

Rail

PROFESSIONAL

THE BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR RAILWAY MANAGERS

PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE
THREATS OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION ARE WORRYINGLY COMMON AT LUL

MISSING LINK
SUPPORTERS MAKE THE CASE FOR SKIPTON-COLNE RE-OPENING

CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE
HOW WOULD A TORY WIN AFFECT THE RAIL INDUSTRY?

CROSS PURPOSES
CROSSRAIL WILL SET THE STANDARD FOR FUTURE RAIL PROJECTS



BIT OF A STRETCH
ATOC CALLS FOR
LONGER FRANCHISES



ALL STATIONS GO
NEW FACILITIES IN
THE MIDLANDS

HIGHLAND HARMONY

SCOTRAIL'S
STEVE MONTGOMERY
ON WHY IT PAYS
TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP

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PROFESSIONAL

DECEMBER 2009
ISSUE 153

CPL, 275 Newmarket Road,
Cambridge CB5 8JE

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DESIGN: MARTIN COOK

MAIN COVER IMAGE: PIERRE GUILLEMIN
LIVERPOOL STREET PICTURE:
WWW.RAILIMAGES.CO.UK

Thanks to Rail Images (www.railimages.co.uk)
for photographic assistance.

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Published monthly by Cambridge Publishers Ltd
ISSN 1476-2196

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Contents



26

EDITORIAL

- 4** Editorial comment
16-17 Train of Thought Readers' letters

NEWS

- 4-15** News
38-39 **People** Elaine Holt; Karen Boswell; Paul Furze-Waddock; Phil Amos; Robert McMillan; Andie Harper; Jim Cornell; Rebeka Sellick; Danny Neale; Kevin Richardson; Gary Chambers; Graham Burgess; David Davenport; David Carter; Charles Salvona; Tim Briggs; Adrian Baker; Andrew Bailey; John Frodsham; Graeme McLellan; Alistair McPhee; Mark Wild

NEWS ANALYSIS

- 18-19** **Paul Clifton** takes a closer look at Atoc's report on franchising, which calls for longer contracts

THE WRIGHT TRACK

- 20-21** **Robert Wright** considers the Conservatives' rail policies and the way in which they would affect the rail industry, if the opposition party ends up in power next year

RAIL PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW

- 22-25** Steve Montgomery, managing director of ScotRail, tells **Arthur Allan** how he wants the Toc to continue to improve

FEATURES

- 26-27** **Changing platforms**
Peter Plisner looks at new stations in the



28

Midlands where private sector investment has been used to help fund construction

- 28-29** **Unrest on the Underground**
Strikes, or threatened strikes, are never far from the agenda at London Underground. A former manager looks back at the history of industrial relations on the Tube, in an attempt to explain how today's situation has arisen
- 30-31** **Crossrail: setting the pace**
Crossrail is currently the biggest civil engineering project in Europe. As such, it will set the scene for future infrastructure projects, both in the results it will achieve and the way in which nearby residents' concerns are taken into account during construction. **John Judge** explains

- 36** **Legal view**
Matthew Hanslip Ward looks at issues that will need to be considered in the regulation of HS2, with a working group due to report back soon on the most suitable route for a new high-speed line

INSTITUTION OF RAILWAY OPERATORS

- 32-33** The institution welcomes its 2009 degree, certificate and diploma students. Plus: Dates for your diary.

RBA AWARDS

- 34-35** RBA judge and CILT CEO Steve Agg explains why companies enter the awards

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- 37** A round-up of key services

RECRUITMENT

- 41** Management positions

ECML: THIRD TIME LUCKY?

National Express has finally given up the ghost on the East Coast franchise and handed it back to the government (see pages 6 and 7).

Will this mark the start of a more sensible approach to franchising – at least for this part of the railway network? Until now, the DfT's approach has broadly been to offer its franchises to the highest bidder, though some pie-in-the-sky ones have been discounted even though they were bigger than the eventual winner. In fact, ministers have openly said that occasional franchise failures prove the robustness of the overall system.

That philosophy has led us to the situation we are in now, namely two franchises collapsing on the East Coast Main Line within three years of each other. DfT accountants, and expensive consultants, spend months pouring over tender documents before an eventual winner is chosen. Yet, in theory, though the Department gives its approval to the spending plans, the majority of the risk is passed to the private sector franchisee.

One of the arguments that GNER, National Express's predecessor, put up in its discussions with the DfT, before it pulled out of its franchise, was that since the government had approved its figures before awarding it the franchise, the government ought to take some responsibility for the unforeseen circumstances that led to GNER's demise.

In GNER's case, it lost this argument.

But does all of the risk, notwithstanding cap and collar arrangements, really pass to the franchisee? No it doesn't. If a franchisee can walk away losing only its performance bond, then the level of risk is actually quite limited. But there's certainly a cost to the DfT if a franchise is returned. Not only does it lose the premiums, which will have been built into the rail budget, but there are obviously costs to refranchising the business, as well as all the associated legal costs of setting up a new company to take it over in the interim.

The answer is for the DfT to be far more discerning when it hands out franchises to contenders who are promising the earth – their projections have to stack up. If GNER had to pull out because it couldn't meet its premium payments, accepting National Express's promises of even higher premiums was madness. *Rail Professional* said so at the time and so did almost everyone else who comments on the railways.

Let's hope it's third time lucky for the next ECML franchise holder, and that the government – whichever political hue it may be – gets it right next time.

Photo courtesy of London Midland © 2008



A Class 323 at Wolverhampton.

London Midland told to make amends for Sunday cancellations

London Midland has received a warning from the DfT because of the Sunday service cancellations in September, which were due to driver shortages.

In a statement, transport secretary Lord Andrew Adonis said: 'The performance of London Midland on 6 September 2008 fell short of its customers' expectations and was unacceptable to both passengers and government.'

According to figures obtained by the RMT union, the operator cancelled 7,558 services in 2008-09.

Adonis added: 'I have issued London Midland with a Remedial Plan Notice for exceeding the Franchise Agreement Threshold on cancellations.'

'This requires London Midland to submit to me a Remedial Plan for addressing the level of cancellations. Discussions are at an advanced stage on a range of measures to be implemented within the Remedial Plan.'

'The Remedial Plan will

be contractualised as a Remedial Agreement.' London Midland has also agreed to a package of additional benefits to passengers, including £44m-worth of passenger information equipment and a promotion for 50,000 day rover tickets over Christmas.

London Midland issued a notice confirming that it was working on a detailed plan with the DfT.

'The company will be making extra investments, increasing the number of low cost fares available and also undertaking a number of actions to improve its performance,' said the notice.

Liberal Democrat shadow transport secretary Norman Baker said: 'It is right to clamp down hard on London Midland. This was a farcical situation that should never have been allowed to happen.'

'The Department for Transport should make sure all train operators can guarantee they always have enough staff to run a full timetable.'

● See page 10 for First Capital Connect's driver shortages.

Concessionary scheme challenged in wake of TfL cuts

by Peter Brown

Business leaders are continuing to question London mayor Boris Johnson and Transport for London about its business plan, following the recent announcement of cutbacks to station renewals and upgrades to the Tube.

Massive fare increases were also announced, which has led to calls for concessionary travel to be reviewed.

With the business plan now approved by the TfL board, all remaining former Metronet station renewals have been deferred for three years and the completion date for the Victoria Tube station upgrade has been put back to 2018.

The decision also means step-free access schemes on the Tube will only take place at the busiest stations and less busy sections of the underground will see 'minor' service reductions.

Because of the financial shortfall, passengers face higher fares, leading Baroness Jo Valentine, chief executive of business organisation London First, to ask who should be



entitled to concessionary fares. She has questioned whether the over 60s should be allowed to travel free at peak times.

She said: 'Boris has put longer term benefits of investing in transport capacity and reliability ahead of the short term pain of above inflation fare increases. Most business leaders would reluctantly accept that as the right principle.'

'However, almost half of bus passengers and up to a third of Tube passengers pay nothing at all. When we're searching down

the back of the sofa for every last penny to pay for better transport, should those in work but over 60-years-old still be travelling in the rush hour for free?'

Further, she said that as the modernisation of the underground that began six years ago is taking shape it should not be allowed to falter.

The mayor said he had 'protected' concessionary fares and free passes for the elderly, young people and low income earners.

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Atoc endorses London – Sheffield electrification

Network Rail's plan to expand the electrified network, increasing capacity and improving journeys while reducing costs and carbon emissions, has been enthusiastically endorsed by Michael Roberts, chief executive of Atoc.

Roberts said Network Rail's study '...backs up the already overwhelmingly strong case for further electrification. We must get on and deliver it. In particular we need to see the benefits of electrification extended to the Midland Main Line as soon as possible.'

The report says electrifying the main route from London St Pancras to Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield would pay for itself over 60 years, with savings made from cheaper running costs and maintenance outweighing the initial investment.

Network Rail chief executive Iain Coucher added: 'Passengers would see enormous benefits from further electrification with faster, quieter, smoother, greener journeys. The case for the Midland Main Line is extremely strong.'

BIDS INVITED FOR BORDERS LINE

Tendering will begin this month for construction of a new rail link between Edinburgh and the Borders.

But work will not start until 2011 and the line will only be complete in 2014, a year later than the Scottish government had promised.

Finance Secretary John Swinney blamed the economic downturn for the delay. 'It was not prudent to launch procurement until further market testing had taken place to ensure the project can deliver the best value for public money,' he said.

The line will run to Galashiels from Edinburgh Waverley and is seen as a catalyst for growth in the region. Construction costs are estimated at up to £295m. The original line closed in January 1969, as a result of the Beeching report.

WALES 'MUST DO MORE TO ENCOURAGE FREIGHT ONTO RAIL'

Welsh railways need greater load capacity and more goods terminals, if rail freight is to be expanded in the country, the Freight Transport Association has advised the National Assembly for Wales.

Addressing the Enterprise and Learning Committee at a meeting about the future of infrastructure in Wales, Christopher Snelling, head of supply chain policy at the FTA, said: 'Rail freight not only represents a great opportunity

for businesses in Wales to improve their supply-chain efficiency, it also provides a sure-fire way to reduce our overall carbon footprint.'

The FTA advised the committee to plan for more terminals, maximising facilities for moving freight between rail and road, to allow more of the total journey to be undertaken by rail. The association also pointed to growing opportunities to carry manufactured goods by rail.

Wales reaches resigalling milestone

Improvements to the rail network in South Wales are reaching the end of the first phase, with work around Seven Tunnel Junction station due to be completed in time for the new year.

A disused platform at the station, Platform 4, has been restored, signalling has been updated and new track laid, all of which will help to reduce delays.

The work is part of the £150m Newport area resigalling scheme, which will form part of a wider project to resignal the whole of South Wales.

Chris Rayner, western route director of Network Rail said: 'The £150m Newport area re-sigalling scheme is set to deliver a 21st century railway to South Wales and will also reverse the history of Severn Tunnel Junction.

'The railway around Severn Tunnel Junction suffered years of decline after it was bombed in World War Two. While this work will significantly boost performance, it will also provide the potential for more trains to travel through in the future.'

EAST COAST PASSES TO GOVERNMENT-RUN COMPANY

by **Katie Silvester**

National Express has relinquished its East Coast franchise after a loan from its parent company, the National Express Group, ran out.

Since 14 November, the franchise has been run by the East Coast Main Line Company, which was put in place by the Department for Transport.

Transport secretary Andrew Adonis said: 'East Coast will remain in public hands for two years and there will be full continuity of service. But this is not a care and maintenance job – I want to see real improvements in the service and better value for money.

'East Coast staff have real pride in their jobs; they want to offer a fantastic service, and the new company will give them the tools for the job.

'This is a profitable railway – it needs to be the pride of its passengers and staff too and that's my aim for East Coast.'

The new company, which will run the railway until it is franchised

out to the private sector again in a couple of years, has pledged to end charges for seat reservations and make £12m of improvements to stations.

Improvements to catering and cleaning are also promised.

Plans to put ticket barriers at York have also been dropped 'in order to maintain the existing through-access for non-passengers'. Gating plans, which had been put in process by National Express, had been contested locally as well as by open access operator Grand Central, which wanted to continue offering tickets for sale onboard its trains.

Elaine Holt, chairman of East Coast, said: 'In the coming weeks and months, our first priority is to deliver "the basics" to a consistently high standard. That means systematically maintaining a good, reliable and punctual train service; helpful and proactive staff; well maintained, clean and accessible stations and trains; and good quality information for every step

of the journey.

National Express East Coast staff will join East Coast Main Line Company under TUPE arrangements.

Anthony Smith, Passenger Focus chief executive, said: 'Passenger Focus will be monitoring the East Coast Main Line Company's services to ensure passengers continue to receive good quality services.

'Passengers will now want a commitment that their views and opinions will be key as decisions are made on the next franchise deal. During the National Express East Coast franchise, passengers were forced to fork out more as the company scrambled to raise money by introducing seat-reservation charges and higher car park charges.

The East Coast Mainline Company is a subsidiary of Directly Operated Railways, a government-owned holding company.

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SUPER-EFFICIENT POWERHAUL LOCOMOTIVES ARRIVE IN THE UK

Freightliner has just taken delivery of two PowerHaul locomotives – the first of the environmentally friendly locos to be bought in the UK.

PowerHaul combines the ability to pull heavier loads, with improvements in fuel economy and reduced emissions.

The locos, which were built by GE Transportation in Pennsylvania, USA, feature several different technologies to achieve high levels of performance, including the new V16-cylinder, twin-turbo PowerHaul engine.

During an unveiling ceremony at Newport Docks, Tim Shakerley, engineering director of Freightliner Group said: 'This product is a culmination of two years of hard work and partnership with GE, in order to

produce a locomotive that will increase our haulage capabilities and bring further reduction to our carbon emissions.'

A spokeswoman for Freightliner said that one loco would go to Freightliner Heavy Haul and the other to the group's intermodal business.

'After some driver training and familiarisation, there will be some loaded trials. The first runs for Heavy Haul are likely to be the Portbury to Rugeley Coal flow, and for Freightliner Ltd, Felixstowe to Birmingham,' she added. 'After this the locomotives will then be used across all areas of the business where they will increase tonnages hauled on specific routes with capacity constraints.'





FAILED OPERATOR PLANS RIGHTS ISSUE

National Express, owner of the former operating company National Express East Coast, has turned down several takeover bids and instead plans to launch a rights issue to raise additional funding from its shareholders.

The company, which has debts of £1.1bn, put out a statement saying it had backed out of the franchise 'due to the unprecedented impact of the recession'.

The statement finished: 'During the last five months, the company has worked with the DfT and the DOR to ensure an orderly handover of the East

Coast franchise, and this has not affected passengers, services or employees.

'The company would like to take this opportunity to thank the employees at East Coast for their contributions during the past two years.'

The planned £360m rights issue, a fundraising mechanism whereby existing shareholders are offered new stock at a discount, has been controversial among its shareholders.

Spain's Cosmen family, currently the largest shareholder and part of one of the rejected takeover consortiums, has

questioned the issue, saying that the company does not have a well-defined strategy. If the Cosmens do not participate in the rights issue, the family will lose their seat on the board as their percentage of the total stock will be diminished.

At the end of November, as

Rail Professional went to press, an extraordinary general meeting had been scheduled to give shareholders an opportunity to approve the rights issue.

National Express continues to operate the rail franchises C2C and National Express East Anglia.

'Glasgow's East Coast connections must not be severed'

Passenger watchdog Passenger Focus has voiced concern over reports that Glasgow may be lopped off the East Coast route when a new franchise is awarded.

The Department of Transport is said to be considering the change, which would mean the end of through services between Glasgow and the north of England after December 2010.

Scotland's first minister, Alex Salmond, has hit out at what he called a 'secret plan to slash one of Glasgow's main connections to London'.

James King of Passenger Focus said passengers must be consulted

about proposals to make significant timetable changes.

'Passengers must be reassured by industry and the government that another company will be running through trains on this important route when the timetable changes go ahead,' he said.

The DfT denied it has received a proposal to alter the cities served.

'Any changes to train services are a matter for the train operating company,' a spokesman said. 'However, any such changes could only be implemented after public consultation and approval from the Department.'



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LAST TWO STANDING: THE FINAL TWO BIDDERS FOR THE THAMESLINK R

THE LIGHTWEIGHT AVENTRA...



Bombardier's Aventra.

By Paula Bedminster

With only two bidders for the massive Thameslink contract still in the running, Bombardier is hopeful that assembly will be done in Derby's Litchurch Lane works.

The Department for Transport had been expected to announce a preferred bidder in late October. It still says the decision will come 'in the autumn'. That is taken to mean any time up to 23 December.

Bombardier lost out to Hitachi for the IEP order. In hindsight, the company is relieved to have failed to win Europe's biggest train building and maintenance contract. Since the government announced it wanted to electrify part of the Great Western, with more routes likely to follow, progress on the train order has been hard to find.

Until the full extent of electrification and its timescale has been set in stone, it would not be sensible to decide how many of the new trains will be powered by diesel, by electricity or by hybrid vehicles.

Bombardier has focused, instead, on the order for Thameslink, worth at least £1bn. Its pitch is for a train called Aventra.

The Class 378 is currently the lightest train in its class. Aventra is 10 tonnes lighter. That's partly due to more expensive aluminium structural components, which are already used in Bombardier's metro trains. It will also have lightweight bogies, used on other vehicles but as yet untested on the Electrostar, from which Aventra has evolved.

Bombardier claims the new train will be 70 per cent more reliable than the best available today. Harder acceleration and shorter station dwell times will enable faster journeys.

And it will use up to 50 per cent less energy than the Class 319s, which currently operate on the Thameslink services. That's partly due to the weight saving, and to the regenerative braking now standard on commuter trains. Improved traction motors and

transformers will help, as will use of LED lighting and more efficient air conditioning.

A 'driver assistance system' will take into account gradients and real-time route conditions, to advise the driver how best to minimise power consumption while still meeting the timetable. Trials using a Class 365 brought a 13 per cent energy saving.

Unlike today's commuter trains, Aventra will also shut down fully at night. It will be 'woken up' by remote control before the driver arrives for the first shift.

All this will come at a price. In the last big round of train orders,

carriages were typically £1m each. Using expensive materials and more advanced technology will push up costs dramatically.

Instead, Bombardier has focused its sale pitch on the whole-life cost of the trains, balancing the higher capital outlay against reduced energy consumption, lower track access charges resulting from less wear and tear, and lower operating and maintenance costs.

With Alstom already out of the equation, will it be enough to bring a big order to Derby against the might of Germany's Siemens, with its evolution of the already well-proven Desiro?



Glasgow Central High Level station's famous arch will soon have track running right through it to serve platform 12 and the brand new platform 13 as part of the Glasgow Central High Level Paisley Improvements Project.

ROLLING STOCK CONTRACT

...VS SIEMENS' NEXT GENERATION DESIRO

by Alan Salter

Commissioning began this week in Germany on the first of ScotRail's 38 new Class 380 electric trains.

And, although procured directly by Transport Scotland, manufacturer Siemens is hoping that the biggest electric train order north of the border for a decade will help tip the balance in its battle with shortlisted rivals Bombardier for the contract to supply between 900 and 1,300 dual-voltage EMU cars as part of London's £5.5bn Thameslink programme.

Rail Professional took a look behind the scenes at Siemens' manufacturing plant in Krefeld, near Dusseldorf to see how the ScotRail order is progressing – and to get some clues about the merits of its new Desiro City model, which has the same DNA as the 380 and is the company's big hope for the Thameslink bid.

The 380s will bring more than 9,000 extra seats to the Scottish network when they are rolled out on the Ayrshire and Inverclyde services from next September –

seats with unparalleled leg room for commuter trains.

The 380 has been developed from the proven Desiro model, currently operated by South West Trains, London Midland, Heathrow Express, Northern Rail, National Express East Anglia, and TransPennine Express. Together, they have covered more than 150 million miles on Network Rail tracks.

Alasdair McNicoll, ScotRail's projects director, said: 'We look forward to the start of test running of the Class 380 at Wildenrath in February 2010. These state-of-the-art trains will enable us to bring customers across the ScotRail network substantial benefits in terms of capacity, safety, and customer comfort.'

The train is a transitional model, leading the way to the Desiro City, said Hans Benter, contract manager for the ScotRail project. 'We believe in evolutionary progress, rather than re-inventing the wheel.'

Indeed, some observers wonder whether Alstom was dropped from the race because its X'tropolis



Siemens' Desiro City.

UK contender was too radical, compared to Siemens' Desiro City and Bombardier's second generation Electrostar.

Unusually for Siemens, which prefers to handle the upkeep of its rolling stock itself – it was named Maintenance Team of the Year in this year's National Rail Awards – the maintenance will be done by ScotRail staff. They were trained by Siemens during commissioning at its test and validation centre at the former RAF Wildenrath airfield.

The Germans will supply both the spares and a small team of advisors at the new depot being built at Shields, Glasgow.

The Desiro City carrying Siemens' Thameslink hopes would

be up to 25 per cent lighter and would reduce power consumption by up to half with intelligent energy management systems – providing instant information on consumption using advanced driver advisory equipment.

There is also an intelligent diagnostic system to spot potential problems before they develop.

It promises quicker passenger flow, thanks to larger doors, vestibules, and wide aisles as well as extra space for luggage and integrated CCTV.

Siemens has invested around £26m in the Desiro City and says it would support high technology jobs in the UK, where it employs more than 18,000 people.

HIGH SPEED LINES 'WILL SAVE TIME, BUT NOT ENVIRONMENT'

The main benefit of high-speed rail lines in the UK will be in the form of time savings to passengers and additional revenue to the rail industry. But the environmental gains, in the form of reduced transport carbon dioxide emissions, will be small.

That's the conclusion of a study by transport economist Professor John Preston, director of the Transportation Research Group at the University of Southampton. Preston says the benefits of spending billions of pounds on high-speed rail must be

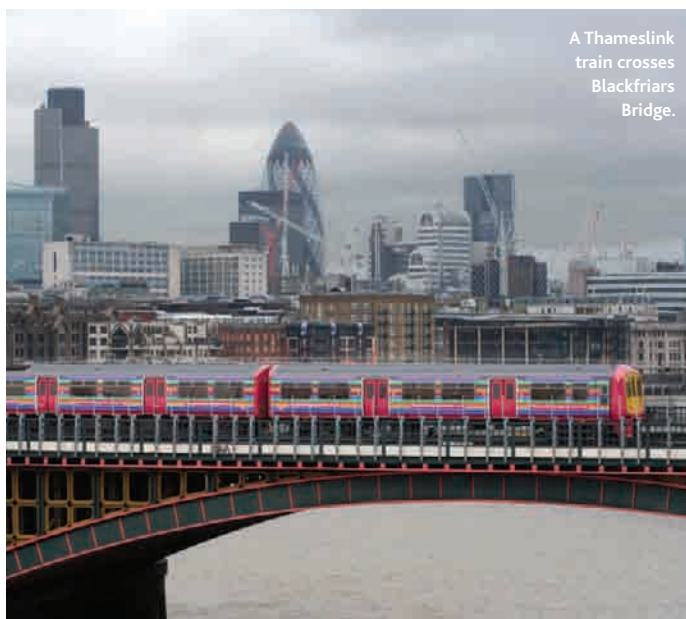
compared with alternative transport investments. So far this has not been done. His review was commissioned by the RAC Foundation.

'HSR is an expensive technology and appears particularly so in the UK, due to the country's built-up nature, the resultant high land costs and high environmental and other regulatory standards,' concludes Professor Preston. 'There will be benefits for users of classic lines as capacity is released, but these are likely to represent less than 10 per cent of

gross benefits. An important issue is how revenue yield techniques might work on HSR services and the extent to which they attract users from across the social spectrum. Another issue is the extent to which there might be price competition from rival conventional train services and how that might affect the financial performance of HSR. Such competition has not been a feature in the regulated systems outside the UK.

'The evidence suggests that HSR can grow the rail market by a factor of two or more.'

FCC DRIVER SHORTAGE SEES SERVICES CANCELLED



A Thameslink train crosses Blackfriars Bridge.

First Capital Connect has had to cancel some of its Thameslink and Great Northern services because of a shortage of drivers willing to do overtime and work rest days.

Problems began when the Toc was forced to cancel all 300 of its Great Northern services on Remembrance Sunday because it had insufficient drivers.

Since then, Thameslink has also been hit, with some weekday

services between Brighton and Bedford cancelled.

Aslef said drivers were not taking industrial action but were merely exercising their contractual right not to work on Sundays.

The union is in the middle of pay negotiations with the company and has rejected an offer, which included a one-year pay freeze.

The union said the company

had been running its weekend service on 'a lot of goodwill'.

FCC needs around 80 drivers to run Sunday services from Peterborough and King's Lynn into London. In September a similar refusal to work at weekends caused disruption to London Midland, which cancelled nearly 1,000 services.

A statement on FCC's website said: 'First Capital Connect, along with other train operators, relies on a certain amount of flexibility with drivers working a combination of overtime and rest days to operate the service.'

'While we have been in routine pay talks with drivers, a steadily increasing number have withdrawn from working rest days and overtime where they have previously been willing to do both.'

'This is not official industrial action and there exists a Rest Day Working agreement with the trade unions.'

The Toc is currently recruiting more drivers. Meanwhile, the next batch of trainee drivers are due to qualify next spring. The company employs around 600 drivers.

Southern launches Priority Seat scheme

by Peter Brown

Southern has set a precedent by launching its Priority Seat Card which allows passengers with disabilities, pregnant women, mothers with infants and the elderly to be seated while making their journey.

Moves to introduce the card follow a six-month experiment when 160 potential users took part. The full introduction of the scheme has been

welcomed by Anthony Smith, chief executive of Passenger Focus, who said it would help those with disabilities that cannot be instantly recognised.

He added: 'This is good news for passengers, especially for those whose disability is not obvious. The Priority Seat Card is a scheme that we support and is an approach that we would urge other train companies to introduce.'

Whether other companies do follow the move, remains to be seen.

But Chris Burchell, managing director of Southern reckons that many regular customers will apply and make use of the card.

He told *Rail Professional*: 'I am delighted with the success of the trial. The card has enabled many of our passengers to travel in comfort and now that we have launched it on a permanent basis, I'm sure that many more will be able to take advantage of the card in the coming years.'

NEWS IN BRIEF

ORR SIGNS SAFETY PLEDGE

The ORR is backing the Health and Safety Executive's Pledge campaign and calling on others in the rail industry to sign up to the initiative, which aims to reduce the number of work-related deaths, injuries and ill-health. ORR chair Anna Walker signed the Pledge on behalf of the regulator. www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/pledge.htm

GO-AHEAD ON TRACK

'Robust first quarter trading' was reported by the Go-Ahead Group in its interim management statement for the three-month period ending 28 October, with trading across its rail operations in line with expectations.

ST ALBANS TO GET TRAM

A branchline from St Albans to Watford is to be converted to a tramline to increase capacity. Signalling equipment for light rail is far cheaper than for heavy rail, which will enable a passing loop to be built and allow double the number of services to run.

CAPACITY BOOST ON WEST ANGLIA MAIN LINE BEGINS

Work has begun to build a carpark extension at Audley End station in Essex, on National Express East Anglia's Cambridge to Liverpool Street line. The project marks the start of a commitment to boost capacity on the line contained in the HLOS.

MAN EVERYWOMAN NOMINATIONS OPEN

The 2010 MAN Everywoman in Transport & Logistics Awards open for entries from 1 December 2009. The awards, held in association with Skills for Logistics, recognise women who serve as role models in the industry, demonstrating the wide variety of career opportunities available in the sector. www.everywoman.com

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DERBY STATION'S UPGRADES UNVEILED



by Phil Lattimore

The £21m Network Rail project to transform Derby station has been completed, with the revamped station offering passengers better facilities and a brighter, more spacious environment.

The project, which began in early 2008, has transformed the gloomy 1950s platforms, with the old heavy, dark platform

canopies completely demolished and replaced by light modern ones. The station refit has also made it more accessible for passengers, particularly the disabled and those with heavy luggage or prams, by installing new lifts and wider stairs.

The refurbishment work on the station has included the addition of new lights and comfortable waiting rooms for



Gloomy 1950s platform canopies have been replaced with light modern ones.

passengers, plus modernised toilets and staff areas.

Area manager Network Rail Mark Tarry commented: 'Passengers can now enjoy a much brighter, smarter and more spacious station following this £21m project that has literally transformed the station.'

Tim Shoveller, managing director for East Midlands Trains, added: 'We're really pleased with the changes that have taken place at the station and, for a city steeped in railway heritage, it's great to now have a station befitting that status.'

WATERLOO PLATFORM DELAYS CRITICISED

Transport secretary Lord Andrew Adonis has asked for 'early recommendations' for the future of disused platforms at Waterloo, last used for Eurostar, in response to criticism about wasted capacity at the busy station.

The platforms are not scheduled to be brought back into use until 2012, as part of a refurbishment of the station, but are costing £2m a year to maintain in the meantime.

Passenger Focus has criticised the delay, pointing out the number of overcrowded services that arrive at the station each day.

Conservative London Assembly member, Richard Tracey added: 'It is disgrace that nearly two years after Eurostar stopped running trains from Waterloo the platforms remain out of use. Network Rail had promised that at least one platform would be in operation by now, but it isn't.'

PRIORITY STATIONS IDENTIFIED FOR UPGRADES

Lord Adonis's 'station champions' have identified 10 'priority' stations, which are to get £50m of funding to bring them up to standard. They are: Manchester Victoria, Clapham Junction, Crewe, Warrington Bank Quay, Barking, Preston, Wigan North Western, Luton, Liverpool Central and Stockport.

Former Virgin boss Chris Green and Professor Sir Peter Hall published their independent report to Lord Adonis on 17 November, concluding that while train fleets are generally being well

upgraded for the 21st century, stations have been allowed to fall behind.

Their key recommendation calls for Minimum Station Standards to be included in all future franchises, to raise customer satisfaction and provide more consistency.

They have also put forward long-term proposals to raise the funding level for stations by 25 per cent for the next two five-year plans from 2014-24 to provide 'catch-up' investment to modernise stations that are now over a century old.

But Sir Richard Branson, head

of Virgin trains, has called for train operators to be incentivised to make their own investments in stations.

He said: 'The private sector has already invested heavily in fleets of new trains, and there is much more that we at Virgin would like to do to add further rail improvements in future.'

'Stations are clearly in need of major overhaul and, with public finances under constraint, the time is right for the private sector to be even more heavily involved in pioneering projects.'

● Network Rail has unveiled its own plans to improve thousands of stations across the country in a five-year, £3.25bn, programme of investment.

Improvements will include everything from new passenger information systems, to longer platforms, better lighting and more seating.

The biggest schemes included in this investment have already been announced and include major projects at King's Cross, Birmingham New Street and Edinburgh Waverley.

SPEED RESTRICTION NOTICE 'COULD HAVE PREVENTED LEVEL CROSSING DEATHS'



by Arthur Allan

Network Rail had failed to put up speed restriction notices at a level crossing that was the site of a fatal accident, a union has alleged.

According to Aslef, Network Rail decided in July that train speeds should be limited to 35mph at four level crossings

on the Inverness–Wick line. But the signs were not erected by September, when three people were killed in a collision at one of the crossings, Halkirk.

Aslef says the evidence emerged in an initial inquiry into the accident, held in Inverness by Network Rail. The track operator

has declined to comment on the investigation while it continues.

The union called for the sacking of Network Rail chief executive Ian Coucher over the issue. It says the train involved in the accident approached the crossing at 47mph, just below the line speed.

'That 12mph could have literally made all the difference in the world to the three people killed on the line that day,' said Aslef's Scotland officer, Kevin Lindsay. 'In view of this incompetence by his company, Mr Coucher should go.'

Meanwhile a report into a 2008 fatal accident in Flookburgh, Cumbria – on a crossing of the same type as the Halkirk one – has criticised Network Rail for failing to upgrade that crossing in line with industry standards.

The Rail Accident Investigation Board concluded that the car

driver killed in that collision might have been blinded by sunlight or failed to understand the red stop lights. But it also recommended that Network Rail revise its management systems to ensure it upgraded crossings when required.

A Network Rail spokesman said the company would not give a 'running commentary' on the Halkirk investigation.

He added: 'We do everything we can to make level crossings as safe as possible, but there is a responsibility on the user to use them correctly.'

He again criticised Aslef's advice to its drivers to slow down at open level crossings: 'Speeds are carefully calibrated for each level crossing. It's important that drivers stick to the rules.'

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SKIPTON-COLNE CAMPAIGN WINS CROSS-PARTY SUPPORT



Steven Hammond (right) and Chris Davies.

by Alan Salter

Three of Britain's leading transport politicians travelled to Yorkshire to lend their support to the re-opening of 11 miles of railway.

Conservative shadow transport minister Stephen Hammond, Lib Dem shadow transport secretary Norman Baker and MEP Chris Davies – the Lib Dem leader on the European Parliament Environment Committee – all spoke at the annual conference of The Skipton–East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership (Selrap).

The group has been campaigning since 2001 to re-open the line between Skipton in Yorkshire and Colne in Lancashire, which was closed in 1970. Its claim that re-opening would restore a vital east-west link across Yorkshire and Lancashire has the support of two county councils and more than 50 town and city councils in the north of England.

Hammond insisted that he was in no position to promise

anything, but spoke of the 'substantial benefits' of re-opening the line.

'The point that the government needs to clearly understand is that it would be a great mistake to lose the connectivity you would get across the city regions all for a small piece of railway which is missing.'

He added: 'Under a different administration, there might be a real chance of this becoming reality.'

Alongside the Conservative commitment to high-speed rail, he said, there are eight other party commitments, which include introducing the right to 'compete or bid against Network Rail for small scale enhancement projects'.

He said: 'We want to encourage initiative and thought and local input and local innovation. The prospect of schemes which would have huge local and regional benefit being able to bid against Network Rail so they would

move up the priority list within local transport regions is of huge significance.

'The contestability aspect of our rail review is likely to be one of the more liberating and defining aspects of the next government.'

The conference had heard from Alan Beswick, a director of JMP Consultants employed by Selrap, that, with the trackbed largely intact, a double-track railway could be built for just over £80m and could attract more than half a million passengers within five years.

His study also concluded that the line would provide a missing link between central Lancashire and the Leeds city region; complement the investment being made in the links to Manchester from the Pennines; provide access to the 'gateway' interchange at Preston Station; increase the overall trans-Pennine rail capacity; and improve journey times between Pennine Lancashire and Leeds.

Baker, who predicted that his party would hold the balance of power after next year's election, said the line was on a list of 14 to be rebuilt by a Lib Dem administration – to be paid for by cancelling nine-tenths of the government's road building programme.

Davies, who travelled on the line as a 12-year-old in 1967, said: 'We are not talking about a community rail line here. We are talking about an important east-west artery.'

He attacked the idea that government spending must be concentrated on London because of its big population and heavy rail usage. 'The north west, which I represent, has seven million people,' he said. 'That is more than the total population in 10 countries within the European Union.'

The conference had been opened by Skipton and Richmond conservative MP David Curry and Labour's Gordon Prentice, the Labour member for Colne, who were famously pictured shaking hands across the Yorkshire/Lancashire border to publicise the campaign. Prentice demanded: 'We need to stop talking about this task. The government just needs to hand over the money, sit back, and just watch the regeneration of this area.'

Network Rail said it 'very much understands the challenge that the Skipton East Lancs Railway Action Partnership are seeking to address in the re-instatement of the Colne–Skipton line and has had a number of useful meetings with the Partnership in recent months'.

A spokesman added: 'Network Rail strives to develop and enhance the rail network and would be more than willing to work alongside other industry parties with a prospective funder, who wishes to take the scheme forward in the future.'

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EAST-WEST ROUTE INVESTIGATED

Investigation work on the route of the proposed East–West railway is taking place so that engineers can ascertain the condition of the ground before designing any necessary ground improvements

The work, which is at the western end of the route, is funded by the East West Rail Consortium, a group of local authorities and government agencies with an objective of securing a new rail route from East Anglia to Oxford via the Milton Keynes–South Midlands growth area.

Steep fare hikes 'masked by more modest average'

by Katie Silvester

Train operators are facing criticism for raising unregulated fares from January to make up for having to drop the price of regulated fares, which are aligned to inflation.

Examples include First Great Western's single supersaver fares rising by 15 per cent and several of Arriva Trains Wales' advance-purchase tickets increasing by 9.4 per cent.

Gerry Doherty, leader of the TSSA rail union said: 'This is a scandal which ministers must put a stop to. Just because they have to cut regulated fares in the new year, they are now jacking up unregulated fares by more than 10 per cent on some routes.'

The rises were announced by Atoc as being the 'lowest fare rises since privatisation', as the average rise will just be 1.1 per cent.

Some tickets will fall in price as they are linked to last July's RPI inflation figure, which was negative. This mainly affects season tickets and some off-peak fares, which will fall by 0.4 per cent.

Anthony Smith, chief executive of Passenger Focus said: 'We call upon the industry to be clear about which fares are going up and to publish average increases for unregulated fares for each train operating company.'

'We are also concerned that some train operators will tinker

with off-peak tickets restrictions, forcing passengers into buying more expensive tickets.

● The Campaign for Better Transport has calculated that passengers are paying up to 29 per cent more for their season tickets today due to a change in pricing formula back in 2003.

Starting in January 2004, regulated fares were allowed to rise at RPI+1% each year. Before that, they were capped at RPI-1%.

Season ticket holders commuting from Sevenoaks, in Kent, to London today pay £2,480 for an annual season ticket, but the price would be just £1,927 if fare rises had continued at the pre-2004 formula.

katie.silvester@railpro.co.uk



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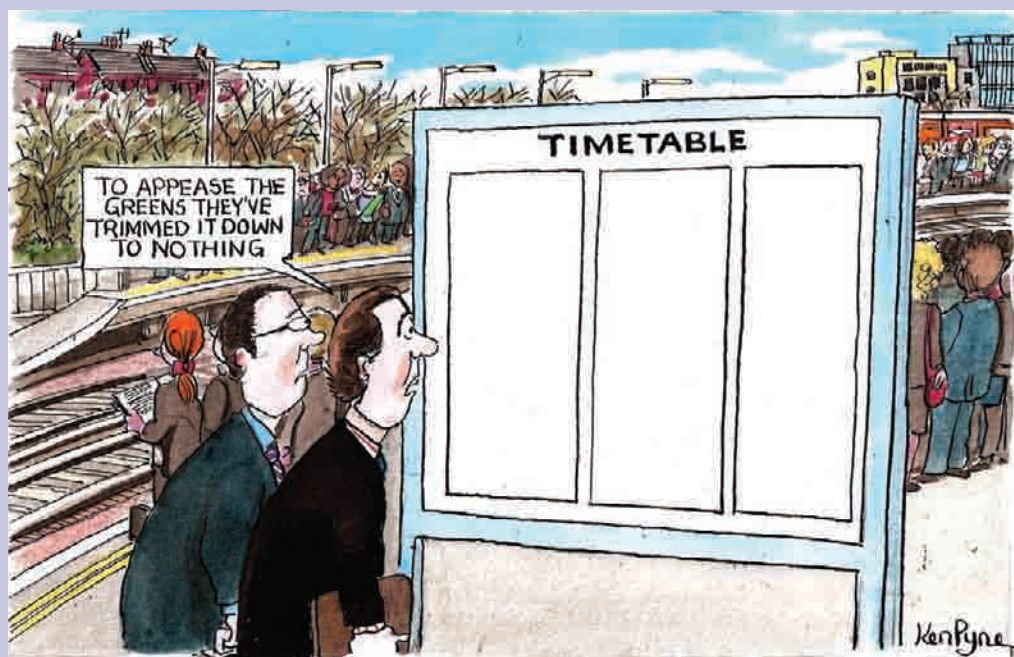
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Timetabling is the culprit in 'empty seats' problem



A fine bit of truth in Rail Pro 152 (November 2009 issue) from Robert Wright. When working on a bid for a south of England franchise, I had the opportunity, via access to the fleet diagrams, to calculate the annual seat kilometres produced by the incumbent operator and compare the outturn with their published figures for passenger kilometres sold.

Their overall load factor was just under 25 per cent. Given that many of their peak hour trains were loading to 125-150 per cent, the evidence

suggests a lot of empty seats being hauled around off-peak.

Many operators haul empty seats long distances to satisfy short distance demand, eg SWT from Weymouth and Exeter to meet the Woking demand. Great Western Trains (the former Inter-City section of the enlarged franchise), with an average passenger haul of just under 80 miles – which is hardly very efficient – hauls empty seats considerable distances to satisfy the Reading market.

There must be more economical

and ecological ways of providing for these essentially short distance traffic flows. The issue is not restricted to these examples.

Anyone leaving Waterloo on a peak-hour fast-line train can observe the rapid dilution of loadings on eight-car slow-line trains overtaken as the journey progresses, and will see the phenomena of slow-line trains leaving Waterloo with standing passengers at the rear of the train whilst there are seats aplenty towards the front, suggesting that people stand by

choice because they are late boarding.

The comments on the Super Voyagers are pertinent. The problem here is the ridiculous timetable, which has trains wandering around the fringes of the country carrying next to no passengers, whilst the central sections of the network suffer some overcrowding – hence the low load factors recorded on the DfT graph.

The answer would seem to be to re-form the rolling stock into eight-car formations and trim back the timetable to: Newcastle to Plymouth and vice versa, one train per hour; York to Bristol and vice versa, one train per hour; Manchester to Bournemouth and vice versa, one train per hour; and Preston to Reading or Southampton and vice versa, one train per hour.

With cross-platform connections at Birmingham New Street, this would concentrate capacity on the core sections of the route and reduce costs considerably.

Implementation of this timetable should enable the trains to realise their full potential and improve loadings. The recent additions to the Cross Country franchise should, perhaps, be returned to their original operators.

David Smith
Western RAILS Consultancy
Bath

Environmental view needs to look at bigger picture

While I usually enjoy Robert Wright's thoughtful material in *Rail Professional* and in his 'native' *FT*, this time (November 2009 issue) he commits the British sin of 'partial accounting' in making his case against the environmental cause of the train. He makes no allowance for emissions not

made for each passenger, who might otherwise be in a car for a comparable journey. That is, no 'opportunity cost' – a key factor.

If just a quarter of each trainload per train per day was travelling by electric train instead of internal combustion, what is the net emission level?

Even by diesel, emissions per seat per train compared well to 25 per cent

of the average load over the whole day. Trains are designed to be used all day every day, while a car or a commercial vehicle is journey specific, another unfair comparison.

Emissions are not being compared fairly – per car against per train? It should be per seat per unit of travel spread over a time-base or distance travelled.

Compare emissions from manufacturing and maintaining a railway (trains and structures) versus a highway system (cars, lorries, fuel stations, etc)? How much emission comes from building one train compared to constructing the number of cars with the same number of seats? Where are the true, 'global' environmental plus and minus factors?

There is also false accounting over the effects of emissions in aviation, maritime operations and land-based transport. Emissions effects are also related to their concentration. How many parts per million are there at an international airport (over the whole day)?

Or along a congested sea lane, as ships in transit run giant diesel engines 24-seven. At altitude, CO₂ is three times more destructive at atmospheric levels than on the ground.

The great British failing is to focus too narrowly on cost-benefit analysis and omit the broader picture; this is partly the result of our culture as well as our politics on all sides. Bigger picture, please – even if it will be uncomfortable reading in terms of what we'll have to spend to make the Earth a place worth living in for future generations.

I see in Robert's article part of a new trend to down-play the benefits of trains and public transport. Perhaps I see something not there, as I work in the railway industry and am some way from affordable retirement!

Or do I see ground being prepared to abandon or severely limit UK domestic high speed train travel?

Joel Kosminsky
London

Aslef is just following Rule Book on level crossings

As a train driver who has suffered at first hand the consequences of a negligent LGV driver's actions at an AOCL (automatic open crossing, locally monitored) level crossing, I feel qualified to comment on Arthur Allan's news story in *Rail Professional* (November 2009 issue).

Mr Allan began his article by indulging himself in a quick snipe at Aslef, claiming that the union had instructed its members to go-slow at AOCL crossings.

There followed a quote from an un-named Network Rail spokesperson urging Aslef to 'reconsider its unilateral action on the issue'. What 'unilateral action' is the anonymous NR spokesperson referring to?

If the apparently ill-informed NR spokesperson was to read the publicly available (at RGS online) instructions to train drivers contained in module TW8 of the current Rule Book, he or she

would see that Aslef has not advised its members to carry out anything but the instructions contained therein.

To dig an even deeper hole for him or herself, the same person claimed that 'Aslef's call to action could have an adverse effect on the safety at open crossings'.

When a train driver is carrying out the correct Rule Book instruction, which states that when he or she has observed that the crossing is clear and the white light next to it is flashing, 'the driver may proceed to the crossing at a speed which is not greater than that shown on the speed restriction board', how can this have an adverse effect on safety?

Would the NR spokesperson dispute that 20mph is not greater than 50mph, and thus complies with the Rule Book instruction?

Would this same person then argue that the train on which I narrowly survived a potentially fatal collision with an LGV at almost the maximum permitted line speed of 40mph would have had an 'adverse effect on safety' if it had been travelling at only 20mph?

This is the same spokesperson who was quoted earlier in the article stating that 'line speeds over level crossings are dictated by a range of factors, including sight lines and traffic flow, and are regularly risk-assessed'.

In view of the RAIB's findings that a staggering 31 per cent of level crossing collisions have taken place at AOCLs in the last 10 years, the layman could be forgiven for thinking that NR's faith in the dictation of line speeds by its current risk assessment method may be misplaced.

As a footnote, the AOCL crossing at which I was involved in the collision referred to above had its line speed reduced from 40mph to 20mph shortly after the incident, then another AOCL a few miles further down the same branch line had barriers installed following a number of collisions and a long campaign by local residents.

What was that old saying about horses and stable doors?

Martyn Hazelhurst
Cumbria

Aslef's level crossing stance could backfire

I heard with concern the Aslef reaction to the Halkirk level-crossing incident

(November 2009 issue).

As an ex-train driver and manager of train drivers, I am concerned at the effect on train drivers of collisions on level-crossings.

I think I am correct in saying that there has not been a recent level-crossing incident that has been the fault of the railway.

Most incidents are due to an error/carelessness/act of stupidity on the part of a motorist or pedestrian.

What will slowing to 20mph achieve? Will a driver be less traumatised?

What I suspect could well happen is one of two things, or both:

- Car drivers will be more tempted to 'jump' crossings, as they will assume the risk is lower ('the train is only going

slowly'), thus increasing such incidents; or

- There will be a call for trains to slow even further or even stop before traversing such crossings.

I understand that, in France, a closed line with level-crossings cannot now be re-opened until all level crossings have been eliminated. This, of course, affects the viability of re-openings and I have heard that one line, temporarily closed, may not now re-open because of this new rule.

Consider sensible responses – yes. But trade unions need to think carefully before macho knee-jerk reactions. They could be hoist on their own petards!

Eric Stuart
France 🇫🇷

THIS TRAIN IS GOING NOWHERE

I was pleased to see the reference to the new Railway Communications System (RCS) on page 25 of the November issue.

The picture shows me in the cab of a First ScotRail train at Yoker depot. The caption states that I am the driver. I am, of course, honoured to be ranked alongside the driver community, but have to confess that I am in fact merely the programme director for the RCS and certainly not competent to drive a

train. A humorous editorial error not lost on my industry acquaintances!

Whilst writing I should also take the opportunity to announce that I have decided to take early retirement from Network Rail in January of next year and am currently working alongside my successor, Graham Greener, who will take over in the near future.

Jon A Wiseman,
Director of FTN/GSM-R
Network Rail



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Atoc wants to see the government setting targets, but not fixing detailed timetables.

Atoc has released a report suggesting longer franchises and less micromanagement of operators by the DfT. The government has said it would consider the findings, as Paul Clifton reports

The system of passenger franchising should be reformed, according to the Association of Train Operating Companies. Atoc says there should be 'less inappropriate micromanagement by civil servants' and greater use of longer franchises, typically 15 years in duration.

In a report entitled *Franchise Reform* the organisation concluded that the government should set standards for punctuality and passenger satisfaction targets, rather than dictating specific ways to achieve them, such as fixing detailed timetables or the number of ticket machines provided at particular stations.

Atoc believes that allowing train operators greater freedom over longer timescales would speed up the delivery of improvements and give taxpayers a better deal for their money. Chief executive Michael Roberts says: 'At a time when the challenge facing all public services is how to deliver more for less, we have a window of opportunity in the railways to empower private train companies to do just that.'

The report argues that too many franchises are over-regulated and micromanaged by the Department for Transport. Allowing train operating companies more opportunity to innovate could 'potentially cut by one third the

£24m spent by DfT Rail and National Networks (2007-08) on consultants'.

Atoc wants longer franchises to become the norm: 15 years in most cases, with 20 years in some others. This, it says, would foster more managerial focus on improving services for passengers, rather than spending time looking at the next bid. It points out that the three Tocs with the highest scores on performance and passenger satisfaction have concessions of 15 years or more.

With the majority of train operators facing slower growth or decline in passenger numbers that was not foreseen when agreeing their franchise commitments, Atoc wants franchises structured differently, to improve financial stability. 'A lack of flexibility means operators pay the same costs at a time when revenue is falling. Atoc believes better risk-sharing is vital to promote stability.'

It advocates an earlier start to revenue support in a franchise, linking franchise payments to GDP and making a greater proportion of Network Rail's charges variable. The report also calls on the government to focus more on awarding franchises on the basis of quality rather than on price alone. 'In line with official advice and overseas practice in rail franchising, we want to see DfT showing more commitment to the principles of best value procurement than appears to be the case at present... and not just the size of premium or subsidy due to be paid.'

While this approach has driven down the cost to taxpayers, Atoc says its approach would do more for passengers by rewarding ideas for better services and improving the quality of franchise bids. In what amounts to a veiled criticism of Network Rail's efficiency, Atoc also wants train companies to take on greater

responsibility for stations, depots and rolling stock. 'Experience suggests that were Tocs to take on more of a role from Network Rail in delivering improvements, then their approach on scoping projects, lower overheads and more streamlined processes could save as much as £250-£500m from Network Rail's prospective spend in this area.'

Atoc suggests a reversal of the trend for the government to take over all aspects of procuring new trains, leaving the job to its members. It argues that this would lead to faster delivery of new carriages and better cost-efficiency in the commissioning of trains. And it wants the changes to be in place before the next round of re-franchising.

The calls for longer franchises are growing. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats both support the idea. And, last April, the Competition Commission concluded that short contracts were contributing to a shortage of carriages on the network. It told the Department for Transport that the way it allocated rolling stock had 'consistently failed to keep pace with rises in demand for passenger travel'. It urged ministers to introduce contracts lasting 12-15 years, allowing operators to generate enough revenues to switch to alternative rolling stock, rather than simply re-letting the vehicles used by the previous owner of the contract.

The Department for Transport said it would carefully consider Atoc's report. It has said recently that any changes to franchising would take at least five years to have an effect, with the biggest contracts not due for renewal until after 2014. The DfT has also been responsible for a complex cascade of rolling stock between several operators. And it plans a bigger cascade following procurement of new Thameslink

Atoc suggests a reversal of the trend for the government to take over all aspects of procuring new trains, leaving the job to its members

trains, with announcement of a preferred bidder thought to be imminent.

So if it were to accept the idea of train companies procuring carriages directly it would be a substantial change of tack.

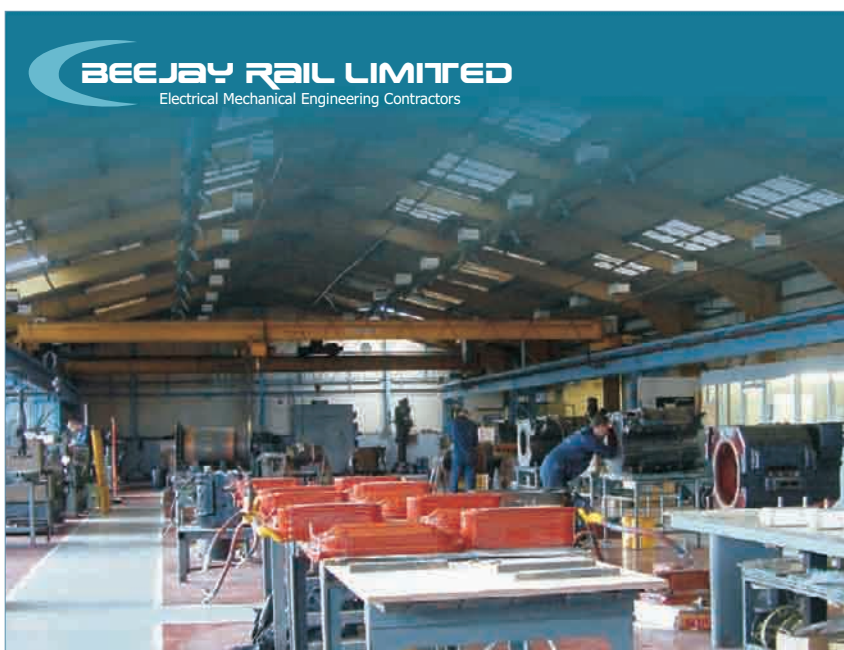
The government may be unimpressed by Atoc's pleas for more control over railway assets. Claiming that train operators are best able to handle resources may not go down well at a time when some of the biggest operators are claiming tens of millions of pounds in revenue support, and warning that profits will fall in the coming months.

The RMT's Bob Crow called Atoc's report an insult to passengers. 'The real agenda here is not a better railway but bigger profits,' he said. 'The government should bin this report.'

'What drives our proposals is a belief that giving train companies a greater stake in the railways... is not only good for passengers and taxpayers, it is also fitting given their role as major public transport players with strong track records of delivery at home and abroad,' concludes Atoc's Michael Roberts.

'In this way, we believe franchising can evolve without the need for more radical, destabilising overhaul, which all the main political parties wish to avoid.' ■

Paul Clifton is the transport correspondent for BBC South: paul.clifton@railpro.co.uk



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THE WRIGHT TRACK

SWITCHING POINTS

The Conservatives have promised longer, less tightly specified franchises, more control over Network Rail and some experimentation with vertical integration if they are elected. But not all of these changes may work in practice, cautions Robert Wright

When Stephen Hammond, the Conservatives' junior transport spokesman, appeared at the Passenger Transport 2009 conference in Manchester on 4 November, one question seemed visibly to take him aback. Alistair Watson, a Labour councillor from Glasgow and former train driver, pointed out that the last Conservative government had considered – following the Serpell Report of 1982 – closing large swathes of the UK's rail network.

Why, he asked, should the public believe his party were any less anti-rail than at the height of the mania for the private car under Lady Thatcher?

It is the kind of question the Conservatives are likely to face increasingly in the run-up to the general election, due by June at the latest. The coming election looks to be much the party's best chance in 13 years of regaining power and overseeing a rail system whose privatisation was only just complete when the party last lost power. While no-one seriously believes the party is waiting to dust off a report which in one option proposed cutting the rail network's size by 84 per cent, those with an interest in the industry are trying to size up the party's attitude to rail.

The party has at least dropped the disastrous policy of vertically reintegrating the railways that it adopted under Chris Grayling when he was shadow transport secretary. The policy was predicated upon politics rather than practicality – it was intended to show that the Tories had learnt from their alleged mistake in separating infrastructure and operations at privatisation. It would have been impossible to implement and, if implemented, would have strangled the freight, cross-country and other services that would have had to negotiate a path across several different infrastructure providers. Just as damagingly, the policy would have required yet another major

shake-up of the railway industry's structure – a prospect so obviously damaging that the party implausibly claimed the reintegration could be done without major disruption.

The policies that remain promise two clear breaks with the existing government's stances. They promise more freedom and longer contracts for rail franchisees, more oversight of Network Rail and some experiments in vertical integration.

The freedom for franchisees is likely to have the largest practical impact. Before Hammond spoke at the Manchester conference, Sadiq Khan, minister of state for transport, had responded to a question about whether micromanagement of rail franchises had gone too far by saying, 'I wish' and complaining his department had real trouble making train operators participate in its initiatives. Through much of what he said, there ran a current of scepticism about whether private, profit-making companies were really interested in providing the best services to passengers.

Hammond clearly believes that private companies largely do work in passengers' interests because that, normally, will provide them with higher revenues. A slackening of government control will, according to this thesis, spur more inventive thinking, taking more account of passengers' needs, than diktats from the Department for Transport ever could. If nothing else, that stance has the benefit of logic on its side. At present, most rail services are provided by companies that in other areas are aggressively entrepreneurial and inventive in their pursuit of profit for their bus operations. In rail, their role is being reduced to acting as human resources managers, handling staff rosters and pensions to fulfil a timetable drawn up by the Department for Transport with the trains it says they should use. However, the Tories may face more constraints than they expect in franchising. Few

franchises are due for renewal and, while there might well be attempts to rewrite some in agreement with train operators, mutually satisfactory changes may prove hard to agree. It will also be interesting to see what happens if a train operator starts using its increased freedom to withdraw services it no longer believes serve a good purpose.


Tory ministers may quickly discover the power of the pressures that led Alistair Darling to centralise so much power in the hands of the Department for Transport in the first place.

Greater freedom also implies greater risk for train operators and, standard economic principles suggest, lower readiness to promise the kind of huge premium payment that was normal for the most lucrative franchises just two years ago. Will a Tory treasury team really be ready to accept a less stringent franchising regime if it leads train operators to promise lower premia? European legislation might also get in the way of some longer franchises. Recent public transport legislation, aiming to stop the entrenchment of monopolies, puts an upper cap of 15 years on the length of any public transport contract.

The franchising changes, meanwhile, look easy to make by comparison with the changes at Network Rail. It is fashionable to scoff at the idea that Network Rail is a genuinely private company with autonomy from government. But an incoming Cameron administration should not forget how the Office of National Statistics declared London & Continental Railways part of the public sector finances when it discovered how much control ministers had over the company. Major changes at Network Rail will have to be handled with extreme delicacy if the government is not to find its £22.3bn debt suddenly landing on its balance sheet.

The party has at least dropped the disastrous policy of vertically reintegrating the railways that it adopted under Chris Grayling when he was shadow transport secretary. The policy was predicated upon politics rather than practicality

The vertical integration experiment looks most difficult to achieve. The present government promised such an experiment following the 2004 rail review and wanted to conduct it on the Merseyrail Electrics area. The idea foundered on Network Rail's scepticism, union unhappiness about the implications for their members, and Merseytravel's concerns about taking on the potential liabilities from the tunnel network under central Liverpool. To expect that Network Rail, sitting securely on a funding settlement that lasts until 2014, will happily revisit this idea and find different answers to the very real problems it presented requires substantial reserves of optimism.

The Tories' greater faith in the private sector will undoubtedly make some difference to how they run the railways if they win the election. But the industry should prepare itself to be surprised not by how much changes but by how much stays the same. 

Robert Wright is the transport correspondent for the Financial Times: robert.wright@ft.com



Margaret Thatcher was a big fan of the private car and had little interest in public transport. The Conservatives' may need to convince voters that today's party is much more pro rail.



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THE RAIL PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW

STEVE
MONTGOMERY

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SCOTRAIL

With ScotRail's last MD promoted to head of rail for FirstGroup, Steve Montgomery stepped into her shoes.

But, unlike many of the transport group's past MDs, Montgomery hasn't come from another service industry, he's a railwayman of 25 years, as he tells Arthur Allan

In a time of recession and ruptured franchises, one operator is on a seemingly unstoppable roll. With a three-year franchise extension in the bag, ScotRail is enjoying customer satisfaction way above the national average, and has seen a 20 per cent growth in passenger numbers. Meanwhile, awards flow in with almost embarrassing regularity: most recently, the firm was named Passenger Operator of the Year for the second consecutive year.

For the man confirmed as managing director in May, these achievements must be tinged with unease. At a certain height of success, a dip is surely inevitable. But the quiet, carefully-spoken Steve Montgomery prefers to focus on doggedly improving service rather than the next black-tie ceremony.

'I don't feel it as a pressure that we have to keep winning awards,' he insists. 'But we do have to keep improving results. It doesn't need to be all bells and whistles – just delivering day-to-day train performance and customer service.'

This understated style is a big contrast to that of Mary Grant, nee Dickson, who led the successful franchise bid back in 2004. Montgomery politely side-steps a suggestion he might echo Dickson's famous public call for passengers to approach her with comments during her commute.

PHOTOGRAPHS: PIERRE GUILLEMIN

He reckons he boards 15 trains a week, including the daily journey to work from his Johnstone home, but will only add: 'We continue to get out there and seek views from the travelling public.'

Montgomery may prefer the slightly more formal setting of the firm's monthly 'meet the manager' sessions at stations.

His background is also very different to that of Grant, now MD of First's UK Rail Division. While his predecessor came to the role through various service industries, including motorway service stations, Montgomery, 46, has been a railwayman for 25 years.

After a brief spell in a carpet factory, he started as a signalman at Howwood in Renfrewshire, before moving into various supervisory roles. Rather than vaulting ambition, he says, his rise was driven by 'gradually getting interested in how the whole system came together'.

'I think British Rail as a business got a lot of stick it didn't deserve,' he reflects now. 'But privatisation has driven a lot of benefits in Scotland that we might not have seen under the BR hat, where we would have been vying with the rest of the UK.'

He was among those who transferred from the previous franchise holder, the much-criticised National Express, when First took over. From operations and safety director, he became acting MD a year ago, taking the reins of the UK's biggest regional operator. So the most recent improvements – including a Public Performance Measure nudging 95 per cent, the best for a decade – have been achieved on his watch.

The relative stability of the Scottish network, now run almost entirely by the Scottish government, is helpful. A public



Montgomery sees a silver lining even in the Scottish government's 'disappointing' decision to cancel the Glasgow Airport Rail Link (GARL) on cost grounds

subsidy that will touch £2.5bn over a decade doesn't hurt either. Montgomery acknowledges that his peers elsewhere in the UK have reason to envy him: 'In Scotland we are in a very good position against our fellow operators.'

The Scottish scene is also a highly collegial one, if Montgomery's phrasing is anything to go by – his answers are peppered with references to 'our partners', Transport Scotland and Network Rail. Currently this triumvirate are at work on the highly complex business of planning electrification of the main Edinburgh–Glasgow route, and doubling the number of services between the cities, while striving to minimise the effects of the work on existing timetables.

Even in these straitened times, passenger growth is up three per cent year-on-year. That's partly down to new services driven by the government: the re-opening of stations at Alloa and Laurencekirk after 40 years, for example.

Montgomery believes the new customers cover the spectrum of travel, from commuters to leisure trippers: 'My belief is that people are becoming more conscious of rail in Scotland – people are coming to rail who had not experienced

it before. We were the first UK operator to bring in free travel for kids up to 15 who travel with an adult – a tremendous saving for families. And our Club 55 product, which gives older travellers a good value ticket to travel anywhere in Scotland, has been widely taken up by other networks.'

So are there no shadows looming in this sunny picture of a nation embracing its resurgent railway? 'We are changing from a steady state of continual growth to a more challenging time,' Montgomery admits.

Nevertheless there are more developments to come. ScotRail has barely spent a third of the total £100m investment agreed as part of the franchise award and renewal. The MD reels off the improvements to date: new interchanges and waiting rooms, CCTV, help points.

True, there have been redundancies this year: some 40 posts were lost at the Glasgow HQ. Montgomery says this was not a result of the downturn, but merely part of the company's regular review of its staffing needs: 'The expansion within ScotRail had come at a very rapid pace so we were going to look at the top team anyway.'

And frontline recruitment continues, with 150 extra engineering and train crew jobs linked to the new fleet of Class 380 trains that will serve routes in the west.

Montgomery sees a silver lining even in the Scottish government's 'disappointing' decision to cancel the Glasgow Airport Rail Link (GARL) on cost grounds. New trains already ordered in anticipation of the service will be put to use on the Glasgow–Paisley corridor.

But there is one area where ScotRail is arguably suffering on account of its own success. Under the Service Quality Incentive Regime (Squire), which Transport Scotland likes to trumpet as the strictest in the UK, ScotRail gets bonuses when it exceeds performance targets and is fined where it fails. But hurdles have been raised to such a degree that the firm faced a net payout of nearly £940,000 this year, despite record customer satisfaction levels.

Among the issues on which the company fell down was the condition of seats and lights in stations, and the state of seats and racks on trains. If he is concerned that his staff may be diverted from core service areas to focus on clearing bird-droppings or changing light-bulbs the moment they blow, Montgomery isn't saying so.

He takes up a point made by Chris Green – ScotRail MD under a previous regime – who recently witnessed a station failing a mystery shopper test because one of its 20 lights was out. 'If the 20 lights are meant to be working and we knew they were meant to be working, we have to make sure they all work,' Montgomery reasons. 'If it was acceptable for one bulb to be out, would that make it OK for two, or three?'

'I have to say it's proven to be a challenging regime. It can be frustrating to see the headlines saying we've landed a million pound fine. But we signed up to the regime; we knew what we were in for. It drives extremely high standards at the front end, and it makes our staff and managers really look at how we present ourselves.'

Montgomery also follows the strict party line on the issue of open level crossings. Scotland became the flashpoint for revived safety concerns in September when three people in a car were killed by an Inverness–Wick train. Aslef later instructed drivers to introduce a go-slow on the



crossings, calling for their replacement or the introduction of in-cab equipment to warn them of obstacles. Offered the opportunity to empathise with his driving staff, Montgomery repeats the Network Rail position that there is no urgent need for replacement. 'We believe the crossings are safe, but they have to be used sensibly by the road user,' he says.

So the Aslef position is wrong? 'We work closely with the unions to ensure we always maintain a safe environment, and this is no different. But we also expect the trade unions to ensure they work within the guidelines, to ensure everything is done to make the crossings as safe as possible.'

That sounds like a criticism of Aslef's action. But it is, he later elaborates, just a 'statement of fact'.

One area where the company and the unions are clearly working in harmony is in the opening of eight learning centres at stations and depots. Here ScotRail staff can expand their skills in topics ranging from foreign languages to cookery.

The latest centre was opened by Montgomery as part of his 'fifth anniversary tour', marking the half-way point of the franchise. The event's title sounds untypically rock 'n' roll – in reality it's an annual exercise that sees the MD and senior colleagues riding the network from east to west, chatting to staff and public.

Montgomery and his colleagues stopped off at a gruelling 36 stations and four depots during this year's tour. He believes it's this kind of legwork and listening that will continue to grow rail use in Scotland. 'The engagement will not stop – it will get greater,' he promises. **■**



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PLATFORM CHANGES

Private sector investment in the Midlands has seen several new stations open, bringing back platforms that had previously been closed during the Beeching era. Peter Plisner has been investigating

When Dr Beeching wielded his infamous axe in the early 1960s, it marked the end for thousands of track miles and hundreds of stations. Even on lines that survived, some of the stations on them nevertheless fell victim to the savage cuts. It has meant that in many places trains still pass through populated areas, but they no longer stop. With increasing levels of congestion on the roads and rising passenger numbers on the railways, the new concept of 'parkway' station was born – a rail departure point, usually on the edge of a city, with plenty of parking.

There are several examples around the country, with of the most successful being built in the Midlands in the mid-1970s close to Birmingham airport. Birmingham International station, which now also serves the National Exhibition Centre, has been so successful that rail authorities have just spent £15m putting in a new multi-storey car park.

Another good example of success of the parkway concept, but on a much smaller scale, has come from Warwick Parkway. Having been the first of the privatised train companies to order new rolling stock, Chiltern Railways also became the first franchisee to build its own station. It's one of only a handful of stations that isn't owned by Network Rail. Funded directly by Chiltern, in partnership with Warwickshire County Council, the station has been extremely successful and proof that if you build a new station, passengers will come!

Built in 2000, it's now used by around half a million passengers every year and provides an ideal place for commuters to both London and Birmingham to hop on the train. It's close to the M40 motorway and the car park has been extended twice since the station opened.

Chiltern's chairman Adrian Shooter says: 'It's done exactly what we thought it was going to do, which is provide a very convenient railhead. People come from the south-west quadrant of Birmingham, as far west as Worcestershire, and some from further away. We get people from places like Nuneaton and Coventry who drive across and many other areas within easy driving distance.'

Hot on the heels of Warwick Parkway came another 'parkway' type station, this time just north of Birmingham. Coleshill Parkway was

Coleshill lost its first railway station in 1939. The new station is a partnership between Warwickshire County Council and John Laing



opened in 2007 and serves both the local community and commuter traffic from north Warwickshire. Coleshill lost its first railway station in 1939. The new station is a partnership between Warwickshire County Council and John Laing. As part of the deal, both parties have signed a profit-sharing agreement.

Ian Walters, rail development manager for Laing Investments, says: 'The county council and John Laing have agreed a return rate that John Laing can earn based on the risks taken in the project over the life of the concession. Above this rate, the county council then shares in any excesses up until the point at which its upfront funding has been repaid. Thereafter, the excesses are re-invested in improvements in the station or transport links between the station and north Warwickshire.'

With two success stories on its hands, it's not surprising that Warwickshire County Council is again looking at additional much-needed stations. Two proposals are currently being worked up. The first is at Kenilworth, a small town like Coleshill which lost its station because of Beeching. Since it closed, the town has grown by 40 per cent. During the same period, rail use across the West Midlands region has risen dramatically – particularly amongst those commuting to work. Around 24,000 people now live in the town and many have to either drive to work or use nearby park and ride stations, many of which are already at, or near, capacity.

The proposed station would be built close to the site of the original one and could be served by a variety of train operators. Already Arriva Cross Country runs through the area, as do many of Wrexham and Shropshire's services. There have also been rumours that Chiltern Railways might be considering a service from the station, perhaps providing direct services to London. Daniel Caldecote, senior transport planner at Warwickshire County Council, says: 'Kenilworth is one of the largest towns in England without a rail station. The county council is committed to the provision of new stations where demand exists. Previous studies have indicated that the station has an economic benefit cost ratio of 2.4 and that 770 single trips per day are forecast to use the station. There is a strong case for a rail station in the town.'

As with Coleshill, John Laing has been appointed 'joint-promoter' at Kenilworth after a tendering process. The appointment of a joint promoter appears to help greatly in bringing forward plans for stations which might otherwise remain on a council wish-list for many years, before perhaps being funded through public sources. Having a joint promoter and funder has helped Warwickshire County Council

With increasing levels of congestion on the roads and rising passenger numbers on the railways, the new concept of 'parkway' station was born – a rail departure point, usually on the edge of a city, with plenty of parking

develop, fund and deliver station schemes, while at the same time helping to guarantee their long-term operation. For a fixed financial contribution, the council is able to secure vital transport, economic and social benefits and is able to pass the financial risks of construction, ownership and long-term operation of the station to a private sector partner.

Ian Walters says: 'John Laing has basically taken the development reins from the county council, and now leads the team taking forward the project. Our input is development, delivery and operational risk. Our incentive is a pre-agreed level of investment into the station and the ultimate 20-year concession.'

The second new station proposal is at Stratford, where a parkway station should provide additional rail travel opportunities for a town that currently has a single station close to the town centre. The new station, north of the town, will provide a new strategic park and ride site for journeys into and out of Birmingham. It's also planned to be on the same site as an existing bus park and ride operation, serving Stratford. It's hoped that the addition of a rail-based park and ride will deliver significant modal shift away from the private car.

The council maintains that the new station would complement Stratford town station by providing convenient access to the rail network for local people, as well as fulfilling the role of strategic park and ride. Plans for the new station form part of an upgrade of what's now termed the 'Shakespeare Rail Line'.

The upgrade will deliver what the council says will be a 'step change in the quality and attractiveness of rail travel' in Stratford-upon-Avon and the surrounding areas. However, at Stratford Parkway the joint promoter, which has yet to be appointed, is expected not only to help fund the station, but also help to secure an increase in the level of rail services from Stratford, something that's critical to supporting the business case for the new station.

According to the council, the highly regulated structure of the rail industry means that there is, in practice, only one potential candidate who



has the ability to furnish the increase in service, and has expressed an interest in doing so. That's London Midland, which is one of the two train operating companies that run passenger services along the Stratford Line. In recognition of the unique circumstances applicable to the Stratford Parkway scheme, an application has been made for exemption from standing orders to allow the appointment of London Midland as joint promoter without an open competition, on the basis that there is no real competition. The application is currently being processed.

Private involvement in stations is proving to be a win-win situation for all concerned in the Midlands and elsewhere. More and more new platforms are now being built and they appear to be happening a lot quicker than in the past. Daniel Caldecote says: 'The joint promoter and funder has enabled the county council to secure the scheme for a fixed financial contribution. It has also enabled the county council to pass on the financial risks of construction, ownership and long-term operation of the station on the basis of a fixed capital payment. Finally, by placing the risks of investment, construction and operation on a single joint promoter, they are given incentives to deliver to time and on budget as they will bear the costs of not doing so.' [1]

Peter Plisner is the BBC's Midlands transport correspondent: peter.plisner@railpro.co.uk



UNREST ON THE UNDERGROUND

Industrial action is an all too regular occurrence on London Underground. A former London Underground manager looks back at the history of industrial relations on the Tube

At the time of writing, London Underground (LUL) is in the midst of an industrial dispute over pay, following stoppages earlier this year. Details of negotiations are kept confidential, but the most recent strike seemed to be about union claims for a five per cent pay rise and no compulsory redundancies. In the light of the economic recession, is such a claim reasonable?

Such disputes are part of an ongoing situation within LUL that seems unending. It is some decades since the miners' strike

and the many industrial problems with car workers. Apart from periodic action by the Union of Communication Workers, the only industrial unrest that makes headline news these days seems to be that involving London Underground and one or more of their trades unions.

LUL deals with three main trade unions on behalf of its staff:

- Aslef, mainly on behalf of train drivers;
- RMT on behalf of some train drivers, many station staff and other maintenance workers; and

- TSSA which represents some station staff, managers and office staff.

The last mentioned is the least likely to cause trouble, although it speaks up regularly on behalf of its members, often in concert with the RMT. Aslef is vociferous on behalf of the train drivers, while RMT is probably heard most often – generally in the person of its leader, Bob Crow – because it represents a wider range of staff and so is more likely to have a grievance.

It is easy to blame the trade unions for industrial unrest. One school of thought is that there are no bad employees, only bad managers. In the case of LUL, I believe there is too much truth in it to let it pass.

LUL in its previous manifestation as the railway part of London Transport (1933-2000) was rather autocratic, and had old-

style industrial relations. An equally old-style trade union officer maintained that, since his day, things had gone mad. He recounted how he and his colleagues used to harangue management in the 1960s and 70s and seek to get what they could for their members – after all, that was what they were expected to do.

But they knew when, at last, there came the steely look and the ‘No’ from the management negotiator, possibly with some industrial adjectives included, that that was that.

When I first joined LUL in the 1970s, many of those in highest positions had worked their way up from such lowly positions as ‘box boy’ (a lad who helped the signalman). They were proud of their career. In some respects that was beneficial, because they knew the company inside out – especially the operations side, which, after all, is what the system is all about. But it also meant that there was inertia and even stagnation.

Others seemed not to have appreciated developmental needs. In the 1930s, Lord Ashfield and Frank Pick were known as a ‘formidable pair’ when they headed operations. But the dynamism of the Ashfield & Pick era had gone. New blood was needed, but an aversion to ‘college boys’ militated against such a transfusion.

Political pressure following the King’s Cross fire was an incentive to get outsiders involved in managing the organisation. Hence, one kind of poor management was replaced by another with different failings. In the wake of the King’s Cross fire, the structure of LUL was reorganised, particularly with regard to front-line and middle management, which had been criticised in the Fennell Report on the incident.

One of the results was that managers became office bound, whereas, previously, they had spent more time out and about and able to monitor staff performance. The number of managers was increased – in some cases four-fold – without a proper investigation as to whether sufficient numbers of qualified managers were available or if throwing managers at the problem was the answer. The disciplinary system became more bureaucratic.

The result of these reorganisations was a management made up of many new managers, some of whom were unequal to their new responsibilities, often reporting to other new managers, recruited from outside the railway industry, who didn’t really appreciate how the railway ‘ticked’.

As part of these changes, a more detailed

management-union negotiating system was set up. Broadly-speaking, the idea was that local issues were dealt with at local level, and so on, up a ‘ladder’. There were also appeal arrangements to deal with disagreements.

However, from the start, the unions not only used the laid down appeals procedure, but sought to circumvent it if it failed to achieve the result they wanted. Over and over again, local managers, who were supposed to be able to tackle local issues, found they were being dictated to and over-ruled from ‘above’

A consequence of this is well illustrated by a conversation I overheard between a new middle manager and an old one. The new manager was asking the older man how he managed his trade union reps. ‘I give them anything they ask for now,’ the older responded. ‘If I say “no”, they just go over my head, so I don’t bother.’

This situation spiralled upwards. I was once in the office of one of the directors, when senior employee relations’ manager entered the office.

‘Do we say “no” or do we agree?’ asked the manager.

‘What’s the point of saying “no”?’ responded

One union leader has suggested that a five-year pay agreement would help to ensure peaceful industrial relations on the Underground during the Olympic Games. Is that a coded threat?

the director, ‘We’ll only be overturned when it gets to the end of the corridor.’

The naiveté of some in employee relations was staggering. I once asked an employee relations manager why LUL gave away so much to the unions’ demands. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘we hope that if we give enough, some day they’ll respond.’

Of course they didn’t, they just took and asked for more.

I was one of a group asked to give input to a pay negotiation that was in progress. Our group of eight consisted of managers with considerable experience of grass-roots staff feelings, yet none of our suggestions were included.

LUL would often say they had made a final pay offer. Then, following union pressure, they would give a bit more. One year,

managers were told to interview all their staff individually to stress that the offer was final and try and persuade them to accept it. As you will have guessed, after union pressure, LUL then made an improved offer. This completely undermined middle management, who interfaced with the staff.

Train drivers who committed serious safety errors, often repeatedly, were rightly either sacked or moved to a lower grade of work. But, after trade union threats, they were given their jobs back and even promoted. The number of Spads on LUL rose steeply whilst that on the national system went down.

On the other hand, a middle manager was removed from his post at an hour’s notice, because a union did not like his efforts to get his staff to do their work properly. This sent shock-waves around middle management.

It is such inherent examples of weaknesses in LUL senior management that are allowing the industrial unrest to fester. No one seems willing to challenge the unions. The strike in mid-June affected travel to a big Wembley football event.

One union leader, not noted for liking multi-year pay agreements, has suggested that a five-year pay agreement would help to ensure peaceful industrial relations on the Underground during the Olympic Games. Is that a coded threat that might be faced as 2012 approaches? If so, what would be the response?

You might deduce from the above that LUL is full of militant workers. This is not so. There is an *esprit de corps* and camaraderie among the staff that is enviable, and the majority of staff do their work conscientiously. One of the repeated gripes of many staff, though, is that good employees are treated no better than bad.

The good staff do not have the management they deserve. They are put under considerable peer and trade union pressure to conform to strike calls. Many of the staff have grown tired of these and resist; but enough strikers still down tools to cause disruption to the public and bring disrepute to their organisation that it could well do without.

LUL needs top management that will grasp the nettle, support its loyal workforce and give Londoners a service they can rely on. If they continually submit to trade union pressure, the present state of affairs seems likely to continue. 📌

The author, who asked not to be named, was a manager at LUL from the late 1970s until the late 1990s.

CROSSRAIL: SETTING THE PACE

Currently the biggest civil engineering project in Europe, Crossrail will set the standard for future UK rail projects, says John Judge

The Crossrail project will unlock the nation's capital by making it more accessible to people living in Britain and those arriving at Heathrow from abroad. The new line will have a significant impact on London and its communities – it will also affect the way we go about all future major rail projects in the UK.

The challenges facing the Crossrail team are all positive. If the team gets it right, they will prove that the UK is capable of carrying out large-scale improvement and building work to the existing rail infrastructure, in the pursuit of delivering the right environment and conditions for modern public transport. One of the most important factors for the project team

is keeping in mind the end users – commuters and daytrippers – who will use the service, and whom we want to continue using it and to feel positive enough about it to recommend it to others.

Whether passengers are making a local journey or have just flown in from the other side of the world, they want travel to be easy and stress free. If they want to grab a bite to eat or a newspaper, they should be able to do so with minimum fuss and effort. The re-development of St Pancras is a perfect example of how to get this right. It is an airy and spacious building above and below; visitors do not feel hemmed in and claustrophobic, and the facilities are first-rate. The key is in providing comfort and making travel as relaxing and pleasurable an experience as is possible, and this also means delivering an efficient transport service that runs on time.

The effects of Crossrail on London will be massive... not just when it's finished, but during the works too. Locals will not welcome disruption to their home or work lives, so it is important the project team understands this and works closely with the affected local communities to minimise the disruption and manage public expectation. Concessions on either



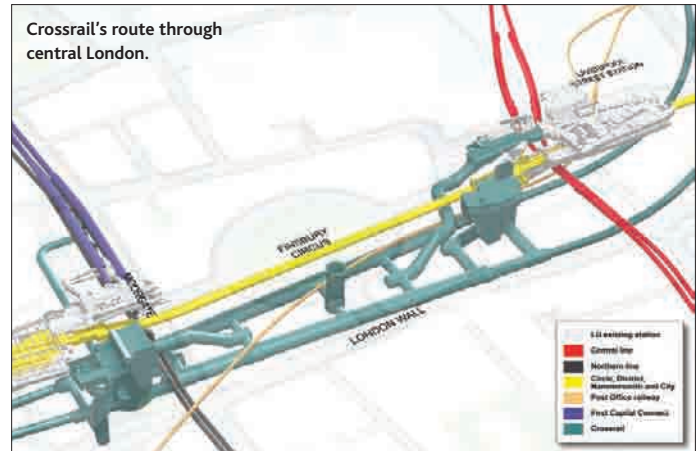
Cross-party support: Lord Adonis, Boris Johnson and Gordon Brown look at a model of Crossrail.

side need to be made to ensure progress can happen. Restricting works hours, removing site waste responsibly and making sure these materials are properly disposed of in an environmentally friendly way, are examples of early issues to be addressed.

Local communities need to respond positively too. In the short term, they will have this redevelopment on their doorstep, but they should be aware of the long-term benefits and prosperity Crossrail can bring. The value of land and property will increase, as travel to and from the city is made easier, and this will encourage people to buy in these areas. It will also open up the opportunity for local residents to seek employment in other areas of London where travel was once restricted by its difficulty. Outside investment will be attracted to these areas too, and local economies will be further boosted by the arrival of new and existing businesses taking advantage of the change.

The recent development of the West Coast Main Line has brought benefits to towns such as Crewe – making travel to London much easier and quicker. It has had a tremendous positive impact on the town. Likewise the DLR effect on Lewisham. The project team will be aware of what Crossrail can bring and the message needs to be communicated clearly to local councillors and business leaders in each area affected. It needs good leadership from all parties to make it work.

However, the project team only has a certain amount of responsibility to local communities. It is up to community members to decide to take advantage of the situation, and this is why I say local communities need to respond positively. When the Crossrail work is in progress, local businesses should be thinking about how to gain from the sudden influx of workers to the area. Businesses also need to plan for when Crossrail is complete to make sure their business makes the most out the opportunity. A tip for



them would be to study what has happened in Crewe and Lewisham. It may also pay to check out other areas of London, in the same way, and to research similar successful businesses with a view to using what they learn about those businesses to improve their own.

For me, the most exciting aspect of Crossrail is the thought of tourists and business people arriving at Heathrow and being delivered smoothly into the heart of London in no time at all. First impressions count, and if Crossrail achieves its aims, the first impression people have of London and the UK will be a good one. Let's make first impressions count and see London grow positively as a consequence of Crossrail. ☑

John Judge runs commercial management problem-solving company, Judge 3D: www.judge3d.com



JANUARY 2010 ANNUAL REVIEW

Rail Professional will revisit the main events of 2009 with comment from some of the industry's leading personalities, and will also take a look at the year ahead.

The issue will land on desks a good week before Christmas and is sure to be read with extra interest.

This is an excellent opportunity to present a positive message about *your* business for 2010.

To make sure you don't miss out, please note these earlier closing dates:

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john.bodill@railpro.co.uk

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Wednesday 9 December
Contact Rob Tidswell:
01223 477427
rob@railpro.co.uk





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PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN RAILWAY OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

THE IRO WELCOMES ITS 2009 STUDENTS

Diploma students



Students starting the 2009 IRO's certificate, diploma and degree courses attended the institution's now well-established course launch day in October. Held in London, the seventh such occasion was attended by 54 of the total 74 students enrolled on the certificate, diploma and degree

courses starting this year.

Those present at the event heard presentations from Chris Daughton, IRO CEO; Mark Hopwood, IRO board member and managing director of First Great Western; Mike Hill, IRO course programme organiser; Tricia Meade, IRO learning and

Degree students



development manager; John Roffey, IRO course mentor; Camilla Allison, chair of the Railway Study Association and tutors, Vince Mills and Caroline Tuff, from Glasgow Caledonian University.

During the afternoon, the students split into syndicate

groups relating to their respective courses to hear further presentations. Donald Macpherson and Stephen Grant addressed students starting the certificate course; Colin Charman spoke to those beginning the diploma and Piers Connor welcomed the students enrolled on the degree course.

WHY A COURSE WITH THE IRO?

Rail Professional asked a number of the students their reason for enrolling on an IRO course.

Sandra Bregger, a change and administration manager at Southern, who is studying the IRO's certificate course, said: 'I enrolled on the IRO certificate course to gain a better understanding of the various aspects of the rail industry, and to improve my job prospects within the company and the railway as a whole.'

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

A number of industry employers have corporate subscriptions to the IRO, which cover their employees' subscriptions. These are graded as associate or affiliate. The current corporate member companies are:

- Network Rail ● First ScotRail ● First Great Western ● National Express East Anglia ● Railnews ● Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail) ● DB Schenker
- Northern Ireland Railways ● First TransPennine Express ● RWA Rail ● First Capital Connect ● Atoc ● Southern ● London Underground
- Docklands Light Railway ● Transport for London ● South West Trains ● Stagecoach Supertram ● Arriva Trains Wales ● Centro
- Parsons Brinckerhoff ● Southeastern ● Virgin Trains ● Chiltern Railways ● C2C ● East Midlands Trains ● Stagecoach Metrolink ● Cross Country Trains
- London Midland ● Mott MacDonald ● Heathrow Express ● Grand Central ● Heritage Railway Association

Those with full membership will continue to pay their subscription personally, irrespective of whether they can subsequently claim it back. Please note that, as the IRO's subscriptions are tax-deductible, a receipt will be issued for all payments – whether by cheque, standing order or internet payment.

If your company would like to explore the benefits of corporate membership of the institution, please contact us. We welcome applications from all industry companies, suppliers and associations – please contact Chris Daughton on: 01444 248931 or: admin@railwayoperators.org

'I also wanted to achieve a recognised qualification which would complement my years of experience.'

Joe O'Meara, 49, the acting head of revenue at Southern, who has enrolled on the IRO's diploma course, said: 'I have worked in the rail industry for 19 years and for the majority of that time I have worked in commercial roles.'

'I have very limited operational experience, except for knowledge of train dispatch and conductor roles, so decided to do this course to gain a more in depth operational knowledge and also to gain a recognised qualification in operational studies. The IRO diploma will help me gain knowledge of the operational side.'

Stephen Eaves, 57, a route control manager for Network

Rail, who is also starting the IRO diploma course, said: 'I chose to do the course to increase my knowledge of railway operations outside of the sphere in which I currently work and to gain an academic qualification in something that I enjoy doing. The course will also show my managers that I am committed to my role.'

Matthew Lee, 24, a project manager for FirstGroup who opted for the IRO degree course, said: 'After finishing my degree in business management two years ago, I joined First Great Western as a management trainee.'

'While I already have a degree, I am still a relatively new comer to the industry and therefore decided to take up the challenge of studying for the IRO degree to broaden my knowledge of the industry.' ❏

Certificate students



DIARY OF EVENTS

IRISH AREA

For information on all Irish Area events please contact Kay Doyle, chairman, by email at Kay.doyle@railwayoperators.org or Hilton Parr, secretary, by email at: hilton.parr@railwayoperators.org

SCOTTISH AREA

For further information on the IRO Scottish Area please contact Ross Campbell on: 0141 242 8620 or email Jim Gillies: at scottish@railwayoperators.org

NORTH EAST AREA

For information on all North East Area events, please contact David Monk-Steel by email at northeast@railwayoperators.org or by telephone on 01751 473799 during office hours. All North East Area meetings take place at 17:30 for 18:00, at York.

NORTH WEST AREA

1 December: Christmas Event – IRO North West get together in Chester/North Wales area. Further information will be posted on the IRO website.
19 January: Talk by Chris Gibb, chief operating officer of Virgin Trains – The West Coast VHF Timetable. Start 18:00. Venue: Manchester Square One.

16 February: Visit to Newton Heath Depot – A look at the operation of a Northern Rail unit depot. Start: 17:30 at Manchester Victoria for transport to Newton Heath Depot.

23 March: Master Class – there will be a talk on ERTMS for operators. Start: 18:00 at Chester.

20 April: AGM in Manchester and presentation on South African Railways. Start: 18:00. Venue: Manchester Rain Bar.

18 May: Speaker and visit – David Hunter and Carl Phillips will speak about Manchester Route Control. Presentation on how a modern day railway control manages day-to-day operations for its customers. Time: 18:00. Venue: Manchester Square One. All events and enquiries should be via Carl Phillips at: ironw.booking@railwayoperators.org
General membership enquires to Clive Evans at: northwest@railwayoperators.org

MIDLANDS AREA

Dates are confirmed, if events change members will be notified via letter or email. Unless otherwise indicated, our events start at 17:30.
11 January: Visit to Rugby station and SCC, at Rugby.

8 February: Network Rail National Operations Delivery Function at Derby ICC.

8 March: LRT speaker at The Mailbox, Birmingham.

12 April: Visit to a freight terminal or freight presentation TBA.

10 May: Toc presentation or driver simulator visit TBA.

For information on all Midlands Area events please contact Julia Stanyard on: 0121 345 3833 or email: midlands@railwayoperators.org

SOUTH WEST AREA

For information on all South West Area events, please contact Nick Edwards on: 07801 905409 or email: nicolas.edwards@dbschenker.com

SOUTH EAST AREA

All South East events will now take place at London Underground's HQ, 55 Broadway, St James Park, SW1, unless otherwise indicated, starting at 17:30 for 18:00.

3 December: SE Area Christmas Reception at the Long Acre, near Covent Garden. Places are limited. If you wish to attend, please contact glen.merryman@londonmidland.com

18 January: Chris Green on Stations. The former chief executive of Virgin

Trains and now Lord Adonis' 'stations champion' will be speaking about his work to improve the facilities at the UK's stations. Start: 18:00.

22 January: First IRO Golden Whistles awards ceremony sponsored by *Modern Railways*. This event will be hosted by The Fourth Friday Club, Grand Connaught Rooms at 12:15 for 12:45. Tables of 10, priced at £900 each, can be booked through Chris Shilling on: 07736635916 or email: chris@shillingmedia.co.uk

For further information on the IRO South East Area, please contact Alex Hellier at: southeast@railwayoperators.org

IRO AGM

8 December: IRO 2009 AGM at 40 Melton Street, London, NW1 commencing at 17:00. Please notify either Claire Wickes by email at: admin@railwayoperators.org or Jo Lane by email: at jo@railwayoperators.org if you would like to attend, as the security measures at this venue are very strict.

More details of area events listed in 2010 are listed on the IRO website at www.railwayoperators.org/Events.aspx

A VIEW FROM THE JUDGING PANEL



The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK)



Steve Agg, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, has been chairman of the Rail Business Awards panel of judges for the past three years

He says: 'The railway industry needs the positive support of both its customers and suppliers. Companies, organisations and individuals generally like to be recognised for their excellence and to know where they stand in comparison with their peers. The Rail Business Awards provide an ideal opportunity for that, which can only be a positive contribution to the overall well-being of the industry.'

Explaining how the judging process works, Steve says: 'Each judge is appointed to a category relating to their own specialist area. We probe and question to find the entry that on balance best answers all the criteria set for the particular category. The quality of the entries submitted so far this year is certainly as good as ever – probably better in fact.'

'In their submissions, companies and individuals seem to be gaining more of an

insight into what the judges are looking for. A great many companies are very keen to win and submit entries year after year, gaining more experience of the entry process, which increases their chances of winning. There are, of course, many one-off activities that stand out as obvious winners. A typical example of that would be the design, construction and opening of St Pancras International; something that was absolutely unique and which has won numerous rail industry and architectural awards. But there are many other instances where technology and innovation have produced radical changes within the setting of the industry and we are certainly seeing more entries reflecting that.'

Agg goes on to explain how important it is to have awards schemes such as the RBA. 'As well as providing recognition, preparing and producing an entry – done with an honest intent – in itself offers a focus for an organisation to look closely at and to analyse exactly what it is doing. And that will benefit the company whether or not the entry actually wins the award.'

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...AND A VIEW FROM A PREVIOUS WINNER



In 2008, Atkins scooped the RBA's Rail Safety and Security Excellence of the year award for a hard-hitting film which has made a real impact across the industry.

Entitled *Complacency Kills*, the company-made video depicts a real-life, potentially fatal incident that took place while contract engineers were installing train protection system aerials on the West Coast Main Line.

Andrew Livingston, Atkins quality, safety and environment director, explains: 'Last year, a team of contractors working at Gypsy Lane (near Nuneaton) were very nearly struck by an oncoming high speed train. The incident, which we call a *close call*, occurred after the lookout's sight line was temporarily obscured by a slow moving freight train, meaning the team had just seconds to get out of the way.'

'Whilst it was a lucky escape, we carried out a full-scale investigation involving all the contractors and their managing directors - we treat all close calls of this nature with the same rigour as a real accident.'

Following the investigation's findings, Atkins decided to make a safety film to illustrate the

dangers of complacency when working track-side. Employing top quality production values, the six minute video re-enacts the incident to good effect, leaving the viewer with much to ponder. To add authenticity to the narrative, the producers cast the actual staff involved in the close call at Gypsy Lane to appear as themselves in the film.


'Our aim was to show in as dynamic a way as possible, how everyone working on the railway is responsible for their own and their colleagues' safety,' says Livingston. 'Granted, it was an unusual approach, but we certainly feel it has been effective.'

'All who have viewed the film, including Network Rail, other clients and our competitors, have praised how well it succeeds in bringing home the "complacency can kill" message,' adds Livingston. 'As a result, and given we had buy-in from everyone involved, we decided to publicise the investigation and its results more widely.'

It was this decision to broaden their audience that led Atkins to enter the Rail Business Awards.

'The RBA provided the perfect platform to convey a message that is of paramount importance. The film wasn't about inadequate procedures or controls; it was about staff not following the existing rules,' explains Livingston.

Winning the award has proved to be a tremendous endorsement of Atkins' approach to safety. 'Comments made by the judges were very supportive of this way of dealing with safety issues and it has obviously resonated with a lot of people,' says Livingston. 'The award also helped us internally in winning over the trust and confidence of our staff and raising the profile of the importance of close call reporting by encouraging a culture in which staff see close call reporting in a positive light.'

'The more reports submitted, the more intelligence we can gather on how we can improve our management of safety. The award and subsequent recognition has really boosted the campaign's credibility and increased awareness of what we are trying to achieve.' 

FULL SPEED AHEAD

With HS2 due to report its findings back to the government imminently, Matthew Hanslip Ward looks at how the new line could be regulated

The case for high-speed rail in Britain is gathering momentum. This year has seen a series of feasibility studies, exploring possible routes for new high-speed links and at last there appears to be political consensus on the merits of high-speed rail. It very much now seems a matter of when, not if.

Now that the principle of high-speed rail in Britain has entered the mainstream, a host of more detailed and difficult questions arise. Will the high speed network be open to mixed traffic – semi-fast regional services and freight services, as well as high speed inter-urban services – or will it be devoted to high speed long distance traffic, as in Japan? Who will own and operate the network? And the million dollar question... where will the funding come from?

A question near the top of the list is, how should a future high-speed network be regulated? Recent developments in relation to the line between London St Pancras and the Channel Tunnel (HS1) offer some early pointers as to the answer. Over the last year, there has been a gradual extension of

regulatory oversight of HS1, culminating this October in new legislation coming into force and the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) publishing a new statement of policy.

This is all part of a move initiated by the government to have HS1 regulated, as far as possible, in the same way the national network is regulated. While the ORR's October statement explains that it is not intended to create any expectation about the approach to regulation of future high-speed lines, there are, nonetheless, key themes that are likely to re-emerge: capacity allocation and charging levels and structure.

From now on, the ORR has a new function in the pre-approval of all new track access contracts covering the reservation of capacity on HS1. Its rights will be comparable to those it enjoys in respect of the national network, where, through its track access contract approval function, it is able to regulate capacity allocation. The ORR looks set to follow the already established pecking order for capacity allocation on HS1, with high-speed services being afforded priority and within those services, priority going to

international passenger services, followed by domestic passenger services and finally freight services.

There are already two passenger contracts permitting access to HS1, one held by Eurostar for its international services, the other by Southeastern for its domestic Javelin operations. These were agreed before the ORR acquired its new powers. As part of its new functions, the ORR intends to consult over the Christmas period on possible modifications to the standard track access agreement, in order to accommodate the bespoke and special features of high-speed service operation, using the existing two contracts as a starting point. In particular, the ORR will look at risk allocation, including appropriate liability caps and the appropriateness of prepayment of charges.

The level and structure of HS1 access charges now come under the ORR. There are two principal categories of charge at the moment. The first is an investment recovery charge. This is designed to recover the huge capital costs of the HS1 project and will be subject to a maximum level set by the government as a maximum value per minute of train service. It is thought that a significant proportion of the long-term capital cost is likely to be recovered by 2047.

The other important charge relates to the cost of operations, maintenance and renewal of the network. This charge will be subject to periodic review by the ORR. During the course of these reviews, ORR expects either to approve or determine the level of operation, maintenance and renewal cost that would be incurred by an efficient operator, and set a level of charges consistent with that. For passenger operators, for example, it expects that the charges will continue to include charges for costs directly incurred as a result of operating train services and charges for fixed and common costs.

ORR will not take into account the actual or expected income that HS1 receives from property, retail, car parking or other activities, or from the investment recovery charge.

Choosing the right regulatory model for future high-speed networks will be crucial to their sustained success. **EW**

Matthew Hanslip Ward is a partner in the rail team at Denton Wilde Sapte LLP.



A Southeastern Javelin at Ebbfleet.

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- Major refurbishment at Highbury & Islington station for London Underground; and
- Translink: design and management of major track renewal scheme.

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Securikey has added, to its portfolio of mirrors, a new range of unbreakable stainless steel mirror domes, specifically designed for use in areas of high vandalism.

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JP POLYMER SHEETINGS



JP Polymer Sheetings is introducing its high-visibility tactile paving product to the UK market.

The company can supply the product, install it and maintain it. Developed by Trelleborg, a world leader in rubber technology, the paving has been fully evaluated in conjunction with the RNIB.

The high specification design is suitable for underground or metro applications, as it has advanced low-smoke and toxicity characteristics. It is fully compliant with EU directives. JP Polymer Sheetings can offer overnight turnkey surface-mounted installation, without excavations.

The designs are already widely used by Spanish Railways, Metro de Madrid, and Metro do Palma.

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HOLT AND BOSWELL COMBINE TO HEAD ECML



Elaine Holt, 43, (pictured left) is to be the chairman of the East Coast Main Line Company, which will be running the East Coast franchise on behalf of the government before it is re-let to a private sector operator.

Holt, who was managing director of First Capital Connect until earlier this year, began her transport career at British Airways, where she worked in customer service. She joined FirstGroup's bus division in 2000, moving across to First Great Western, where she was customer services director. She was part

of the bid team for First Capital Connect, running the franchise when it was awarded to First, until her sudden departure in April.

Karen Boswell, 46, is to be managing director of ECML. She also hails from FirstGroup, where she was most recently deputy managing director of FCC. Prior to that she was customer service director for FCC.

Before joining the rail industry, Boswell worked for support services company Aramark. She has also had customer support roles with Granada and Allied Lyons.

DRIVER INSTRUCTOR GETS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD



Robert McMillan, an instructor driver for Virgin Trains, has been designated a

Chartered Environmentalist by the Society for the Environment. It is believed that he is the first, and currently only person, in the British railway industry to hold this award.

McMillan, 56, used examples of his current work in his evidence including interests in energy consumption, bio-fuels, recycling and his instruction methods.

He said: 'Railways are paramount to the future of sustainable transport.'

SIGNS ARE GOOD FOR BAKER

Adrian Baker, former owner of Doric Signs, has joined Caliba, a supplier of passenger information, signalling and control systems to the rail industry.

Doric Signs, which had traded since 1957, had most recently re-signed St Pancras.

Marketing director, Philip Chester, said: 'Adrian's vast experience has seen him play an integral role in many projects with key clients in the rail industry including Network Rail, Southeastern Trains and Intercity, to mention a few.'



Briggs named as IOSH VP

A former railway health and safety officer has been elected vice-president of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

Tim Briggs is one of six vice-presidents at the institute. Briggs, 54, started his health

and safety career in rail but now works as the course leader of Leeds Metropolitan University's BSc Honours degree in Safety, Health and Environment Management.

He said that becoming a vice-president was a 'huge

honour'. 'Being elected as vice-president is a massive thing for me, and I'm looking forward to promoting IOSH's aims and values nationally and internationally, and to representing a body that I care for passionately.'

FURZE-WADDOCK TO LEAD BIDDING FOR VIRGIN

Virgin Trains has appointed **Paul Furze-Waddock** as its new business development director.

Furze-Waddock, who starts in the new year, will be focusing on franchise bidding for the group, including the West Coast franchise, which is due for re-bidding in March 2012.

He joins the company from FirstGroup where he was commercial director of rail. He has also worked for Angel Trains.

Virgin Trains' chief executive officer Tony Collins said: 'I am absolutely delighted that Paul will be joining the senior Virgin Trains team at a very exciting time.'

'He has a strong track record in successful franchise bids and is the right person to lead Virgin's rail franchise activity.'

'His appointment is a real demonstration of our commitment to bid for, and retain, the West Coast franchise whilst also looking at other opportunities.'



EIGHT NEW RECRUITS FOR INTERFLEET



Above: The seven new training and competence recruits. Left: Rebeka Sellick.



Rail constancy Interfleet Technology has appointed former employee **Rebeka Sellick** as principle consultant.

Sellick, who was previously head of the maintenance services team had left to become the engineering director at Atoc.

Jonathan Wragg, UK regional director at Interfleet, said: 'Rebeka's skill in being able to identify issues and devise solutions will be of great benefit, as will her proven track record in delivering successful projects, both at strategic and practical levels.'

Sellick, 41, added: 'I am delighted to be returning to Interfleet, a company with the right mix of bright people who really know about the rail industry and can make a difference.'

Meanwhile, the company's Training & Competence Solutions team has taken on seven new people. The new recruits are **Danny Neale, Kevin Richardson, Gary Chambers, Graham Burgess, David Davenport, David Carter** and **Charles Salvona**.



GBRF BOOSTS RAIL SERVICES COMMERCIAL TEAM

Phil Amos (above) has been promoted to a new commercial role for freight operator First GBRf.

Amos, 36, who has been with First GBRf for seven years, becomes market manager of Rail Services.

The new role will see him take responsibility for the management of all GBRf's commercial activity for its Rail Services, which include conducting, loco and rolling stock hire, driver hire and stock movements.

Former GBRf driver Chris Jones will be joining the Rail Services team as assistant market manager.

PEOPLE ROUND-UP

HARPER JOINS AECOM

Andie Harper has been appointed as the European director of programme management for transportation and Infrastructure at consultancy Aecom.

He will be leading the company's management work in the transportation and infrastructure market sectors, including work on Crossrail as part of the Transcend Consortium.

Harper, 55, was previously CEO of Metronet, where he oversaw the transfer to Transport for London. Other past roles include acting as project director for the Edinburgh Tram Project.

SAVAGE TO HEAD HERITAGE TRUST

The Railway Heritage Trust has appointed **Andy Savage** as its new executive director, replacing Jim Cornell. Savage has held several senior positions in the rail industry and is presently deputy chief inspector of the Rail

Accident Investigation Branch. He is also a fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers, as well as being a member of CILT and IOSH.

TRANSPORT INET ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTOR



The Transport Innovation Network (iNet) has appointed chartered engineer **John Frodsham** as

its new director.

Frodsham, 53, joins the team from Stadco where he spent four years as engineering sales and commercial manager.

Located at Loughborough University, The Transport iNet is funded by East Midlands Development Agency and the European Regional Development Fund, with the aim of increasing the level of innovation in the East Midlands.

STEPHENSON HARWOOD TAKES ON NEW RAIL SPECIALIST

Solicitors firm Stephenson Harwood, a specialist in transport, has added **Graeme McLellan**, 39, to its finance team.

He recently advised Angel Trains on its UK refranchising, and Lloyds TSB on financing new trains for Stansted Express.

The appointment of McLellan, previously a partner at Pinsent Masons, follows the hiring of **Richard Parsons** last month from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer.

MCPHEE LEAVES INVENSYS RAIL

Alistair McPhee, managing director of signalling company Invensys Rail (previously Westinghouse Rail Systems) is to leave the company at the end of the year.

McPhee joined the company in 2002 as projects director, becoming

MD in 2006. He has overseen the growth of the company in the UK, Europe and the Far East.

Mark Wild, currently general manager core markets, will become acting managing director.

BAILEY BECOMES CATALIS MD

Training provider Catalis has appointed **Andrew Bailey** as its new managing director.

Bailey, a chartered accountant, has moved from his post as chief operating officer of the RTC Group, Catalis' parent company, to take up his new role at Catalis.



THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR METROS

Cities around the world are investing heavily in metro systems and the UK is no exception. Andrew Roden reveals why Invensys Rail is helping drive this metro boom



From North America to Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, something quite remarkable is happening: cities blighted by soaring road congestion are turning to metro systems to unblock the streets and improve residents' quality of life.

The milestone metro opening this year may have been in Dubai – the first such system on the Arabian peninsula – but we shouldn't overlook the huge investment in new and upgraded networks taking place on every inhabited continent. The world's biggest cities looked to metro systems at the start of the 20th century, and today metros are increasingly regarded as the best and often only way to unclog congested roads.

Britain is part of this growing trend too with massive investment in the London Underground – one of the world's biggest and busiest metros – as well as Glasgow and Newcastle. In Manchester, meanwhile, the Metrolink light rail system relies on dedicated former heavy rail rights of way for much of its network and is being expanded. The Tyne and Wear Metro is set to be concessioned, bringing with it a swathe of new funding. On

Merseyside, although the Merseyrail franchise is considered to be part of the conventional rail network, in practice it operates far more like a metro. In short, there's a lot going on.

New and upgraded metro systems are far more capable than their counterparts of even 20 years ago, offering greater capacity and service frequency with improved safety, passenger information systems and station environments. Appropriately, the company that is doing more than most to meet modern-day demands for metro equipment is British: Invensys Rail.

The UK is lucky in having well-designed and operated metro systems, but the potential offered by Invensys Rail's latest train control systems, in terms of increasing capacity and improving service frequency, is exciting to say the least. The company is part of FTSE 100 listed process controls and automation provider Invensys plc and its heritage includes famous names such as Westinghouse Rail Systems, which developed and installed the train control equipment for London Underground's Victoria Line – the world's first automated metro line.

Recent successes have cemented the company's strong reputation, with new contracts won in Sao Paulo, Brazil, alongside major work enhancing metros in Singapore and Madrid, and key infrastructure on Vancouver's light rapid transit system, which is due to open in time for the Winter Olympic Games next year.

At the heart of Invensys Rail's success is its wide range of Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) signalling systems. CBTC uses data transmissions from trains and a sophisticated control centre to allow trains to run far closer together than conventional signalling systems, without compromising safety. Automatic operation of trains also means schedules can be adhered to more exactly and passenger comfort maintained.

CBTC sounds simple in principle, but it belies the massive development effort to bring it to

today's peak of efficiency. Invensys Rail's systems are proven in service, but developing the hardware is only part of the story: in order to maximise the benefits over conventional signalling, a holistic and highly-specialised approach must be taken in the system design process. Invensys Rail has proved expert in ensuring the design is right first time to eliminate delays in commissioning train control systems, delays that have dogged many operators around the world. The train control system on an automated metro is as critical as the trains themselves: if either are delayed the system cannot run.

Invensys Rail has continuously been developing its CBTC packages and even with the capabilities of today's offerings, it is looking towards the next generation. There is the potential to use CBTC as the basis for a whole-route management package, encompassing passenger information systems, predictive train maintenance, and much more.

It is cutting-edge thinking, but Invensys Rail believes the technology is available now to integrate these varying sub-systems. Forty-one years after it pioneered automatic train operation on the Victoria Line, it is repeating this success with another groundbreaking step forward. [1]

The potential offered by Invensys Rail's latest train control systems, in terms of increasing capacity and improving service frequency, is exciting to say the least



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