

**Filton Bank Four Tracking Special**

**Decision in June.**



Stairway to heaven: The new footbridge at Stapleton Road has passive provision for an extra span and clearance for electrification. All ready for the Four Tracking of Filton Bank.

**Countdown to June decision on go-ahead for Filton Bank Four Tracking.**

- FoSBR marks 50 years since Beeching at the Halo Café Bar.
- Picture of a Tram in Geneva
- More than flowerbeds: Stapleton Road gets brand new footbridge
- Parson Street goes from 3000 to 77000 passengers in ten years.
- Spanish riding school finds a large white horse in Westbury.

**FOUR TRACK FRIDAY**

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May call to support for four tracking of Filton Bank at the footbridge at Stapleton Road railway station at 11am.**

## **CRITICAL PATH ANALYSIS CONCLUDES: FOUR TRACKS FOR FILTON BANK.**

The great Scottish/American Industrialist/Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie knew how to play economic downturns to his advantage, reequipping his factories when demand for labour and material was low thus getting ahead of his rivals before the next economic upswing.

Since the economy in the UK is not exactly overheating, there is now no better time to use the same strategy as Carnegie and equip Filton Bank with full four track bandwidth capacity. The Government is scratching around for infrastructure projects to kick start the economy and shorten dole queues, interest rates are low and the increase in demand for rail travel shows no sign of slowing down. The Electrification of the Great Western Main Line will mean more long distance trains fighting for space with local services for the Greater Bristol Metro, meant to serve local stations whose passenger numbers have been increasing for the past ten years. Whilst wrangling continues with passenger rail franchising, the hardware side of the rail industry, overseen by the nation's uber quango the not for profit Network Rail is working through a long list of capital projects without the red tape endured by the passenger franchising. It is understood that most of the design work has been done by Network Rail as they are minded to go ahead with this investment since it will ensure that the new electrified service between Bristol, the rest of the West Country and the Capital will be robust and not suffer from insufficient capacity or be bustituted when repairs are needed.

The Greater Bristol Metro will not be viable without four tracking, many Severn Beach Trains do not call at Lawrence Hill at present and cross city trains from Portishead and Weston super Mare would be compromised not to mention that the rebuilding of Ashley Hill and Horfield stations would not be possible. FoSBR calls on the ORR and the Government to ensure that this vital investment in the gateway to the West Country and Wales is given the go ahead as a vote of confidence in the region and the country outside of the capital.

### **11am, Friday 17<sup>th</sup> of May rally at Stapleton Road For Four Tracking of Filton Bank.**

Show your support by filling out the form below and bringing it on the Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> of May.

**Greater Bristol needs a strong local rail network to meet the needs of commuters and residents. To this end it is vital that Filton Bank is four-tracked to allow express trains to pass stopping trains.**

Name.....

Address.....

E mail..... Day tel. number (optional of course).....

I support the four-tracking of Filton Bank because.....

.....

Bring this form to Stapleton Rd. Station, Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May, at 11am , or send to Rt. Hon. Simon Burns MP, Rail Minister.

**Projects dependent on Filton Bank Four tracking; Four tracks good, two tracks bad.**

**Cross Bristol Services:** Capacity is needed to allow local trains to stop at Stapleton Road, Lawrence Hill, through Temple Meads onto Bedminster and Parson Street.

**Henbury Loop:** Trains running the loop enter and leave it via Filton Bank from Stoke Gifford and Narrows Ways junctions.

**Portishead Line:** More capacity required south of Temple Meads to accommodate the extra trains to Portishead.

**Reopened stations on Filton Bank:** Reopening Ashley Hill and Horfield require segregation of local trains from long distance trains, to allow stopping at these stations.

**RMT GIVES ITS FULL SUPPORT TO FOUR TRACKING OF FILTON BANK.**

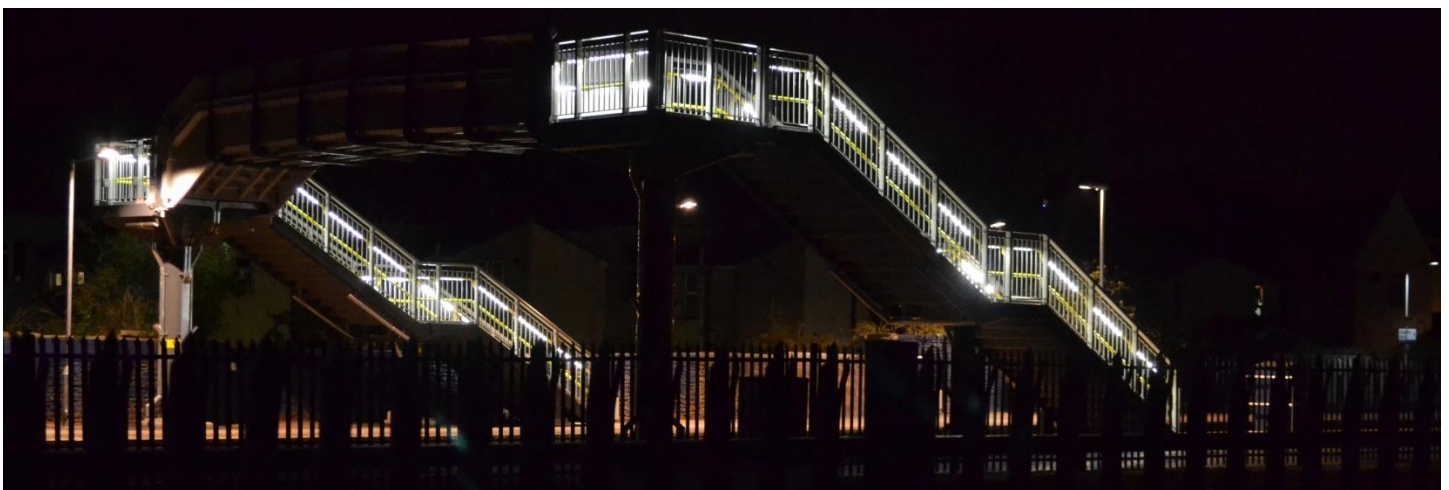
The current position with Filton Bank is that Network Rail has included returning it to four lines in its submission to the Office of Rail Regulation for Control Period 5 funding. The final decision is due to be made this summer and as such, all pressure should be applied towards the ORR.

Network Rail is aware of how important this project is. If this project is turned down then not only does this have local implications, it also has an effect nationally as it will cause performance issues for the North East/ South West Main line. These issues will then be compounded on other lines, such as the South Wales Main Line and all other lines from the West to London.

In hope that funding will be agreed, provision and planning have started as Network Rail would like this key part of its strategy completed as soon as possible. Design work has started and the new footbridge has included passive provision to easily allow it to be extended over the two reinstated lines. Network Rail is also hoping to begin work on the disused steel bridge in the autumn and this will include its complete renewal.

Hope this helps and I wish you all the very best. I look forward to the massive changes that hopefully will be happening in the Bristol area over the next couple of years. The only thing stopping these changes are the ORR and ultimately, the Government.

Gary Abbott, Branch Secretary RMT Bristol





## FoSBR marks 50 years since Beeching at the Halo.



Train to campaign: FoSBR supporters en route to the Halo to mark 50 years since Beeching.

### **VESTED INTERESTS AT THE HELM OF BRITAIN'S 60's TRANSPORT POLICY.**

50 years ago the head of British Rail Dr. Beeching appointed by the then transport minister Ernest Marples ( who happened to have his own road building company) published the report "Reshaping of British Railways" outlining how he was going make the railways break even. But the alacrity of culling of more than two thousand stations and a third of rail mileage by ripping up the track for scrap and selling off railway land, today seems more an attempt covert the travelling public from rail to road based forms of transport then make the railways pay.

Bristol suffered badly during this period of railway contraction. The closure of the Somerset and Dorset line had a knock on effect of undermining the line through Fishponds and Staple Hill an thence to Bath (which would have been useful for the Bristol and Bath Science Park), the viaduct from Fishponds to Montpelier was pulled down to make way for the M32 thus destroying a rapid link from East Bristol to Clifton fragmenting the city and its economic activity.

South Bristol also lost the line through to Brislington that connected Wells and Glastonbury, (okay one cannot have expected Beeching to have foreseen the Pilton pop festival growing into what the Glastonbury festival is today). The Portishead line, not totally eliminated but on life support as a freight only line is now likely to be reopened before the end of this decade, having been closed to passengers with no effort to increase passenger use.

The Severn Beach Line, the sole survivor of Bristol's four local lines now carrying nearly a million passengers a year demonstrates what could have been had Bristol maintained all its local rail infrastructure intact.

Fifty years on, local rail is slowly returning to Bristol, the increasing likelihood that the Portishead line will return to the national network by 2017. A second line to Bath (Bath to Bristol four tracking) depends partly on the reopening Somerset and Dorset line to Bath (if the Scots can reopen the Waverly line to Galashiels then anything is possible) and reconciling its current use as a cycleway. An emotive issue demonstrated by the protests against its use as part of the Bristol Rapid Transport.

The line south to Brislington and on to Clutton, the City of Wells and new age shrine of Glastonbury will be a much tougher challenge to reinstate due to building encroachment. But just as the contraction of the rail network in the sixties eroded the case for rail, restoration and reinstatement of lines, services and capacity only serves to strengthen the case to add to what is already being developed, and since railways require less space than roads they can be woven in much more easily into the existing fabric than any major road scheme.

But now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the attitude of rail as anti-aspirational is truly very last century. The mode has refused to die and is now bouncing back with the highest passenger levels in 90 years on a network, thanks to Beeching is a half the size. Stations and even railway lines are being reopened and with HS2 new long distance lines are to be built that will not only result in dramatically reduced journey times but will increase capacity to accept continental rolling stock that will allow freight come straight through the Channel Tunnel to the Midlands and beyond. Electrification is being rolled out to an extent that a tipping point will soon be reached that will make electrifying the whole network viable. Although there is plenty to celebrate there is much to overcome and FoSBR has its work cut out as the Bristol Area has a reputation of consistently punching below its weight in lobbying for railway investment brought to this part of the world.

**FOSBR 2013 MEMBERSHIP**

**Thanks to all of you who have renewed your membership for this year. Your subscriptions and donations are much appreciated and our vital for our campaign to improve local rail services. A membership card is enclosed with this newsletter.**

**To those of you who have not yet renewed your membership, it is not too late and we would be very happy to receive your subscriptions. In case you have lost the membership form, another one is enclosed with this newsletter.**

**Best wishes to you all.**

**Tony Lloyd (FOSBR Membership Secretary)**



## FAST LINK FROM KNOX'S CHURCH TO HADRON COLLIDER



Geneva's trams: A Smashing way to travel to CERN, at almost the speed of light. Calvingrad as Geneva is called by some of the locals is a city of 100,000 blessed with a beautiful tram system, trolley buses and railways, Oh it just makes you want to weep. It would be cruel to go on about how lovely the public transport there is. Only to say, that the system is integrated and seems more popular than driving.

## LANGUAGE EXCHANGE GROUP VISITS THE WESTBURY WHITE HORSE BY RAIL



Off to see the Westbury White Horse. Arrival at Westbury station, yet again taking advantage of the Groupsave four for the price of two. The group returned to Bristol from Warminster.

**It is a fact of life the 14 year olds are impossible to please, but a least you can save on the travel by knowing your way round First Great Western fares.**

Visit the Isle of Wight was my advice to an unemployed Spanish friend lamenting that the train fare from Bristol to a sunny beach in Cornwall was beyond her.

The journey to the Isle of Wight is bliss. Temple Meads, Portsmouth Harbour, ferry to Ryde Harbour then straight onto the local train to Sandown Station - all on one FGW ticket. Everything connects. Everything works. My standard return ticket with a pensioner's reduction was £50. Advance tickets will be far cheaper.

The two trains which trundle down the east coast of the island have cascaded from the London Underground. Trains cascade. The West of England Board expects a 'cascade of elderly diesel multiple units from other parts of the country but hopes for the Thames Turbos Class 165/6s as soon as the electrification of the Thames Valley services takes place'.

Inside the train is a picture of a butterfly on a flower with the words -"This Island is a little paradise" by Karl Marx, Political Agitator.

As our week's family holiday on this little paradise was in arctic April, the main entertainment was walking along the coast. But the key members of the party – aged 6 to 16 - enjoyed everything apart from the 14 year old who never wants to go to the Isle of S\*\*te again!

A Bristol Grandma (or should that be Granma? Ed.)



The construction of the new electrification compatible foot bridge at Stapleton Road ushers in a new level of investment for Bristol's local stations. This level of infrastructure is in a different league to the flowerbeds that were the default improvements of before. It may not have included ramps for wheeled access but these will come when the station returns to be Bristol's second station again. With road access, interchange with the Severn Beach line and showcase bus routes. Stapleton Road has the potential to become a major transport hub for east Bristol. Especially more so if it's four platforms are restored along



with four tracks on Filton Bank. The station will be served by many more local trains as part of the Greater Bristol Metro making it viable for long distance trains to stop en route to south coast via the Rhubarb loop. Arrivals to Bristol Stapleton Road will have just as many options to travel on from there as Bristol Temple Meads. The road access to the station can be fully opened up to Taxis and motor cars raising the level of activity enough to deter fly tipping. One day Stapleton Road will regain its rightful status that made it Lloyd George's Station of choice to visit Bristol.



Busy service at Parson Street. Note the unused platform ready for expanded local services.

Parson Street in 2002/3 only served 3932 passengers but rose to 77722 in period 2011/12. An increase from 10 to over 200 people a day, the same number that Stapleton road was serving ten years ago which now is frequented by more than 350 people daily . Parson Street should be south Bristol's equivalent to Stapleton Road, whilst Stapleton Road is still an interchange between the main and Severn Beach lines, Parson Street is still waiting to be reconnected to Portishead to have its interchange status restored. But once it does, not only will it will allow passengers from Portishead and Pill to access North Street and south Bristol but also change for trains in the direction of Weston-Super-Mare forming a North Somerset Metro including connection with the bus to Bristol Airport without needing to travel to the heart of Bristol

**Call for Filton Bank Four Tracking. Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 11am Stapleton Road Station campaigns;** [julieboston17@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:julieboston17@hotmail.co.uk)

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