



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: FAILINGS OF THE MCNULTY REPORT

A few months on we have now had a chance to reflect upon the McNulty report. The report is focused on the high costs of 'GB Rail' and particularly the high apparent costs of regional rail services. As users of regional railways we feel that the report misses the point. Its use of statistics is misleading and inappropriate (As the old joke says "there are lies, damned lies and statistics"). Its regional cost-saving recommendations will not work as the practical suggestions are focused on the deep rural services. These absorb only a tiny proportion

of the subsidy. The report is a missed opportunity.

The main thrust of the report is that our railways are costing us too much of our taxpayer's money. The report highlights the success of recent years over which rail use has rocketed. However the subsidy has risen in proportion to the usage – whereas the large fixed cost base of the railway should have enabled the proportionate subsidy to be reduced. Comparisons with selected European railways suggest that the cost per passenger mile in the UK is disproportionately high. A number of fac-



A Sprinter races through Steeton and Silsden with a service from Morecambe. We will hopefully see Sprinters replacing Pacers on many of the Morecambe trains.

Title Picture: One of our “new” electric units stands at Skipton, forming the 12.32 service to Bradford. This service is one of a handful of off peak services booked to be formed by these class 322 units.

tors are identified. One is the tendency to run many short trains rather than fewer high capacity services. The manpower and system capacity required is thus much higher.

Looking to the future we need to extend the capacity of our trains rather than run more services. The report also comments on the way that railway pay has increased at a rate that has outstripped inflation while the private sector has failed to find ways of reducing costs by cutting

numbers of staff. Thus there has been the suggestion that most trains could be single manned and that a number of station booking offices could be shut. Much of the analysis is considered and useful. The report is far less strong on the details of how any cost-cutting changes might be implemented.

The report particularly highlights the high subsidy required by regional train services – both as a proportion of fare-box income and on the

basis of passenger miles. There follows a section in which methods of cutting the cost of rural services are considered. There are some interesting ideas there. However it appears to us that the report misses the point about regional services. The deep rural services, which it considers at length, absorb only a small proportion of the subsidy. Far more important is the role of the more intensive services into the main urban centres outside London. There is no consideration of the apparent higher costs of these services. Meanwhile the ex Transport Secretary, Philip Hammond, is reported as saying that these services cannot justify investments in new trains because of the high subsidy levels.

We find it deeply disappointing that the report doesn't look into these issues in more depth. We would suggest that the data presented in the report (and regularly by the government) is deeply misleading – and favours the case for investment in and around London.

The London commuter market developed much earlier than in the rest of the country. London has expanded outwards throughout the last century. Sustained investment has seen a system developed which allows passengers to commute long

distance into London and live in suburban or even semi-rural locations while working in the city. They are able to earn handsome salaries which support the long-distance commuting habit. It isn't the most eco-friendly lifestyle but it makes the railway pay. These long-distance commuters are still heavily subsidised but the subsidy per mile travelled is of course relatively low (because the distances travelled are greater). Even the proportionate subsidy paid is lower – as the fare-box income is higher. The shorter distance commuters are mainly to be found on the tube system – which is separately supported.

In contrast the regional commuter railway developed much later. It was only in the 1970s that mills, collieries and much heavy industry were shutting down. The replacement jobs were then found in the cities of Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle. Commuting began – and the local railways which were built to service industry found a new role, conveying commuters to work. The cities are however much smaller than London and the distance travelled by commuters is much less. The focus of McNulty on the subsidy per train mile is thus inappropriate. A much more relevant statistic would be the subsidy per

journey – as each journey corresponds to one less car in our polluted and congested city centres.

We are also very suspicious of the cost-allocation system. We suspect that allocation of costs by Network Rail on the basis of route or train mileage are resulting in a disproportionate cost allocation to the regional system which has seen relatively little investment.

We believe that a different approach is required to the regional network. Much has been achieved in Germany where new trains and modest infrastructure improvements have enabled frequencies, speeds and capacity of services to be improved. For relatively modest investment UK regional services can be transformed. Longer, modern trains can efficiently convey passengers over the short distances to and from the city centres. This investment can reduce the proportionate subsidy and reduce the number of car journeys. In Airedale the immediate requirement is longer platforms to enable longer trains with more seats to run.

By focusing on particular and narrow measures of financial performance McNulty is overlooking the possibility of fruitful investment in rail services such as ours. We only

need to look at the enormous benefits for our region from the (relatively modest) investment in Leeds North West electrification.



322 483 (which also features on the front page) approaches Shipley with the 13.17 Bradford to Ilkley service

This should be an example of the way our railways can move forward – with sustained investment to transform our regional economies.

EXTRA ROLLING STOCK

There is some news of additional trains for ‘Northern’ – even it is ‘second hand’ stock. Firstly there are five additional class ‘322’ electric units, transferred from ScotRail. These are now operating out of Leeds giving extra peak services on the lines from Skipton, Ilkley and Doncaster to Leeds (see details below). In addition 18, 2 car class ‘150’ units are arriving from London Midland (again displaced by

new units there). Six act as replacements for the three class '180' Inter-City units, which have been used on services from Manchester to Preston and Blackpool . Four will displace class '156' units which will be handed onto East Midlands Trains. Eight units will provide extra capacity. In addition the seven Pacers currently on hire to First Great Western will be returned. This extra stock will be used across the north of England and will enable a number of peak hour services into Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds to be strengthened.

According to a Commons written answer the cost, for the remainder of the current Northern franchise, will be £30.4 million.

INVESTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Since we started drafting this newsletter there have been two major announcements concerning investment in our northern rail network.

NEW STATIONS APPROVED

Firstly approval has been given for stations at Kirkstall Forge and Apperley Bridge. Detailed design work

on the £17.2m scheme is due to begin in May 2012 and should be completed by May 2013. Precise costings will need to be approved by the DfT and construction could begin in July 2013. It is hoped that the new stations could open in time for the December 2014 timetable change. The stations will be served by the half-hourly Leeds to Bradford services. Depending on the results of detailed timetable development some additional electric units may be required.

TRANSPENNINE ELECTRIFICATION

Also included in the Autumn Spending statement was government authorisation for Network Rail to borrow £290m to electrify from Leeds to Manchester. George Osborne actually announced electrification only as far east as Leeds. However subsequent announcements have clarified this—and Leeds to York is included.

Much clarification is still required. Where will the electric trains required come from? To where will electrification extend—Hull? Middlesbrough? Scarborough?? The announcement is however a step forward and is to be welcomed.

SKIPTON STATION WORKS

Skipton station has been the scene of much activity. There are two sets of improvements taking place. Firstly there is a Northern scheme for improvements to the station. The entrance hall has seen a deep clean, repaint and new seating. Meanwhile the subway is being refurbished with new handrails, flooring and walling. It is looking much better. A new waiting shelter on platform 3/4 is shortly to be commissioned. There is new signing throughout the station. Work on the station canopies is not included in the current scheme as Network Rail are responsible. It is however hoped that some refurbishment will be scheduled for next year.

There is then a scheme to increase the capacity of the sidings prior to the entry into service of our extra five electric units (three of them are to be stabled at Skipton overnight). This involves extensions to existing sidings plus one new siding. Two of the existing Sidings have been out of commission for several weeks in November. Plans are in place to cope with the reduced space for stabling trains at Skipton. Meanwhile, contractors have taken over a large part of the station car park. Alternative parking has however been pro-



A lunchtime Gypsum train races through Skipton. The numerous freight services are a potential constraint on running more frequent passenger services

vided, just down the road in a store car park.

Unfortunately the work on the sidings has not been completed in time for the new timetable. As a result there appear to have been problems getting the stabled units away for all the early morning services. Hopefully the problems will be speedily resolved.

TIMETABLE CHANGES

Completion of the viaduct refurbishment at Arnside has meant that the boat train to Heysham is running through to the port once again. Meanwhile, more good news from the Lancaster / Morecambe line is that the two Sunday morning services (which to date were Summer only) are now running throughout the year. They leave Leeds at 09.00 and 10.51, returning from Morecambe at

12.20 and 14.46. Winter Sunday trips to the seaside are now possible!

The main changes in December will be our extra peak trains to and from Leeds. The 07.39 from Skipton runs semi-fast to Leeds (owing to pathing issues) but the 17.39 back from Leeds calls at all stations. There are a number of alterations around this – and the last Carlisle departure will be put back from 17.56 to 18.06. Regular commuters are advised to try the new services – at least initially there should be some free seats – until people adjust their commuting patterns.

Early this Summer we complained to Northern about the number of evening services whose timings had been altered, usually only by a few minutes—but away from the standard pattern. We are delighted that most of the services are now back in the right place (leaving Leeds at xx.26 and xx.56). Thanks to Northern and Network Rail for sorting this.

Finally there are some changes to the new early morning services to and from Carlisle. The northbound service will leave Leeds at 05.29. There will be additional stops at Ribbleshead and Garsdale and an earlier arrival time in Carlisle at 08.17. The southbound service will also set out earlier, at 05.53. It will be able to call addi-

tionally at Lazonby and Garsdale and pick up the existing timings from Ribbleshead.

FURTHER NORTHERN FRANCHISE EXTENSION

The latest DfT plans suggest that the current Northern franchise will be extended to April 2014. It will then be let at the same time as the TransPennine franchise – so there may well be an amalgamation or re-ordering of the two franchises. The Invitation to tender is expected in May 2013, with the award of the franchise by the end of 2013.

FARE INCREASES IN THE NEW YEAR

You may well have read about the fare increases to come next January. The coalition had announced that for the next three years fares will rise by the 3% more than RPI (the Retail Price Index). However the July index – on which the fare increase will be based has recently been announced as 5%. This means that the general increase in fares will be 8%. This is well above typical increases in wages. However the government says that it is necessary in order to finance investment in the railways.



The '322' units have pleasant interiors. However your chairman still hasn't found anywhere to safely park his bicycle (other passengers may well need to park prams)

For Northern however the increase in regulated fares will be 10%. The extra 2% increase is to contribute towards the cost of additional trains. These are the 5 class '322' units, a number of class '150' diesel units and the return of seven Pacers currently loaned to First Great Western. In addition Metro is to scrap the concessionary 50p flat fare for OAPs. This will be replaced by a concessionary 50% rate for each journey made (equivalent to the child fare).

We are unhappy with these high fare increases. It is London and the South East who are benefiting from the substantial investment in Thameslink and Crossrail. We gain a few second hand units. There are no immediate plans for the essential platform lengthening which we need. However it is here that the surcharge on fares is being implemented. This appears to reflect a continuing bias towards government investment in the London area.

ON THE TRAINS

Our local services have continued to run reliably throughout the Summer. There have been some issues with the reliability of the 07.57 from Skipton. This now starts back at Carlisle (instead of Ribbleshead) and has too often been late arriving in Airedale. The main source of delays has been a preceding loaded coal train. Northern Rail are following up the regulation issues with Network Rail. Generally services have however run well and we are impressed by the continuing efforts of local staff. We would also like to highlight two instances where 'Northern' went the extra mile.



A reminder that our '333' units still operate most Airedale passenger trains

On Friday 2nd September evening services were well used by visitors to the Bingley Music Festival. Extra services ran from Keighley to Leeds to get people home after the departure time of the last regular service.

Then, on Saturday 3rd September

when Bradford City were ‘playing away’ at Morecambe, the 10.19 from Leeds was strengthened to four coaches. The extra capacity was well used by the regular passengers and the football fans.

We are aware of an increase in delays since the start of the new timetable on December 11th. We are monitoring the situation closely and hope that the initial difficulties will soon be resolved.



A smart Grand Central 'Adelante' unit creeps into Bradford Interchange with an express from Kings Cross

CONGRATULATIONS TO NORTHERN RAIL STAFF

Bob Smith, Driver Team Manager at Skipton has won the “Outstanding Personal Contribution (Management)” award at the National Rail Awards. We are delighted about this well-deserved award. Bob has always been willing to make that extra effort to keep our services running – at any time of day or night, whether he has been on duty or not.

We would also like to thank Phil Thickett, Operations Manager in

Leeds, who has recently retired. He has also worked tirelessly to keep our services running. His practical knowledge and commitment to service will be missed.

GRAND CENTRAL CHANGES

Your committee have been using the Grand Central train service from Bradford Interchange and have been impressed by their reliability and the friendliness of the service on board. There are a few improvements to the timetable planned from the December timetable change (subject to regulatory approval). Many of the services will call at Mirfield and several trains will run direct from Doncaster to Wakefield, omitting the Pontefract stop. This is particularly helpful on Mondays to Fridays as the last train back (19.48 from Kings Cross) should arrive back in Bradford some 20 minutes earlier at 22.48. This is in time to connect with the last Bradford Forster Square to Skipton train at 23.09 and also to connect at Interchange with the last Keighley bus. Two of the north-bound Saturday services and all the Sunday services will also omit the Pontefract stop and are speeded up as a result.

Until recently Grand Central have offered cheaper tickets for purchase on the day but no bargain advance purchase facility. They are now also offering some cheaper advance fares on

their website. Prices start from £19 single.

Arriva (who in turn are owned by Deutsche Bahn) has recently purchased Grand Central. We are assured that the business will continue to operate on an independent basis. Hopefully the greater financial muscle will assist the business in its continued development.

ALLIANCE RAIL

We have previously reported on Alliance Rail plans to run from London to Skipton, Bradford and Ilkley. A formal application has now been made to run a 2-hourly service from London—four trains to run to Skipton, two to Bradford and one to Ilkley. We await further developments.

E-PETITION ON A CASHLESS SYSTEM FOR METAL SALES

Many of you will be aware of the problems caused by frequent theft of copper cable on the railway system. Your Chairman is also aware of the problems that have been caused by theft of lead from church roofs! Many of the thieves are able to sell their illegally obtained metals to scrap dealers for cash with no questions asked

There is a government e-petition which if it get 100,000 signatures will

be debated in parliament. It will require a metal sales cashless system to be introduced as planned in Europe but not yet here. This will really help reduce cable theft - and if they get it in Europe but we don't here you can bet all the thieves will migrate over making our problem even worse, Please go to the following address and sign up:

<https://submissions.epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/406>

LLM CRP

Some comments from the meeting held on

30 September 2011- R Tickner

Patronage is up by 5% over a comparable period – this represents an additional 14,000 more passengers. Overall performance in the last period was 92.6% and moving annual average is now very close to 90% which is good news.

The North Yorkshire County Council representative, their Rail officer Andrew Easson has retired and he will be replaced. He had been on a two day a week contract but it has been agreed that is not enough to do the work and the new officer will be a four day a week appointment. He was the chair of the executive group until last year.

The process has a number of formal stages and work is proceeding on the route prospectus. One of the principal

aims is to improve the service; the need for later trains is particularly noted. One success has been the introduction of Sunday morning trains throughout the year (they used to run for about four months only) but it is important that these are now publicised and used.

Designated service status now being actively pursued: this can bring benefits. The example below comes from:

<http://communityrailman.wordpress.com/>
(the blog of Simon Clarke who is the CRP officer for this line and others in Lancashire) and was dated 29 September 2011:

Community railman has definitive proof that Community Rail Designation works!

The East Lancashire CRP, using the fact that the East Lancashire Line has been designated as part of the Government's Community Rail Strategy, and working with Northern Rail, has been granted a derogation by the Department for Transport to amend a departure time from Colne.

Currently the 08.50 service from

Colne to Blackpool South arrives into Burnley Central at 09.03 – just too late for students who study at nearby Burnley College. From Monday 12th December 2011 this train will now depart from Colne at 08.40 (Mondays to Fridays) and arrive at Burnley at 08.53 giving students just enough time to get to their 09.00 lectures.

The blog is the less formal part of the website which is maintained by Simon Clarke and has a good number of visits. The site can be found at:

<http://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/>

New posters have been prepared and funded by the CRP, appearing on stations as far away as York. The aim is to publicise the line especially for its leisure potential.

A new guided walks programme up to December 2011 has been published.

There are plans for a shelter on the up platform at Giggleswick which the CRP supports – this is a bleak spot and at one time there was not

Letters

Letter from Keith Preston, Committee Member,

I have to report that Paul Hatton, one of the founder members of AVRUG died aged 61 in September having lost his battle with Cancer.

We met at RCTS meeting in the 1980s and following a talk by James Towler which mentioned different rail user groups, we decided to start a Rail Users group for the Airedale line. At that time, services were using 2 or 3 car DMU'S and many stations needed attention. Paul became both secretary and treasurer doing both jobs for several years.

He was born and brought up in Thorpe Edge, Bradford, becoming Head Boy at Thorpe Secondary School. After an early interest in fishing, he became interested in railways whilst on holiday. He began work in the textile industry and in his 20's joined Edmund Bell and Co, curtain manufacturers and wholesale retailers.

He married in the late 1970's to Joan. He leaves 2 sons, Stephen and Andrew and a grandson.

Paul was a great asset for AVRUG and a good friend. He retained his membership of AVRUG, RCTS and Bradford Railway Circle.

Our Condolences go to his family. His funeral at Nab Wood Crematorium, Shipley on Friday 30th September was well attended. Some of Paul's duplicate railway colour prints are to be donated to the vintage carriage trust at Ingrow for the benefit of preservation

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the twenty first AGM held on Saturday 7th May 2011
in the Church Hall, Saltaire Methodist Church.

PRESENT

Twelve members were present.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Keith Renshaw, John Bearpark, Alan Ward, Jenny Whiteside, Roger Smith, John Holroyd and Neil Whitaker.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 16th May 2009

The minutes of the last AGM, proposed Marten Lougee, seconded by Jane Loomes, were agreed nem con as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Tim Calow reported that it had been a "boring" year: so many smooth journeys where nothing untoward happened. There was a week of emergency timetable in the extreme weather of December 2010 and a recent fire at Kildwick which had caused some disruptions but the class 333 continued to function well with few substitutions. Passenger numbers continued to grow.

Concerns were the adequacy of station car parks, passenger information particularly when things went wrong, revenue protection and overcrowding. However from December there would be five class '322' units from Scotland to help bring some relief with additional trains at peak times. More class '150' stock was expected – the apparent anomaly in Government numbers was because four '150' cars were considered equivalent to five '180' cars.

From May there would be an early morning through train from Carlisle, although timings were poor, and the Morecambe Summer Sunday service was now contin-

uing after September. The new East Coast Eureka service provided a good pattern and it was noted that class 91 electric hauled stock would regularly work the Skipton service in the evenings with no apparent problems on the electrical supply.

The committee were all busy with Marten Lougee very involved with British Transport Police, Andrew Noble was undergoing police training as well as becoming a father, Keith Renshaw was continuing to work on the buses, Rod Tickner was training as a Reader in the Anglican Church and Tim Calow was ordained deacon and continuing to study. Thus work for AVRUG had to be fitted in around these commitments. Thanks were also due to Peter Bewes, Malcolm Riley and Keith Preston for their support. Jenny Whiteside was having to step down from the committee this year, her help on the website and publicity would be missed.

Looking ahead the main issues were the new franchise to start in 2013; money for the new stations at Kirkstall and Apperley; maximising the use of the class '322' units with possible extra trains off-peak although this was dependent upon the number of freight paths; possible re-ordering of the class '333' into 3 and 5 car sets together with platform lengthening which would give greater capacity although timings would become more complex as a result.

A number of improvements had been made and the main challenge for 2011 was the '322' units, for hopefully another "boring" year. Finally Tim thanked those attending for their support; reminding those present that more help was always welcome especially for support for the website and publicity.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Due to less news letters and a most welcome donation from Northern Rail the year ended with a surplus. Costs were still slightly higher than income but given the bank balances available meant that the subscription levels should remain unchanged.

The 2009 comparative figures in the report contained a typing error: donations for 2009 should read £31 (the same as 2010) all other figures being correct.

The report's acceptance was proposed by Peter Bewes and seconded by Paul Kampen and was carried nem con.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were proposed by Alan Sutcliffe, seconded by Keith Preston and agreed:

Chair	Tim Calow
Vice chair	Marten Lougee
Secretary	<i>vacancy</i>
Treasurer	Rod Tickner
Membership Secretary	Keith Renshaw
Newsletter Editor	Andrew Noble
Publicity	<i>vacancy</i>

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

The following were proposed Tim Calow, seconded by Marten Lougee and agreed:

Peter Bewes
Keith Preston
Malcolm Riley

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Andrew Noble and Rod Tickner would liaise about the possibility of getting changes made to the website...

After refreshments Stan Hall joined the meeting with some reminiscences of his experience of the railways in Airedale.

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