

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 24, 2009 9:13 AM **Subject:** Railfuture Rail User Express, 24 Nov 09, copy #1

*Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.*

We begin with a roundup of news from rail user groups around the UK.

Thanks to RUGs that send me their magazines and bulletins. I'm happy to receive items by email to save postage.

*In this issue, there are stories of underinvestment in rail set against figures which show (a) that rail reopenings routinely exceed expectations, and (b) that the rail network is carrying record numbers of people - including royalty. Elsewhere, busways get the thumbs down, light rail gets a leg up, and the Brigadier's cat makes a bid to be a transport consultant.*

As always, feel free to forward this message to a colleague, or to reproduce items in your own newsletter (quoting sources).

+++ GUEST RAIL USER GROUP OF THE MONTH : **The Heart of Wales Line Travellers' Association** +++

The Association is affiliated to Railfuture and exists to promote the 121 mile line between Swansea and Shrewsbury, and lobby for suitable services. Their ultimate aim is for a 2-hourly end-to-end service (including evening trains), 7 days a week. Other aspirations include better station facilities and more appropriate rolling stock. HoWLTA is a member of the Heart of Wales Line Forum which is a consortium consisting principally of local authorities, the rail industry and tourism agencies, all working together to promote and develop the line. In order to remain effective over the length of such a long route, HoWLTA has built up a network of local station representatives and adopters. An unusual visitor to the line in October this year was the Royal Train carrying the Prince of Wales to a number of engagements: "The clandestine movements of the train were a far cry from the passage of the Royal Train exactly 57 years ago (on 23rd October 1952) when it travelled from Craven Arms to Llandrindod Wells carrying the then uncrowned Queen Elizabeth to the Elan Valley near Rhayader to open the Claerwen Dam."

From the Heart of Wales, we move south ... a long way south ... to **New South Wales** where TOOT (Trains on our Tracks) has been campaigning against a controversial piece of legislation from the state government that would have given the Minister the power to declare any line "disused" and thus available for other uses, including ripping up the tracks and selling off the land. The Secretary of Friends of the Northern Railway, itself a member of TOOT, tells me that there was a big demonstration against this in Sydney. The happy outcome is that the NSW Govt has just withdrawn this particular piece of legislation. TOOT says: "It's a huge win for the community and everyone who has campaigned so vigorously around the state over the past two months". Meanwhile the fight goes on to fill in missing links in the rail network and put an end to the absurd situation where freight between Melbourne and Brisbane is being squeezed onto road simply because there isn't enough daytime capacity on the existing rail routes.

*...and now news from our regular contributors...*

Reports of overcrowding from around the country in the October edition of RUEX prompted the Secretary of the **Wharfedale Rail Users' Group** to send me their newsletter to show that their line also suffers from crush loading during peak hours. The Wharfedale line lies wholly within the West Yorkshire transport administration area. WRUG argues that, if passenger growth continues at even half the current level, the longer trains promised in the Yorks & Humber Route Utilisation Strategy will be inadequate. Members are encouraged to write to their MPs asking 'Will Wharfedale get the extra coaches and when? Can you be assured that these coaches will give the same levels of comfort, accessibility and convenience as our present coaches?'

In their Autumn newsletter, the **South East Northumberland Rail User Group** welcomes the news that the ticket office at Morpeth station will open longer hours for a 6-week trial period – the group hopes that there will be sufficient business to warrant the arrangement becoming permanent. A display case has been made available at Morpeth station for use by SENRUG. The campaign to reopen the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line to passengers received a boost when the Association of Train Operating Companies listed it as one of the 14 reopening schemes across England to be good value for money (£34m for the ABT line, which SENRUG compares to the cost of junction improvements on the A19 trunk road: over £54m!). However, elsewhere we read that Network Rail has "shown utter contempt to rail users in SE Northumberland" as it has not replied to any of the three letters from SENRUG asking about infrastructure matters. In an editorial, the group's Chairman questions the huge disparity between normal and advance ticket prices, especially now that train operators find that passengers are increasingly opting for the cheaper fares: "would it not be more

sensible to take the average fare and let this be the price regardless of whether you book 3 months or 5 minutes before?" *Quite so! – and the editor of Rail magazine made exactly the same point a few weeks later - Ed*

In an effort to raise the profile of their reopening campaign, the **Rail Action Group East of Scotland** (RAGES) has printed hundreds of illustrated postcards which are being distributed via information stalls and a newsletter mailing; there's space on each card for you to add your name & address before posting it to the Minister for Transport. A representative of RAGES attended a meeting arranged by National Express in Edinburgh on 9th Nov to discuss the draft Dec 2010 East Coast timetable, and was able to express a number of concerns. Later in November, the group received a message from the new East Coast franchisee setting out their immediate plans and mentioning that an invitation was on its way for the stakeholder roadshows to be held in mid-January. A newsletter is available on the Company's website at: <http://eastcoast.co.uk>. RAGES currently has 130 members, and the annual membership fee is £4.

The new **Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton** rail user group has found that Cambridgeshire County Council has negotiated student rail passes with First Capital Connect, but has failed to pass this information on to parents who have been paying more than they needed for rail seasons or the alternative bus pass – it's now been agreed that they can convert to the discounted rail pass and get a refund if they act quickly. FCC have honoured their commitment to retain a Saturday booking office service at Meldreth in response to the group's campaign, and travellers are urged to use the facility so that a healthy level of transactions is maintained.

The **Bedford Commuters' Association** is trying to get an additional service to stop at Bedford in the evening peak but East Midlands Trains is intransigent, claiming that it's not in their franchise commitment. The East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy consultations give the BCA an opportunity to influence the service level in the future. By manning the platform at Bedford in the evening peak, BCA's committee were able to both collect annual subs from members and to monitor numbers alighting from each train. The group has submitted its views on the design of the new Thameslink rolling stock; Flitwick station is to be upgraded as part of the Thameslink project, but the BCA feels the project could be greatly enhanced by drawing on funding from nearby town-centre developments.

The Hertfordshire-based **Association of Public Transport Users** has been keeping its members informed about service disruptions affecting First Capital Connect services due to industrial action. An APTU spokesman has given radio interviews and the committee has written to FCC arguing that compensation under the Delay Repay scheme is insufficient recompense for the sort of problems that passengers face. Other problems reported by APTU members include: poor quality information on station displays and the difficulty in knowing which platform to use for late evening services at West Hampstead (APTU arranged for voice announcements to clarify the situation). Although proposals for a new station at Brent Cross are at an early stage, APTU notes that the rail industry has yet to formulate a view on service implications.

**ONTRACK**, the user group for the Clacton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze branches, is very pleased that National Express East Anglia are to operate a trial local train service between Walton and Colchester Town (with connections at Thorpe-le-Soken to/from Clacton) on the four Sundays prior to Christmas. This will be achieved by extending nine of the Walton/Thorpe shuttle services to/from Colchester Town calling at all stations, and will be the first time for many years that Weeley and Hythe will have a Sunday rail service. Colchester Town station is much more conveniently situated for the town centre than is Colchester (North) and ONTRACK have campaigned for Sunday services on this line for several years – they trust that this trial will be successful and that local train services on Sundays will eventually be made permanent.

At the AGM of the Felixstowe branch of the **East Suffolk Travellers' Association** in October, members were treated to a DVD presentation entitled "ESTA – the first 20 years". The secretary is normally able to report an upward trend in rail travel, but this year had to tell AGM attendees of a decline due to a combination of the credit crunch and local strikes by some rail employees. ESTA organised no less than eight day trips during 2009, although the Mystery Tour in April ended in ignominy as members had to clamber down from the emergency exit of their coach after it had lurched into a storm culvert.

Weekly updates from the **Oldham-Rochdale-Manchester** group, STORM, paint a grim picture of journeys on the special bus service contracted to run during the 3-year closure of the Oldham Loop line – the group has alerted local councillors to the many tales of woe. Not surprisingly, there are also accounts of gross overcrowding on some trains on the direct line to Rochdale. There is also a report describing the disgusting state of Manchester Victoria (*see news item below – Ed*). On a more positive note, STORM welcomes the possibility that a new company, Great North Western Trains, may introduce a direct service between Rochdale and London, observing that it can take almost as long to get from Rochdale to Manchester Piccadilly as it can to get from there to London. Plans for Mince Pie Specials on 6 Dec in conjunction with Northern Trains are well advanced, with the promise of a jazz band and perhaps carol singers.

An update from the **Weardale Railway** tells us that the national network connection at Bishop Auckland has finally been completed, and the re-sleepering and re-ballasting of the line between Wolsingham and Bishop Auckland is almost complete. It will thus be possible to travel the length of the line, although there is much to be done before Bishop Auckland can see a regular service.

**Friends of the West Highland Line** have added Helensburgh (Upper) to the list of stations adopted by the Society, and already some colourful floral displays have given this rather drab station a new lease of life. The autumn edition of West Highland News heaps praise on Network Rail for completing a programme of works “on an ambitious scale, in very difficult conditions and with little public awareness”; in an attempt to set this on record, there are illustrated articles about the refurbishment of two historic viaducts, with further stories promised for future editions.

When the committee of the **Shrewsbury–Aberystwyth Rail Passengers’ Association** fixed the date for their AGM in Newtown well in advance, how were they to know that there would be rail replacement buses that day? (*yes, we’ve all been there – Ed*). One item emerging from the AGM was the agreement to relaunch the group’s internet chat room after it became overloaded with “reply all” messages. Commenting on ATOC’s call for longer franchises (one benefit of which should be more private sector investment), SARPA points out that the Wales & Borders franchise is in its 6th year out of 15 and there has been virtually no investment! SARPA’s official response to the proposal from Arriva Trains Wales to run a through service from Aberystwyth to London is largely supportive, but with these observations: (1) a better all round service to the passenger could be made by WSMR and ATW co-operating with each other rather than competing and (2) the “Virgin Trains Moderation of Competition” agreement is an impediment to better rail services for the Wales & Borders region and should be scrapped. A separate article in their newsletter takes a critical view of privatisation and the current competition issues on the West Coast Main Line, and observes: “the passenger seems to be the last consideration in all this.”

There are two lengthy articles in SARPA’s autumn newsletter comparing the woeful lack of rail investment in Wales to the high spend in other nations, particularly the Republic of Ireland, which is similar in both size and station footfall to the Wales & Borders franchise area. Brigadier John Faviell rounded off his article by telling us that he had great fun with his grandson creating a fantasy Welsh rail network in Lego, only to have it rearranged by the cat while their backs were turned. The creative intuition shown by the cat led the Brigadier to comment: “I’m thinking of hiring her out to our political parties as a transport consultant - she surely couldn’t come up with anything worse than the Ministerial Advice Group.”

*...now news from Railfuture...*

On the **Railfuture** website you can see a revised “Nov 09” version of our national list of rail user groups. Go to [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk) select “Links” then “Rail User Groups”.

**Railfuture** issued a press release calling for £33m of regional funding which had been earmarked for a rejected road scheme to be used to restore double track on the main railway line between Kemble and Swindon. The controversial Westbury bypass was turned down in July by Communities Secretary John Denham. Railfuture’s Severnside Branch is suggesting that the money be spent elsewhere in Wiltshire to relieve a major bottleneck in the Region’s rail network. “Now that the Government has decided to electrify the main lines from Paddington to Bristol and South Wales, the Kemble route will carry a large number of diverted trains while the work is carried out. This makes it essential that the 12 mile single track section is doubled as soon as possible,” said Branch Secretary Nigel Bray. He added that the line via Kemble is the only realistic alternative route for trains between South Wales and South East England whenever the Severn Tunnel or the routes leading to it are closed for engineering work or by any other obstruction. The Kemble line is also the main rail artery between Gloucestershire and London.

*STOP PRESS: S.W. England’s new transport and infrastructure board has now agreed to provide additional money to allow the Swindon-Kemble rail redoubling project to go ahead.*

**Railfuture Scotland**’s research officer, Ken Sutherland, has been looking at the predicted and actual passenger figures relating to four rail reopening schemes in Scotland, and finds that the passenger demand in each case far exceeds the pessimistic estimates used for the project appraisal. For example, trains on the Edinburgh-Bathgate line are carrying four times as many passengers compared with the theoretical estimate. He concludes: “The ‘criteria’ used to analyse new rail projects needs to be radically improved to more accurately reflect the real life experience and actual public usage of new rail links. Unsatisfactory ‘theoretical estimates’ are being employed to reject many rail improvement projects, which would otherwise be well used - if they were to be offered!”

At their recent meeting, **Railfuture's Passenger Committee** felt there was a need for a separate Route Utilisation Strategy for CrossCountry, which has hitherto only been considered piecemeal in other RUS documents. Earlier in the year, the committee had been working on its contribution to Chris Green & Peter Hall's study of station facilities (*see below*), and had made a submission to the Parliamentary Transport Select Committee about priorities for rail investment.

*...and now the rest of the news...*

#### RECORD NUMBERS USING RAIL

Despite the recession, passenger travel on National Rail is continuing to grow. Latest figures from the Office of Rail Regulation show total passenger kilometres travelled in 2008-09 increased by 3.4 per cent on the previous year to 50.7 billion – an all-time record in peacetime. Regional operators had the largest increase of 6.4 per cent in 2007-08, while the lowest growth was recorded in London and the South East, where passenger journeys increased by just 2.5 per cent. - *Railnews*

#### OWN YOUR OWN TRAIN COMPANY

Here's something a bit different: a company that's aiming to be the first *co-operatively owned* train operating company in the UK. It's called "Go! Co-operative". This new community interest company wants to provide open access rail services linking main lines to smaller market towns, and also provide light rail or bus links, or develop car pools, to enable outlying communities to access these services. Initially, Go! Co-operative is looking to provide a new, regular route that will enhance cross country connections in Somerset and Wiltshire. It hopes to raise upwards of £250,000 as the first open access train provider to be run as a multi-stakeholder co-operative. Co-op members are each required to purchase a minimum of 500 £1 shares. Details: [www.go-now.coop](http://www.go-now.coop)

#### ACTION STATIONS – *have your say on Network Rail's investment programme*

Network Rail has just unveiled its plans to improve thousands of stations across the country in a five year, £3.25bn, programme of investment. In a pioneering move, NR is launching the first ever nationwide stations research project asking passengers what is important to them at their local station, where they would like to see investment and what are their priorities. The survey can be accessed online at [www.networkrail.co.uk/actionstations](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/actionstations). The research project will last for up to three months and involve on-line surveys, telephone surveys and focus groups to really get into the detail of what passengers rate as the most important things to have at stations (lifts, information screens, toilets etc). The results from the survey, along with the station champions report just published by the Department for Transport, will feed into a much wider review on stations. This will take place over the next twelve months involving every train operator, rail funding partner and interest group in the country. – *NR news release*

#### BETTER RAIL STATIONS

An independent report entitled "Better Rail Stations" has been published by the Station Champions, Chris Green and Sir Peter Hall, advising the Government on ways to improve stations, focussing on getting the basic facilities right as well as considering the broader role of stations in the future. Read the full report at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/passenger/stations/betterrailstations/>.

To coincide with the publication of the Station Champions' report, Transport Secretary Andrew Adonis embarked on a whistle-stop tour of the ten stations it names as being in greatest need of more work to improve life for travellers. The worst is Manchester Victoria (*this will come as no surprise to STORM – Ed*). Read his travelogue at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/press/railstations>. In his Conclusion, Lord Adonis says: "I welcome views on the Station Champions' report. I am keen to make these new standards a feature of future franchise agreements between the Government and train operating companies. They will also inform Network Rail's future investment strategy" ...then adds... "I am travelling around on another national Rover ticket to minimise the cost...last time I publicised these Rover tickets, the train companies put up the price immediately, so buy yours now to avoid disappointment!" – *from DfT website*

#### ON THE WEB (1): PLANS AND PHOTOS OF STATIONS

The Station Facilities section on the National Rail website has a new feature which allows you to see a plan of any selected station and inspect photographs of the station's facilities such as the waiting shelters and car park. Go to

[www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/search](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/search), enter the station name and press Search. On the station page, scroll down to the new "Stations Made Easy" link, then click this to see the station plan. Now select "View larger version" – on this, you can point and click to make a photo appear, and clicking on the photo will give a full size image. – *thanks to Russell Darling of RAGES for telling us about this useful facility*

## ON THE WEB (2): MAPS OF THE UK RAIL NETWORK

Most of the rail maps you see on leaflets and posters around Britain can be reviewed online at: [www.projectmapping.co.uk](http://www.projectmapping.co.uk). You can choose from dozens of different rail maps, including those showing: Community Rail Partnerships, lines under construction & proposed, regional networks, and the networks of individual train operators. Project Mapping has brought the maps together on one site to “enable comparison and further understanding of rail map design”, but of course copyright restrictions apply if you’re tempted to reproduce one of the maps for any reason. – *thanks to Frank Salt of STORM for pointing me to this website*

## ATOC CALLS FOR 10-YEAR ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAMME

The Association of Train Operating Companies has called for a 10-year rolling programme to electrify cross-country rail lines at an estimated cost of £50m a year. ATOC says electrifying 400 miles of route to fill in the network's missing links would cut carbon emissions by around 75,000 tonnes a year and increase passenger capacity by 35% on those routes electrified. **Ten 'missing link' schemes identified by ATOC are:** Liverpool to Manchester via Warrington Central; Manchester to Leeds via Huddersfield; Basingstoke / Reading to Birmingham via Oxford and Leamington / Coventry; Birmingham to Bristol via Cheltenham (including Gloucester); St Helens to Wigan; Leeds to York; Preston to Manchester via Bolton; Crewe to Chester; Ipswich to Felixstowe; and Swindon to Cheltenham. – *Transport Briefing*

## INQUIRY SEEKS TO IMPROVE CHANCES FOR LIGHT RAIL

A joint inquiry by the All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group and Pteg, the body which represents transport authorities in Britain's major cities, began at the House of Commons on 27 Oct. The inquiry will be seeking to understand how transport stakeholders can work together to improve the take-up and implementation of tram systems in the UK. The first session will hear evidence from the Light Rail Transit Association, the Oil Depletion Analysis Centre, Confederation of Passenger Transport and representatives from the ultra light rail sector. It will cover issues around peak oil, climate change, health impacts and the role of innovation in light rail. A report of the inquiry's findings is expected to be published in early 2010. – *Transport Briefing*

## GET INVOLVED IN LTP3

English local transport authorities (outside London) are working on their next Local Transport Plans to cover the third 5-yr period from 2011 to 2016, and there will be opportunities for transport campaigners to contribute to the development of the LTPs. *Delivering a Sustainable Transport System* is the Dept for Transport's overarching policy – it sets out five national transport goals: supporting economic growth; tackling climate change; promoting equality of opportunity; contributing to better safety, security and health; and improving quality of life and promoting a better environment. Rail campaigners would do well to focus on how their proposed scheme might achieve these outcomes when contributing to the LTP process. The consultation process may involve meetings with key stakeholders, mailshots and/or a web-based forum; most authorities have details of the process on their websites. Currently, each authority is developing its draft LTP for publication by the summer of 2010. This will be followed by further consultation prior to publication of the final document.

## BUSWAY FARCE – *we told you so!*

Council bosses have confirmed that Cambridgeshire's guided busway will not open on November 29 as planned. Cambridgeshire County Council has not yet given a revised launch date. They have admitted that work on the £116 million project still has to be completed - and that until it is, the buses cannot run. The latest busway bombshell has triggered an outcry from critics of the controversial public transport system. Tim Phillips, chairman of pro-rail group Cast.Iron, which opposed the building of the busway, said: "The Cambridgeshire guided bus scheme is nothing short of a national disgrace. Indeed it is a farce and everything Cast.Iron has said about it since 2003 - including at the 'independent public inquiry' - is turning out to be true." – *Cambridge News & Crier*

## PENALTY FARES CONSULTATION

The Department for Transport has launched a consultation about changes to the National Rail Penalty Fares scheme; the closing date is 27 Jan 2010. The consultation seeks contributions toward making the rules clearer through the use of plain English and by revising a number of issues which have sometimes caused confusion. The Association of Train Operating Companies has requested a change in the charge amount of a penalty fare, presently £20 or twice the single fare. ATOC's proposal is that in future the penalty fare charge is £50, or twice the full single fare from the station where the passenger got on the train to the next station at which the train stops, whichever is the greater, but with a discount if it is paid within 21 days. This change would bring charges into line with those made by Transport for London. Details at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/nationalrailpenaltyfares/> - from DfT website

## REMEDIAL MEASURES IMPOSED ON LONDON MIDLAND

**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Mole, has** outlined the actions agreed with London Midland in respect of LM's recent breach of its franchise agreement. First, LM has been issued with a Remedial Plan Notice to address the company's unacceptable level of cancellations. Second, a package of additional benefits for passengers has been agreed, including: (i) an obligation to invest in new, high-quality information equipment, spending no less than £4.4 million over the life of the franchise in addition to the investment that has already committed in the franchise agreement; and (ii) a promotion for 50,000 day rover tickets for travel over the Christmas period and an additional 400,000 Advance Purchase tickets over the next two years on some of the most popular routes. — *DfT news release*

## MOORE'S MAINLINE MANUAL

There's sad news for those that rely on Moore's publication for information about main line steam. Mike Hedderly of *Vapour Trails* reports that: "Unfortunately there won't be any further issues of the manual because Dick Moore passed away recently after a long illness. We're indebted to him for making the planning of worthwhile train trips so much easier over the years, whether as passengers or photographers. The best source of advance main line steam details is now the [www.uksteam.info](http://www.uksteam.info) website which is updated regularly."

## A CARD FOR CHRISTMAS

I was looking into whether I could buy a railcard for a relative as a Christmas present, but it appears that only the applicant in person can buy a 16-25 Railcard or a Senior Railcard because of the need to present proof of identity. No such proof is required for a Family & Friends Railcard, so it's possible to give one of these as a present. Perhaps [railcard.co.uk](http://railcard.co.uk) should think about offering a gift voucher that could be redeemed for any of their products.

## LONDON TRAVELCARD

After the last issue of RUEx, Trevor Jones wrote in to say: "One thing on Travelcards that might not be well-known is that they often won't work to go back into a barrier-protected area straight after coming out of one, for example if changing trains at a terminus, such as arriving at Victoria by Southern and departing by SouthEastern. This is a deliberate feature for fraud prevention. The staff will always then let you through if you show them your valid ticket, but it can cause an annoying minor delay possibly making you miss a tight connection."

*London-wide pay as you go Oyster ticketing on National Rail services will be available from January 2010, according to Transport for London's director of fares and ticketing.*

## CLUB 55

I already knew that both First ScotRail and First Great Western have discounted fare offers for those aged 55 or over, but I'm indebted to SARPA for pointing out in their newsletter that Arriva Trains Wales and First TransPennine Express also operate "Club 55" schemes. With the ATW offer you can travel anywhere on the Arriva Trains

Wales Network for just £15 return; this offer ends on 12 Dec.

## PROJECT UPDATE

· An invitation to tender for the main contract to build the Borders rail link (**Waverley Line** project) will be issued before the end of 2009, according to the Scottish Government. It is not clear whether the 2013 opening date remains viable.

- A new station is to be built at **Gogar** on the outskirts of Edinburgh. It is expected to be in operation by the end of 2011.
- Construction of the western section of the **East West Rail Link** project may be taken forward through a planning application to the Infrastructure Planning Commission, which will be able to consider bids for transport schemes from March 2010. Milton Keynes Partnership, which is promoting the project to restore a rail link between Bedford and Oxford via Milton Keynes with a connection to Aylesbury, hopes to take advantage of new legislation coming into force shortly under the 2008 Planning Act to speed up development of the scheme.
- Trams could replace trains on the **St Albans Abbey** branch line by 2011 under plans to hand over responsibility for running services to Hertfordshire County Council.
- An application under the Transport and Works Act to extend the Northern line to **Battersea Power Station** could be submitted by summer 2010 after Wandsworth Council registered a new planning application for the 40-acre Power Station site.
- The government has announced that a south east extension to Crossrail, which would allow connections with cross-Channel rail services at **Ebbfleet International**, will be safeguarded.

*...and some other brief points...*

- The **Heritage Line Community Rail Partnership**, covering the line from Bishop Auckland to Darlington, has appointed Robert Whitehouse as part time Community Rail Officer.
- The **Wensleydale Railway** has launched an appeal for £100,000 so that can upgrade the track over this coming winter; donations can be made online at [www.WensleydaleRailwayAssociation.com](http://www.WensleydaleRailwayAssociation.com)
- A recently-published report on **franchising** from the Association of Train Operating Companies can be found at: [http://www.atoc.org/general/FutureFranchisesReport\\_S8.pdf](http://www.atoc.org/general/FutureFranchisesReport_S8.pdf) - thanks to Andy Macfarlane for spotting this

#### CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT

CBT officers have been in the news recently, highlighting the Great Season Ticket Swindle. It's all part of the organisation's ongoing campaign about the high cost of rail fares in the UK. The figures given in their analysis might be useful to support your local campaign – and there are ways in which you can add your support to the CBT's own campaign. Visit [www.bettertransport.org.uk](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk) to find out more. Also note that there are several links to rail user groups on the CBT website; check that your group is in the main listing and on any special pages, such as those concerned with line reopening campaigns.

#### SUSTAINABLE LEISURE TRAVEL NETWORK

This new network has been set up by Natural England and the University of Central Lancashire to bring together what is known about making rural leisure travel more sustainable. They are currently building up a database of projects, large and small, which reduce the impact of leisure travel to, from and in the countryside. If you have a project and would be willing to share your experience or if you would like to hear about existing projects, please let them know. See [www.vistrav.org.uk](http://www.vistrav.org.uk)

#### EVENTS +++ EVENTS +++ EVENTS

**Sat 28 Nov** Open meeting about the Manchester Rail Hub and other rail projects at the Mechanics Institute, Princess St, Manchester from 12:30 to 15:00 with free buffet lunch. Details: [www.nwtar.org.uk](http://www.nwtar.org.uk)

**Sat 5 Dec** Railfuture East Anglia branch meeting in Cambridge. Speaker: Mike Lamport of the Olympic Delivery Authority.

**Thu 10 Dec** Friends of West Highlands Line talk "A Journey to the Western Isles" at Partick Free Church Hall,

Thornwood Terrace, Thornwood, Glasgow from 19:30.

- 2010 -

**Thu 14 Jan, 15 Feb & 11 Mar** Friends of West Highlands Line meetings with guest speakers at Partick Free Church Hall, Glasgow from 19:30.

**Sat 20 Mar** European Passengers' Federation AGM and Conference at Malmo, Sweden.

**Sat 8 May** The Railway Development Society Ltd (Railfuture) AGM, Wrexham.

**10-16 May** Railfuture annual group visit, provisionally booked for Lyon, France. For details, send Sae to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ.

**Sat 3 Jul** Railfuture summer conference in Taunton.

+++ More events on [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk) - Select "Links" then "Events" +++

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