

Can it be an LNER Azuma?



Picture: IAN SIMONS

IN WITH THE NEW: Hitachi inter-city express train in the livery of LNER

Hitachi has stripped the Virgin branding from the new inter-city trains which were destined to be operated by Virgin Trains East Coast, but whether the trains will still be called Azuma – the Japanese word for East – may be in doubt because Virgin could claim to “own” the name. VTEC, a joint venture between Stagecoach and Virgin, asked to walk away from the East Coast franchise early because revenue had not matched its predictions. The new Hitachi class 800s will be operated by London North Eastern Railway which, although government owned, is managed by a partnership of private sector consultants. It took over the existing East Coast fleet from VTEC in June. After the default of National Express in 2009, the East Coast trains were run successfully for six years by Directly Operated Railways.



Hitachi IEP train in Virgin livery at Dunbar last year

for purpose” and pointed out “serious deficiencies” in the way the Department for Transport awards contracts.

<https://www.railstaff.uk/2018/06/25/lner-completes-takeover-from-virgin-trains-east-coast/>

railaction

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DOR however was scrapped by the Government, perhaps to avoid the embarrassment of a “nationalised” train operator doing a better job than the private train operators.

Former Network Rail chief Sir John Armitt told the BBC in July that the rail franchise model is “bust” and should be reviewed. Earlier, the House of Commons transport committee said the rail franchising system was “not fit

for purpose” and pointed out “serious deficiencies” in the way the Department for Transport awards contracts.

Bringing East West Rail back to life



STOP THE ROT: The Oxford-Bletchley line near Steeple Claydon in 2016

A major step in restoring rail links between Oxford and Cambridge was taken at the end of July when Network Rail applied for legal permission to rebuild a railway across central England. Not-for-profit Network Rail plans to reopen a “mothballed” line west of Bletchley and to upgrade the existing Bedford-Bletchley line if its application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act is given the go-ahead by the Government.

Phase 1 of the East West scheme was opened from Oxford to Bicester in 2016. Construction work on phase 2 should start next year although some preliminary work has already been carried out. Phase 3 from Bedford to Cambridge remains at the planning stage.

By the “early 2020s”, train services could start running from Oxford to Bedford, along with trains from Aylesbury to Milton Keynes.

Rail campaigners can support the TWA application by making representations to Transport Secretary Chris Grayling before 7 September 2018.

“I would encourage people to give their views directly to the Department for Transport and leave them in no doubt about the public’s appetite for getting trains on tracks as soon as possible,” said Councillor Mark Shaw, chairman of the East West Rail consortium of councils which has campaigned for the reopening of the Varsity Line since 1995.

“East West Rail will drastically reduce journey times within the region, bringing key economic and cultural centres within easy reach of each other.

“After more than 20 years of campaigning, the submission of the TWA order is a hugely significant milestone, marking the final stage in acquiring permission to reopen the rail lines between Oxford and Bedford, and Aylesbury and Milton Keynes.” Network Rail says the project aims to create more jobs, more economic growth, and sustainable housing.

The proposed Oxford-Bedford service is expected to stop at Oxford Parkway,

£1 return offer for children on South West

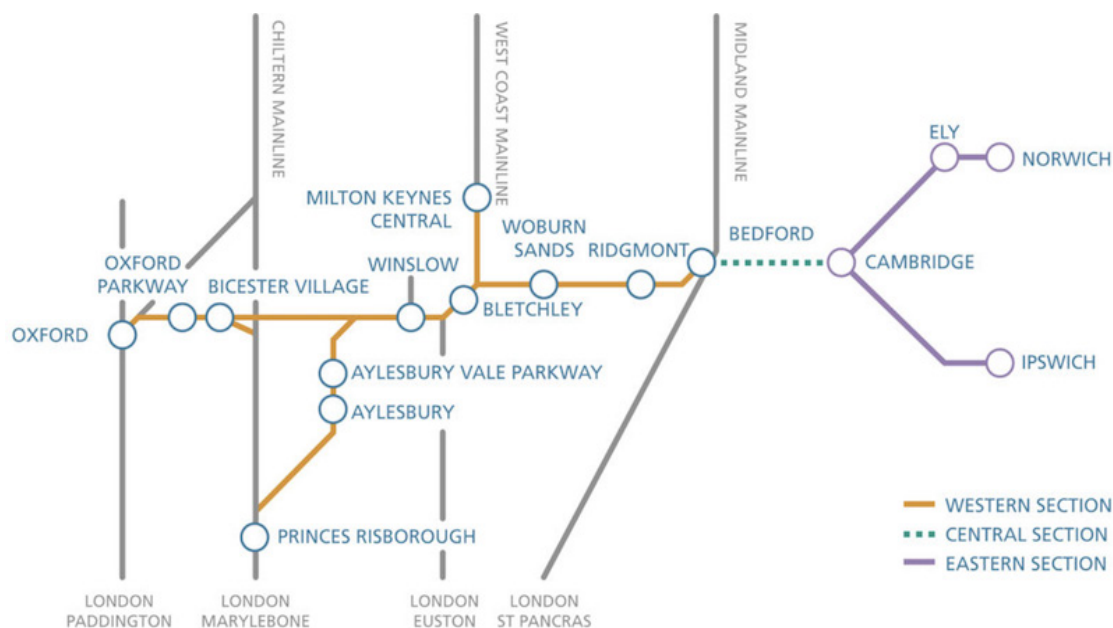
Children can travel for £1 return this summer with South Western Railway. South Western Railway’s LIVE BIG promotion allows up to four £1 child tickets to be bought with each South Western Railway off-peak, super-off-Peak or promotional day return adult ticket.

Sarah Vos, head of sales and marketing at South Western Railway said: “We hope to inspire families to take advantage of our summer-long kids-travel-for-a-pound offer and enjoy days out exploring our network and creating fun memories together.”

Tickets can be booked until 2 September.

For further information, go to:

<https://www.southwesternrailway.com/destinations-and-offers/offers/livebig>



NETWORK EFFECT: The many connectional opportunities of the East West Rail line

Bicester, Winslow, Bletchley, Woburn Sands and Ridgmont. Existing local services are expected to continue on the Bedford-Bletchley line.

The proposed Milton Keynes to Aylesbury service will stop at Bletchley, Winslow and Aylesbury Vale Parkway.

Colin Murphy of Network Rail said: "This is the culmination of four years of work developing the scheme and follows three positive rounds of community consultation, where we have continually refined our proposal based on the views of the community and planning experts."

Rob Brighouse, chairman at East West Railway Company, said: "This is very welcome and shows our shared commitment to move all elements of the project from planning to delivery as quickly as possible."

Bedford Mayor Dave Hodgson, chair of the transport forum of England's Economic Heartland, said: "The Government has made realising the huge economic potential of this region a national priority and East West Rail is fundamental to delivering this. "We now need the route between Bedford and Cambridge to be confirmed as soon as possible."

More information at:

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/our-railway-upgrade-plan/key-projects/east-west-rail/western-section/>

Five key points for rail campaigners at:

<https://www.eastwestrail.org.uk/transport-and-works-act-order-twao/>

You can email your support to: transportandworksact@dft.gov.uk and please consider sending a copy to the consortium at info@eastwestrail.org.uk

Letters can be sent to Transport and Works Act Orders Unit, Department for Transport, 1/14-18, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 4DR.

All submission documents are available at www.networkrail.co.uk/east-west-rail and paper copies can be viewed at Bedford, Bicester, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury and Winslow. Details can be found at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/events

Initiative on dementia

The Leeds-Morecambe rail line has become the first dementia-friendly line in Britain.

The initiative was launched at Bentham station in May by the Community Rail Partnership.

A special train, complete with a commemorative headboard, forget-me-not signage and project posters, departed from Leeds, picking up guests at Shipley, Keighley and Skipton, including a group of people living with dementia and their supporters.

The project has devised dementia-friendly walks from stations on the line.

Jools Townsend, chief executive of ACoRP said: "We feel passionately that our railways should be accessible and welcoming to all.

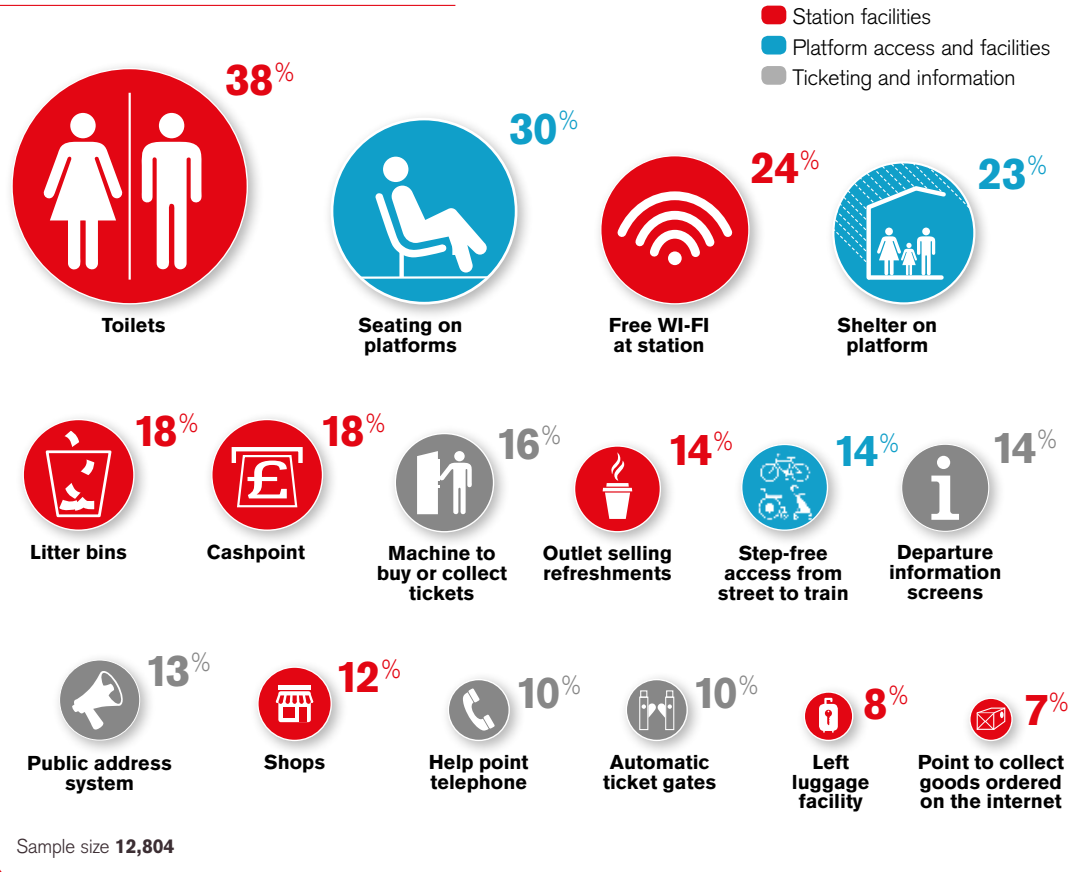
"Railways provide connections with other people and places."

The partnership is hosting groups of people living with dementia and their carers on journeys along the Bentham line and at various destinations, including Morecambe.

More info:

<https://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Bentham-Line-Dementia-Friendly-reduced-copy.pdf>

Priorities for improving station facilities (%)



Graph: TRANSPORT FOCUS

Railfuture press releases

Railfuture press releases 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](#)

In order of importance to passengers, the issues raised in the Transport Focus survey

Toilets are top priority for passengers at rail stations

Passengers believe toilets are the most important of all the facilities provided at local railway stations. The graphic above shows the priorities for passengers as revealed in surveys carried out by the official rail watchdog Transport Focus. Taking the overall railway into account (not just the stations) the price of tickets was the main concern for most passengers.

“We asked more than 12,800 passengers across the country to rank possible improvements to their rail service in order of priority,” said Anthony Smith, chief executive of Transport Focus.

“The improvements were not costed, nor subject to a cost benefit analysis. We were simply looking at aspirations.”

<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvement/>

Rail Delivery Group embarks on its fares and ticketing review

Railfuture’s Dr Stephen Wright is coordinating our response to the rail industry’s review of fares and ticketing. The Rail Delivery Group, which represents the private firms involved in running the railway, is currently carrying out a public consultation which closes on 10 September 2018. It is expected to publish a report in the autumn. Railfuture members often know how to get the best deals on the railways but “ordinary” people on average earnings find rail fares prohibitive. It is the most important issue for most people who were surveyed by Transport Focus.

The level of rail fares is really an issue for the Government, rather than the companies running the trains. The Campaign for Better Transport points out that public transport has the potential to unclog our streets, clean up our air and fight climate change. The Government should be doing all it can to reward those



BRITAIN RUNS ON RAIL

The Rail Delivery Group's logo and its slogan

can contact Steve Wright at steve.wright@railfuture.org.uk to influence Railfuture's submission.

<https://www.raildeliverygroup.com/media-centre/press-releases/2018/469773920-2018-05-08.html>

Corby celebrates two-trains-an-hour promise and hopes for more

The Government announced in June that the new East Midlands Trains franchise will have to provide an extra train each hour so that there are two trains per hour to and from Corby, which saw its station reopened in 2009. Railfuture campaigner David Fursdon said: "This is good news indeed."

The line from Kettering to Corby has recently been doubled and work to electrify the line from Bedford to Corby continues. The current EMT franchise has been extended to 2019. The invitation to tender for the new franchise was published in June 2018 and the new franchise will run from August next year. Loss of inter-city trains at Bedford has prompted continuing protests which are now likely to be aimed at the likely challengers to Stagecoach (the current franchise holder): Abellio and Arriva. Bedford's importance is likely to grow once the East West Rail link is up and running.

<https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/corby-to-get-an-extra-train-every-hour-government-confirms-1-8527010>



MELTON MOWBRAY: A new Crossrail train (being delivered from Derby's Bombardier factory to London) passes through Melton Mowbray station in July hauled by a BR-era diesel locomotive. Corby rail campaigners have welcomed the promise of better links to London but now they also want improved links in the other direction towards Oakham and Melton Mowbray, both of which are served by CrossCountry trains

who travel by bus or train, but both bus and rail passengers have had to struggle with rising fares, cuts in services and timetable chaos. The Government has sat back and watched as local councils axe bus routes. You can input directly into the RDG consultation at www.britainrunsonrail.co.uk/fares or you

Railfuture conferences

The next Railfuture conference is in Reading on 11 November 2018.

Speakers include:

Howard Smith
Operations Director, Crossrail

An insight into Crossrail and its forthcoming launch

Anna Holbrook

Network Rail

The Western rail access project to Heathrow Airport

Howard Elliot

Network Rail

Electrification on the Great Western project

Councillor Tony Page,
Reading Borough Council

Reading transport and integration

Ian Baxter

SLC Rail

Stations and projects including Reading Green Park, Worcestershire Parkway and Wantage Grove

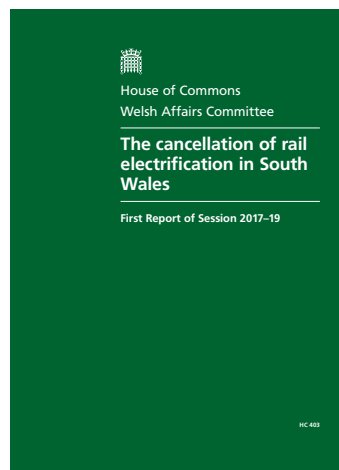
Graham Cross

Chief Executive Heathrow Southern Railway

For further information see:

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

Air quality warning after shock of rail electrification cutbacks



One of several reports resulting from the Government's electrification backtrack

closed from 25 August to 2 September to allow problem spots to be dealt with.

The Government's decision to cut back on electric trains in favour of hybrids that run partly on diesel is also likely to worsen air quality. The transport committee said ministers ignored the environmental costs of scrapping electrification projects and opting for bi-mode trains. Experts deny that bi-mode trains can deliver the same reliability, speed and environmental benefits as electric trains. The Urban Transport Group, which represents major cities, said hybrid inter-city trains are heavier, more complex, less efficient, damage infrastructure and contribute to local air quality problems.

One of the speakers at Railfuture's November conference in Reading is Howard Elliot, project engineering manager for Network Rail, who will be talking about electrification on the Great Western.

Book your place at:

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/transport-committee/news-parliament-2017/rail-investment-report-publication-17-19/>

Electric points for cars but not for bikes and mobility scooters



Electric car charging points are being installed on pavements throughout Britain, with apparently little or no consultation with the public. The charging points allow electric car drivers to park and recharge their cars on public roads. The points do not provide recharging facilities for either electric bikes or mobility scooters, both of which provide more social benefit than electric cars.

Hackney Council, which was asked to explain its policy on charging points, said: "The electric vehicle charging infrastructure the council has in the borough is provided through SourceLondon at zero cost. These charging points are designed specifically for the electric vehicle market and the council are in the process of looking to expand this network to support a switch to lower emission vehicles. The service agrees that Ebikes are important but there is some doubt as to the benefit of on-street Ebike-specific chargers." The council did not explain the involvement of

What's on

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

3 August 2018. Friday.
Pontefract Civic Society, Rail sub-group. Venue: Pontefract Squash & Leisure Club, Stuart Road, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 4PQ 19.00-21.00

6 August 2018. Monday.
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 19.30

11 August 2018. Saturday.
Venue: Methodist church hall, Gosforth Road, Seascale, Cumbria CA20 1PU 13.50

13 August 2018. Monday.
Bexhill Rail Action Group meeting. Venue: Hastings Direct, Conquest House, 34 Collington Avenue, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN39 3LW (nearest station Collington) 19.00-21.00

For further information on these and other events see:

<http://railfuture.org.uk/events>

SourceLondon which is a trading name of BluePointLondon Limited, 5 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0PG. There is obviously money to be made from electric cars. In June, oil company BP announced it had spent £130 million to buy Britain's biggest electric car charging network, Chargemaster, which has 6,500 charging points. BP told the Guardian it wants to become a leading provider of energy to low-carbon vehicles in the UK and aims to provide "ultra-fast charging".

<https://www.sourcelondon.net/>

Extend Crossrail into Kent if you want to boost economic growth



Buffer stop at Abbey Wood

Extending Crossrail from Abbey Wood, London, to Ebbsfleet in Kent and building a multi-modal crossing of the Thames estuary are among the recommendations made by a Government commission on the future of the Thames Gateway. The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission said in July that the Government should provide £20 million to fund the extension to offset the area's deprivation and poor public transport links. The commission supports the Government's plan for a Lower Thames Crossing which must be able to accommodate a rail link, combined with a second Thames flood barrier, to be delivered by 2050.

Howard Smith, Operations Director, Crossrail, will be speaking at Railfuture's November conference in Reading, about Crossrail and its forthcoming launch.

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thames-estuary-2050-growth-commission-report>

Buses take the strain of Euston station weekend closures

London's Euston station is to close for three weekends in the summer. The station, which handles 44 million passengers a year, will be closed on Saturday and Sunday 18 and 19 August, the bank holiday weekend of Saturday, Sunday and Monday (27, 28, 29 August) and the last weekend of the school holidays, Saturday and Sunday (1 and 2 September).

Network Rail will be replacing North Wembley junction and the National Rail website warns of rail replacement buses. Few alternatives are on offer. As a result, the Chiltern line from London Marylebone to Birmingham and the West Midlands is likely to be very busy, along with the Midland main line from St Pancras and LNER services on the East Coast main line from King's Cross.

Although there will be no trains at Euston, the station will remain open, providing access to London Underground throughout the three weekends.

Inter-city services from the North will stop at Milton Keynes.

London Overground services between Euston and Watford Junction will be suspended on the affected weekends.

London Northwestern Railway plans to run a special half-hourly service between Hemel Hempstead and Northampton. Buses will run between Stanmore Underground station and Hemel Hempstead, calling at Watford Junction, Kings Langley and Apsley.

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/feeds/euston-station-to-close-for-three-summer-weekends-while-wembley-junction-is-replaced/>

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.

One example:

Railfuture Yorkshire's Graham Collett collated the Railfuture response to the Office of Rail and Road's consultation on Improving Assisted Travel.

He was later invited by the ORR to participate in a workshop on the subject. Well done, Graham.

Graham's document can be downloaded:

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/dl1689>

Other submissions can be downloaded from:

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

Trams will replace problem-plagued guided buses in France



Trams were unveiled in July to replace rubber-tired guided buses in the Normandy city of Caen. Alstom is supplying 23 energy-efficient Citadis trams (left) which can carry 210 passengers. The first deliveries will begin in October with entry into commercial service scheduled for September 2019. Caen's guided busway opened in 2002 with a single guide rail but "has been

plagued with faults". The conversion of the three lines of the busway to light rail is costing £200 million.

<http://www.metro-report.com/news/single-view/view/first-caen-tram-unveiled.html>

Preserved railway helps Greater Anglia with bringing in new trains



Train operator Greater Anglia has done a £3 million deal with the preserved Mid-Norfolk Railway to smooth the introduction of its new Stadler train fleet which is to be based at Norwich Crown Point depot. The preserved railway, which has a main line connection at Wymondham, 10 miles from Norwich, will lay some extra tracks where, during the testing and commissioning phase in 2019-20, Greater

Anglia will store some of its new trains. Greater Anglia will be bringing 58 Stadler trains into service – 38 regional bi-mode trains, 10 inter-city trains and 10 Stansted Express trains – as part of a £1.4 billion investment in replacing its entire fleet. Greater Anglia had to find new capacity after abandoning its plan to build a new train depot at Brantham, Suffolk.

<http://www.derehamtimes.co.uk/news/mid-norfolk-railway-deal-store-greater-anglia-trains-1-5586057>

Heathrow western rail link looks likely after 70-year wait

More than 70 years after Heathrow became London's airport, it may soon be getting a western rail link. Consultation on the Department for Transport-backed rail proposal closed in June, a few days before MPs voted in favour of a third runway. The idea is to build a spur from the Great Western main line near Langley and a new 5km tunnel to Heathrow Terminal 5. The first rail link to the airport was the Piccadilly Tube line which opened to Heathrow Central in 1977. The Heathrow Express service from London Paddington opened in 1998 and serves Heathrow Central and Terminal 5. There have been several attempts to provide a Heathrow link from the South Western main line. The latest bid is by Heathrow Southern Railway which wants to create a £1.6 billion route from near Chertsey to Terminal 5.

One of the speakers at Railfuture's November conference in Reading is Anna Holbrook of Network Rail who will be talking about the western rail access project to Heathrow Airport.

Also speaking at Railfuture's conference at Reading is Graham Cross, chief executive of Heathrow Southern Railway

Book your place at:

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/our-railway-upgrade-plan/key-projects/heathrow-rail-link/>

Women are welcome on ScotRail's new electric trains

ScotRail found itself in trouble on Twitter when its new Hitachi-built £475 million class 385 electric trains entered service between Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow

Farewell Stanley

We are sad to announce that former Railfuture vice-president Stanley Hall died in June.

Busway failure

The Cambridge guided busway has failed to increase bus use in Cambridge.

Rail day axed

The Rail Delivery Group scrapped its conference in June "because of the state of the railways".

Paris points

Electric car charging points in Paris are on the road, not impeding pedestrians on the pavement as they are in London.

Public control

Railfuture vice-president Andrew Adonis said in May that the Government should have taken the East Coast back into public control for a longer period.

Poisonous fumes

The Government plans to ban wood burning stoves, which have a tiny impact on air quality compared to the poisonous fumes pumped out by trucks, buses and cars using diesel fuel.

- Barry Shearman



The all-male line-up on ScotRail's publicity picture for the new Hitachi train

Queen Street on 25 July 2018. It issued a picture of the new train, full of men, prompting a tweet from Professor Claire Squires of Stirling University: "Are women also allowed on the new trains pls."

Another Twitter user asked: "No women or children on this journey then?"

ScotRail quickly tweeted: "Quite the opposite" and issued a picture showing a lone woman, among many male passengers.

Later another Twitter user commented: "Any disabled passengers? Any with pushchairs? Any with bikes?"

The picture was taken on a ScotRail preview trip and the "passengers" had been specially invited by ScotRail. It is not known how many women were included in the invitation. The class 385 is the first of 70 new electric trains which are expected to be running in the central belt by early next year. Introduction of the trains was delayed after drivers raised concerns about the design of their windscreens.

<http://www.railjournal.com/index.php/rolling-stock/scotrail-launches-hitachi-class-385-emus.html>

Rail ombudsman created to handle rising tide of complaints

A rail ombudsman is to be appointed in November to handle complaints from passengers about train travel. The ombudsman is expected to deal with complaints that have not been resolved by train operators or passenger groups such as Transport Focus, but discussions are still going on between the Office of Rail and Road and the Rail Delivery Group. Complaints about train services are currently running at over half a million a year, following widespread dissatisfaction. It is estimated that around 6,000 complaints a year will be referred to the service.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-44870685>

Spanish high speed train crash 'was not investigated properly'



The European railway agency has called for a new inquiry into the 2013 accident that killed 80 and injured 152 near Santiago de Compostela. The European Union Agency for Railways said that the accident "has not been investigated in an independent manner." It questions the way Spain's Railway Accidents

"When you realise that we've been breathing illegal air in the UK for over eight years, I would say this is a rather poor effort"

Jenny Jones of the Green party gives her verdict on the Government's clean air strategy

"City Hall is taking bold action to clean up London's toxic air – and the fact that the Government's Clean Air strategy has taken on board many of the things we have been calling for in order to help tackle the problem is welcome. Ministers now need to match our urgency."

Sadiq Khan, mayor of London

Deaths from particle air pollution have increased sharply recently – not reduced as Gove promises in fairy land!

*Simon Birkett
Clean Air in London*

Oslo plans to go car-free in its core by 2019 and to get there it is building its network of bike and pedestrian paths, replacing parking with planters, and putting a price on driving downtown.

CITYLAB

Investigation Commission acted and warned that the investigation focused on the train driver's human error while ignoring "essential questions regarding the origin of the accident".

https://elpais.com/elpais/2016/07/08/inenglish/1467965763_490590.html

Union calls for action over assaults on rail staff



The TSSA rail union called on the Government in July to declare the timetabling crisis at Govia Thameslink a national emergency and wants an inquiry by the COBRA emergency committee.

The union says that a survey of members has shown that stations are no longer safe work spaces as passenger anger at the unreliability of the service is leading to abuse of staff. General secretary Manuel Cortes proposed a return to the pre-May timetable as an interim solution.

http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/16367179.Government_is_urged_to_declare_a_national_emergency_over_the_rail_crisis/

Closing date for Rail User Group Awards is 1 September

It is time to think about nominating your suggestions for this year's Rail User Group Awards. The deadline is Saturday 1 September. The categories are: 1 Best website, 2 Best social media promotion, 3 Best newsletter, 4 Best new group, the Oliver Lovell Award, 5 Best campaign, 6 Best campaigner, the Clara Zilahi Award [Railfuture members only], 7 Judges' Special Award. The seventh annual RUG Awards will be presented at our autumn conference in Reading on Saturday 10 November. Full details in Rail User Express and at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Express



Railfuture's latest book 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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Pollution count

The UK's most polluted towns and cities have been revealed in World Health Organisation figures.

The 30 places that exceeded the limit of 10 micrograms per cubic metre were:

- Scunthorpe 15 (estimate), Manchester 13, Swansea 13, Gillingham 13 (estimate), Carlisle 12 (estimate), Chepstow 12 (estimate), Leeds 12, Leicester 12, Liverpool 12, Grays 12 (estimate), Eccles 12 (estimate), Nottingham 12 (estimate), Plymouth 12 (estimate), York 12, Prestonpans 12, Royal Leamington Spa 12, Sandy 12, Sheffield 12 (estimate), Stoke-on-Trent 12, London 11, Coventry 11, Hull 11 (estimate), Londonderry 11 (estimate), Middlesbrough 11, Norwich 11 (estimate), Southend-on-Sea 11, Stockton-on-Tees 11, Storrington 11, Wigan 11.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-43964341>