



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

from Tim Calow

In this issue we report on three issues that are related much more closely than they initially appear to be. Firstly there is the continuing excellent performance of the train service along our line, the result of much hard work by Northern and Network Rail staff, much of it behind the scenes. There is then the survey by Passenger Focus. Interestingly 27% of passengers were not satisfied with punctuality! I suspect that many of these are passengers who travel on our overcrowded peak trains which, largely because they are overcrowded, often run a few minutes late.

We then report on the development of plans to give us more seats on the peak train services. We consider these plans to enhance the capacity of the line to be essential to its continuing success. Without them overcrowding will get worse and passengers will become frustrated. Be assured we are working hard, campaigning for prompt implementation of sensible plans to give us more seats.

Above: 333 014 leaves platform 3 at Shipley, under the new footbridge while running as the 14.32 Bradford to Leeds train. The new footbridges, with lifts, should soon be complete. Tim Calow

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group – Annual General Meeting
Saturday, May 16 2009 at 2pm
Saltaire Methodist Church Hall
Agenda on page fifteen, do try and come along!!

PLANNING EXTRA CAPACITY IN AIREDALE

Tim Calow reports

In the last *airlines* were AVRUG's comments on the then recently issued draft Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for Yorkshire and Humberside. As a quick reminder the Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) is the key Network Rail document setting out plans to develop the railway over the next 10 years.

The preferred strategy for Airedale (option AI 1 below) combined some longer trains (6 coaches from Skipton to Leeds in the peaks) and some extra trains (four coach local services would run between Keighley and Leeds). This gave a better cost:benefit ratio than option AI 2 where longer trains called at all stations. However, with option AI 1, most stations would see fewer trains calling during the peak hours as none of the trains to Leeds would call at all the stations.

Since then we are glad to report some evidence that our submission has been read. There is (for instance) a short summary of our comments in

the news section of April's edition of *Today's Railway* magazine (page 12). It emphasises our criticisms of the strategy.

Meanwhile Passenger Focus has published some research on passenger attitudes to the service enhancement options. This research has shown that passengers are more concerned about increased frequencies than about savings in journey times to Leeds. 60% of passengers from Skipton, Cononley and Steeton (which would benefit from any faster journey times) preferred to retain the existing frequency of trains rather than have fewer but faster services. Just 35% favoured a reduced frequency of faster services.

Unsurprisingly, passengers from Crossflatts and Saltaire which would suffer reductions in frequencies were overwhelmingly opposed to any reduction in their service frequencies. (There is more on this on page 9.)

This does not surprise us. It backs up

	Option AI1 Two tier service £m	Option AI2 One tier service £m
COSTS		
Investment Cost	8.1	7.9
Operating Costs	62.1	76.7
Revenue	-29.3	-29.3
Other Government Impacts	5.9	5.9
Total Costs	46.8	61.1
BENEFITS		
Rail User benefits	56.4	56.4
Non user benefits	33.4	33.4
Total Quantified Benefits	89.8	89.8
NET PRESENT VALUE	43.0	28.7
Benefit:cost Ratio	1.9	1.5

our rather less scientific 'gut feeling'. We also doubt that it would be possible for the limited stop trains to save much time unless the signalling is improved between Keighley and Shipley (and this is not included in the Network Rail plans). This research prompted me into searching the Network Rail website for the backing documentation for the economic appraisal of the potential solutions. Little detail is given, however that which is available is summarised in the table at the bottom of the opposite page. All figures are based on the net present value over a 60 year period (future revenues and costs are discounted back to give a current value).

It is interesting that the cost difference is not in the initial investment. In terms of investment it would appear that the cost of providing a turnround facility at Keighley is almost as much as the extra cost involved in lengthening all the station platforms. The cost difference is in the costs of operating the services. It appears not to be in the cost of leasing vehicles as both options state that they assume an additional 12 vehicles would be required. Why therefore are the operating costs 23% higher for option 2? It certainly isn't clear to me!

If we then look at the revenue and benefit projections they are identical for the two service options. It doesn't appear to matter what kind of service is provided for passengers (as long as the extra capacity is there passengers will use it?). The Passenger Focus research suggests that passengers are most concerned about frequency of services but such considerations are not accounted for in the RUS analysis.

A further question arises as to what would happen to our off peak services. These are now approaching capacity at times. The two-tier service, option AI1, would require any additional off-peak capacity to be provided by additional services (as some platforms would only be long enough for four coach trains).

This will be both expensive and difficult to manage depending on the numbers of freight trains which will use the line. Option AI2 would however allow for extra capacity by running six-coach trains in the existing pattern (probably at much less actual and opportunity cost).

Final RUS delayed

Meanwhile, publication of the final RUS is to be delayed until the Summer. There is further work to be done to take account of two additional issues. These are:-

- additional rights for East Coast services granted by the ORR. These are the firm rights for three daily services from Bradford Interchange to London Kings Cross. There are also conditional rights granted to National Express to run a two-hourly from London to Harrogate service via Hambleton and Leeds;
- the application by Cross Country to run its Newcastle to Reading (and vice versa) trains via Leeds instead of Doncaster, as noted in the last *airlines*.

There may be some significant changes to the draft RUS before it is finalised this Summer, but AVRUG has been assured that these changes will not delay the development of schemes to address the very real capacity issues on Airedale and other Yorkshire commuter routes.

Network Rail's plans

Some indication of the current thinking is given in the plans recently published by Network Rail. These CP4 Plans (Control Period 4) which were published on 31 March cover spending over the five years from April 2009-March 2014.

Our line is included in 'Route 10' North Cross-Pennine, North and West Yorkshire. The plans are intended to cope with expected growth in passenger numbers of up to 45% over ten years.

During 2009 to 2012 train lengthening is planned for most routes, up to 4- or 6- coach trains.

The report states that: "One route where train lengthening is difficult is the Airedale route between Skipton and Leeds because of platform length constraints at Shipley which is primarily caused by the station being on a triangle. An option to lengthen the platforms here is being examined".

Commissioning of turnback facilities is noted for 2012-2014, but Keighley is not explicitly mentioned. Elsewhere, the possibility of using Selective Door Operation at particular stations with short platforms, is discussed.

It does therefore seem that the different

options for our services are still being considered and that more work is being done to see if 6-coach trains could be enabled to call at all of our stations.

Explicitly, the plans for spending which may be relevant to our line are:-

2009/10 - a linespeed increase through platform 5 at Shipley;

2010 to 2013 - platform lengthening;

2010/11 - new stations at Kirkstall Forge and Apperley Bridge;

2011/12 - enhanced stabling facilities for trains- Skipton and Huddersfield are identified as potential locations;

2013/14: new bay platform at Leeds.

More Jottings from Tim Calow

TRAIN PERFORMANCE

Train performance has improved since the end of the leaf fall season. The PPM (Public Performance Measure) has settled around 93 to 94% for both Leeds to Skipton and Bradford to Skipton train services after dropping as low as 84% in November.

Particularly impressive has been the way that the service kept running through the February snows. It reflects the dedication of many staff who managed to get to work and keep the service running in spite of the difficult conditions. There were delays but certainly no shutdown of the system. With the arrival of Spring and better weather the minor delays which often afflict our service are much reduced.

My personal journey experiences have also been good. The only significant delay I have suffered was on Monday 9 March when there were problems with the overhead wires at Leeds station.

The half-hour delay was an irritation - but the driver provided a helpful running commentary, explaining why we were being delayed. I understand that there were delays for much of that morning.

ALONG THE LINE

Skipton station café opening hours have been extended and it is now open from 06.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday and from 06.00 to 14.00 on Saturdays.

Shipley station lifts should be opened before long. We understand that the station will be manned from first train to last by a permanent security guard. They will be responsible for the supervision and safe operation of the lift as well as opening and locking. Northern Rail is looking for DFT funding to similarly extend the booking office hours.

continued on page 6

News from the Leeds-Lancaster Morecambe Community Rail Partnership



Rod Tickner reports from the meeting held on 17 February 2009.

The main areas of discussion centred around the Community Rail events which are scheduled for the period Friday 15 May to Friday 12 June 2009.

It is likely that the events locally may spread over a longer time period of time with those for the Bentham Line being outside the official period. One of the interesting approaches is a photographic exhibition which it is hoped as many as possible will enter.

This has the title "Communities and Railways working in Partnership" and the best of the images will be displayed at the various community rail events in 2009 - the first of which will be at the Platform Gallery in Clitheroe from 15-17 May. The closing date is 1 May. More details can be found on the Ribble Valley Rail website (which line has the same Development Officer, Simon Clarke) www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk

Passenger numbers in January 2009 are 10% up: this builds on the steady increases. 381,000 in 2007 compared to 405,000 in 2008. As somebody asked: how much more would the usage grow if there was a really regular service? The website www.llmr.co.uk gives latest details.

TRAIN TIME CHANGE - SEE PAGE 14.

Below: Seen by Tim Calow at Lancaster on 21 February 2009, 144 021 (on the left) is on the last train to Leeds while 142 018 will go to Morecambe. It was on an occasion like this that a late platform change led to one of our members missing the last train to Skipton.





Early morning at Bradford Forster Square on 2 April. 158 796 has just arrived on the 07.01 from Skipton. This train (and the subsequent return to Ilkley) are rostered for a class'158' in order that the extra peak hour Ilkley to Leeds service can be formed by a high capacity Class'333' electric unit.

Tim Calow

continued from page 4

The main recent development has been the new passenger information screens which are now in place all along on the Airedale and Wharfedale lines. The screens are much easier to read than the old ones. We have taken up a number of specific concerns with Northern Rail, specifically:-

- trains still on the screens after the train has gone. At Skipton there seems to be a two minute lag.

- trains off the screens when the train hasn't yet come. On a number of occasions at Crossflatts, Bingley and Saltaire the next train has changed to the Leeds service before the Bradford train arrives (or vice versa). This is very confusing!

- estimated train departure times one or two minutes later than the actual times when the train comes.

- platform changes (at Skipton) not reflected on the screens and leading to

incorrect automated announcements. Local staff do try to correct these false announcements but that shouldn't be necessary.

- platform numbers missing for some trains (at Steeton and Silsden).

- some Sunday Skipton to Leeds services are on the system as non-stop from Skipton to Leeds – which could be handy for some Skipton passengers but doesn't reflect reality!

A number of these issues have already been sorted and the system appears to be working rather better. However, if you are aware of any other problems then please get in touch with me (chair@avrug.org.uk) – and I can follow them up.

ENGINEERING WORK

On 22 February there were track renewals at Skipton and thus bus replacements between Keighley and Skipton. On 1, 8 and 15 March there were track renewals at Keighley and

buses replaced trains between Shipley and Skipton. As far as we are aware the bus replacement went relatively smoothly. There were however problems with the bus timings on the National Rail Enquiries System. We chased up our usual contacts but were unable to get all the errors corrected. Please (once again) get in touch if you had any problems.

We are unaware of any planned blockages on the Airedale line. We would however like to give advance notification of a 'two week' blockage of the Settle & Carlisle line from Friday 10 July until Monday 27 July.

SUMMER TIMETABLE

There are a number of minor adjustments to the timings of the Morecambe and Carlisle trains. The most significant are in the evening peak from Leeds where there are also minor adjustments to Skipton trains. Departures, Monday to Fridays, from Leeds will now be at 16.39 (Morecambe), 16.56, 17.26, 17.52 and 17.56 (Carlisle).

Passengers need to be aware however that the last Leeds departure to the Morecambe/Lancaster line is just over 10 minutes earlier than before. (see also page 14).

The engineering work on the Settle and Carlisle line, planned to run from 8 November, has been postponed until next year.

MUSIC TRAINS

The Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Company, in conjunction with Northern Rail, will be running three Music and Ale Trains between Skipton and Ribbleshead on Saturdays 09 May, 13 June & 04 July. The trains leave Skipton at 19.59 and include an optional ride over the famous Ribbleshead Viaduct before returning back by 22.00 hours.

Pennine Jazz Band will be performing on each train, whilst the Hall Brothers perform folk on the 09 May and 13 June, then Malc and Jeannie on the 04 July. The Keighley & Worth Valley Railway catering team will provide a different selection of real ales on each train, together with quality wines and soft drinks.

Tickets are now on sale for the first train on Saturday 09 May and cost £5 if purchased in advance, or £8.60 on the day. Advance Tickets can be obtained now in three ways:

- On-line from www.settlecarlisle.co.uk

- In person at Settle Railway Station, Café Express at Skipton Railway Station or Appleby Railway Station.

- By post from SCRDC (MusicTrain), Settle Railway Station, Station Road, Settle, BD24. 9AA. Please allow seven days for delivery of tickets.

AVRUG web site

Your editor very much regrets that for several reasons he has been unable to keep the group's web site up-to-date for several months. Committee member Jenny Whiteside has come to the rescue and hopefully the site will be relaunched in the very near future. Many thanks to Jenny for taking this task on!!!

Steve Broadbent

Garsdale buildings re-opened

– 20 years after S+C reprieve from closure

The exact 20th anniversary of the reprieve from closure of the Settle and Carlisle line on April 11 1989 was celebrated at Garsdale station on Easter Saturday with the re-opening of the station buildings by Network Rail's Route Director Jo Kaye.

At the same event, a bronze statue of a border collie dog Ruswarp was unveiled (see picture below). Ruswarp was the faithful companion of the co-founder of the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line (FoSCL), Graham Nuttall. Ruswarp's paw print was accepted as a valid signature of objection to closure – the dog being a fare paying passenger at the time – joining tens of thousands of human signatures of objection. That paw print helped bring the plight of the line to national attention.

With contributions from The Railway Heritage Trust and FoSCL, Network Rail has restored Garsdale station, which was in poor state with badly leaking



roofs. The result, FoSCL chairman Mark Rand says, is "stunning, a mini-St Pancras".

So far as was possible everything has been restored as the Midland Railway designed it, with modern techniques used and facilities installed. Concrete lintels have been replaced with shaped stone, and new roofs, stone chimney stacks, waiting room benches, fireplaces, and barge boards, etc., made just like the originals. Recent add-ons have been demolished, and former doorways re-opened. A specimen drinking fountain from the British Museum was used to provide moulds to enable new ones to be cast.

Garsdale is the last of the S+C line's stations to be restored in this fashion: the work was managed by Kieran Breakey, seconded to the project by Network Rail.

Photos by kind courtesy of Mark Rand, FoSCL Chairman.



Passenger Focus surveys our line

Steve Broadbent takes a personal look at a recent survey of passengers' desires, and the recent performance achieved on our line by train operator Northern Rail.

A survey of passengers using the Airedale line, to see what they would most like from future rail services, has been carried out on behalf of Passenger Focus, the national rail (and bus) passengers' watchdog. The work, carried out for PF by Continental Research in October 2008 and published in April, is intended to inform the Yorkshire and Humber Route Utilisation Strategy, which Tim Calow describes on page 2. Some 750 passengers were asked for their views in the survey.

The survey looks only at Leeds-Skipton trains, on which 44% join at Leeds and 23% at Skipton, with the remainder joining on route. 73% use the line to commute, 19% for leisure and only 6% for business. Surprisingly, perhaps, 13% of those surveyed, one in seven, were using the service for the first time, which seems a very high incidence of first-time users.

But that figure does demonstrate the growing popularity of the line, and overcrowding is an issue, one that we hope the Y+H RUS will firmly address. 5% of commuters said they could "rarely or never" get a seat, and 15% said it was "about half the time" – but for leisure travellers those two categories totalled 4%. Certainly, for passengers joining peak-hour trains at Bingley and Saltaire there is a real problem of capacity, as well as for those not lucky in the scramble to join evening trains at Leeds.

The main part of the survey notes passengers' satisfaction with certain aspects of the service, and here I would beg to suggest that people's views of the railways, their expectations, can

be coloured by what they read in some sections of the press. And sometimes, perhaps, the press is not totally balanced with 'shock horror' stories of sardine-like travelling conditions, 'chaos' due to engineering works, 'sky high' fares, and endemic lateness. And are we becoming conditioned to be increasingly afraid of 'security risks', I wonder. Anyway, whatever the case, the percentage of passengers "fairly or very satisfied" with the service under the following headings is:

Connections with other transport	34%
Security on trains and stations:	58%
and 49% respectively	
Provision of info on train times/	
platforms	74%
Ability to get a seat	77%
Scheduled journey length	79%
Frequency	72%
Not having to change trains	79%
Punctuality/reliability	73%
Value for money of ticket	42%

While, of course, it is AVRUG's prime role not to be complacent, it is hard to envisage what the 20% or more of passengers in each of the above categories who are not satisfied would actually like to see. We have one of the most modern, reliable, clean, and speedy services in the country, with the best provision of on-station information, (with the current exception of Cononley) in the north, although this survey was done before the recent installation of the new public address and information screen system.

Fares, especially for those using a Metro Card season ticket (which could soon be extended to cover Cononley and Skipton), are among the lowest in the country, and even a day return from say

Keighley or Skipton into Leeds offers, at least from my perspective, very good value, compared with driving a car and parking - and rail fares are often cheaper than the parallel, far slower, bus route.

And don't forget, rail fares do not cover the costs of running the railway, Northern Rail gets over half its income in subsidy from the government which means from the tax bills of the nation. If Northern ran without subsidy, the level of fares would scare many people away, leading to even higher fares, a vicious spiral, not to mention what would happen on the roads into Leeds.

The question as to whether our line should have more trains, longer trains, and/or a service which inter-leaves an all-stations service with either trains which omit some stops or run only as far as Keighley, which the draft version of the RUS debates, is a complex one currently taxing the minds of many in the region's public transport industry.

It is, perhaps, too complex an issue to put to the public in a survey, I doubt if I have the attention span to grasp the concept while hurrying for my train, nattering on my mobile, or idly watching the view go by as I plan supper or the day's work. Nevertheless, 35% favoured a solution of slightly less frequent trains with some omitting minor stations, and 60% preferred the



The new information screen at Skipton, with all trains shown 'on time', as is becoming ever more the case on our line.
Tim Calow

continuation of the present service but with longer trains.

The list of things passengers would most like to see improved reads:

- 1 Punctuality/reliability of trains
- 2 Value for money
- 3 Not having to change trains to complete journey
- 4 Frequency of trains on the route
- 5 Length of journey time.

Which is a most interesting list I could debate for the whole of an issue of this newsletter!! Going from 5 to 1, as I say, (apart from the services which come down our line from Lancaster and Carlisle) we have fast, electric trains, which stop at every station, so it is hard to make them go quicker, unless some stations are missed. And all along the valley, the journey time is much quicker by train than by road, station to station.

However, long dwell times at stations, for whatever reason, do lead to extended times, given the seven intermediate station stops. The kind of crisp station stops and rapid deceleration at stations that I witnessed on a recent tour of Northern Ireland's railways - where they have the diesel version of our 333s - would help journey times and punctuality. These trains are also used at peak times very differently to ours, but that is another story!

We have a half hourly service, which is good by national standards, with additions in the peaks, plus the trains to/from Lancaster and Carlisle off peak. And if you are heading to Leeds, if the Bradford train comes first and you change at Shipley you have effectively a 15-minute service. Very few lines outside London match that.

Not having to change, of course, depends on where you are going, and as most of the passengers questioned were commuting into Leeds, on the basis of the information given, it is hard

to see where else services could run to that would be practicable and help solve this issue.

Value for money, I feel, is perhaps more a media-driven issue when the real costs of driving are taken account of, and any further reduction in fares would mean more national taxation, and, perhaps, even more crowded trains, requiring more expenditure, which means more tax, on providing more seats. A balance has to be struck between supply and demand?

And finally punctuality/reliability. Northern Rail has kindly provided me with detailed figures for the whole of the 2008/9 year of the Public Performance Measure, which combines punctuality (trains arriving within 5 minutes of booked time) and reliability and is the major performance indicator of the industry. For the whole of the year, on the Leeds-Skipton service, the PPM was 92.28%. For Bradford-Skipton it was 92.81%.

There was the usual autumn dip, caused by the genuine problem of leaves on the line, which leads to what is known as 'defensive driving' - making sure the train does not skid by always applying the brakes and accelerating more gently than usual.

The rail industry divides the financial year into four-week periods, and this survey was done over periods 7 and 8, right in the middle of the leaf fall season, which may have given rise to some of the passengers' concerns.

The period-by-period PPM figures for Leeds-Skipton in 208/9 were:

1	94.59
2	93.17
3	94.44
4	94.94
5	93.84
6	94.08
7	91.37
8	85.72

9	83.61
10	91.51
11	93.27
12	93.33
13	95.38

And looking at the last period of the year, that is March 2009, the PPM for Leeds-Skipton was 95.38% to 5 minutes, 97.00% to 7 minutes and 98.27% (1 in 58) to 10 minutes, with just 0.36% of the 1969 scheduled trains, one in 277, cancelled. In other words, if you commute into Leeds each working day through the year, say 220 return trips, you can expect two trains in the year to be cancelled and eight journeys to be more than ten minutes late, based on this one month's figures. Can any other mode of transport beat that?

Now by industry standards these figures are very high, especially when the complex nature of what are known as the 'Leeds North West' group of services is considered. I wonder if passengers' perceptions align with the reality?

On the other side of this coin, regular observation of Airedale services show that trains are often a few minutes late at intermediate stations, with 'recovery time' enabling an 'on time' arrival at the terminus.

And of course, while the PPM data is based on trains within 5 minutes of time, even a 4 minute lateness can be the difference between making a connection and not, and can also affect the departure time of a train leaving that terminus. Peak-hour train crowding leads in itself to longer station stops, so again commuters will face more lateness than off-peak travellers. Hence why the solution awaited in the RUS is so important to our line.

I have deliberately made this article a personal view, and have also been, I hope, slightly provocative. AVRUG would always be pleased to hear readers' views as to what they would do or like to see being done, to improve our service.



Service developments

by Steve Broadbent

In *airlines 53* I noted several developments which could affect train services to Leeds and Bradford from this December, but where the final decisions had not then been made.

Well, a decision was made, although it is not very final!

Firstly, the winner was undoubtedly Grand Central, which will be able to start a fourth return service between Sunderland and London Kings Cross this summer. This might not seem very relevant, but GC's trains stop at York and then run non-stop to/from London, and the company does offer very good value fares, which you can buy on-board the train – just £35 York-London one way. The new service will provide a useful 'day trip to London' service which has a journey time, if you take the Leeds-York train and change there, only a few minutes longer than taking the direct Leeds-London NXEC service. GC's carriages, with lots of leg room and seats aligned with windows, have a different atmosphere, well worth the experience! If you live near the Harrogate-York line,

watch out for special fares using this service to London.

GC was also granted permission to operate three return trains a day between London Kings Cross and Bradford Interchange, and while this service will be of primary benefit to those in Halifax, Brighouse and Pontefract, again it will offer choice for those wishing to travel to London from the Bradford area. This service is due to start in December.

Sadly, Hull Trains' application to operate London Kings Cross-York-Harrogate was rejected, but National Express East Coast's applications to serve both Harrogate and Bradford via Leeds is still alive, but is dependent on negotiations between NXEC and Northern Rail, as well as some other rail bodies, as to how these aspirations can be achieved without compromising existing services.

Above: Grand Central is acquiring five-carriage 125 mph Class 180 trains, as seen in this artist's impression, to enable it to expand its services.

It will be difficult to find clear paths for the Harrogate trains through Leeds at appropriate times, and probably impossible for the Bradford services to run to Shipley and Forster Square with the new stations at Apperley Bridge and Kirkstall Forge in operation for local trains. If NXEC were to seek to run to Bradford Interchange then it may well have to find suitable diesel trains to operate this route, not easy at the moment.

So those plans will be developed in the coming months, along with a whole new timetable for the east coast main line, and the smoke will clear, eventually. The recession is also not helping: press reports suggest that growth in rail passenger numbers has tailed off strongly in recent months, and also that passengers are forsaking first class travel so as to economise. These trends may well be exercising the minds at NXEC, as they try to plot the soundest way forward for the operation.

And as Tim Calow mentions elsewhere, the desire of Arriva Cross Country to operate more trains via Leeds, opening up a new direct route to Reading and the Thames Valley, along with the suggestion that there be a fifth Trans Pennine Express train each hour between Leeds and Manchester so as to help overcome over-crowding, are reasons why publication of the Yorkshire and Humber Route Utilisation Strategy, on which a great deal depends, is being delayed until the Summer.

Finally, news of perhaps 23 brand new diesel trains coming to Northern Rail, and they may even be seen locally, is close, but it does take at least two years for new trains to be delivered. Also, the shape of the new electric train fleet for Northern, perhaps more but shorter 'pre-owned' trains, is being firmed up, with train operator London Midland, from where we might get these units in 2011/12, seeking bids to meet its needs..... watch this space!!

continued overleaf

A '333' in Northern Ireland?

Northern Ireland Railways operates a diesel version of our electric Class 333s, and I greatly enjoyed travelling on them during a recent break - one is seen here at Bangor's impressive bus/rail interchange.

The front-end is different, but there is much that is familiar inside, although they do have very comfortable 2+2 seating with tables.

Off-peak the service between Belfast and Bangor (and also between

Belfast and Carrickfergus, which uses trains similar in look to Northern's Class 156s) is half hourly, but between 0700-0900 there are 11 trains from Bangor and seven from Carrickfergus, some of which run 'fast'.

Steve Broadbent



1959

Continuing Rod Tickner's look at the pages of Railway World of 50 years ago

Not every one was happy about diesels, especially multiple units. A D L Smith of Potters Bar, drew the distinction of travelling in a drawn coach (his distinct preference) rather than a driven coach. In his words the diesel multiple unit "while it possessed few of the advantages of a Tube train and the road motor coach, combined the worst features of both."

He continued "The noise level within the unit is such as to inhibit conversation; the atmosphere is oppressive (due to the very effective oil-fired hot air system); the riding qualities are indifferent and the ambient taint of diesel fuel is nauseating."

He wanted to associate himself with those who felt no proprietorial pride at the sight of a diesel-powered train. He

believed that the use of diesels, instead of the imaginative exploitation of coal as an energy source, to be wrong and the result of political expediency rather than any balanced technical consideration. He threatened to withdraw his support from *Railway World* if they persisted in lauding diesels compared to steam!

However a number of venerable older classes of steam locomotive were being scrapped and pleas were being made for the establishment of a British Transport Museum: the first glimmer of hope being the restoration of Midland railway compound 1000 so that it could be used to haul special services, rather like the WR City of Truro.

1959 was the last year that *Railway World* was an independent publication, it was then published by Ian Allen.

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STOP PRESS...MORECAMBE TRAIN TIME CHANGE....

Just when there is hope the Morecambe line timetable might be changed for the better, it is actually going to take a backward step from the timetable change on May 17, when the last train of the day from Leeds, the 1652, is being brought forward to 1639, shortening the commuters' day in Leeds even more. The reason is believed to be pathing issues between Carnforth and Lancaster.

From May 17 the timetable departing Leeds Mondays-Fridays will be:

16.10	Bradford FS via Shipley
16.26	Skipton (all stations)
16.35	Bradford FS via Shipley
16.39	Morecambe (calling Shipley, Bingley and Keighley, but not at Steeton & Silsden)
16.56	Skipton (all stations)
17.10	Bradford FS via Shipley
17.26	Skipton (all stations)
17.36	Bradford FS via Shipley
17.50	Skipton (all stations)
17.56	Carlisle (calling Shipley, Bingley, Keighley and Steeton)

There are other small changes to the Morecambe line's timetable, while an early morning departure from Skipton on Saturdays also changes - the London train will leave at 0655 (presently 0642).

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group

www.avrug.org.uk

Affiliated to Railfuture

NINETEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at Saltaire Methodist Church Hall

**Saturday 16 May 2009
commencing at 2.00pm**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of 18th AGM held on 19 April 2008
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Election of committee officers and members:

The present committee is listed overleaf and it is presently understood all are willing to continue to stand in the coming year.

But we are still short of a Secretary, and we always welcome new faces onto the committee in whatever role. This item is always handled informally at our AGMs, there are no formal candidate lists or ballots, but if you would like to be involved please do contact a committee member at any time, or simply come along to the AGM and put your hand up!!

The officers are: Chair, Vice chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter editor, Membership secretary.

7. Any other competent business.

**Light refreshments will be served at 2.45pm
before a talk from our guest speakers,
Drew Haley and Stuart Rands from Northern Rail.**

Letters, ?? and !!

AVRUG welcomes 'Letters to the Editor', whether questions about our railways or comments on them, for possible inclusion in *airlines*. Please address them to the Editor, as below, and we will do our best to fully answer points raised. Letters will be published as space permits, and may be edited.

Longer contributions to *airlines* are also welcome, but please contact the Editor in advance, to ensure space is available and to agree content and deadlines, etc.

Subs and £££s

AVRUG does its work in lobbying for better and more reliable services along the Aire Valley thanks to its loyal membership, who pay just £3 a year for the privilege!! Donations or sponsorship to allow us to do even more are just as gratefully welcomed!

The address for subscriptions is below, for donations please contact the Treasurer.

Our web site...

www.avrug.org.uk, should be being continually being developed, but in recent months I have had big problems with my software, so I regret it is in need of an up-date. Jenny Whiteside is now taking on this task!!

Next Newsletter...

...is due to be published in Summer 2009. Due to heavy work commitments for both the chairman and editor, we have regrettably dropped behind schedule lately.

Thanks to...

...Tim Calow and Rod Tickner who have helped with words, and my wife Viv for the design and proof-reading.

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