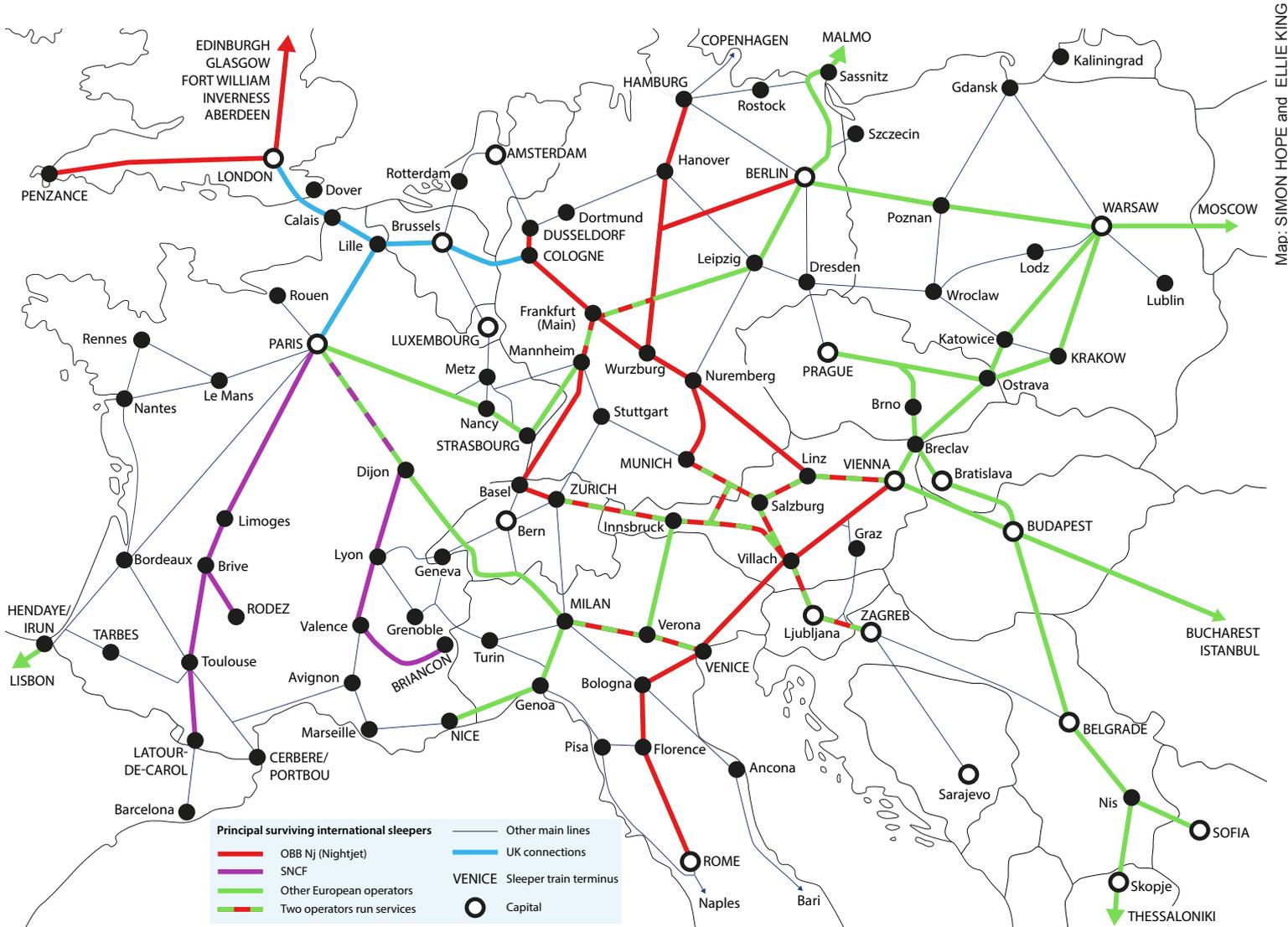


Travel by night to save a day



The European night train network as it is in 2018

By Simon Hope

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At the end of 2016 Austrian Railways (OBB) took over most of the classic overnight sleeper services from German Railways (DB), operating them under the brand name Nightjet. This has been a success, but other international and domestic night trains face an uncertain future, despite widespread protest campaigns in many countries to prevent important remaining traditional routes from being axed.

Many night trains are perceived by operators to be uneconomic, under-used and no match for high speed and other fast trains. When a large amount of public money has been invested in a high speed line, the temptation is to use it as much as possible for high speed trains during the day.

It is also claimed that night trains have low occupancy rates. The opposite is true on most services. Also, contrary to some official opinion, they are popular with the public. For years, there has been a lack of information and publicity about

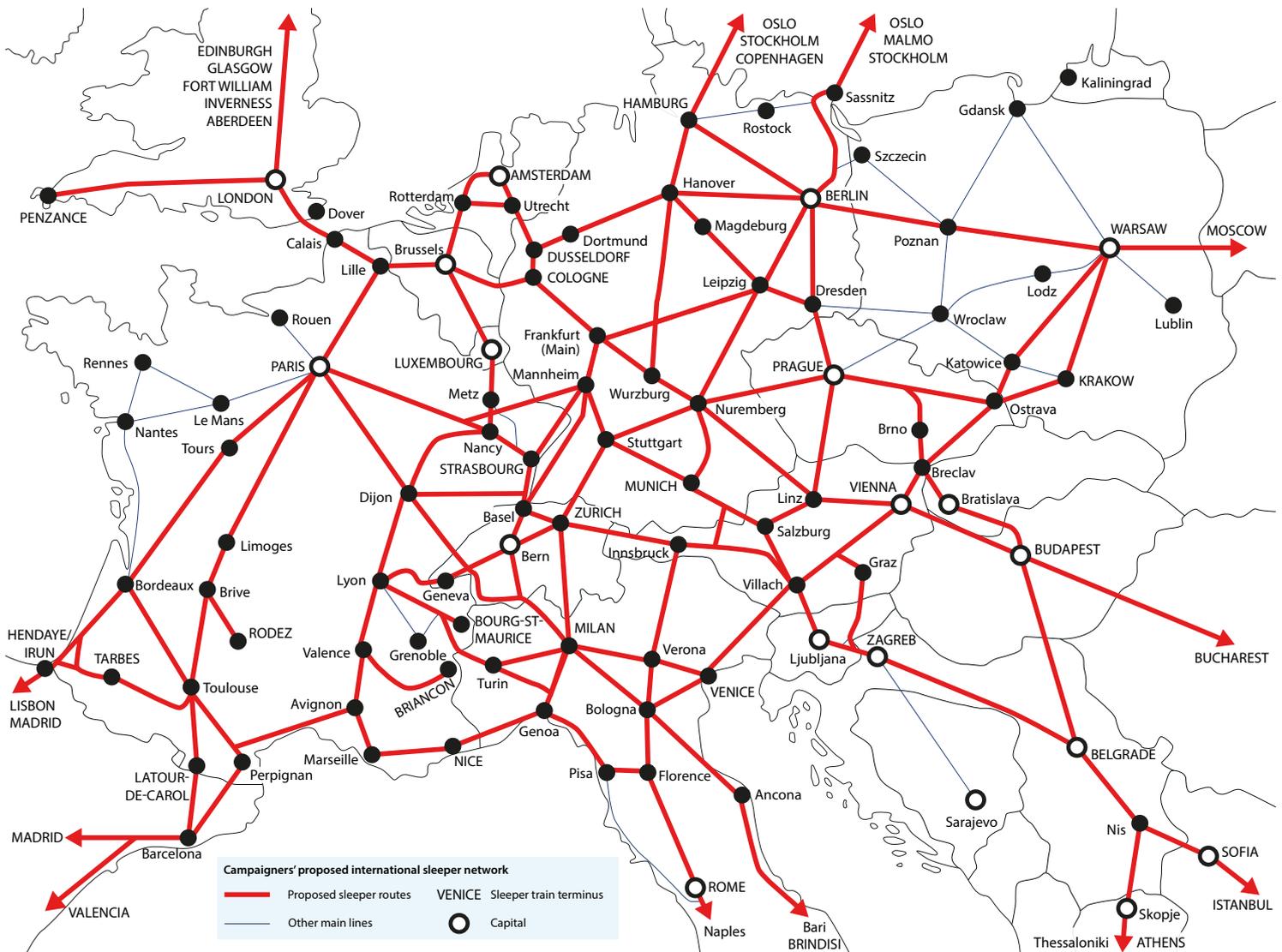
railaction

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Map: SIMON HOPE and ELLIE KING

The future European night train network as campaigners would like to see it

night trains and no effective promotion or marketing, which has all helped some operators to say this type of train is out of date and should be phased out. Also, complex and confusing ticket pricing and procedures for booking encourage potential passengers to use less environmentally friendly means of transport, such as road or air, or to choose higher-priced fast day trains. There is further discouragement of potential passengers when ticket sales for night trains cease several hours before departure. Perhaps more alarming are frequent cancellations and delays, often caused by last-minute decisions on overnight track maintenance work. Another major issue is lack of suitable rolling-stock.

There are many benefits in overnight travel :

- Travelling 400 miles overnight by train can save up to a whole day.
- Passengers can avoid the hassle and extra cost of hotel accommodation.
- It is less expensive than daytime travel for long international journeys.
- It is climate-friendly, using relatively little energy, and encourages modal shift from air to rail.

A 2013 French study reported that the energy used per passenger on an inter-city train (probably less fuel efficient than a night train), was proportionally 5.8, compared with 39.4 for an aircraft.

In my experience, European night trains are more comfortable and relaxing than

Railfuture press releases

Railfuture has issued press releases on the following subjects:

- Sustrans has got it wrong
- Rail fares
- Rail User Group awards

These can be read in full at [Railfuture press releases](#)

A review of other Railfuture appearances in print and broadcast media can be seen at: [Railfuture in the news](#)

overnight buses or coaches which only provide, at best, reclining seats. Road coaches are also slower and less punctual because they are subject to traffic jams.

Another major issue which needs urgent attention and could attract many more tourists, particularly young people and senior citizens, is the design of the night trains. The basic interiors have barely changed since the first vehicles were invented in the 19th century. A common European design, for use in all countries, could provide the basis for an economically viable transcontinental system for the future.

The interior layout could be based on both single and double-deck vehicles, the latter for four-berth couchettes (see *Railwatch* 148, July 2016), with longitudinal beds, greatly improved luggage space and more privacy than traditional coaches.

Night Trains should be a pan-European issue, and initiatives could be taken by Brussels, national governments and railway administrations and companies.

New emphasis could focus on extending the successful OBB services to centres that have lost their night trains in recent years, such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen. Many cities would welcome being included on the night train network because trains are now a proven route for economic regeneration in remote regions.

Feasibility studies are certainly needed for all the issues raised above. Collaboration between train operators in all countries is essential to establish a strongly connected network, linking with all types of day trains at both ends of the journey.

This should be a positive project for the European Union and individual countries, and could help towards better European transport cohesion, co-operation and integration. A helpful initiative would be to lower track access charges for night trains. High track access charges was one reason the city of Brussels lost all its services about eight years ago. Railfuture members should consider night trains when planning business or leisure trips. You can choose a travel agent from the Association of European Rail Agents website (aera.co.uk/) or an online retailer such as Loco2.

<http://aera.co.uk/members/>

<https://loco2.com/>

A map of sleeper trains over a wider European network has been produced by fellow rail campaigner Per Eric Rosen. The map can be seen online:

<http://rosnix.net/~per/tag/night-trains-map/>



Battle to save night trains

Groups from around Europe gathered in Perpignan in November to try to stop the closure of the Paris-Nice night train service. Night trains should be modernised – not closed down, said Claire Brun from *Oui au Train de Nuit*. Night trains are climate-friendly alternatives to air travel, as well as being important for international tourism and regional development.

Back on Track organised a half-day conference in the European Parliament at Brussels in January. The aim is to promote overnight services as part of a Europe-wide network of international trains. The speakers were Dr Libor Lochman, executive director of the Community of European Railways, and Mr Kurt Bauer, head of the long-distance passenger department of Austrian Federal Railways.

From Saturday 7 April to Sunday 15 April 2018, *Back on Track* is co-ordinating a European Week of Action to highlight the importance of night trains.

<https://back-on-track.eu/>

<https://ouiautraindenuit.wordpress.com/>

Railfuture AGM 2018

The Railfuture AGM is in Edinburgh on 12 May 2018 and will take place at the Holyrood Hotel. For more information:

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/

Railfuture conferences

The next Railfuture conference is in Carlisle on 23 June 2018.

Speakers include:

Mark Rand, Past Chairman, Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line

For further information see:

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

Holidays by rail and beside the railway

Railfuture members know that travelling by train is a great way to enjoy a holiday. For some of us, staying near a railway station is a prerequisite for an enjoyable time. There are even places where you can stay on the station itself.

Here are a few examples we know about. There are probably many more. If you know other rail-based accommodation, let us know.



Helmsdale station (pictured above) in Sutherland is north of Inverness, on the line to Wick and Thurso. You can catch a train within yards of your bedroom.

<http://helmsdalestation.co.uk/>

On the other side of Scotland, you can stay at Glenfinnan station in a coach which has been converted by the station museum into comfortable "bunkhouse" accommodation for up to 10 people. The famous viaduct is 20 minutes walk away as is the 1745 "Bonnie Prince Charlie" rebellion monument.

<http://glenfinnanstationmuseum.co.uk/facilities/sleeping-car/>

Alton station, Staffordshire, is on a former rail line in the Churnet Valley. Sadly there are no trains passing through.

<https://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/search-and-book/properties/alton-station-4615/>

You can stay at Kirkby Stephen station or in the station master's house at Ribbleshead on England's Settle-Carlisle line. Trains still serve both stations.

<http://www.sandctrust.org.uk/stayatastation/>

Also on the Settle-Carlisle, three-bedroom Dent station, the highest mainline station in England, can also be hired.

<http://www.dentstation.co.uk/>

At Ruswarp, you can stay on the station where North York Moors steam trains chug past a couple of times a day, as well as a few regular trains to Whitby and Middlesbrough.

<https://www.sykescottages.co.uk/cottage/North-York-Moors-Coast-Ruswarp/The-Station-House-1220.html>

The Sidings Hotel has original Pullman carriages converted into guest rooms and is beside the East Coast main line, five miles north of York.

<http://thesidingshotel.co.uk/accommodation>

What's on

Here are some forthcoming events that may be of interest to rail campaigners. Details of venues and times can be found on the Railfuture website:

2 March 2018

Friday

Pontefract Civic Society, Rail sub-group.

Venue: Pontefract Squash & Leisure Club, Stuart Road, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 4PQ. 19.00-21.00.

3 March 2018

Saturday

Railfuture Wessex branch AGM.

Venue: Above Bar Church Centre, 69 Above Bar Street, Southampton SO14 7FE. 13.00.

6 March 2018

Tuesday

Ribble Valley Rail committee meeting. Non-committee members welcome to attend, but not allowed to vote.

Venue: New Inn, 20 Parson Lane, Clitheroe, Lancs BB7 2JN. 14.30.

For further information on these and other events see:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Events>

People who arrive on foot, bike or public transport get a lower rate than those who arrive by car at the camping van at Christow on the preserved Teign Valley Line. 1950s camping van holiday.

<http://www.teignrail.co.uk/camping.php>

No trains will disturb your sleep at the former Petworth railway station (two miles down the A285 from the Sussex town) on the closed Pulborough to Petersfield line. The last train ran in 1966.

<https://www.old-station.co.uk/>

Corby electrification work goes on



The Midland main line between Bedford and Kettering where a fourth track has been reinstated and electrification masts are ready to be installed

Picture by David Fursdon

Reinstatement of the second track from Kettering to Corby was nearing completion in February, after two years of work. Electrification infrastructure is still being installed between Bedford and Corby via Kettering and will probably not be completed until 2020. Carillion was part of the consortium involved in the electrification but at a public meeting at Corby station in January, Network Rail was not able to comment on the effect of the company's collapse.

Railfuture papers being surveyed by National Railway Museum

National Railway Museum project archivist John Smales has surveyed the historical material which Railfuture handed over to the museum last year. Two museum volunteers have also been cleaning and removing mould from some of the stored papers. Archivist Alison Kay has said work will now move on to cataloguing the material, some of which dates back to Railfuture's forerunners, including SRBLUK, the Society for the Reinvigoration of Unremunerative Branch Lines in the United Kingdom. Railfuture is contributing to the museum's costs.

The museum, which opened in 1975 and is based in York, has drawn up a £50 million, seven-year plan, designed to increase visitor numbers from 750,000 to 1.2 million. The revamp is planned to be completed by 2021.

<http://www.nrm.org.uk/aboutus/futureplans>

Scunthorpe direct with Grand Central

Direct trains from Scunthorpe to London could start running by 2020 if co-operation between Grand Central and North Lincolnshire Council pays off. Open access train operator Grand Central, which already runs rail services from London to Sunderland and Bradford, will be asking the Office of Rail and Road to

Web links

Readers of *railaction* should be able to click on the web links in this document to be taken straight to the relevant website.

However this is not yet an exact science. One problem is that organisations update their websites and change the page references.

We do our best to keep abreast of these changes, but it is not always possible.

Railfuture submissions

Railfuture responds to many formal consultations about the railways.

Submissions can be downloaded from:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/consultation+responses>

approve a plan for trains run from London to split at Doncaster with part of the train continuing to Scunthorpe, Barnetby, Habrough, Grimsby and Cleethorpes.

<https://www.scunthorpetelegraph.co.uk/news/scunthorpe-news/scunthorpe-could-direct-trains-london-977794>

Beattock school campaigners go to Scottish Parliament

Beattock Station Action Group met the Scottish Transport minister Humza Yousaf in



January, as part of its campaign to get the iconic station reopened. Five pupils from Moffat Academy – Emma Carlyle, Jodie Shannon, Hayley Drummond, Finlay Dowds and Matthew Macfarlane – went with the Beattock Station Action group to the Scottish Parliament. *Picture: Moffat Academy*

<http://www.moffat.dumgal.sch.uk/>

<http://www.beattockstationactiongroup.org.uk/>

Double tracking for Aberdeen-Dyce

The rail line between Aberdeen and Dyce will be closed from 12 May 2018 for 14 weeks to allow the track to be doubled, as part of a multi-million-pound upgrade. Buses will also replace trains at Easter weekend and May Bank holiday as preparation work gets under way. As a result, by the end of 2019, there will be an hourly Inverness-Elgin service, a half-hourly Aberdeen-Inverurie service, additional Elgin-Aberdeen trains, a new through Inverurie-Montrose service, and more through services between Inverness and the central belt via Aberdeen.

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/aberdeen-to-inverness-rail-improvements/aberdeen-to-inverness-rail-improvements/>

Greater Anglia appoints integrated transport manager

Train operator Greater Anglia has appointed Paul Wilkinson as integrated transport manager to help make customers' journeys to stations easier.

Paul Wilkinson's role covers station cycle parking, improved connections with buses, joint ticketing, information and marketing of onward-journey opportunities.

Paul said: "I will be working with groups within Greater Anglia, which is committed to being as environmentally friendly as possible."

<https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/about-us/news-desk/news-articles/greater-anglia-appoints-integrated-transport-manager>

Freight trains start to run from Finland to China

Freight trains started operating on a 5,000 mile long route from Finland to Xian in China in November. The 12-day journey compares to 60 days by ship.

<https://www.finnishnews.fi/business-finance/finnish-city-starts-efficient-railroad-freight-service-to-china/>

Old style borders are back for Eurostar's new Amsterdam service

Eurostar is launching twice daily direct services between London and Amsterdam in April. The train will run direct from London to Amsterdam but passengers from Amsterdam to London will have to get off the train at Brussels for passport controls. Eurostar says the connection at Brussels is a temporary measure until the British and Dutch governments reach an agreement to allow passport checks to be conducted on departure in the Netherlands. It could be in place by the end of 2019. There are 70 daily direct flights from London to Amsterdam.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-43002908>

End of an era for Chester-le-Track

Chester-le-Track, the rail ticket sales operation at Chester-le-Street and Eaglescliffe stations, will stop trading at the end of March 2018, after 19 years in business. Stationmaster Alex Nelson said increasing use of the internet for ticket sales had made the business unprofitable. Chester-le-Street is likely to lose its toilets and waiting room as a result of the de-staffing of the station.

<https://www.sunderlandecho.com/our-region/county-durham/station-toilets-and-waiting-room-to-close-as-face-to-face-train-ticket-firm-announces-its-closure-1-9025039>

London-Manchester ticket that cost £484

A Virgin Trains passenger tweeted a picture of her London-Manchester first-class open return rail ticket which cost £484. "Laura" said her firm bought the ticket at the last minute. Laura's tale was reported in the Mirror Online, days after the January rail fare increase. Readers called the ticket "extortionate".

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/travel/uk-ireland/passenger-shares-virgin-trains-rail-11806711>

UNESCO world heritage rating for Norway's Rjukan railway

The Rjukan railway in Norway reopened in 2016 after being closed for 25 years. Set amid a dramatic landscape, the railway and the train ferry are now part of a UNESCO world heritage site which also includes the place where heavy water was made in the second world war. Norwegian resistance attempts to stop the Germans producing an atomic bomb were the subject of the 1965 film The Heroes of Telemark. The railway now runs on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday during the summer from Rjukan to the ferry at Mael.

<https://www.visitnorway.com/places-to-go/eastern-norway/telemark/rjukan/>

Lake District railway tunnel excavated and then refilled

A filled-in tunnel under the A66 road near Keswick on the former Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith line has been excavated (and filled in again) on behalf of the Lake District National Park Authority. The results of the dig will be evaluated to see if the tunnel is suitable for a footpath. The authority supports the principle of reopening the line which is being promoted by CKP Railways, but Cumbria County Council has removed the scheme from its Local Transport Plan.

<http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/localcommunities/northern-lake-district-area/keswick-to-threlkeld-railway-path>

High speed Nanlong station

A new railway station was built at Nanlong, China, in nine hours. Around 1,500 workers, seven trains and 23 diggers were used in the project, part of a new 152-mile-long 124 mph line, expected to be completed by the end of the year.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/23/c_136918319.htm

Warning: This could be your last railaction

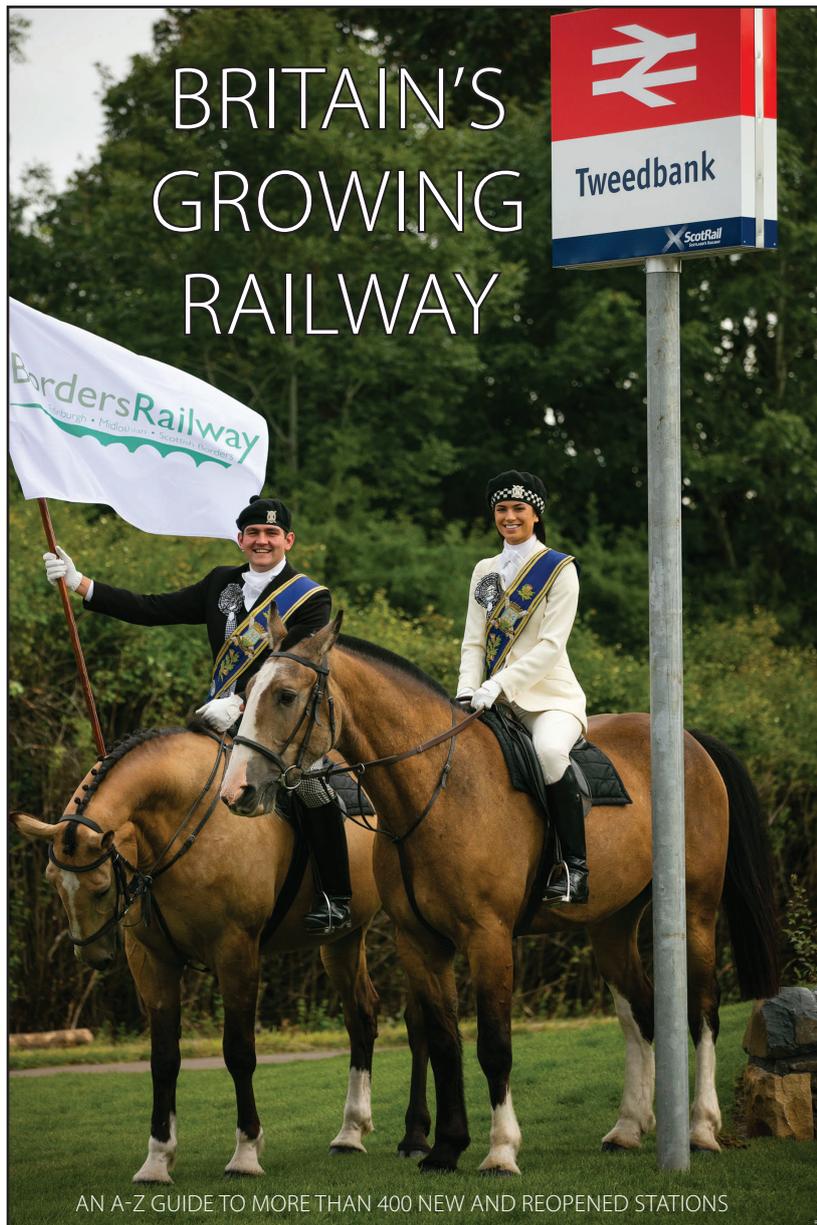
Big changes to data protection rules are on the way. From May 2018 we will not be able to keep you up to date by email unless you explicitly say that we can. Being a member of Railfuture is not enough. You will need to tick boxes to confirm how you want Railfuture to stay in touch with you. You will have the opportunity to say exactly what you want us to contact you about, campaigning news, membership benefits or fundraising appeals. In recent years Railfuture has used email activism to help our pro-rail campaigns and fight for increased investment in rail. It is one of Railfuture's most effective campaigning tools. This is an opportunity to make sure you get exactly the news and information you want from Railfuture. A flier will be sent to you with the next issue of *Railwatch* explaining things in more detail.

Once you have read it, please go to railfuture.org.uk and tick those boxes.

Trump wants to cut passenger rail spending by half

American President Donald Trump proposed in February to slash the federal subsidy for Amtrak passenger rail by nearly half. He wants Amtrak funding to drop from £1 billion to £528 million. Earlier the Louisiana Association of Railroad Passengers reported that the Trump administration has proposed closing all of Amtrak's long-distance routes. LARP believes there is no realistic support for such a draconian proposal from the majority in Congress, but the Trump administration named former Representative Lynn Westmoreland (the Republican Representative for Georgia) to serve on Amtrak's board for a five-year term. In Congress Westmoreland frequently voted to cut Amtrak funding.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/02/12/trump-budget-proposes-again-cut-federal-funding-amtrak-half-which-congress-has-rejected/324039002/>



Railfuture's latest book (above) gives details of the 400 stations and over 950km of new routes which have opened to passengers since 1960. Rail expert and author Paul Salveson said: "This book is indispensable not just to rail campaigners but transport professionals, local authority politicians – and those chap/esses in Government." The Rev Edmund Worthy of Wellingborough said: "Britain's Growing Railway is a wonderful work of reference and an inspiration to remind us of all the good news of railway expansion." The 192-page 2017 updated edition costs £9.95 and can be obtained online at

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/shop/>

GET YOUR COPY TODAY!

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How we can all help make the City of London a more friendly place for rail users

The vast majority of people arrive in the City of London by public transport, but the roads are polluted and hostile to pedestrians and cyclists.

The City of London has never had a transport strategy but it is now trying to devise one.

Members of Railfuture and rail user groups are invited to give their views to help planners compile the strategy.

The City has few residents and about 85% of the people who work there arrive by public transport.

Many rail users travel into the City from miles around but rarely get asked what they think about transport issues.

The new Thameslink and Crossrail services will soon increase the number of people going into the City.

One of the big questions for the planners is to decide who is more important, pedestrians, cyclists, bus passengers or car drivers.

Help make the City a better place. Give your views at:

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/transportstrategy