

Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.

As always, feel free to forward RUEx to a colleague, or to reproduce items in your own newsletter (quoting sources). If you want further details of any of the stories mentioned, look on the relevant website or, failing that, get back to me so I can send you the source material.

For details of group affiliation to Railfuture, see website [here](#) (from the "Membership Type" menu, select "RUG or similar").

A welcome thread in this month's contributions is a broadening of horizons, so that local campaigns are set in the context of their regional or national impact. It's a trend that can only magnify their significance, and thus the likelihood of their adoption.

Roger Smith

We continue with the usual roundup of news items from groups around the UK. Please keep your contributions coming: they are all gratefully received.

Friends of the West Highland Lines

Over the past decade, the number of journeys on Scotrail has grown 35% from 68.7 million to 92.7m, whereas seating and standing capacity has increased by less than 10% from about 63,000 to 69,000. However, a £475 million programme over the next seven years will offer 180 new carriages, 75% of trains refurbished with power points and wifi, seven Class 320 trains from 2016, a new HST fleet on all the trunk routes in 2017, and 70 electric Class 385s on routes in Central Scotland by 2018. The Class 73 locomotives that will haul the Serco Caledonian Sleeper services use 30% less fuel than the Class 67. Scotrail is also committed to fit all of its trains with Control Emission Toilets, so that no waste is deposited onto the track.

A four-year, £170 million package will see 16 miles of double-track between Aberdeen and Inverurie; upgraded signalling; Forres station rebuilt with an improved alignment; platform extensions at Insch and Elgin; and new stations at Dalcross (for Inverness Airport) and Kintore, west of Aberdeen. (Would that the 12 miles of single-track between Inverness and Muir of Ord were similarly improved! – Ed).

Rail Action Group, East of Scotland

As part of the Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Programme, Glasgow Queen Street (High Level) station will close completely from 20 March to 6 August for electrification work in its approach tunnels. ScotRail has produced a new train plan, but journeys will take longer and trains may arrive at or depart from a different station than normal: <http://www.scotrail.co.uk/queenstreettoolkit>. Also, a new Edinburgh Gateway station at Gogar, that will provide access to the airport via the tram network, is due to open in December.

Ribble Valley Rail Users Group

A number of infrastructure projects have been completed: widening the Farnworth tunnel south of Bolton prior to electrification, replacing the last jointed track, and installing a new steel footbridge on the outskirts of Clitheroe. New shelters are also being provided at several stations.

The Sunday service on 7 February carried a camera to record the journey from Blackburn to Hellifield, on the Settle – Carlisle line, for route learning purposes. The link is often used for specials including, recently, Flying Scotsman and Royal Scot on proving runs. As well as the passenger service, the line also carries engineering trains, and a lot of freight, including gypsum, cement and logs. There was a near miss on the Hanson Cement level crossing, when a car jumped the lights just feet in front of a train.

The Friends of the Settle - Carlisle Line

Whereas the new Northern franchise offered “an unprecedented package of improvements”, Settle-Carlisle hardly featured: Leeds-Carlisle was not one of the proposed “Northern Connect” inter-city services, nor was there any mention of a direct service to Manchester.

Settle-Carlisle is seen as a potential pilot project for the development of Community Rail into Community Business Units. FoSCL contributed greatly to the document that went to the DfT. The Chairman is keen for FoSCL to join ACoRP (the Association of Community Rail Partnerships).

Following a major landslip, buses replace trains between Carlisle and Appleby. The River Eden has severely eroded the base of an embankment, which is still moving. Although a plan to repair the landslip has now been agreed - it will involve building a structure underneath the affected section of railway to support it - there is still no forecast of how long the disruption will last. However, FoSCL emphasise that the line from Appleby to Leeds – “including the best bits” - remains open.

TravelWatch NorthWest

At a conference in Manchester, Arriva Rail North confirmed that Manchester Airport would receive through trains from Barrow, Windermere and Blackpool, with some extended to Stoke on Trent and Crewe, and from Bradford, Burnley, and Warrington. Both Northern franchisees are to trial Boxing Day services.

Dr Jon Lamonte, Chief Executive, Transport for Greater Manchester, then introduced a new Vision Strategy to 2040, which will shortly be published for consultation. It will focus on further developing the Airport; City links across the North, and the transport network across the region and its outreach.

A strategic report to be published in Spring 2016 by Transport for the North, a statutory body, will have a major bearing on the 16 million residents and the 7.2 million jobs in the region, and cover all transport modes and needs, including both passengers and freight.

Support the Oldham Rochdale Manchester Lines (STORM)

DR reports a minor victory regarding afternoon peak fares. A friend was waiting at Manchester Victoria for the 1557 to Huddersfield with a valid off-peak ticket. When a 20-minute delay was announced, she went for a coffee, but was prevented from returning through the barrier, as it was now after 1600. Rather than buy a peak ticket, as directed, she went instead to the customer service desk. They endorsed her ticket to the effect that she could re-enter the station without further payment, and she caught the (delayed) 1557.

The proposed six-per-hour timetable on the Standedge route, in which TransPennine would take over the stops at four small stations from Northern, was an interim solution pending the provision of more capacity on the line (but which did not appear to include any more track). It was acknowledged that some small stations did merit a better service, but that frequent fast trains precluded any such improvement.

Manchester Victoria and Salford Central will be closed from 25 March to 3 April for track realignment and strengthening arches in preparation for the Ordsall Chord development, which will connect Manchester Victoria, Piccadilly and Oxford Road stations by 2017.

But to end on some good news: from 21 March, Manchester Airport staff will be able to get to work on Metrolink's new early morning service. Trams will run daily from Firswood from 3.40am, arriving in time for the 4am shift, which is when a large number of employees start work.

In a written response to Simon Danczuk MP regarding the disparity in the fares from Rochdale and Bolton, Rail Minister Claire Perry said that, as well as distance, other factors were taken into account including journey time, frequency of service and the historic volume demand. When assessing overall levels of patronage and setting prices between any two stations, it was also necessary to place them in context against the volume of all passengers between all stations on the whole line of route. The new Northern franchise agreements from 1 April 2016 include important mechanisms to enable the Rail North authorities to make decisions on changes to their local rail services, including fares, and invest in these franchises to make improvements for passengers.

Harrogate Line Supporters Group

At the Railfuture Rail User Groups Awards for 2015, the Group was awarded the Best Campaign Gold Award, and Brian Dunsby was named Best Campaigner, and presented with the Clara Zilahi Gold Award in recognition of his contribution to rail campaigning. The judges were impressed by the Group's role in promoting enhanced rail services for the wider economic benefit. Railfuture Director, Roger Blake said that it had shown how local rail groups could have an impact, and change their rail services for the better.

The Group welcomes a new Leeds Bradford[®] Airport Masterplan, which recognises its proposal for a Parkway Station, as described in last month's issue, as a possible solution for a rail link. The gradients involved precluded a direct heavy rail link, whilst light rail, though an attractive option, would be very expensive.

Once Harrogate was electrified, Bradford and Skipton services could be integrated, and gain a direct service to the Airport, as they share the same platforms at Leeds, and tracks in and out. The synergy could accelerate electrification of the Harrogate Line, and provide some of the desired cross-city services, with improved platform availability at Leeds Station, whilst keeping the respective projects independent in terms of funding and implementation.

Shrewsbury to Chester Rail Users Association

No significant changes are expected in the May 2016 timetable, with no improvements from relaying twin track north of Rossett until December 2016. However, the temporary re-routing Cardiff to Manchester services saw a service enhancement of a (roughly) 30 minute frequency each way, which pointed up the potential for the route.

SCRUA will send a robust response to the Welsh Government regarding the shape of the new Wales and Borders franchise, which will come into effect in 2018. Although the Welsh Transport Secretary has ruled out terminating services at Shrewsbury, the DfT has suggested that the franchising of any services that terminate in England might not be devolved. Thus the Cardiff-Manchester service might be hived off, with South Wales service terminating at Cardiff, leaving West Wales to the Welsh franchise. Also, Arriva Rail North might extend their Manchester - Chester service to Llandudno.

The Association would like to see the line between Wrexham and Chester fully redoubled, a new Wrexham North Parkway interchange station, and Baschurch station reopened between Gobowen and Shrewsbury.

A meeting in October 2015 brought together groups representing the Shrewsbury to Chester, Crewe and Aberystwyth lines; the Heart of Wales line, and the Marches Rail Users Alliance / Rail for Herefordshire. Station user groups representing Craven Arms, Leominster and Shifnal were also invited. The meeting agreed to establish a new grouping to be known as the 'Shrewsbury Rail Users Federation'.

Hull & East Riding Rail Users' Association

The Hull Daily Mail reports that a contract has been let for an automated signal system controlled from York to replace eight Victorian signal boxes on the line between North Ferriby, near Hull, and Gilberdyke, where the branches to Selby/York/Leeds and Goole/Doncaster diverge. The upgrade, to be completed in March 2018, will allow 24 hour working, increased capacity and higher speeds.

East Norfolk Transport Users' Association

ENTUA met Brandon Lewis MP to discuss the new rail franchise starting in October. The main points were: extending rail services beyond Norwich; new and more rolling stock, and continued refurbishment of Great Yarmouth station, with a bus interchange at the station entrance. Mr Lewis supported a through service from Peterborough to Great Yarmouth, that would alleviate changes at Ely and Norwich; even a summer only service would be a boon to holidaymakers.

Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group

The Barking - South Tottenham line will close from 4 June 2016 until February 2017 for electrification. Until 24 September, weekday services will continue between Gospel Oak and South Tottenham, but then the whole line will close. Details of the proposed Rail Replacement Bus Services are on the website. When the line reopens in 2017, test and commissioning will still require weekend closures, and 2-car diesel units will continue to provide passenger services until spring 2018, when new 4-car electric trains are delivered.

Hitchin Rail User Group

Govia Thameslink Railway expects only a few tweaks to the Great Northern timetable before 2018 to reflect passenger-loading figures. Arlesey has seen spectacular growth. To bridge the gap in its weekday service from Kings Cross between 2222 (too early for many concert and theatre performances) and 2322, the 2301 service that currently runs non-stop to Biggleswade could also serve Arlesey and Sandy.

HRUG also observed that, if the down Cambridge Cruiser and up Kings Lynn services called at Hitchin, with a connecting bus link, then the journey between Luton and Stansted airports would be 15 minutes shorter than by road, even with a change at Cambridge. From 2018, GTR hoped that Hitchin might retain its non-stop service in the evening peak, but possibly from St Pancras rather than Kings Cross. Meanwhile, the promised review of peak hour restrictions never happened. A relaxation to, say, 1645 to 1845 would make a considerable difference, not least by taking pressure off the non-stop 1910. Meanwhile, the bombshell reported in the January issue – a total 16 week closure of Kings Cross for re-signalling – was overly dramatic: current thinking is for a limited service for just one month, but not before 2019 at the earliest.

Association of Train Passenger Users - Thameslink

On the subject of “skip-stopping” to make up time, GTR have recognised that changes to northbound stopping patterns should be decided upon and announced before the train reaches Blackfriars; changes made en route – eg that a train should run fast to its destination – are counter-productive, as the time saved is offset by the time taken for passengers for intermediate stations to get the message and alight. However, any failure of an on-board door camera on Class 387s would inevitably cause a last minute change, as the train can then call only at stations with dispatch staff.

Proposals to install Wifi and tables on the regional Class 700 stock are progressing: once approved, these will be added to units leaving the factory from around June; those already released will be retro-fitted. However, a similar proposal for Power sockets is less certain, as the retro-fit would be very expensive.

Which magazine has made a “Super Complaint” to the ORR regarding failure to pay compensation for delays. APTU supports the campaign aims, and notes that the Chancellor has committed to a reduction of the eligible delay time from 30 minutes to 15 minutes.

Chesham & District Transport Users' Group

Amersham Action Group (“AAG”) received advice on step-free access at Amersham station from a local firm that had completed a similar task for Mersey Rail at a cost of just over £2.5m, much less than the £10.5m quoted by TfL. As a result, TfL had been asked for a copy of the Bills of Quantities for the Amersham project, to better gauge the specification and costings.

West Sussex Rail Users Association

A major junction renewal at Battersea Park and continuing work on the Network Rail infrastructure at Victoria means that there will be no Southern services to and from Victoria from Good Friday through to Easter Monday. All Southern services will run to and from London Bridge, and there will be replacement buses from Victoria to Clapham Junction. Network Rail will also be undertaking essential works to a bridge over the River Arun at Pulborough, with replacement buses running between Billingshurst or Horsham and Arundel all weekend.

Tarka Rail Association

TRA is conscious of so much that is happening in the south west, and its potential impact on the Exeter-Barnstaple line; however, problems are opportunities! Thus any rolling stock shortfall caused by delays to Great Western Line electrification could see the new South West franchise operator providing some services to Barnstaple, even a through service to London. A dual TOC would drive innovation, quality and standards. Both the TRA and South West Trains support the idea of a Weymouth-Waterloo service via Yeovil and Salisbury, which could save up to 30 minutes over the Southampton route.

More immediately, SWT have proposed Summer Saturday services in Somerset and Dorset from May 2016, including 'Seaside Specials' from Salisbury to Weymouth, more services between Yeovil Junction and Pen Mill (also on Bank Holiday Monday) for Devon connections, and new services to Maiden Newton, Thornford, Yetminster and Chetnole: <http://www.southwesttrains.co.uk/northandsouthdorset.aspx>. Comments are invited by Friday 18 March to WoE@swtrains.co.uk.

The TRA is also contributing to the West of Exeter Resilience Study, and favours reinstating the Okehampton Route. The National Rail report is far too pessimistic regarding both performance (especially if the running speed were 90mph, rather than 75mph) and cost, provided that the design was for diversionary route, and not gold plated. Even so, it would perform a useful local service all year round.

Beyond Barnstaple, there used to be branches to Torrington and Ilfracombe. Combe Rail has been formed to establish a community and heritage railway on the track bed of the Ilfracombe branch, and lobby for its eventual reconnection to the national network at Barnstaple.

...news from Railfuture follows...

PASSENGER GROUP

Responding to the DfT South Western Rail Franchise consultation, Railfuture suggests that, after the inner suburban and Windsor lines, the next priority should be for faster services on the main lines to Portsmouth, Southampton and Weymouth, and a more frequent service West of Salisbury. New services could include Poole/Bournemouth to Brighton, and a metro-style service between Southampton and Portsmouth. Later and more frequent Sunday services are needed generally, together with a limited one on Boxing Day, and the ability to react to spikes in demand such as sports events, and seaside destinations in hot weather. Four new stations are envisaged: two at Wilton, on each of the lines from Salisbury to Westbury/Bristol and Yeovil/Exeter, and also at Chard and at Farlington, adjacent to the A3M/A27 junction. There is also scope for more community rail partnerships. Wherever possible, overall journey times should be reduced by improving connections, both within and between franchises, whilst access to other modes of transport requires clear information at the station entrances about routes, times and pick up points.

A report by the Transport Select Committee, cited in Rail Technology Magazine, identified problems with rail access to airports, eg that HS2 will not serve Heathrow. Plans are needed for links to regional airports, whilst Network Rail should consider airport surface access. Network Rail responded that, whilst it did aim for sufficient capacity and minimal interchange, airport users did not represent a game changer for demand at the busiest time of day, as the increase in passenger numbers was largely driven by commuters.

Travellers to Europe are advised that the Piccadilly office of Voyages-SNCF (formerly Raileurope) has closed, and the SNCF website is geared only to online booking.

NORTH EAST BRANCH

The Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive (TWPE), aka Nexus, held DB Regio, the Metro operator, responsible for the meltdown of the service on the day of the Great North Run in September. According to the Newcastle Journal, the reduced capacity was caused by a combination of timetable changes, inept rostering, and too few trains, that led to overcrowding and delays at stations. Putting extra trains into service to try and retrieve the situation then caused a series of power supply "trips". The leader of Newcastle Council has since suggested that DB Regio's contract to 2017 should not be extended.

The Branch's NE Infrastructure Wish List Document submitted to Lord Adonis' Strategic Infrastructure Commission made specific suggestions concerning connectivity between Northern cities. At a Stakeholder Summit, Virgin East Coast said that it had identified over 200 initiatives designed to improve the passenger experience, enhanced the training of front-line staff, and appointed four regional general managers. May 2016 would see 42 more London-Edinburgh services each week. New services were also planned to Lincoln, Harrogate and Bradford, and by 2020 Virgin hoped that the 65 new EIP train sets would reduce journey times from London to Edinburgh and Leeds to 4 hours and 2 hours respectively. However, challenges included ECML infrastructure, network congestion, and bids for Open Access services.

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

Redevelopment of the Ipswich station forecourt should be completed in April, providing better access for buses, taxis, cyclists and pedestrians, and an improved environment, with more user-friendly traffic signals. The campaign to reopen the Wisbech branch can only have been boosted by the spectacular growth at Manea, where the footfall is up 192% in a year. And where that line crosses the A605 east of Peterborough, Cambridgeshire County Council has submitted plans to bypass the level crossing with a bridge, although its "Sustainable Transport Transformation along the A10 South" does not seem to have reprieved plans for a similar bypass around the Foxton level crossing. CCC is also likely to approve a redesign of Cambridge North station, which is now expected to open in May 2017.

As the new Class 700 stock is introduced on Thameslink in June, its Class 377 stock will replace the ageing Class 317 and 321 units on the Great Northern routes from London to Cambridge and Peterborough. A contract has also been let for a variant of Class 700 for the Moorgate service. Ironically, these suburban units will feature power points, which are so sadly lacking in the regional design.

THAMES VALLEY BRANCH

At its November meeting, GWR summarised its new franchise currently to April 2019. There will be 20 more trains/day between Reading and Gatwick, 12/day to Newbury, additional off peak services to Bristol via Bristol Parkway, and time savings of 15 minutes to Bristol, Cardiff & Cheltenham. The Hayes service will be electrified and move to Crossrail, along with Heathrow Connect. On the local Reading service, Class 387 units with 110mph capability and 365s will replace the 165/166 units.

The Appleford Rail Group is concerned at the number of cuts to its service, in particular that the 17.24 from Paddington no longer calls. They would like a two-hourly service off-peak from Monday-Friday and restoration of the Sunday service. GWR responded by saying that its service commitment is for five trains a day in each direction Mondays-Fridays, but ten up trains and nine down trains now call at Appleford.

A conference hosted by West Oxfordshire District Council discussed the future of the North Cotswolds line between Oxford and Worcester. Demand was being suppressed by the lack of car parking facilities. Redoubling between Evesham and Pershore, and between Wolvercote Junction and Hanborough, would enable reduced journey times and increased frequencies. A "turn-back" at Hanborough for London-Oxford trains would allow 3 fast trains per hour into Oxford. These developments would be delivered in Control Period 6 (2019-2024) at a cost of £275 million. There was also talk of re-opening the Stratford, Witney and Cowley branches (with a cross-city link), and also High Wycombe-Bourne End, to allow a through service from Milton Keynes to Heathrow.

WESSEX BRANCH

The ten busiest stations in the Wessex area in 2013/14 remain the same in 2014/15, but they all moved down in the national rankings. Is this part of the network so lacking capacity that passengers are being driven away? Are fares just too high? Meanwhile, Chetnole, between Dorchester and Yeovil, had just 2334 passengers (so would the South West Trains initiative reported above help to boost this figure? – Ed).

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

A DfT competition offering grants to rail operators for innovative ideas and trials is aimed particularly at heritage railways and community rail partnerships. Around 20 winners will receive grants ranging from £25,000 to £75,000 to develop their ideas.

Under a DfT Sustainable Travel Transition Year Revenue Competition, local councils can apply for a share of the £60 million Access Fund available from late summer 2016 through the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-travel-transition-year-revenue-competition-2016-to-2017>

Train service requirements in the 2016 franchise agreements for Northern Rail and TransPennine Express:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-rail-2016-rail-franchise-agreement>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transpennine-express-2016-rail-franchise-agreement>

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has issued a Prohibition Notice to West Coast Railway Company Ltd (WCRC) barring it from running its heritage rail services on the mainline railway. One such incident involved a steam locomotive operated by WCRC passing a signal at danger, and coming to a stop across the busy Wootton Bassett junction in Wiltshire, avoiding collision with a GWR express by less than a minute.

The ORR is seeking views on its approach to innovation set out in Annex A of the consultation letter. Email any comments to Sukhninder.Mahi@orr.gsi.gov.uk by 5 pm on 31 March 2016, stating whether you are responding as an individual, or which organisation you are representing.

http://orr.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/20993/orr-approach-to-innovation-2016-03-03.pdf

An ORR report, '[GB rail industry financial information 2014-15](#)', analyses the latest financial data from train operators, Network Rail and government. Its chief executive commented: railway use continues to rise and, as a significant source of funding for the industry, passengers must lie at the heart of its continued evolution.

The ORR has welcomed the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) report on competition between passenger train operators: "Competition between services on our railways delivers real benefits for passengers, providing more choice and making better use of the network...We now look forward to working with governments and industry partners in developing the important changes needed to help provide the opportunity for more competition in the future."

The Campaign for Better Transport notes the various reviews of Network Rail's funding, structure and investment programmes as a result of failures in delivery of planned projects. Any future change must include national oversight of infrastructure to avoid fragmentation. CBT welcomes the go-ahead of key rail electrification projects after pausing them in the summer. It is also seeking to ensure that Network Rail does not sell off any land that might prove to be useful in the future, in its attempts to raise money.

STORM quotes the Times Online as follows: "Stifling micromanagement and the strategic incoherence of transport ministers and bureaucrats are deterring train operators from bidding for new rail franchises, a committee of MPs has concluded."

The Nottingham Post reports a proposal to revive the passenger service to Warsop and Edwinstowe, and a new station at Ollerton. The line would provide access both to Sherwood Forest, and to the major employment site at Ollerton Energy Village. Notts County Council has asked the DfT to incorporate it into the specification for the next East Midlands franchise, which starts in 2018.

GTR's proposal to replace some or all ticket office functions with a "Station Host" on the concourse has met with a mixed reaction, welcoming the extended hours of operation, but raising all manner of concerns. GTR claim that a Station Host will be able to perform any and every ticket office function. However, that still leaves issues such as the safety of handling cash in the public arena, and the loss of expertise of dedicated ticket office staff, so it is surprising that no pilot implementations are planned. According to London TravelWatch, the format of the consultation was largely driven by The Ticketing & Settlement Agreement – and also the need to complete it before the London Mayoral election gets under way, so there is no realistic prospect of an extension.

...and finally

From the Railfuture East Anglia website: "Want to travel from Waterbeach to a station beginning 'B'? Don't use the machine on platform 2: press 'B', get 'V'! pic.twitter.com/F61eKxg8ao.

STORM quotes the Huddersfield Examiner: "Huddersfield's resident station cat Felix has been working hard capturing both mice and commuter's hearts for the past five years. Now she has received a purr-motion and a posh uniform to be envied by many a moggy. Felix has been named Senior Pest Controller, and is living proof in furry form that purr-severing with hard work can pay off..."

Also from STORM, an announcement heard recently on Birmingham New Street station: "Platform 6 for the 16.33 to Northampton calling at Marston Green and lots of other places." Their shift must have been coming to an end...

And for its hat-trick, STORM cites a report in The Scotsman. Virgin Trains affords the opportunity to book a private carriage from Scotland to London. The cost of a single journey from Glasgow or Edinburgh to London starts at £1,900. Alternatively, a return journey in a chartered train will set you back at least £65,000, subject to availability. The service is most commonly used by football teams and corporate groups, but has also been deployed by a number of A-list celebrities...

The Salveson Salvo notes that, at the Labour Party's Spring conference in Llandudno, Jeremy Corbyn's speech included quite a lot of 'railway'; apparently he's a bit of a railway crank and self-confessed reader of RAIL magazine.

EVENTS

Events that may be of interest to RUG members are listed below.

See also the [Events listing on the Railfuture website](#)

Coloured blobs indicate the various types of event...

- National & regional rail events.
- Railfuture (Rf) events (rail user group representatives are welcome to attend).
- Local Group events.

March

■ 14 . Monday. Bexhill Rail Action Group, Hastings Direct, **Collington**. 1900-2100. Also 11 Apr, 9 May, 13 Jun, 11 Jul, 8 Aug, 12 Sep, 10 Oct, 12 Nov. December in a local hostelry. <http://www.bexhillrailaction.org.uk/>.

■ 14 & 15. Association of Community Rail Partnerships, DfT Designated Line Seminar, **Norwich**. Also 11 May, Community Rail in the City; 1 Jun, Station Adoption Seminar; 13 Jul, Members' Seminars North; 20 Jul, Members' Seminars South; 29 Sep, Community Rail Awards, **Southport**. <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>

■ 15. Tuesday, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton RUG, 1930-2100, Village Hall, **Shepreth** (NB. Change of venue). Also 15 June at **Foxton** Village Hall.

- 16. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton line, the Sloop, **Barton-u-Humber** from 1800 for 2000. enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk. (Also 18 May, and 21 September at the No 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes** from 1900.)
- 18. Friday. Marlow-Maidenhead Passengers' Association AGM, Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Road, **Bourne End**, SL8 5SX, 1945.
- 19. Saturday. Lincolnshire Branch AGM, at **Saxilby** Methodist Church. lincolnshire@railfuture.org.uk
- 31. Thursday, Hertsmere Constituency, Civic Offices, Elstree Way, **Borehamwood**, Herts, WD6 1WA, 1930-2100.

April

- 2. Saturday. Passenger Group Meeting, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, **Birmingham**, B4 7SX, 1315-1700.
NB. Change of date from 9 April confirmed. Also 24 September.
- 4. Monday. Ribble Valley Rail, New Inn, **Clitheroe**. Also, 9 May, 6 June, 4 July and 8 August.
- 7. Thursday. London and South East Branch, Sussex & Coastway division meeting. 1800. Also 5 May, 2 June.
- 9. Saturday. Yorkshire Branch, Swarthmore Centre, Woodhouse Square, Leeds LS3 1AD, 1300 - 1600.
- 16. Saturday. Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line AGM, Hallmark Hotel, Court Square, Carlisle, 1045 for 1145. Guest speakers pm from Arriva Trains North and the Campaign for Borders Rail <http://www.foscl.org.uk>
- 16. Saturday. Devon & Cornwall Branch AGM, Unitarian Church, Notte Street, **Plymouth** PL1 2AQ, 1330-1615. devon-cornwall@railfuture.org.uk
- 16. Saturday. Thames Valley Branch AGM, West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Road, **Oxford**, OX2 0BT, 1030
- 18. Monday. Avocet Line, Malthouse, The Globe, **Topsham**, 1900. Also 3 Jul (Outing – TBC), 17 Oct (AGM) and 12 Dec (Christmas Social, The Globe, **Lympstone**)
- 19. Tuesday. Bedford-Bletchley Rail Users Association AGM, St John's Church Hall, St John's Street, **Bedford**, 1930.
- 19. Tuesday. Association of Passenger Train Users, Friend's Meeting House, 7 Upper Lattimore Rd, **St Albans**, AL1 3UD, 1930.
- 23. Saturday. London and South East Branch AGM, International Hall, University of London, Lansdowne Terrace, Bloomsbury, London, WC1N 1AS, 1400. Doors open at 1030 for open meeting at 1100 with guest speakers.
- 28. Thursday. Tarka Rail Association AGM, **Umburleigh** village hall, 1915.

May

- 10. Tuesday. Stourbridge Line User Group public meeting / AGM, **Kidderminster** Town Station (SVR) Railway, 1930.
- 14. Saturday. East Suffolk Travellers' Association AGM, Gannon Rooms, Station Approach, **Saxmundam**, 1400.
- 19. Thursday. Edenbridge & District Rail Travellers' Association AGM, WI Hall, **Edenbridge**, 1900 for 1930.
- 21. Saturday. Railfuture AGM, **Milton Keynes** from 1000 for 1045. Guest speaker on East West Rail. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

June

- 7. Tuesday. TravelWatch NorthWest Conference, Town Hall, **Blackpool**.
- 18. Saturday. Summer Conference at the Scottish Mining Museum, **Newtongrange**, 1000 for 1045-1700. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>
- 25. Saturday. East Anglia Branch, St Mary at Stoke Church Hall, Stoke Street, **Ipswich**, 1400.

Further Ahead

- 12 November. Saturday. Rail User Conference at the Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, **Birmingham**, 1000 for 1045. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

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