

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

from Tim Calow

**W**e must apologise again for the delay in the production of this newsletter. We are dependent on several of us finding the time to write, edit, design and post the newsletter – and life can get in the way at times.

We have, however, been quietly working away and have recently attended meetings concerning the proposed Skipton to Colne reopening and the East Coast 2010 timetable. We will be attending several meetings to press the case for investment in Airedale train

services, with Passenger Focus and our local MPs.

Meanwhile, we would like to welcome two new arrivals on the scene. Firstly, Andrew Noble has joined the committee. Andrew lives in Saltaire, travels regularly on the line and is aiming to follow a career in the police. Secondly, committee member Jenny Whiteside now has a son, appropriately named Robert Stephen. We wish him many happy journeys.

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## From the Editor's chair...

by Steve Broadbent

**I**echo Tim's apology for the time that has elapsed since the last *airelines*. Almost two years ago I was fortunate to secure freelance work with RAIL magazine, and this commitment has grown and grown - over the summer I have not had a single free weekend! I'm very lucky to have this work, which of course is fascinating, but it does mean there is little time for anything else. And while the workload grows, Tim has twisted my arm to get an issue out before Christmas!!

Sadly, this is also my last *airelines*,

I have been unfortunate enough to lose the skilled help that has made the newsletter the high-quality publication many of you have told me it is, and I have neither the skills myself, nor indeed the eyesight, to be able to produce what I feel is an acceptable standard. It's been great fun editing *airelines* over the past few years, but as you will appreciate, things have changed!

I normally spend a page or two in each issue rounding-up rail news which affects our area, rather than

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## **Planning extra capacity in Airedale**

We have little progress to report on development of the Route Utilisation Strategy plans since it was finalised in the Summer. We are continuing to express concern that plans are developed to address the existing overcrowding issues.

We understand that plans to lengthen platforms to take 6 coach trains are being developed.

Meanwhile, a reply from the Department for Transport to a letter from our committee member Keith Preston, suggested that there are no plans to remove the class '333' units which operate our services from the West Yorkshire area. This suggests that earlier plans to reform class '333' into 5- and 3-car sets might be under consideration again, enabling peak trains to be increased to 5 or 6 coaches.

This would involve shuffling the trailer cars which is quite feasible, though the 5 car sets would be a little slower accelerating.

Extra units would be needed to operate some services, so perhaps Leeds to Bradford trains might utilise class '321' units (as used on Leeds to Doncaster trains). Some of these have been released from London Midland following the introduction of new Siemens units.

## **Train performance**

Train services have generally run well over the course of the last 6 months and very little of the disruption that has occurred is attributable to problems with our class '333' electric trains.

Signalling problems have caused a few problems. Back on 14 May points problems at Apperley Junction caused disruption through much of the day. More recently problems with the signalling (particularly points at Shipley) caused delays on the morning peaks on both Thursday 29 October and Wednesday 11 November and in the early afternoon of 30 October.

The gales on Saturday 3 October caused major disruption and the line was shut from lunchtime after a tree fell on the line at Bingley, bringing down the overhead wires. Services were also disrupted in the morning peak on Tuesday 22 September after the diesel unit on the 07.00 Skipton to Bradford broke down at Keighley. There were some delays rescuing the failed unit and it was 08.15 before the line was cleared.

Between these incidents services have run well. I have been told that the sanding equipment fitted to the class '333' electric units has helped performance during the recent autumn leaf fall season.

# News from the Leeds-Lancaster- Morecambe Community Rail Partnership



**S**ince the last meeting we have had the AGM and a further committee meeting, *writes Rod Tickner*. Key comments are given below. As usual please let me have any comments – the next meetings are scheduled for Tuesday 8 December and then 9 March 2010. I can be e-mailed on [rod@avrug.org.uk](mailto:rod@avrug.org.uk)

At the AGM it was noted that in the last year the CRP has made significant input into the Lancashire and Cumbria RUS, the restoration of a service to Heysham has been popular; various events have been promoted and our colleagues at LASRUG have produced an attractive line guide (with some financial assistance from ACoRP). The growth in patronage from stations unique to the line (Giggleswick, Clapham, Bentham and Wennington) has been noticeable.

The new website for all the CRP

lines involved in Lancashire, which has been set up by the CRP officers is now working: [www.communityraillancashire.co.uk](http://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk) - well worth a visit as it also links with our own website. The original [www.llmr.co.uk](http://www.llmr.co.uk) is still there as well.

One of the interesting points is that there is a bid in to fund extra facilities for cyclists to include cycle racks with lighting and CCTV in 90 stations in all covering many of the ones on the line.

Performance continues to improve, passenger numbers increasing by over 55% with revenue about 10% higher.

Discussion continues on how best to achieve timetable improvements: one view is that if gaps can be filled with a service as far as Skipton then this represents an improvement and greater journey possibilities. The other pressing need is to extend the current summer Sunday service – the winter schedule has no trains on Sunday mornings.

While Simon Clarke, the CRP officer, is looking at strategic matters, the CRP is looking at opportunities for people to be involved at a community level so that its work has a tangible visibility with specific stations along the line.

# More Jottings from Tim Calow

## ALONG THE LINE

### ENGINEERING WORK

**T**here is no engineering work planned in the run up to Christmas. We do however have advanced notice of some Sunday work in February. All day on Sundays 7 and 14 February 2010 work at Calverley and Thackley tunnel will block the route between Leeds and Shipley/Guiseley.

Leeds-Bradford Forster Square trains will be replaced by buses throughout, departing originating station at advertised times. Journey times will be extended and passengers between Leeds and Bradford are advised to use the Caldervale Line service.

Skipton-Leeds trains will terminate in platform 2 at Shipley with connecting buses between Shipley and Leeds. Leeds-Skipton trains will start from platform 2 at Shipley at advertised times and the Leeds-Bradford Forster Square buses will connect with these trains at Shipley.

Additional buses will run from Leeds to Shipley departing at advertised times and alternate hours these buses will connect with the Bradford Forster Square-Skipton trains at Shipley. Journeys to and from Leeds will be extended.

Leeds-Morecambe/Carlisle trains

will be diverted to start from and terminate at Bradford Forster Square. They will depart from Shipley at advertised times with connecting buses between Leeds and Shipley, departing earlier than advertised from Leeds in order to connect.

Journeys to and from Leeds will be extended. The Bradford Forster Square-Skipton service will run normally.

Leeds-Ilkley trains will start from and terminate at Guiseley with connecting buses between Leeds and Guiseley. Buses from Leeds will depart earlier than advertised in order to connect. Journeys to and from Leeds will be extended. The Bradford Forster Square-Ilkley service will run normally.

## NEW TIMETABLE

**A** new timetable starts on Sunday 13 December. We are not aware of any changes to services in Airedale or of significant changes to trains serving Leeds.

## EAST COAST NEWS

You are probably aware that National Express have given up the running of trains on the East Coast Main Line. The more observant of you will have noticed the 'East Coast' stickers placed on the London trains which serve Leeds (and Skipton and Bradford).

It was at 23.59 hrs on 13 November 2009, the East Coast Main Line rail franchise transferred from National Express East Coast Ltd, to East Coast Main Line Company Ltd, the new business established by the Government to operate services on the line for about the next two years. We are promised that services and ticketing will not be affected by the changeover.

Meanwhile one of the challenges is the development of the new standard hourly pattern of services to enable more trains to run and increase capacity. It is intended that the new timetable will be introduced in December 2010 (though timing is tight to go through all the necessary procedures).

The current draft plans show five 'East Coast' and one open access train running each hour. Two of the services will run to Leeds and two to Newcastle (either one or both continuing to Edinburgh).

Many of the intermediate stops currently covered by Leeds trains will be taken up by a new hourly 'local' service which will run alternately to Lincoln or York. This enables the Leeds services to be speeded up to standard timings of 2hrs 10 or 11 minutes. Except in the peaks, all Leeds trains will call at Wakefield and Doncaster.

Alternate trains then call at either Peterborough or at Grantham and Stevenage. Passengers for Newark or Retford will need to change trains at Doncaster. Standard departures

from Leeds are planned to be xx.15 and xx.45 – with arrivals at xx.15 and xx.45. This would give excellent connections to and from the Skipton local trains and standard journey times of just under 3 hours from Skipton to London.

Plans to run additional 'East Coast' services to Bradford and Harrogate are not to be implemented due to difficulties finding paths for through services.

It is similar difficulties which mean that the two-hourly stopping service will run to York rather than Leeds. The existing Bradford, Skipton and Harrogate services are part of the franchise specification and will continue to run in their current timings. Mike Hogg (Operations Director) explained to us that 'East Coast' would like to be able to run electric trains to Skipton. This is not however in order to run additional services. It would give them flexibility to run the Skipton service more reliably. Currently the Skipton – Leeds leg of the train has to be cancelled if no diesel set is available.

'East Coast' is intending to use 125 mph, 5 car, class '180' units on the Lincoln services, and five units will be leased to cover three daily diagrams. The remaining services are to be covered by the existing fleet.

There will also three trains each way between Bradford Interchange and London run by Grand Central. Trains are planned to leave Bradford

at 06.30 (arr. London at 09.51), 10.22 (arr. 13.45) and 15.46 (arr. 19.08). Return services from Kings Cross leave at 10.48 (arr. 13.53), 14.48 (arr. 17.53) and 19.48 (arr. 22.57).

It has to be observed that the journey times from Bradford are not competitive with East Coast/Northern services via a change of trains in Leeds. In addition the first departure from Bradford and the last arrival do not give connections from or to the Aire Valley. The trains are likely to be much more attractive for passengers from around Halifax and Brighouse.

## **CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR SERVICES**

Northern local services will operate normally, apart from early closedowns on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve when trains will operate until approximately 2000 and will then start to run down. Few late evening trains after 2200 will run.

No rail services will operate on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. On New Year's Day there will be some early morning Northern cancellations before 0700 after which the normal weekday service will operate. Full details are available on the Metro website.

## **METRO Settle & Carlisle Line Winter Offer 2009/10**

Northern has introduced a Flat Fare Winter Offer in conjunction

with Metro (WYPTE) on the Settle & Carlisle and Leeds – Morecambe line for holders of English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) passes issued by Metro (WYPTE) and Metrocards. Customers must show their valid ENCTS pass issued by Metro (WYPTE) or Metrocard to take up this offer.

The ticket is available between Monday 2 November 2009 and Saturday 13 February. The flat Fare Day Return of £8.00 is available from Leeds, Bradford Forster Square, Frizinghall, Shipley, Ilkley, Ben Rhydding, Burley in Wharfedale, Menston, Guiseley, Saltaire, Bingley, Crossflatts, Keighley and Steeton & Silsden. It is available to any station between Hellifield and Morecambe /Carlisle.

## **SKIPTON TO BOLTON ABBEY?**

The Yorkshire Dales Railway (YDR) is working away towards its goal of returning trains to Skipton, from Embsay. To this end, the first Network Rail study (GRIP 1) has been completed, and so far everything is going well!

Two further studies are required before any work can start, and the project will cost somewhere in the region of £2 million. The idea is that Embsay Junction would be reinstated, fully signalled, controlled from York, and YDR would operate services between Skipton and Embsay, using part Network Rail's branch to Swinden Quarry (Tarmac).

They would use Platform 5 at Skipton, which is currently derelict, and could operate a Park and Ride service for Skipton using the large car park at Bolton Abbey station. This would hopefully ease the traffic going into Skipton...

A new range of Skipton Savers has been launched to help raise funds for the project: these can be bought on the train or in the shop at Emsay, and allow your money paid to be doubled against tickets in 12 months' time. Do please support them with their work on this very worthwhile project (says your Chairman who lives in Emsay!).

## **BRADFORD CROSSRAIL**

**B**radford Civic Society has just produced a report "Common Sense Regeneration; A Plan to revive the fortunes of Bradford". It laments the current state of Bradford City Centre and looks to a number of measures to regenerate the city.

It is interesting that they see the current ring road as a problem,

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*Editor's Notes, continued from page 1*

just the Aire Valley line, and while Tim has covered many issues, just to say that the proposal to re-route Cross Country services that presently go via Doncaster so as to run via Leeds is still very much 'live' and this could give Leeds through services to Oxford and Reading from next December.

Three documents will appear soon,

because of the way it "effectively cuts off the city centre from Goitside (and the University, the Alhambra, the Media museum, the central library, the ice rink and various bars and clubs nearby)." They recommend that this should be re-routed away from the city centre.

In the longer term the Society looks to a cross-city rail link to give better access to Bradford by public transport. A high-quality circular rail route serving Bradford, Leeds, Normanton, Wakefield, Brighouse, Halifax and Bradford again, is suggested. The hopes are for improved InterCity links to bring in tourists and a railway to serve Leeds-Bradford Airport.

We support the aim of improving public transport links but remain to be convinced that a 'heavy rail link' is the most effective way forward when a more comprehensive Light Rail System could probably be constructed at a similar cost. This could reach areas currently only served by buses – something that 'Crossrail' would not do.

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which will be of great importance to West Yorkshire: the Government's revised Rolling Stock Strategy is imminent; a major study entitled 'Manchester Hub' is due in January, despite the title this project will (eventually) affect services across the North; and Network Rail's Northern Route Utilisation Strategy will take a 30-year view right across the North of England. Watch out for all three if you are interested in our railways!

# The SELRAP Autumn Conference

*SELRAP - the Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership, which campaigns for the re-opening of the Skipton-Colne line - held a Conference at Herriott's Hotel in Skipton on November 6. Rod Tickner reports.*

**T**here were speakers from across the political spectrum – David Curry (Skipton MP), Gordon Prentice (Pendle MP) together with Stephen Hammond the Shadow Transport Minister, Norman Baker (Liberal Democrat Transport spokesman) and Chris Davies MEP.

All the speakers were fulsome in their praise for the way SELPRAP had campaigned and was taken seriously and were keen to suggest how the line's re-opening could be taken forward.

All political parties were united in their support for the scheme, but there were no promises just suggestions how any of them would tackle rail problems after the next election. David Curry spoke about the social issues and the need to develop that part of Lancashire; Gordon Prentice noted that such developments were a regional responsibility rather than that of central government. Stephen Hammond stated his party is committed to High Speed Rail and were keen on longer franchises and Community Rail schemes with less involvement from the Department for Transport.

A number spoke of the strategic importance of such a link- opening

up the possibility of direct routes from the Aire valley to Preston, Blackpool and the West Coast Main Line, rather than the trip in the opposite direction to Leeds and changing to head west as at present. Chris Davies felt it suffered from the domination of "London" based issues.

Alan Beswick (from the Consultancy firm which produced the 2007 report on the feasibility of the line being re-opened) looked at the business case and reminded the audience that the costs were clearly outweighed by the benefits in most approaches that were modelled. But also there was a need to consider other less tangible benefits such as environmental impact, social inclusion and improved connectivity. As an example: Skipton to Manchester currently takes 142 minutes by rail but with the Colne link in place such a journey would be of the order of 50 minutes, particularly if the Todmorden curve was re-instated.

Reference was made to the success of the line re-opening at Alloa in Scotland which has exceeded all expectations in terms of growth and it was suggested that such an effect could be possible between Skipton and Colne.

The trackbed is largely extant and, although there are challenges, the scheme is one of the most feasible of proposed rail re-openings within the country. However, the cost is £80 million or so for the 11.5 miles of double track railway.

Paul Salvesson for Northern Rail highlighted their commitment to community-based transport as a way forward but again, could not specifically help with promises of cash. He stressed the arguments for social cohesion but pointed out that such a development would mean that the double track between Bolton and Blackburn would need to also be re-instated.

Adrian Shooter, chairman of Chiltern Railways, emphasised the usefulness of longer franchises – his company has a 20-year one which allows it to promote infrastructure developments from within commercial sources rather than the public purse; in fact he stated that much of the cost of developments is effectively met from the proceeds of revenue – i.e., the customers.

He urged SELRAP to accept that it was now time to turn from a campaigning organisation to one that was planning on delivering a service. He acknowledged that such activities were not without risk – if the Chiltern Railways' current plans for developments were to fail then it would have cost £10m of the company's reserves to no avail.

Peter Kilbride drew on the

development of the Bere Alston-Tavistock line in Devon, which was linked to other social developments such as housing. These ideas were echoed by Steven Cochrane of the Pennine Lancashire Leaders and Chief Executives Group; who examined the need for agreement from all organisations working together.

Norman Baker stressed the strategic and environmental impacts and pointed out that his party had 14 rail re-openings it would proceed with if they came to power. The train services had to be promoted as an entity and thus it was important that all the companies joined together to develop their marketing and developments.

The next step would be to raise the finance for the more thorough engineering study, which would cost in the order of £80,000-£100,000; the present momentum needs to be maintained. Agreement with many organisations would be needed to ensure that the existing benefits of all political party support together with social inclusion arguments, environmental considerations and strategic development would be successful.

However it is much more than a local link but a strategic part of the redevelopment of the country's rail network, and it is now necessary for much larger sums of money to be made available for the necessary next steps to bring what many support to a reality. To move from campaigning to doing.

# Aire Valley Rail Users' Group

## *Minutes of the nineteenth Annual General Meeting held at Saltaire Methodist Church Hall on Saturday 16 May 2009*

### PRESENT

Sixteen members were present together with Drew Haley from Northern Rail.

### APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Steve Broadbent, J Wilkes and Ken Williamson.

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 19 April 2008

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

### MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Tim Calow reported that it had been a year of stability with the same stock and a stable timetable although there were changes to the Morecambe line in the afternoon driven by WCML changes. The problem of peak time loadings would continue to be monitored.

Passenger numbers were up by 11% in the first three months of 2009. This however brought

with it continuing problems of overcrowding.

Infrastructure was continuing to be improved: the new Skipton Station Café; Keighley repainting; Shipley footbridges and lifts; Leeds ticket barriers and the Passenger Information system replacement. On the S & C the signalling had been enhanced although the blockades to allow maintenance continued.

New stations were on the horizon together with a possibility of a revamped service.

He reminded members that there was a lot of work in AVRUG with various committee members being involved in meetings with Northern Rail, Passenger Focus and especially those concerned with the Rail Utilisation Strategy which had been the single most time consuming issue with a final version due in the summer of 2009. There was also correspondence, particularly in connection with bus replacements as well as occasional press releases.

The magazine continued to be produced which were supplemented by circular e mails.

Looking forward there were the solutions to the increased demand along the Aire valley route. Tim raised certain concerns about the importance of service frequency, the limitations of the signalling on speeding up limited stop services; the need for more off peak capacity; and his uncertainty about what was planned regarding through diesel services in the peak periods.

The meeting was reminded of the death of Robin Sissons, one of our members and a campaigner for rail issues who sadly died in June 2008.

Tim then thanked his fellow committee members for their varied contributions to the work of AVRUG; and also thanked Drew Haley and his Northern Rail colleagues who have kept our trains running. A discussion was recalled with a Conductor, whilst commenting on passengers on the East Coast downgrading from first class as an economy measure, proudly pointing out that everyone travels first class on Northern.

Finally he thanked those attending for their support; reminding those present that more help was always welcome.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Although there was a small deficit there were healthy reserves thus the subscription rates should remain unchanged.

The report was accepted nem con.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were agreed:

Chairman	Tim Calow
Vice chairman	Marten Lougee
Secretary	vacancy
Treasurer	Rod Tickner
Membership Secretary	Keith Renshaw
Newsletter Editor	Steve Broadbent
Publicity	Jenny Whiteside

## ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

The following were agreed:  
Peter Bewes  
Keith Preston  
Malcolm Riley

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Peter Bewes reported on developments with SELRAP, Emsay Steam Railway and FoSCL.

After refreshments, Drew Haley presented latest details from Northern Rail and answered questions.

## Letters, ?? and !!

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

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

## Subs and £££s

AVRUG does its work in lobbying for better and more reliable services along the Aire Valley thanks to its loyal

membership, who pay just £3 a year for the privilege!! Donations or sponsorship to allow us to do even more are just as gratefully welcomed! The address for subscriptions is below, for donations please contact the Treasurer.

## Our web site...

[www.avrug.org.uk](http://www.avrug.org.uk), should be being continually being developed, and Jenny Whiteside is now taking on this task.

## Next Newsletter...

...will hopefully appear in spring 2010!

## Thanks to...

...Tim Calow and Rod Tickner who have helped with words.

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## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Chair:** Tim Calow, 3 Laurel Close, Shires Lane, Embsay, Skipton BD23 6RS  
tel: 01756 799517 e-mail: Chair@avrug.org.uk

**Vice-chair:** Marten Lougee, 11 Meadow Close, Cononley, Keighley  
BD20 8LZ tel: 01535 636487

**Secretary:** VACANT

**Treasurer:** Rod Tickner, 18 Florist Street, Stockbridge, Keighley BD21 4DY  
tel: 07900 346844 e-mail: rod@avrug.org.uk

**Membership Secretary:** Keith Renshaw, 3 The Crescent, Baildon Green,  
Baildon, Shipley BD17 7PE tel: 01274 592702

**Newsletter Editor:** Steve Broadbent, 1 Heather Rise, Burley in  
Wharfedale, Ilkley, LS29 7RA e-mail: steve@stevebroadbent.net

**Publicity:** Jennifer Whiteside, 86 Aire View, Silsden, BD20 0AN  
tel: 07966 018283 e-mail: jennywhiteside@blueyonder.co.uk  
Keith Preston, 8 Herbert Street, Saltaire, Shipley BD18 4QH  
tel: 01274 778623

Peter Bewes, 135 Burnside Crescent, Skipton, BD23 2BY  
tel: 01756 791282

Malcolm Riley, 12 Hope View, Shipley, BD18 2NG tel: 01274 589488

Andrew Noble, 8 Kendall Avenue, Nabwood, Shipley, BD18 4DU  
tel: 01274 773680 e-mail: andrewnoble8@hotmail.com