

From: [Tony Smale](#) **Sent:** Sunday, October 11, 2009 6:52 PM **Subject:** Railfuture Rail User Express, 11 Oct 09, copy #1

Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.

Firstly a reminder that the August 2009 version of our national **list of rail user groups** is now available on the Railfuture website. Go to www.railfuture.org.uk select "Links" then "Rail User Groups". If you haven't done so already, please take a look and make sure your group is listed correctly.

We begin with a roundup of news from rail user groups around the UK. The big issue for rail user groups this month remains OVERCROWDING, with little sign of the promised 1300 new carriages. Note that, in several news items, there's a call for other rail users to help out or to reply with their own local experience of the issue in question; please respond if you can!

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

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

ALRUG, the user group for the Exeter-Exmouth line, escaped my attention when I was updating Railfuture's national list of rail user groups. I first heard about this group from the latest magazine of the neighbouring Tarka Rail Association. So, to make amends, I've feature ALRUG as this month's "Guest Rail User Group".

+++ GUEST RAIL USER GROUP OF THE MONTH : **The Avocet Line Rail Users' Group** +++

ALRUG was launched in June 2007 to represent rail users on the scenic route to Exmouth, and has since attracted over 100 members. Its main concern is that the single-line infrastructure and hand-me-down rolling stock (usually Pacers) cannot cope with the ever-increasing passenger numbers. In order to make the case for a half-hourly service on Sundays, ALRUG's members have been conducting passenger counts on the line – an hourly rate of £7.85 is on offer should anyone require payment! Committee members have also been out at stations meeting rail passengers and recruiting new members. ALRUG's chairman, Tony Day, has written to Secretary of State, Andrew Adonis, with suggestions for improvements; Tony was fortunate to be able to meet Lord Adonis when he stopped off at Exeter St Davids during his round-Britain rail tour earlier this year. Digby & Sowton Station on the Avocet line, Devon's busiest unstaffed station, has been selected as a national pilot for a transport integration scheme, and ALRUG has submitted a report to Devon County Council showing how more could be made of bus/rail interchange at the station.

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

ALRUG members joined with others from the **Tarka Rail Association** (representing the Exeter-Barnstaple railway) on a visit to the busy Traction Maintenance Depot in Exeter. One gruesome fact to emerge was that any unit involved with a fatality has to be taken to Reading for inspection and repair because the Exeter depot is not equipped to deal with bio-hazards. A photo-montage in TRA's Autumn magazine shows improvement work at various locations, with the comment that there appears to be no shortage of investment at the moment. Elsewhere we read "Community Rail is meant to have cost reductions as a major objective, yet there seems so far after 2+ years to be no inroad into the expensive and vast army of specialist staff... who travel long distances by road to do simple tasks such as changing a light bulb, greasing a point or just look at something." (*Have others on community rail lines noticed any efficiency savings?* – Ed). There's an interesting initiative at the Stationmaster's Café in Barnstaple, where the enterprising owner has set up an information helpline (07964 525084) with a recorded message about train running, supplementing the scant information at stations on the line. Network Rail has been pioneering exhibitions in the area to show its plans for new radio masts along the Tarka line – the TRA says that NR plans to repeat the consultation exercise elsewhere in Britain (eg East Anglia) as part of its programme to upgrade communications between track and train. And finally, we're to look out this Autumn for a new BBC2 series called "James May's Toy Stories" – TRA members had the pleasure of working with the production company on the construction of a record-breaking 10-mile Hornby model railway over the disused route from Barnstaple to Bideford.

Having considered proposals for the Helioslough rail freight depot near St Albans, the **Association of Public Transport Users** (covering Harlington & West Hampstead Thameslink) is minded to lodge an objection, citing concerns about line capacity and service disruption during the build phase. APTU learnt from First Capital Connect that deliveries of the new Class 377 Electrostar trains from Bombardier are running very late; all were due by March 09, but only 14 of the 23 trains had been delivered by late Sept. New lifts at St Albans were being closed in the early evening due to vandalism (including use as a toilet), but APTU were reassured that management measures have been put in place so that the facility remains available throughout the evening.

In the newsletter of the **Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association**, we read that there's been confusion over restrictions on tickets for passengers travelling between London and Cambrian line stations with some instances where revenue protection staff claimed that valid tickets are not valid. SARPA checked this out and the only restrictions on Off Peak tickets to/from London Euston are that you must not arrive there before 1014 or depart there before 0930; also Off Peak fares are valid on the 1643 departure from Euston which is in the evening peak. They then wrote to both Virgin and Arriva Trains Wales to remind them to train their staff properly on ticket validity. Elsewhere, there's a story that Welsh Assembly Members had been castigated in the press for running up car expenses; one AM insisted that a recent business trip could only have been done by car, but SARPA's chairman Gareth Marston had just been on a complex journey by a combination of train and bus to attend a meeting in a village near Wrexham followed by one in Chester without any difficulty and at about 1/3 of the cost of a mileage claim! And finally, commenting on the proposal by ATW to run a direct service to London Marylebone, Gareth says he's more comfortable in supporting this than what was originally proposed because it's less hostile to the Wrexham-Marylebone service and it will bring added benefits to ATW's franchise area.

The Community Rail Festival at Carlisle on 26 Sept gave the **Furness Line Action Group** an opportunity to set up its information stall and engage with the public. In their September newsletter, we read that FLAG has castigated two environmental organisations, the Cumbria Wildlife Trust and the National Trust, for leaflets which contained road maps but no railways. In response to Network Rail's Electrification Strategy published in the Spring, FLAG submitted comments welcoming the overall strategy (including the top ranking of the Oxemholme-Windermere branch for electrification), however, the group questioned the criteria for rating infill electrification, arguing that wiring Carnforth-Barrow would benefit a greater number of passengers. FLAG continues to take issue with Northern over the non-inclusion of Transpennine services in the Company's timetable leaflet. The campaign for improvements to Dalton station continues, with a 460-signature petition and representations to decision makers; there is a promise from the County Council that Dalton will be considered for a "Harrington Hump" platform height raiser when the device goes into production in 2010. While acknowledging Northern's shortage of rolling stock, FLAG feels that the Company must address the gross overcrowding on an afternoon train from Lancaster to Carlisle which is routinely formed of a single-

car “153” unit - this is one issue where FLAG suggests that members challenge their prospective MP about support for rail investment during the coming General Election campaign.

Late news: Transport Minister Sadiq Khan announced on 30 Sept that the Cumbrian Coast Line between Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness has been designated as a community rail service.

Mark Norton, Convener of the **Dornoch Rail Link Action Group**, tells us that a draft new Highland Local Plan has been published for consultation, with comments due by 9 Nov. Mark says that, while the draft Plan recognises the need to upgrade rail and road links, the transport references are inadequate and need to be emphasised, particularly the Far North Line. He wants rail supporters to **respond to the consultation, emphasising the importance of major upgrades to the line, especially: the Dornoch Rail Link, Georgemas Chord, Halkirk Station re-opening and upgrades for greater axle loading, capacity and speed.** You can request the Plan by email from: devplans@highland.gov.uk

The **Mid Anglia Rail Passengers’ Association** has for a long time been extremely concerned with pedestrian safety at the road crossings on the footpath to Bury station, and has written letters to Suffolk County Council and the local MP – it is now proposed that a safe crossing will be installed. The group is also tackling Network Rail about the amount of unsightly vegetation between tracks at Bury. Earlier this year, a group of MARPA and Railfuture members took it in turns to stand on Newmarket station (with permission of National Express East Anglia) to count numbers of passengers getting on and off each train throughout a complete day. MARPA thought that much larger numbers were being attracted since the introduction of the hourly service a few years back, but lacked hard evidence. In all, 452 people used the trains that day equating to 164,528 users per year - a considerable rise on previous years. MARPA has relayed these findings to the train operator and has taken the opportunity to point out a number of deficiencies with station facilities at Newmarket. On a race day in July, the early evening train from Ipswich to Cambridge arrived at Newmarket as a single-car Class 153 unit, and was met by about 150 people wishing to travel – with inevitable consequences! “It is on these occasions that the railways often let themselves down.” MARPA’s website is now live at www.marpa.org.uk

Ribble Valley Rail is yet another group complaining about overcrowding on services operated with a Class 153 unit. The group continues to press for a regular service beyond Clitheroe to Hellifield, and has heard rumours of the latter being developed as a steam heritage centre. The Friends of Whalley Station has been delivering 500 timetable leaflets around the village and reports that only blue flowers from their planters seem to be susceptible to theft for some unknown reason! Several station groups along the line report vandalism and litter problems - RVR works in close liaison with the British Transport Police, and has learnt that there’s to be a dedicated police officer to act as point of contact for each station. Elsewhere in RVR News, there’s a report of the Grand Day Out in which Northern laid on three special trains for volunteers around the network converging on York, where there was a buffet with speeches at the National Railway Museum followed by a chance to look around the exhibits. RVR’s Santa services will be running on 12 and 19 Dec.

The principal campaign of the **Airedale Rail Users’ Group** at the moment is for greater investment in rolling stock. On the Northern network as a whole, the rolling stock is relatively old; although Airedale trains are fairly new, they are frequently overcrowded. ARUG fears that there will be no new trains for the north of England: “instead we will be waiting to receive second-hand trains which might (eventually) be displaced from the rest of the country.” At least the Airedale service has been reliable this summer, and the new lifts at Shipley are much appreciated.

The **North Cheshire Rail Users’ Group** was pleased to be included in a high level stakeholder meeting, hosted by Merseytravel, about the Halton Curve re-instatement project which, in future, will be called the ‘Chester to Liverpool Airport Rail Campaign’; NCRUG made a strong plea for stops at Frodsham or Helsby to be included in timetable

modelling. The group is currently liaising with local government officers and the train operating company about the proposed Customer Information Screens for Helsby, Frodsham and Runcorn East. The much improved Sunday service on the line is welcomed by NCRUG, but they've been urging better publicity in an effort to expand patronage. However, the problem on weekdays is overcrowding; the cut-back in the number of new carriages promised for the North West does not auger well, so NCRUG has taken up the matter with local MPs.

The Lowestoft branch of the **East Suffolk Travellers' Association** has had a busy spring and summer, celebrating the 150th anniversary of their line, responding to timetable proposals and conducting passenger surveys. Railfuture helped to fund ESTA's survey which sought the views of rail users on the vexed question of relocating Lowestoft station as part of a redevelopment scheme. About 1000 people took part in the first round of surveys, several taking the opportunity to submit further comments such as the gentleman that booked tickets on line and wasted time queuing at a ticket counter only to be told that he must use the machine to get his ticket: why was this not stated on the website? After a mix up over the stopping point for a rail replacement bus service, ESTA has been informed that drivers will in future have to sign a chit to say they understand where they have to stop before they take the bus out. New timetable proposals raised a number of number of issues, such as sacrificing through trains to London (which is a franchise commitment) for a regular, hourly service on the East Suffolk line – the committee has alerted MPs and councillors to the issues, sent its response to the train operator with a copy to the Secretary of State Lord Adonis, and succeeded in getting at least three local papers to report the matter. Finally we read that ESTA has already started planning their 151st anniversary event for 2010 – *whoa, steady on chaps!*

Campaign issues for the **Rail Action Group East of Scotland** currently include: car parking charges at Dunbar, clarification about reimbursements for Nat Ex East Coast season-ticket holders in the event of service disruption, and the cleanliness of NXEC trains. In the RAGES newsletter, there is the comment that “few will mourn the passing of NXEC.” The group has been involved in further meetings with councillors and MSPs about reopening projects and service issues. During the ScotRail Franchise Consultations, the RAGES Chairman noted that “we're pleased with the overall investment in rail transport in Scotland, but that was not happening in our area.”

...next, the launch of two new groups...

Various parties, including **Railfuture West Midlands**, have come together to form the **Baschurch Station Group** to campaign for the re-opening of Baschurch Station which is about 8 miles north of Shrewsbury on the ex-GWR line to Chester. Supporters claim that the business case is self-evident, especially now that the line is served not only by regular Arriva Trains Wales services, but also by the new and very popular Wrexham and Shropshire service to London Marylebone. Sir William McAlpine has kindly agreed to be the Honorary President of the Group. The initial public meeting, held on 21 Sept 09 and chaired by Owen Paterson (MP for North Shropshire), confounded doubters by attracting over 250 people!

A new rail user group for **Foxton, Meldreth and Shepreth** stations in Cambridgeshire has just been agreed, and website development is underway. Promoter of the new RUG, Councillor Susan van de Ven, reports that the wheelchair ramp to Meldreth Station northbound platform is nearly complete, and the County Council is working with First Capital Connect to install a number of cycle racks at Foxton. Anyone interested in helping the group is asked to contact susanvandeven@yahoo.co.uk.

...now news from the Railfuture Board and regional branches...

Railfuture has written to Lord Adonis urging him to continue electrification beyond the recently announced Great Western Main line; a slightly abridged version of the letter follows:

"We welcome the Government's decision to electrify a substantial portion of the UK's railway system, to include the Great Western Main Line to Bristol, Cardiff, Oxford and Newbury, and also the remaining unelectrified sections of the Liverpool-Manchester line via Newton-le-Willows. However we hope that this is just the first stage of a rolling electrification programme. We also welcome the recognition that a large fleet of diesel-engined IEP trains will not now be required, a project which was widely criticised throughout the railway industry. We are disappointed that Bedford-Nottingham/Derby-Sheffield will only be considered later instead of being included now. The Leeds-Manchester route is also a high priority candidate for inclusion, although we recognise that this route's services originate from a wide range of cities. We take this opportunity to send your Department a copy of Railfuture's own Electrification paper, which is more ambitious than the Government's present plans, but was nevertheless carefully structured to limit our proposals to only those routes perceived as most capable of delivering the maximum "network" benefits, efficient use of rolling stock including locomotives, and deriving the maximum commercial and environmental benefits possible. We would welcome your detailed comments on the proposals in the light of your own immediate plans."

Railfuture's **London & SE Branch** has identified a problem with Travelcards failing to operate the automatic gates and would like to hear of any instances from other rail users.

Out and about: **Lincolnshire Branch** had a stand at the Grantham Rail Show on 5th & 6th September, **Wessex Branch** is organising a visit for its members to Northam Traincare Depot in Southampton, and **Yorkshire Branch** members enjoyed a visit to the Corus site at Scunthorpe earlier this year, riding on the Company's 15 miles of internal track.

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

RAIL USER GROUPS SCOOP COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS

The 2009 ACoRP Community Rail Awards were presented at the Community Rail Festival in Carlisle on 25 Sept 09. Some rail user groups had contributed to award-winning projects submitted by their local Community Rail Partnerships, while other RUGs won awards in their own right. In this second category were...

- Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line - artwork prize for their sculpture of Ruswarp the collie dog, whose paw print had been among the signatures of objection to closure of the line.
- **Friends of Handforth Station – artwork commendation for “A Platform for Art”.**
- **Friends of Lympstone Village Station (Avocet line) – station garden prize.**
- Tarka Rail Association – marketing publication prize for their walks booklet

The “Best Station Adoption Group” prizewinners were: **1st Friends of Glossop Station; 2nd Maghull Station Volunteers; 3rd Friends of Dronfield Station. The Egton Station Partnership and the Friends of Brierfield Station were shortlisted.**

So well done to all concerned! Why not take a moment to look through the full list of prizewinners at www.acorp.uk.com? You can read about their projects and perhaps start thinking about what you might submit in 2010.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Railfuture's Rail Reopenings Conference 2009 is at Corby on Saturday 14th November. Campaigners fought a long battle to put Corby back on the rail network, so there are lessons to learn as well as news of projects to inspire us for the future. Top line speakers make this event especially good value at £20 (includes buffet lunch) – normally you would have to pay over £300 to attend a day-conference organised by one of the professional agencies. Further details are in the "Events" section, below. To attend, simply send your name, address & tel no with a cheque for £20 payable "Railfuture" to: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND. Railfuture members should use the coupon supplied with *Railwatch* magazine.

ROUTE UTILISATION STRATEGIES

Draft Route Utilisation Strategies for the East Midlands and Great Western are now available for comment. You can download each document from the Network Rail website (<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/>); select the "RUS" link from the left hand menu. The East Midlands RUS was published on 20 Aug and consultation closes on 13 Nov. The Great Western RUS was published on 1 Sept and consultation closes on 27 Nov. The final EM and GW Route Utilisation Strategies are scheduled for publication in early 2010.

PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS RAIL TRAVEL

In September, the Department for Transport published a new Official Statistics Opinions Survey on public experiences of and attitudes towards rail travel. A similar study was last carried out by the Office for National Statistics in 2006. More than half (55%) of people surveyed had travelled by rail in the past year, up from 49% in 2006. Of them, 22% had made both short and long distance journeys (up from 18% in 2006); 22% had only made short distance journeys (the same as 2006) while 8% only made longer distance rail journeys (up from 7% in 2006). People said that the main factors stopping them using trains or using them infrequently were: the perceived convenience of travelling by car, the cost of rail fares and the location of stations. The most common factor mentioned as likely to increase use of short distance train services by non/infrequent users was a reduction in the cost of fares. Other factors mentioned were the better location of stations and improved frequency, reliability and speed of services. The full survey is available on the DfT website at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/railways/> - *Govt press release*

PROJECT UPDATE

- The **Llangollen Railway Trust** has applied to the Welsh Ministers for a Transport and Works Act Order to authorise the construction of new railway for 2 miles from the present terminus at Carrog to a new station at Corwen using the trackbed of the former railway which ran from Ruabon to Morfa Mawddach.
- Network Rail has applied to the DfT for the powers to build a £60m rail flyover at Hitchin as part of proposals to increase capacity on the **East Coast Main Line**. Trains should be running on the flyover by the start 2014.
- Imperial Wharf is the latest railway station to join the National Rail network. The new **West London Line** station, served by London Overground and Southern trains, means the north and south of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham are connected by overground railway for the first time since the Second World War.
- On 5 Oct, a class 378 unit ran at slow speed along the **East London Railway**, which is to join the Transport for London Overground network next year. The train made its first test run from the new depot at New Cross Gate to

Dalston Junction station.

- The tracked transit service connecting the north and south terminals at **London Gatwick Airport** is to be closed to allow a £45m upgrade to take place.
- The consultants, appointed by the Middlewich Railway Steering Group partnership to carry out a study to assess the potential for upgrading the **Sandbach to Northwich** branch line, submitted their detailed report in the summer. The report shows that re-opening the line to passengers is potentially viable, with a benefit/cost ratio which is substantially higher than the industry threshold. The scheme would include a new station to serve the Cheshire market town of Middlewich.
- A long-awaited £3m railway station in **Buckshaw Village** in Lancs is set to be built during 2010. Iain Coucher, chief executive of Network Rail, confirmed that their plan is to commence work next year following construction of access roads. It is expected that work will be complete before the end of 2010.
- Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council says it will shortly begin work on the first phase of the **Tees Valley Metro** project, a package of rail enhancements which would include the relocation of the existing Corus station and construction of a new Wilton International transport hub between Teesport and Wilton.
- Scottish Transport Minister, Stewart Stevenson MSP, has committed the Scottish Government to funding a Development Study to look at the re-opening of East Linton and Reston Station together with an hourly service between **Edinburgh and Dunbar**.

COUNTY COUNCIL OBJECTS TO AIRTRACK PLAN

Surrey County Council is to lodge an objection to BAA's plans for a new network of rail routes and trains linking many stations in the county with Heathrow Airport. The proposals will be decided following a public inquiry in 2010. If given the go-ahead, construction will start the following year with services expected from a date in 2014. The authority says that, while it supports the principle of Airtrack, the scheme is unacceptable in its current format. Primary concerns are the impact the plans would have on existing rail services and likely traffic congestion problems in Egham. Surrey's executive member for transport, Councillor Ian Lake, said he feared the level crossing closures could turn Runnymede into a "virtual island". – *thanks to Railfuture London & SE Branch for spotting this item*

EXTRA PEAK-HOUR SERVICES ON LONDON MIDLAND

The Government has agreed funding with London Midland to operate the extra services from this December boosting services for passengers commuting to the capital from Watford Junction, Bushey, Milton Keynes, Bletchley and Harrow & Wealdstone. The improvements represent the second phase of Government plans to increase capacity for rail passengers on the London Midland network which in total will create an additional 2,600 seats during peak commuting times. The five new services comprise three additional peak morning trains for commuters travelling from Bletchley and Watford to London Euston and two peak evening services for passengers travelling from London to Watford and Milton Keynes. – *Government news service*

CHRISTMAS ADVANCE TICKETS SOLD OUT

Millions of passengers will be out of pocket as train fares soar fourfold this Christmas. Families travelling to meet loved ones will be hit by rip-off charges as only one in 20 tickets is available at a cheap advance rate. National Express East Coast, which launched its festive fares on Friday, admitted its limited number of cheap advance bookings had already sold out. A Mirror investigation found an NXC journey from London to Edinburgh was advertised as from £12 each way for Christmas travel. But they found no cheap advance fares were available for traditional travel dates of December 23 and 24. Instead, passengers face fares between £24.05 and £42.70, rising to £48.05 - four times the advertised £12

price - for a single back to London on December 27 or 28. – *mirror.co.uk website*

RAIL CONCESSION TO CONTINUE

The Welsh Assembly Government has confirmed the concessionary fares pilot will continue on the Borderlands and Conwy Valley Lines, and restart for the Winter on the Heart of Wales and Cambrian Coast Lines. – *Passenger Focus website*

IMPORTANCE OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES UNDERESTIMATED – *not the first time I've banged on about this!*

The importance of the role of commercial activities on a railway station is typically underestimated. Commercialisation of railway stations is still some way behind other modes of transport, especially airports, but current market conditions may just help to force facility owners to look again at the opportunities that are around and to apply serious management time and effort to optimising the facilities. The results may be surprising – rail retail can both significantly enhance the total rail experience to passengers and be more profitable than primary revenues. Passenger Focus's National Passenger Survey results rank the element 'Facilities and Services' as second lowest when it comes to passenger satisfaction, with only around 50% of passengers rating facilities and services as satisfactory or good. While this element is not broken down into specific issues, it is clear that this includes not only toilets and waiting rooms but also ATMs; coffee and catering outlets; confectionery; newsagents; specialist shops; services such as dry cleaning; and taxis. Many additional benefits accrue as a result of such activities in stations, such as the improved perception of security, improved waiting areas and the general attraction of rail. Experience tells us that station trading is typically more robust than high street retailing. The most recent figures show that many stations have seen double digit growth year-on-year from their retail outlets, even during the recession. This is partly due to the fact that a high proportion of train journeys are not discretionary. – *from an article in Rail Professional*

REMARKS FROM TRANSPORT DEBATES – *yours truly travelled from Wool to Bournemouth at vast expense!*

Speaking at a fringe debate about Transport and the Environment at the Lib Dem Party Conference, Edmund King from the AA raised the subject of high parking charges at stations. This remark found resonance with many of the LD councillors in the audience – obviously it's a hot issue out in the constituencies. At a separate fringe debate sponsored by Passenger Focus, a Network Rail spokesman told us that the next generation of passenger displays at stations would include guidance for passengers about alternative ways to reach destinations in the event of severe disruption. The prize for the best quip of the day goes to Anthony Smith, Chief Executive of Passenger Focus: "I've met two people who understood the fares system; one's now dead and the other's gone mad."

WRONG TYPE OF ROLLING STOCK

While we continue to wait for the promised additional carriages on Britain's railways, the Government announces yet more taxpayers' money to subsidise car production. An article about the extension of the car scrappage scheme in the *Independent* tells us that "by the time the full £400m has been distributed, some £320m will have gone to subsidise foreign car workers' jobs, and just £80m will have stayed in the UK." *Could we suggest a better use for this cash?*

BLUE BADGE MAP NOW INCLUDES RAIL

The Government's interactive Blue Badge Map, which can be found quite easily on the Direct.gov.uk website, has been updated so that it now includes rail lines with stations colour-coded green, yellow or red according to their accessibility. Green implies step-free access to all platforms with staff on hand to help, and yellow is for level access but staff may

not be on hand. Red, of course, spells trouble! The map also shows where there are blue-badge parking places, disabled toilets, shopmobility centres and even football stadiums that have disabled facilities.

ALL JOURNALS LARGE AND SMALL

There's understandably a feeling of pride when we see our press release featured in a national newspaper or magazine, but we shouldn't miss opportunities to get our stories printed at "Parish Pump" level. One idea is to pay a visit to a local parish church, receive divine inspiration and, on the way out, check whether their monthly magazine carries articles of a general, community nature. Most of them do, so when you strike lucky: note the editor's name, contact details (nowadays they're bound to have email) and the deadline for copy ... then send in your articles. Unlike writing for the national press, stories don't have to be very "newsy" – perhaps just talk about bargain fares to popular destinations and suggest readers give the train a try for Christmas shopping trips. RUG committees could devolve this easy task to station reps living along the line.

For a moment, put yourself in the shoes of the hapless Parish News editor, staring each month at 12 sheets of blank paper wondering how on earth he's going to fill all that white space. And suddenly ... your 200-word article plops into his Inbox. Manna from Heaven!

FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

If you're writing a campaign document and find yourself stuck for hard statistics to back up your arguments, why not take a look at the newly-published *Fact File* from the Association of Train Operating Companies (click on www.atoc-comms.org and follow the link to "Publications and Factsheets"). Here are a few extracts to whet your appetite:

- Passenger revenue in 2008/09 was £6.004 billion. The average train fare per single journey is £4.72.
- Average rail emissions of CO₂ per passenger km are approximately half those from cars and a quarter of domestic aviation.
- The risk from Signals Passed at Danger at the end of 2008 stood at just 15% of its 2001 level.
- On the basis of fatality risk per passenger kilometre, rail travel is: three times safer than bus/coach travel; twenty times safer than using a car; 300 times safer than cycling or walking; over 1,000 times safer than motorbike riding; broadly similar to flying.

ACoRP's COMMUNITY RAIL FUND

Rail user groups on any of Britain's officially-designated Community Rail lines can put forward projects for funding from the "Designated Community Rail Development Fund" administered by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships on behalf of the Department for Transport and Network Rail. The bid should be addressed through the line's Community Rail Partnership Officer, who will have all the necessary paperwork.

RAIL SALES

Railfuture envelope re-use labels are available at £3.50 for 1 pack or £6 for two packs, inclusive of postage and packing, from our Membership Secretary, David Harby, at 6 Carral Close, Brant Road, Lincoln LN5 9BD - cheques only please, made payable to Railfuture.

An all-colour report of the Railfuture summer conference in Northallerton is available from Trevor Jones, 67 Guildford Park Ave, Guildford GU2 7NH. Please send cheque for £2 payable "Railfuture".

EVENTS +++ EVENTS +++ EVENTS

Mon 12 Oct Avocet Line RUG AGM at the Globe Hotel, Topsham from 19:00.

Wed 14 Oct Tarka Rail Assn. AGM at Barnstaple Library from 18:30.

Thu 22 Oct The Institution of Engineering and Technology, Railway Annual Lecture and Dinner, IET Savoy Place, London.

Sat 24 Oct East Suffolk Travellers' Association autumn meeting in St Marks Church Centre nr Oulton Broad South station from 14:30. Guest speaker from Suffolk County Council.

Wed 4 Nov ACoRP conference "Sustainable Transport & Tourism" at Cardiff Parc Hotel.

Wed 4 Nov Passenger Transport Conference at Bridgewater Hall, Manchester.

Sat 7 Nov Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association meeting at Aberystwyth RAFA Club 12.00.

Tue 10 Nov East Cheshire Lines Rail Users Group meeting at Village Hall, Chelford 19.30 to 2100

Thu 12 Nov Friends of West Highlands Line talk "Lines Round Scotland" at the Partick Burgh Hall, Burgh Hall Street, Glasgow from 19:30.

===== ***hurry!*** =====

Sat 14 Nov RAILFUTURE RAIL REOPENINGS CONFERENCE "Building on Success", at St John the Baptist Church Hall in Corby from 11:00 to 16:30. Speakers: Tim Shoveller the MD of East Midlands Trains, Jim Bamford of Notts CC & E Mids Rail Forum, Stephen Abbott from TravelWatch E Mids and Colin Elliff from the Woodhead project, plus speakers from Corby Borough Council and ACoRP. Fee only £20 (includes buffet lunch). Details and booking form on the Railfuture website.

===== ***book now!*** =====

Sat 21 Nov Fen Line Users Association AGM, King's Lynn.

Sat 1 Dec Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association meeting at Newtown Bell Hotel, 18.45.

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.

Sat 20 Mar 2010 European Passengers' Federation AGM and Conference at Malmo, Sweden.

Sat 8 May 2010 The Railway Development Society Ltd (Railfuture) AGM, Wrexham.

10-16 May 2010 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 2010 Railfuture summer conference in Taunton.

+++ More events on www.railfuture.org.uk - Select "Links" then "Events" +++

This bulletin has been sent by Tony Smale, Railfuture Rail User Group Liaison Officer

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On behalf of:

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