

January 2013

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APOLOGY

We apologise for the absence of a newsletter in 2012. This has not been entirely due to the wrong sort of deadlines. Since Andrew Noble resigned as editor of our newsletter we have had no one to take his place. This leaves the writing and editing with your Chairman who leads a busy life with a variety of commitments. I am sorry that we have taken so long to produce this newsletter but if you want regular newsletters then we need a volunteer to edit them (and ideally more volunteers to write articles).

SAFETY ON THE LINE

Many of you may have read of the conviction for manslaughter of a railway conductor on Merseyrail. Christopher McGee gave the 'right of way' to the driver while Georgia Varley, a sixth form student was leaning against the train. She staggered and fell between the train and the platform. She was killed. In passing sentence the judge commented that the conductor "had direct and personal responsibility for the safety of the passengers". He said "Much has been made ...of how intoxicated Georgia was but that did not relieve you of the duty of care". The judge stated that the conductor "had displayed an extraordinary disregard for her safety" and sentenced him to five years imprisonment.

This case raises a number of issues which are very relevant to the operation of trains more widely – and espe-



321903 waits to leave Skipton

cially on the Airedale line. The first issue is over the level of duty of care owed by the railway. There is no similar level of care which would be required of a motorist out on the road. If Georgia had left the station and tried to cross a road then there is no expectation that drivers who saw her state of intoxication would all halt their cars. A motorist is unlikely to be considered criminally culpable if he runs over an intoxicated pedestrian.

Indeed I frequently see far higher levels of disregard for my safety as a cyclist when I am out on the road (no – I am not intoxicated!)

A second issue is to ask if the demands made of conductors are reasonable. The judge would probably understand how a motorist might face the situation of a drunken pedestrian. It seems however that he had far less understanding of the situation of the conductor. The conductor gives the right of way over a hundred times a day. Late at night drunk and obstructive passengers are common. The conductor's defence was that he saw the passenger moving away from the train. This was contradicted by the evidence of the CCTV at James Street. I have however no doubt that the conductor may genuinely have **perceived** the passenger move away from the train. It is well known that we often see what we expect to happen (and not what actually occurs). I suspect that the judge has failed to appreciate the difficult burden which is placed on conductors across the UK.

Safety standards have moved on a great deal in the last twenty years. In the past we had slam door stock. The risks of injury from passengers boarding trains was much greater. Modern stock, with sliding doors, is much safer. We rightly continue to try and reduce risks further. However the cost of the changes is often forgotten. Revenue is lost as conductors are required to return to the rear of the train to give the right of way – they rarely are able to check tickets in the front coaches. Time is lost due

to the lengthy station procedures for opening and shutting doors. Time lost means longer journey times (Airedale schedules are no faster than thirty years ago when Pacers dawdled along – that in spite of electrification and modern, faster trains). This reduces the revenue that the trains earn. Longer journey times mean more trains are required to run the same service. Longer station dwell times reduce the capacity of key parts of our network. This means that expensive infrastructure enhancements may be needed – in order to reliably run the same train service.

McNulty identified higher costs for running train services in the UK compared with continental Europe. It has been difficult to pin down the reasons for the difference. My personal observations suggest that our defensive attitude to safety in the UK is a significant factor. In some ways it is historical (there is no fencing of railways over much of the continent – as individuals are held responsible and required to stay clear of railway lines). In other ways it is more recent. The fear of safety implications has meant



Slam door units at Skipton

that any changes to working practice are hard to implement.

There needs to be some more flexibility. Otherwise the railways will become ever more expensive and passengers will instead travel by roads – which are far more hazardous. One route forward was to have been longer franchises, however.....



Conlonley Crossing; road and rail meet

FRANCHISING – WHERE NOW?

The interim report by Laidlaw (into the letting of the West Coast rail franchise) has uncovered a remarkable tale of incompetence at the Department for Transport. To allow innovative approaches to investment and to change working practices, longer franchises were recommended. However the income stream for longer franchises is subject to the uncertainty of the current economic situation. There were thus complex linkages to the rate of growth of the national economy. Then there was the 'Subordinated Loan Facility' to ensure that the owning group could not easily walk away from the franchise part-way through.

The letting of the West Coast franchise is not a direct concern for us. However there are substantial implications. Firstly, it is still not clear what changes there might be for the franchising process and the shape of future franchises. There is the added complication for us in that the Passenger Transport Executives have been developing a proposal to manage the new Northern franchise. We thus wait to see what services will be included in the new franchise, who will manage the franchise and of

course the level of growth which the DfT expect the new franchise to cater for.

These are important questions – but so is the timetable for the letting of the franchise. Currently the West Coast re-franchising is still on hold – together with Great Western and London Tilbury Southend line franchising. Northern and TransPennine are a little way back in the queue but it would appear that some delay will be inevitable. This is a real problem as important decisions need to be made – particularly about the provision of electric trains for newly electrified lines in the north-west and the related question about the provision of extra capacity across the network.



The long Chiltern franchise has made investment in trains possible

THE NEXT FRANCHISE

At some point there will be a new Northern franchise and we will be looking to feed your views to the relevant authorities. We have already fed back views to Metro concerning Railplan 7 and to the DfT concerning plans for devolution of franchise management.



Interior of a class '319' Thameslink unit, will we be seeing these 'up north'?

We have discussed the key issues about the next franchise at the last AGM and subsequently at our committee meetings. Top of our list is the need for longer platforms and additional rolling stock so that the chronic overcrowding of peak trains can be reduced. We are also concerned that there should be some plans for procuring some modern diesel stock for the Northern franchise (and specifically to operate the trains from Leeds to Carlisle and Morecambe). We are also keen to see improved services on Sunday and at the start and finish of the weekday timetable.

If you have other concerns then please do get in touch – either to chair@avrug.org.uk or by coming to our AGM (which we will shortly arrange, probably on a Saturday in April).

GRAND CENTRAL NEWS

The Office for Rail Regulation has rejected the Grand Central application for a fourth Bradford train on the grounds of the 'Not Primarily Abstractive' test. The application had been for a train from Bradford via Leeds and Micklefield. Grand Central have now re-submitted their application with the passenger stop at Leeds removed.



Grand Central and East Coast trains at Kings Cross

Their application for a fifth Sunderland train has been approved – though for reasons of pathing one service in each direction will only run as far as Hartlepool. Sunderland passengers would have to use the connecting 'Northern' service.

LEEDS STATION SOUTHERN

ENTRANCE ENQUIRY

The public enquiry into the proposals for the new station entrance at Leeds started on November 27th. The time-scale for construction cannot be set until this process is concluded – though it is hoped that construction work can be completed during 2014.



Leeds station—
which most Airedale passengers use

DECEMBER TIMETABLE CHANGES

There have been a number of minor changes to the timetable so do watch out if you (like me) arrive at the last minute for your train. In particular many of the local trains from Skipton to Leeds and Bradford will leave a minute earlier (xx.01, xx.17, xx.31, xx.47 from Skipton). The times as far as Bingley have all been advanced by a minute. There is then an extra minute in the schedules to Saltaire so times at Saltaire, Shipley and beyond generally remain the same as now. This adjustment applies to most services throughout the day.

There are similar adjustments to the Sunday timetable – with Leeds trains leaving Skipton at xx.14 and the two hourly Bradford trains at xx.36., Departure times up to and including Bingley will be a minute earlier (as on weekdays). The aim of these adjustments appears to be to improve the punctuality of services approaching the complex junctions at Shipley and so improve the running of the Leeds North-West system.

Moving back to the weekday timetable, the 'extra' morning train to Leeds has had its schedule adjusted so it can call at all stations (currently it doesn't call at Cononley, Crossflatts or Saltaire). It will leave Skipton five minutes earlier at 07.34 arriving in Leeds at 08.17. The two previous trains from Skipton leave earlier as a consequence – at 07.20 to Leeds and 07.27 to Bradford. Watch out for the earlier departures all along the line if you catch these trains.

The 13.49 from Leeds will now appear as a Lancaster service. This is a change of presentation rather than substance. The train will arrive in Lancaster at 15.47 and then return as the 16.03 to Leeds via Morecambe. Passengers should therefore be able to stay on board the service before it continues to Morecambe. This change is intended to encourage passengers from Lancaster to use this through service instead of relying on the connection at Carnforth off the Trans Pennine Manchester Airport to Barrow service.

WINTER OFFER

The usual winter offer of cheap fares is available on the Carlisle and Morecambe lines. For holders of MetroCards and Senior / Disabled Bus Passes there are return fares of just £10. These are available on any day for MetroCard holders but only Monday to Friday for holders of the bus passes. The offer is available until March 15th (excluding half term week, February 18th - 22nd).

EXTRA SUNDAY SETTLE – CARLISLE TRAIN

Passengers taking advantage of the winter offer can also use the fourth Sunday service through to Carlisle. It starts back from Sheffield at 10.17. It leaves Leeds at 11.20, Shipley 11.32, Bingley 11.37, Keighley 11.42, Skipton 11.55. It calls at Settle, Kirkby Stephen and Appleby before arriving in Carlisle at 13.47. It returns from Carlisle at 15.20 – calling at the same stations as outward reaching Skipton (17.07) and Leeds at 17.46 before continuing to Nottingham (19.57).

STATION IMPROVEMENTS

Recent months have seen a number of works along our line.

Keighley Waiting room Refurbishment has been completed. The works have been carried out by Consortia. The main waiting room on the Leeds/Bradford bound platform has been refurbished with new CCTV, new ceiling, seats renewed, new lighting and heating and a DDA compliant ramp to allow wheelchair customers to use the waiting room for the first time. A new shelter next to the main waiting room to allow customers to stay dry after the waiting room has closed. Upgrading the shelter on the Skipton bound platform includes a new glass front, an automatic door and an internal CCTV camera.

Skipton Canopy. Work is well under way to restore the canopy back into its original glory. The work includes renewal of all the canopy glass, new lighting, straightening of two leaning pillars, fixing of the drainage, repairs to platform surfaces and finally repainting. This work will vastly improve the look of Skipton Station and be a real positive for customers.



Work in progress at Skipton

Shipley Station. Work on the booking hall is scheduled for January.

LEEDS – MORECAMBE COMMUNITY RAIL NEWS

Passengers in the North West will have more say on how local rail services are run after the service designation of the Bentham Line as a community rail service, Rail Minister Norman Baker announced today.

Designation of the line between Leeds to Morecambe will enable train companies to work more closely with the Leeds, Lancaster and Morecambe Community Rail Partnership to better design services to meet local needs.

Community Rail Minister Norman Baker said:

I want to encourage communities to become more closely involved with their railways to help create the services and stations passengers deserve.

That's why I am delighted to announce this latest community rail service designation. Today's designation is a major step towards helping the Leeds, Lancaster and Morecambe Community Rail Partnership work

closely with local groups to provide innovative and more cost effective rail services for their community.

Ian Bevan, Managing Director of Northern Rail, which runs services on the route, said:

The designation of the Bentham Line is fantastic news for the local community. As this route is integral to the area, its designation ensures it will be developed to benefit local people and visitors to the region. We look forward to working with the community rail partnership to enable the route to prosper as much as possible.

Councillor Richard Rollins, Chairman of the Leeds, Lancaster and Morecambe Community Rail Partnership said:

This is excellent news. Designation will enable the Community Rail Partnership to work in partnership with the local community to make significant developments along the line. Key objectives include station improvements and service developments.



A Leeds train leaves Lancaster

COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP AWARDS

Northern was the overall winner at the 2012 Community Rail awards. Congratulations to them and to the individual winners which include the 'Best Station Garden' at Dronfield.

ENGINEERING WORK

Engineering work has affected Aire-dale on the first two Sundays of January. Buses replaced trains between Leeds and Shipley. As far as we know there were no major problems – please get in touch if you know otherwise!

Further work is planned for Sunday 3rd February and Sunday 10th February. Buses replace trains between Skipton and Shipley / Bradford. Fuller

details are available on the Northern rail website and should shortly be on posters at our local stations.

We are not aware of any more work planned on the Airedale line. However Carlisle and Morecambe line services are affected by bus substitutions beyond Skipton on 17th and 24th February and on all five Sundays in March.

PERFORMANCE STATISTICS AND INCIDENTS ON THE LINE

Our lines continue to perform well – except on a few days when failures have badly disrupted services. The snow caused some disruption on Tuesday 22nd January when the overhead wires near Guiseley were damaged by a fallen tree. In general trains have kept running through the snow and we would like to thank the staff who have turned out to work through the difficult conditions of the last weeks.



Local trains are frequent



Pathing freight is difficult: a loaded coal train at Bingley

There have been a couple of incidents when the older electric units now used have broken down – and recovery has not been straightforward as they are not compatible with our usual '333' units. Performance of the longer distance diesel services has not been so good for a variety of reasons and is a cause for concern. A particularly important train for us is the early departure from Carlisle – which is a key commuter service in Airedale and has had its problems.

SPEED LIMITS RAISED

As well as extra times in some schedules we have also had some slight increases in speeds – which should also help punctuality. At Shipley the ten mile per hour speed restriction through platform 5 has been shortened to the curve through the platform itself. The limit over the junction at the Skipton end of the platform has been raised to 25mph and at the Bradford end to 20mph. This should



A Bradford train creeps into Shipley



Speeds to Burley are now higher

save about a minute for all trains between Skipton and Bradford.

Similar savings of time should apply to all trains from Ilkley on the Wharfedale line. Following earlier work to stabilise the embankment between Ben Rhydding and Burley the 20mph speed limit has been raised to 60mph. Some adjustment to the schedules on this line should follow – at some stage.

NORTHERN PAYING REVENUE SHARE!

Northern is the one train company which has increased its revenue above forecast so it is paying additional money to the DfT. In the 2011/12 financial year it paid over £12.5m of its revenue – though it must be remembered that there is a £109.2m subsidy plus £210m in subsidies from the five Passenger Transport Executives to run the train services specified.

DECEMBER 2014 – THE BIG CHANGE?

Any speeding of schedules on the Ilkley line may only follow the opening of Kirkstall Forge and Apperley Bridge stations. It is still intended to open the stations in time for the December 2014 timetable change. At this stage there will be a major revamp of our timetable. Planning of the new timetable is in progress and we will tell you as soon as we know more.

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the twenty second AGM held on Saturday 21st April 2012
in the Church Hall, St Peter's Church, Shipley.

PRESENT

Fourteen members were present.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received Peter Allan, John Bearpark, Peter Bewes, Alistair Bould, Phil Davies MP, John Heaton, John Holroyd, Chris Hull, Marten Lougee, Keith Renshaw and Neil Whitaker.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 7th MAY 2011

The minutes of the last AGM, were agreed nem con as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Tim Calow reported that it had been a steady year: and he wished to thank the committee for their input.

The basic work had been performed: meeting with Passenger Focus, Northern Rail as well as e mailing circulars, preparing newsletters and informing the press. He wanted to thank Keith Renshaw for his work with the membership, Rod Tickner with the finances and Marten Lougee for the many meetings he attended. However help was still required with the website, newsletter and publicity and any offers of assistance would be most welcome. However all were busy people, Marten Lougee being the Chair of Rotary during the year, Rod Tickner training as a Church of England Reader and himself studying for an MA.

Airedale services had run well although the East Coast services less so. The new units, class 322 had been introduced on augmented services at peak times and had helped cope with increasing demand; over the last year there had been a 4% increase in passenger numbers; the 0739 ex Skipton, for example, loads well and its 278 seats are nearly full.

However a recent notable failure was on Monday 2 April when a class 322 (O701 Skipton – Bradford) failed at Bingley and it took one and half hours to move the unit. Coupler modifications were being made so that a 322 could be coupled to a class 333 in an emergency in the future. The conductor had been particularly helpful.

Looking ahead in May there will be repairs and repainting of the canopy at Skipton. In December the 0739 will call at all stations; and a four car unit will be on the Sunday Carlisle services.

The Bolton Abbey Steam railway are looking to reopen the link with Skipton in 5 years at a cost of £2 million, while SELRAP are looking for finance for the next stage of preparatory work for a re-opening of the Skipton-Colne service.

The key points to be borne in mind for the next franchise will be to tackle overcrowding. Longer trains and platforms will be needed and possible selective door opening. The next franchise could operate from September 2013 or January 2014 if it is combined in some way with the Trans Pennine franchise. Local management is a possibility, however little will be spent locally in the compared to London. However this will be a major focus for the committee over the next year.

The committee would be interested in members' concerns. The early morning Saturday trains were still poor, with Sunday hardly any better. Late departures at night would be helpful. It was noted that some conductors fail to check tickets regularly. A ticket machine on platform 1 at Shipley would be helpful.

TREASURER'S REPORT

A modest surplus was shown, mainly due to donations received on top of the subscriptions. However given the balance of funds available subscriptions would remain unchanged.

The report's acceptance was carried nem con.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were agreed:

Chair	Tim Calow
Vice chair	Marten Lougee
Secretary	vacancy
Treasurer	Rod Tickner
Membership Secretary	Keith Renshaw
Newsletter Editor	vacancy
Publicity	vacancy

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

The following were agreed:

Peter Bewes * Andrew Noble * Keith Preston * Malcolm Riley

After refreshments Steve Broadbent, a previous AVRUG newsletter editor and writer for RAIL magazine, gave some personal views on how to influence the next franchise.

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