

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 21 June 2013

railfuture *Yorkshire*

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

Holme Tunnel Upgrade

20 Week Closure between Burnley and Todmorden

by Mark Parry

Network Rail is repairing and strengthening the 250 metre long Holme Tunnel near the village of Holme Chapel. This will close the railway between Burnley Manchester Road and Todmorden for 20 weeks lasting from Saturday 9 November 2013 and Sunday 30 March 2014.



Photograph by Paul Colbeck

Currently there is a 20 mph speed limit in the tunnel because the walls have become distorted through ground movement over time. Network Rail says it will be relining and strengthening sections of the tunnel, allowing speeds of up to 45 mph. They will also be laying new track, improving the drainage and rebuilding the Todmorden Portal.

A site compound will be set up in Holme Chapel to enable these works. A replacement bus service will run between Burnley Manchester Road and Todmorden and also between Burnley Manchester Road and Hebden Bridge whilst this line is out of action.

Welcome to your latest edition of the Yorkshire Rail Campaigner – all 8 pages of it! In this edition you have the latest on Hatfield and Selby Bridge, a local franchising timetable, news on possible new stations for York, the difficult progress on the Minsters line, the fight for Dronfield, the overwhelming need for new trains, the complexities of funding for rail projects, the latest diary and more...

Hatfield & Selby Bridge

by Mark Parry & Tony Ross

As reported in our last newsletter, the spoil heap at Hatfield Colliery slipped and caused extensive damage to the railway. Our own Tony Ross has been following events closely as Network Rail manage the extensive repairs needed.

Cleethorpes MP Martin Vickers has raised the landslip issue with Andrew Lansley, the Leader of the House of Commons, as a Parliamentary question according to the Sheffield Star. Martin Vickers accepts the immediate need to restore services, but in the longer term he has concerns about the safety and monitoring of the spoil tips.

Network Rail has said that engineering renewal works on the Selby swing-bridge will be deferred while services in the area are already disrupted by the landslip at Hatfield Colliery. In the meantime they will conduct intensive maintenance work on the bridge to keep it safe until the renewals work can be rescheduled. The same applies to renewals on two other bridges on the route to Hull, which were scheduled for the August bank holiday. Phil Verster, route managing director for Network Rail, said at least 12 weeks notice will be given of the re-scheduled renewals so passengers can plan their journeys.

On Hatfield Phil Verster said Network Rail is aiming to restore services to Cleethorpes, Scunthorpe and Goole by July, but repairs may not be completed until September. This disruption also badly affects freight and the Great Northern/Great Eastern Project has also been postponed to allow a diversion using the Brigg and Lincoln lines. Normally 140 freight trains a day pass Hatfield.

FRANCHISING UPDATE

by Graham Collett

The Secretary of State finally announced his new franchising programme on 26th March www.gov.uk/government/news/fresh-start-for-franchising

We are grateful to **Rail Action** – an electronic bulletin sent to members between regular issues of Railwatch – for setting out the new programme in an easy to understand format. Below are the franchises for services in the Branch area.

	Publish OJEU	Issue ITT	Contract award	Franchise start
East Coast	October 2013	February 2014	October 2014	February 2015
Northern	July 2014	December 2014	October 2015	February 2016
TPE	July 2014	December 2014	October 2015	February 2016
East Midlands	March 2016	August 2016	June 2017	October 2017
Cross Country	April 2018	September 2018	July 2019	November 2019

Publish OJEU = Publish in the Official Journal of the European Union

Issue ITT = DfT to issue an official invitation to tender

East Coast is the only franchise – both in the Branch area and nationally – planned to go ahead prior to the next General Election! This is ironic as it has been run far more effectively under Directly Operated Railways (ie the Government) than it was under the previous Private Sector operators, who had to “hand back the keys” because they fell far short of their revenue forecasts. In the case of the new Great Western franchise, the Government “is to put to market a competed management contract in [July] 2016”. It must therefore be assumed that the form of franchising for the East Coast – given its much earlier start – is unlikely to be radically different from the existing model.

Although no decision has yet been taken on whether to combine the Northern and TPE franchises, they both follow the same timetable. It had previously been assumed that they would be combined, but there has been some recent opposition to doing so. Devolution to local authorities and Integrated Transport Authorities - such that they would become the franchise holder(s) - was recommended by the Brown Review of Franchising earlier this year https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49453/cm-8526.pdf Brown also noted that the Northern and London Midland franchises were likely to require some re-mapping to conform services more closely to PTE areas. Discussions about the shape of the new franchises and who controls them are ongoing.

York Stations

by Mark Parry & Paul Colbeck

York council has plans to build nearly 22,000 new homes in York over the next 15 years, leading to a need for transport improvements. It is hoped that four new railway stations will be built at Haxby, Strensall, the York Central "teardrop" site and York Business Park.

According to the York Press, the council is saying that the following improvements would help deal with transport issues: upgrades to the Outer Ring Road, a bus interchange on Queen Street near York Station, and expanded Park & Ride facilities, eventually including a new site at Clifton Moor. The York Press has also headlined York Council's draft plan to increase the capacity of York station as it is predicted that 41% more passengers will be using the station by 2021 compared with 2009 usage. The plans to develop the station will both recognize the station's listed status and be sympathetic to its heritage.

High Speed 2

an email from William Kirby

Firstly, the location of the Leeds terminus...at New Lane...I agree with you that it's not an ideal site - what other sites were considered, I wonder? It's probably just within easy walking distance of the city centre and the bus station, but the LeedsCityBus would need to be rerouted to serve...and what about NGT? (*Editor: NGT=Trolley Bus*). Maybe by then Leeds will have a Supertram network? Who can tell? 2032 is a long way off and a lot can happen between now and then.

Moreover, the station entrances may be only 100m apart, but my street map of central Leeds suggests that the distance from the door of a local train arriving at City station to the door of a departing HS2 train will be at least 200m. British people, it seems, are not keen on changing trains, especially if they have to walk between stations (how will disabled people manage?), and they may well take a chance on driving to the HS2 station and leaving their cars there (especially businesspeople, who can charge the doubtless high parking fee to their firm) rather than taking a local train and walking from City station (travelator or no travelator).

However, there's plenty of time for all the other questions you raise (*in our last issue*) to be answered. I don't know how your crystal balls perform..., but mine becomes increasingly murky after 2015 and is totally opaque after 2019 (i.e. the end of CP5). The answers depend on so many factors - the development of West Yorkshire's rail network and local economy, changes in travel habits and patterns, the expected changes in governance of rail transport in the North, general elections in 2015 and 2020, etc. etc.

Or is there? I'd like to start a campaign to persuade the DfT to start building HS2 from both the north and south ends at once. In January I sent a... letter to Vince Cable. He didn't reply, so I sent it to David Cameron, who promised to forward it to the DfT. This week I received a reply from a DfT official, who essentially said that Phase 1 needed to be completed ASAP as the London-Birmingham section of the West Coast Main Line was forecast to be full by 2024...

But personally, I don't think that the northern economy can wait till 2024 for work on its parts of HS2 to start, and I think a government commitment to redeploy resources to enable work to start on the 'arms' of the Y network at the same time as the southern section would act as a vote of confidence and be a real shot in the arm for the North - even though this would doubtless entail a delay of (say) 2 years in opening the southern section.

I'm thinking of launching an e-petition; I'll need Railfuture's help in drafting and publicising it. *Editor: Mike Crowhurst (former National Chairman) was appointed as HS2 Branch Ambassador at the AGM and a copy of William's email and letter to Vince Cable have been passed to him.*

Tony Ross updates us on the struggle to re-open this line from York to Beverley.

Successive governments keep changing the local authority planning guidelines. Remember John Prescott's huge Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions... after 1997? The present government proposes to devolve planning powers and the current East Riding Local Plan Draft Strategy Document (January 2013) is out for consultation until Friday 5th April 2013. It's not one document. It's a huge collection of documents and local plans/maps. Could we hope that *this line's* route protection might show up on the maps? No, not unless I'm mistaken. But wait, at least some Stamford Bridge residents have told the Council... that "sites north of the town should not be developed...to protect a route for a York to Beverley railway line".

The Strategy Document includes the following paragraph 5.45: "Potential improvements to further increase the coverage and capacity of the transport network could include the longer term aspiration to reopen the Hull/Beverley to York rail line. A feasibility study (by consultants Carl Bro) to investigate possibilities for reinstating the route was completed in 2005 and showed that this was feasible in engineering terms and that the overall benefits would exceed the overall costs over a 60 year period of time. The study costed the reopening of the line at approximately £240 million, but so far a budget for this has yet to be found and the scheme is unlikely to attract government funding at the current time. The scheme attracted strong support during the preparation of this Plan and should any deliverable proposals come forward they are likely to be supported by the Council."

The writer's view is that funding for a certified consultants' study to Network Rail's GRIP Stage 3 level should be the Campaign's next benchmark and target, plus route protection. (GRIP = Network Rail's current 8-Stage Governance for Railway Investment Projects). But funding for such a study from where? The Skipton - Colne re-opening (SELRAP) campaign currently has a similar problem... For the Penrith - Keswick rail re-opening project, professional railway engineer Cedric Martindale formed a PLC (CKP Railways Ltd) some time back to promote their campaign and to raise funds.

The *East Riding Council's* Local Transport Plan Strategy 3 was published in September 2011. Under 'Rail Strategy', paragraph 18.30 reads: "There is support locally for enhancements to the existing rail network such as the reinstatement of the Hull to York railway line, reopening of stations on existing lines, improvements in the frequency of existing services and a number of intermodal freight facilities. Initial viability work has been undertaken for the reinstatement of the Hull to York railway and the route has been safeguarded within the East Riding's emerging...Local Development Framework. It is felt that improvements to existing provision within the East Riding have the potential to relieve pressure on the strategic highway network, particularly the A63/M62 and the M18, A1(M) and M1." A Policy Statement reads: "The Council will work in partnership with rail operators and user groups to improve accessibility to stations, particularly by sustainable transport modes, support measures to integrate rail travel and other transport modes, and protect potential rail routes and facilities for the future". Unfortunately, this route protection promise was not apparently converted into planning policy - which meant that a planning application for a dwelling that would block the diversionary route through Market Weighton identified by the 2005 Carl Bro report could not be refused. Under 'Consultations', paragraph 18.40 reads: "Consultative discussions were held with the Train Operating Companies, the Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership, Rail Development Humber, VHEY, relevant council officers, Hull & East Riding Rail Users' Association and representatives of local rail users". So, what is the current status of the East Riding Council's route protection?

The City of York's Local Transport Plan 3 states (para. 2.71) "Services to Harrogate are of a low frequency and rail links to the south east of the city including Hull are relatively poor." Para. 3.33 states "Locally, rail links need to be maximised by improving the interchange between bus, cycling and walking facilities at York rail station, improving services and stations, including a new station at Haxby, will also enhance rail links. Lobbying and partnership working is seen as critically important for local and long distance service improvements". The "Transport Vision for York" started by York Outer MP Julian Sturdy has adopted the Minsters Rail Campaign objective of reopening the line as one of its long term goals. York has bid for new government funding for a new station at Haxby but is competing with other new station bids nationally. Haxby is on the line to Scarborough within the city boundary and the new station would very likely be the starting point for a rail route towards Beverley.

After a long winter and a late spring the willing volunteers from FRIENDS OF DRONFIELD STATION (FODS) can at last get on with the job of maintaining the station to ensure it stays in tip top condition and remains an attractive and much appreciated feature of the town. Project Manager Philip Brightmore said "We have a whole programme of work to keep us busy over the summer. This includes sowing the seeds for our prize winning meadow flower display in the 'triangle' adjoining platform two, painting the fences, repairing the eight planters and filling them with summer bedding, mowing the grass and reseeding where necessary; not forgetting picking up litter and keeping the station tidy".

Over the winter the station has been improved by the installation of seating on both platforms and by the addition of some brand new poster cases in the waiting shelters, used to house artwork supplied by pupils from Dronfield schools. FODS are particularly proud of the vintage DRONFIELD sign on the east end of the waiting shelter on platform one, which had been specially commissioned for the station. Philip went on to say that he was also very grateful to the contractors from ISS who came three times a week and did a great job in keeping the station clean. He added that "Thanks should also go to the road sweeper who regularly visits the station with his barrow, and the boys from Dronfield Town Council who willingly dispose of the large quantities of garden waste for us."

The success of FODS in campaigning for a regular train service from Dronfield and continuing to seek further improvements is largely due to the dedication of the volunteers who give up their time to work on the station. However FODS is always looking for new people and new ideas. A chance for anyone interested to contribute will be at the Annual General Meeting to be held at 7.30pm on Friday the 7th June at Gosforth Lodge, Cliffe Park, Dronfield. At this meeting Mr Hugh Chaplain, Rail Devolution and Franchising Manager: Rail in the North, will give a talk entitled 'A Brighter Future for Rail in the North: What these changes could mean for Dronfield'. Mr Chaplain is currently working with a consortium which has been established in response to Government plans to consider devolving responsibility for local rail services to local level. With electrification, extra capacity and changes in the way passenger train services are decided this could be an exciting time for the future of train travel in this part of the country. *There maybe* opportunities for local communities, local councils and other stakeholders, *they* being poised to influence critical decisions affecting local and regional services. Few will be better placed than Hugh Chaplain to advise on what impact these prospective changes could have on train services from Dronfield.

The AGM promises to be an important and stimulating evening. Anyone interested in taking part in the discussion or volunteering to help maintain the station is very welcome to come.

Bio-Mass Contract

by **Mark Parry & Tony Ross**

Associated British Ports has announced it has signed a 15-year contract with Drax Power Ltd to handle biomass shipments destined for the Drax Power Station at Selby. This involves infrastructure improvements and the programme is expected to generate about 100 jobs during construction with an additional 100 jobs created once the facilities become fully operational, as reported in The Hull Daily Mail. The works at the port of Hull will involve a new loading facility capable of loading trains with 1,600 tonnes of material in just 40 minutes. Thanks to Tony Ross for alerting us to this good news.

Don't forget Elland.

by **Mark Parry**

HADRAG, the Halifax and District Rail Action Group got their case, for the long awaited station at Elland, stated in the Huddersfield Daily Examiner on 9 May. With a population close to 15,000 Elland is described as the 'biggest town in Yorkshire without a railway station'. The original Elland station closed in 1962 and when the re-opening of the rail line between Huddersfield and Halifax was discussed, a station at Elland, as well as at Brighouse was included in the plans. However, when the line opened 13 years ago the Elland station was shelved to cut costs. Hadrag has identified an area near Lowfields industrial park as a potential site for the station. Group chairman Stephen Waring pointed out the increased usage at Brighouse station and thinks that patronage at Elland may be at a similar high level.

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Membership Matters by **Paul Colbeck** We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

Mr John Armitage Mexborough; **Mr Gerry Bates** Sheffield; **Mr Vincent Carroll** Scarborough;

Mr Brian Dunsby Harrogate Line Supporters Group; **Mr Gary Mogan** York;

Mr Andrew North Harrogate; **Mr Colin Sherwood** York and **Mr Richard Waddington** Bradford.

Thanks once again to those members who have agreed to convert to e-mail (thus saving us the cost and time of distribution). If **you** have an email address we could use, but still receive your YRC by post, please let me know.

Chairman's Column

by **Chris Hyomes**

Official figures show a continued steady decline in road usage, while our railway network is seeing a continued rapid growth in passenger numbers, and despite the millions of pounds being invested in the country's railway network, here in Yorkshire we are seeing no planned investment to cope with the increasing demand for rail travel.

At our AGM, we heard from SELRAP on how they are pushing forward their campaign to see the Skipton – Colne line re-opened, a few days after our AGM, I attended a meeting of the Don Valley Railway campaign, which are in a near identical position to SELRAP, both schemes would add vital capacity to the rail network while at the same time open up new travel opportunity's.

At the Same time as our AGM a meeting was being held across in Calderdale to push for the re-opening of Elland railways station.

Over the last twelve months HS2 has grabbed most if not all of the headlines and while it is keeping railways in the news the benefits it will bring to rail users' is thirty years plus away, the benefits of the three schemes mentioned could be felt within two to three years, except we have a problem, a problem of epic proportions, there is simply insufficient rolling stock, overcrowding is now the biggest problem on services out of Leeds, Yorkshire railways needs rolling stock and we need it now, most of our current trains are approaching thirty years of age , they cannot go on for ever and yet there are no short term plans to expand and or replace our regions fleet of trains.

While we need to and will continue to support viable reopening campaigns, the Branch must focus its attention on seeking a new and expanded fleet of trains.

Finally I look forward to welcoming you to my home town of Pontefract for our summer meeting in June, details are on the back page of this newsletter.

Funding For New Lines Is A Mess!

By Nina Smith (Vice chair)

One factor which is delaying much needed re-openings and brand new routes is the issue of which funder is responsible. Rather than looking at the whole of the railway system as a national asset where all lines are to at least some extent interdependent on each other, responsibility for funding new routes is seen as a local issue. There are exceptions re long distance routes e.g.HS2, but not for those new pieces of railway which would contribute both for local journeys and for longer distance travel (passenger and freight).

To give some examples, joining up the 13 missing miles between Colne and Skipton (and doubling the route from Rose Grove to Colne) would not only open up commuting opportunities for residents of the deprived boroughs of Burnley and Pendle, but would also facilitate rail commuting from Skipton to Manchester and Lancashire, and enable through services to run to Skipton and the Dales from places such as Liverpool and Blackpool. Further, such new connectivity would ease the journey between Skipton and its hinterland and such places as Milton Keynes, Llandudno, Chester, Hereford, Shrewsbury and Stoke-on-Trent. Yet these 13 miles are some way off being reopened because they lie partially in Lancashire and partially in North Yorkshire, and neither council has funding in their grossly over-stretched transport budgets which have already resulted in bus routes being withdrawn and other services cut. The route will benefit people from much of England (and Wales), yet the DfT refuses to consider it as anything other than a local issue. What madness! They don't apply the same criteria to roads.

The service on the Settle - Carlisle route is inadequate, both in terms of frequency, capacity and destinations. The Friends of the Settle - Carlisle Railway have demonstrated that there is a strong latent demand for travel between Manchester and its airport and stations on the S&C route, but they face the problem of a railway partially in Cumbria and partially in North Yorkshire, with trains currently starting in West Yorkshire, and with very poor connectivity at Carlisle into services to Scotland and North East England. The desired service to and from Manchester would start in the Transport for Greater Manchester area, and pass through Lancashire/Blackburn.

It's time for this nonsense to end and the expansion of our rail network being seen as a national priority – after all, it was central government, not local councils that took the vandal's axe to so many lines in the 1960s.

STOP PRESS. One proposal in the Queen's Speech is for a Local Audit and Accountability Bill. If passed, this will mean referenda having to be held to approve such as the setting up of the West Yorkshire Transport Fund, as it would mean local council tax payers having to pay an extra 1.5 pence a week for a measure that has clear environmental, economic and social benefits. This is clearly designed to kill the proposal as the 'great British public' always seem to vote against any tax increases. Referenda are never held regarding changes in national taxation, so why should local decision-making be so subject? The West Yorkshire proposal has the support of all five councils, who are run by elected representatives – and we live in a representative democracy! Time to write to your MP to get this proposal dropped.

Hello from your new editor – Mark Parry

I have a hard act to follow in taking on the editing of this newsletter which has gained a good reputation over the years. Thank you to those of you who have sent me articles and information. It is this local knowledge and information on our campaigns that makes us different from the commercial magazines. Please keep these pieces coming so we can record what we achieve and share good practice. The large number of articles sent this time has allowed for an 8 page newsletter yet again.

Press Date for September 2013 issue

Please email (preferred) or post material, news and feedback to: Mark Parry (YRC 22), Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com to arrive by **Saturday 10th August 2013**.

Railfuture Yorkshire Our Next Branch Meeting Pontefract Saturday 15 June 2013

This meeting will start at 14:00 hours and everyone is welcome.
St Giles Church, Market Place Pontefract.

The Church is in the very centre of town, the closest station is Tanshelf, however, most people arriving from Leeds will arrive at Pontefract Monkhill.

For directions: <http://binged.it/16Jn1wb>

Railfuture Branch and National Events Diary

Saturday 15 June: **Branch Meeting** – Pontefract, please see above.

Saturday 22 June: **Railfuture Summer Conference - Future Aspects of Railway Operation; The Albemarle Centre, Taunton** – for further details and bookings <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/> or see **Railwatch**

Saturday 21 September: **Branch Meeting** – Halifax Central Library, please see YRC 22 for more details.

Saturday 18 January: **Branch Meeting** – Doncaster Priory Place Methodist Church, Printing Office Street.