seen as cutting taxes to the Treasury.

6.4 Small-scale improvements can be done, e.g. Bicester to Oxford, and Birmingham Moor Street has two platforms that can be opened up.

6.5. Money for high-speed rail should come from a £30 surcharge on air tickets. The train operating companies should be enabled to invest. A lorry road user charge would capture foreign users as well.

6.6 We can also move forward by changing franchise arrangements. The 5yr Southern franchise won't be long enough to do anything sensible. We need 30yr franchises, but on a rolling 5yr basis, so that you can lose it if you don't meet quality conditions. 30yr would also match the life of a train. See the infrastructure being put in by Chiltern on their long franchise.

6.7 Electrification is needed and we should fill in the gaps. Lord Adonis is keen on electrification, so we may see something coming forward. Hastings to Ashford is an example of how not to do things: a 2-car dmu from Brighton to Ashford which is electrified most of the way. Yet new trains aren't even specified in the new franchise, with the government saying it can be done by timetable improvements, which isn't possible since there is no suitable spare rolling stock in the country.

6.8 The Department for Transport should aim at long-term strategic development of the railways including for such things as electrification and rolling stock.

6.9 Answering a question by Colin Elliff "What about oil supplies?" he said a more sensible energy strategy is needed.

## **Final Questions and Open Discussion**

Mike Crowhurst, *Railfuture's* national chairman, opened the session by remarking that maybe we are starting to hear political consensus despite lack of progress with economists stuck to their figures. Norman Baker then took questions.

**Q1.** Norman Bradbury (SW London): talking to DfT about road fuel tax they say it should be neutral on roads, but they don't know about on rail.

**A.** Bill Bradshaw is pursuing this with Adonis.

**Q2.** Graham Nalty: if there is benefit in fuel tax, then disbenefit in police and hospital costs, etc.

**A.** It also undermines the government road reduction strategy (which still exists); different ministers say different things.

**Q3.** The likely drop in oil supplies makes HS more imperative.

**A.** There is the issue of oil reserves as well as carbon, but climate change is more urgent. Both arguments lead to electric rail. Ministers like opening new things but don't like stopping things.

**Q4.** Ebbw Vale has got double the expected passengers showing that rail will be used, so how about re-opening the Great Central railway from Aylesbury to Nottingham?

**A.** There are obstacles, but the LibDems have published a list of other lines to re-open on their website, as well as electrification to come first, and re-doubling.

**Q5.** Is our history of transport ministers not lasting long a worry?

**A.** The average length is 14 months. Firstly the problem is that Transport is always seen as a step up or a step down. Secondly, if a minister gets a hold of their brief, then the Civil Service wants to move them on. DfT officials are more pro-air and pro-road than their ministers, hence ministers move on. But if the Prime Minister wants something to happen then it happens, e.g. 3rd runway at Heathrow but not rail.

**Q6.** Should taxes be used to influence demand?

**A.** There should be longer franchises and encouragement of rail freight. The objective for roads is to stop pollution rather than stop driving, hence the desire for both modal shift and more efficient vehicles.

**Q7.** Roger Blake (London) reminded all campaigners in the room of the need to substantiate every desire with evidence, and asked what does this all mean for us?

**A.** There is a consensus between Lib Dems and Conservatives to build HS but not on how to fund it - the Conservatives would cut the rail budget.

## **Glossary**

ATOC = Association of TOCs

BAA = British Airports Authority

BR = [former] British Rail/Railways

CTRL = Channel Tunnel Rail Link (= HS1)

DfT = Department for Transport

dmu = diesel multiple unit [train]

ECML = East Coast MainLine

EMT = East Midlands Trains

EWS = English, Welsh & Scottish [freight train company]

GWR = Great Western Railway [line west from Paddington]

HS = High Speed

IEP = [new] InterCity Express [train]

MAA = Moving Annual Average

NATA = New Approach to Transport Appraisal

NR = Network Rail

ORR = Office of the Rail Regulator

PF = Passenger Focus

NR = Network Rail

RFG = Rail Freight Group

RUS = Route Utilisation Strategy

SNCF = French Railways

SPAD = Signal Passed At Danger

TOC = Train Operating Company

TPWS = Train Protection & Warning System

WCML = West Coast Main Line

### **Information about the conference speakers**

CAROLINE LUCAS MEP was elected leader of the Green Party in September 2009 and has been a *Railfuture* vice president since that date.

SIMON MONTAGUE will be familiar to many people as a former BBC transport correspondent (from 1997) joining Eurostar in 2006.

JULIE MILLS is an Independent transport consultant, specialising in strategic rail planning and economics.

COLIN ELLIFF works as a civil engineer for a major rail consultancy and is a *Railfuture* member. He was elected a director in May 2009. He is a campaigner for retaining and reopening the railway through the Woodhead Tunnel.

KELVIN HOPKINS MP is Former member of Labour Party national policy committee for Transport. He has been an MP since 1997.

CHRIS GREEN is one of the Railway industry's best-known personalities. He is a career railwayman and joined British Rail as a graduate management trainee in 1965. Whilst with BR he held a wide range of posts including Managing Director Network SouthEast, InterCity and ScotRail and he spearheaded the modernisation of the Chiltern and Kent Line routes. He was previously a non-executive Director of Eurotunnel. He was appointed Chief Executive of Virgin Trains in 1999, and Non-Executive Chairman of Virgin Rail Group Holdings in 2004 before moving to Network Rail as a Non-Executive Director in 2005.

CHRIS AUSTIN has worked in the railway industry for over 40 years, in local management, in project planning and for ten years at the British Railways Board as Parliamentary Affairs Manager. After privatisation, he set up and ran a political consultancy for rail industry clients. He retired from the rail industry in early 2009. Until 2008 he was chairman of the West Somerset Railway. He has been invited to become a vice president of *Railfuture*.

TONY BERKELEY was Public Affairs Manager of Eurotunnel from 1981 until the end of construction of the Channel Tunnel in 1994 and, before that, worked for George Wimpey on a number of multi-discipline projects around the world. He sits in the House of Lords and was an opposition Transport Spokesperson 1996-7. He is Secretary of the All Party Parliamentary Rail Group and of the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group. He is also a *Railfuture* vice president.

PROFESSOR LEWIS LESLEY is Transport science expert having spent 25 years at Liverpool John Moores University.

NORMAN BAKER MP is one of the few prominent MPs untarnished by the expenses scandal. He has long campaigned for transparency and higher standards in parliament.

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### Tom Clift, managing director of Grand Central



and representatives of the Wensleydale Railway, North Yorkshire Moors Railway, the Welsh Highland Railway, East Lancashire Railway, Keighley and Worth Valley, the Weardale Railway, Peak Rail, Yorkshire Dales and North Yorkshire County Council are expected to attend



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