

Spring Meeting
Sat 25th March at 14:00
in Royal Over-Seas League, 100 Princes St., Edinburgh
Speaker: James King
The RPC - past & present

Programme:

- Talk by James King
- Questions to the speaker
- Coffee/Tea break
- Branch AGM

Branch AGM

Agenda:

- Reports from Office-Bearers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership)
- General Discussion - a chance for members to ask questions, and to provide guidance to the Committee for policy and activity for the coming year
- Election of Office-Bearers

We do want an active and varied committee, and new volunteers for office or committee membership will be welcomed. Have you considered whether you could bring anything to the Committee? Important: see Page 3 'Vacancy'.

ROSL: Just west of Frederick Street junction with Princes St.

James King: After a successful career in advertising and marketing James established his own strategic business and marketing consultancy in 1996, which he continues to run today. He is the Scottish member of the new Rail Passenger Council, before which he was a member of the now defunct Rail Passenger Committee Scotland. He is also the Scottish Member of the British Transport Police Authority and a former Vice Chair of Rail Action Group East of Scotland (RAGES). His interest in rail was established in student days when he campaigned for the retention of the Kyle line.

National AGM

Perhaps not many Scots will make it, but the AGM of Railfuture is in Swindon on **Saturday May 6th**. Before that will be the postal elections for members of the National Board. Please use your vote - all it costs you is a stamp! There's really no excuse for missing out on your right to vote.

SKILLS

With the last Railwatch you would have received a form asking if you had any skills you could offer to Railfuture - experience in business or industry (engineering, finance, marketing and so on) or campaigning (media, lobbying etc.). There has been a very small response from Scottish members. You can still offer your services using the web. It's actually hosted via our website, so go to www.railfuturescotland.org.uk/skillsDB, register and log your skills.

Editorial

This newsletter is the usual compilation of cut and paste from a variety of sources. Most national (i.e. Scottish) issues are raised in the public media although not always with adequate understanding of the details for informed comment. Most major issues from a rail campaigning viewpoint are raised in our national magazine Railwatch. Due to time pressures and the fact that we have had an undue amount of space in recent issues of Railwatch there was no Scottish contribution to the next issue you will receive.

So, what's left to tell you, the Scottish members, about here? We are still waiting for the draft National Transport Strategy to be published (end of February is now the forecast) and as a body we will need to respond to that. The Committee will put in a response, but individual comments will be accepted too.

Transport Scotland is in the process of taking the reins to control rail in Scotland. I'm sure that we will tell them if we think they are not getting it right!

In the last few months there have been several consultations to which we have contributed (or in some cases, failed to contribute).

INNOVATION

One Scottish member has been approaching the European Passenger Federation recommending overnight trains from Scotland to mainland Europe. He writes:-

"There are night trains from central Scotland (Glasgow and Edinburgh) to London but the journey is shorter than the night. It would be ideal to use the whole night and arrive in Paris or Brussels (the current destinations of the Eurostar service).

"The Scottish Executive funded a ferry service from Scotland to Belgium recently and it is sufficiently successful not to need a continuing subsidy. However, the complexities of a direct rail service seem to be greater though what precisely the difficulties are, is not clear to me.

"It seems to me that this idea may fit in with the EPF's interest in a co-ordinated European network of night trains. I think that the advantages for our business community are clear and that such a service would increase our accessibility to tourists many of whom never get much beyond London, I think the argument for the night train network might usefully focus on the advantage to the geographical periphery."

High Speed Rail

A UK conference in Glasgow in December spoke strongly for the case for new separate high speed lines up both east and west coasts to enable development of both local and national services. However we seem no nearer to solving the problem of stopping and non-stopping services between Edinburgh & Glasgow.

Public Petitions Committee

The Association of Caithness Community Councils put a petition to Parliament calling on it to improve the infrastructure, rolling stock and timetabling of the far north line with "unrestricted thinking on how best to shorten journey times and ensure the future of the railway between Inverness and Wick/Thurso". The Committee, having heard the evidence, agreed to consult with The Executive, First ScotRail, Network Rail, the Highland Rail Partnership, Friends of the Far North Line and Friends of the Earth Scotland. Time for comments finished in mid-January.

Forecasting

Jane Ann Liston asked the committee if anyone knew any details about CAPRI. Our ever-knowledgeable Chairman did some homework and included this in his reply.

I believe that CAPRI (Computer Analysis of Passenger Revenue Information) is / was used by ATOC to produce the numbers of passenger journeys and the associated revenue from information held in a database. This database records the numbers of tickets and the associated revenue for journeys between every pair of railway stations in Great Britain. The software is / was also used to allocate revenue / income.

The initial set of bullet points is derived from ATOC and DfT web sites.

- Rail use is measured using passenger kilometre data from the rail industry's central ticketing system, CAPRI. This covers some 90%+ of all ticket sales. For those ticket sales which CAPRI does not record correctly, notably some operator-specific tickets and multi-modal tickets, the SRA, with the help of train operating companies (TOCs) and Passenger Transport Executives (PTE's), is able to produce a robust estimate of passenger kilometre levels
- CAPRI allocates season ticket usage by applying journey factors obtained through surveys. For instance, an annual season ticket assumes 480 journeys per year. These are distributed across the year, such that there are fewer journeys allocated around times such as Christmas and summer. However, as a result, figures are liable to minor retrospective adjustments.
- CAPRI allocates revenue between train operators using algorithms agreed with the rail operators. Passenger kilometres are measured in the same way. The SRA also undertakes an annual reconciliation exercise with operators to review the latest year's figures.
- The CAPRI system will be replaced by a new system called Lennon from April 2003. The new system will have the same range of data but it will be collected more quickly and there will be greater capacity to analyse it.

The following is derived from the Atosorogin web site (software developers).

LENNON: Latest Earnings Networked Nationally Over-Night.

- ability to process information on every single UK train ticket sale, collects sales data, validates this data to confirm its accuracy, allocates earnings to each of the 27 TOC's, all achieved within 24 hours of a ticket purchase
- LENNON enables TOC's to review their daily performance figures and customer usage patterns for the first time
- The solution has transformed rail settlement processes and improved the way industry accesses and uses passenger fair information to create new products and enhance customer service
- In March 2004: at the Railway Industry Innovation Awards, ATOC won the information technology award for the LENNON solution, a "smooth introduction of such a complex system..."

I believe that the custodian of this data is the Rail Settlement Plan which is part of ATOC. Rail Settlement Plan Ltd. (RSP) is part of ATOC, the Association of Train Operating Companies, an umbrella organisation set up by the UK Train Operating Companies. RSP has responsibility for the operation of the fare systems and ticket types offered by the train operators, and oversees £4 billion in annual rail fares in a revenue-sharing system between participating operators. The National Reservations Service (NRS), which operates under the RSP, processes an estimated 120 million inquiries and 40 million transactions a year.

I thought that this was worth sharing. Perhaps you already knew it all, but the Editor certainly didn't. It is NOT true that our indefatigable member Tony Lennon will be going around collecting the data for LENNON in a little notebook.

CONSULTATIONS

CLOSURES

"Consultation Document on the Implementation of the Railways Act 2005, Provision on Closures and Minor Modifications"

Scotland has its own version of this - the only difference seems to be the address to which replies are sent! The consultation is not about closures but about the process by which possible closures are evaluated and then the consultation is conducted. Consultation finishes on April 21.

Howard Thomas writes "In the meantime, I cannot emphasize the importance of everyone to write, write, and write again to their MPs. Passenger Committee will be especially interested in the responses members receive from MPs of all political persuasions, and of all persuasions within political parties. We would also like to know the views of local government on the future provision of rail-based passenger public transport."

REGIONAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIPS

The Boards begin to work formally from April. Over the last couple of months applications have been invited for places on these. With the smaller Partnerships there have often been only 2 places for non-elected members, and it was expected that enterprise board and health board nominees would be appointed to all boards. So places for all the user-groups, campaigning groups and everyone else have been pretty minimal. Applications came from individuals, the putative boards looked at the applications and made recommendations to Transport Scotland and the Executive/Transport Scotland makes the appointments. Find out who is on your RTP board.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS COMMITTEE FOR SCOTLAND

We perhaps have more chance of representation on this. Consultation is under way at the moment and finishes on March 22nd.

£50m wasted

What Scotland on Sunday described as "failed transport schemes and studies" has cost £50m since 1997 they claimed in November. Not only has the government repeatedly commissioned consultations but in several cases no action has been taken after a consultation, and when, later, action has been decided on the costs have doubled since the original consultation. Railfuture is not opposed to consultations - they are necessary if new projects are to be moved forward - but we would agree that persistently commissioning studies instead of actually doing something is not only wasteful but deceitful.

SPT improvements

Better services, including some later evening services out of Glasgow and now the Larkhall-Milngavie service, have raised the number of passengers to over 1m a week.

Bus or Rail?

The discussions about rail travel between Edinburgh & Glasgow continue - improve the Shotts line, re-establish Airdrie-Bathgate, electrify the canal line, build a new bullet line. In November Brian Souter introduced a new parameter - a proposed bus with a 10-minute service. This has obvious attractions for anyone not going the full length between George Square and Princes St Gardens, and the price is attractive especially for anyone for whom time is not critical. In addition, in a few weeks pensioners are going to be able to travel free on buses but not on trains. Rail is going to have to work hard to provide a service which will keep customers on this route.

RailFuture Scotland Annual Report 2005

RfS Meetings

3 Committee Meetings

Including: Review of first few months of First ScotRail; station automatic barriers; rumours of withdrawal of sleeper services; the WCML; drafting our response to the SE Consultation "Towards a Transport Strategy for Scotland – consultation on rail priorities"

Public Meetings

April

incorporating **AGM**. Iain Docherty on "Transport Policy since devolution".

Oct

John Yellowlees (External Relations, First ScotRail) spoke about the first year of First ScotRail.

Private Meeting

A small delegation had a meeting with Fergus Ewing MSP (SNP)

Actions

responses to Consultations:

South Lanarkshire Local Plan
Glasgow Airport Rail Link

Conferences & Meetings attended:

SE Conference on Transport Scotland
Sestran Conference on RTS
Scottish Executive Pre-Consultation on NTS with reference to Sustainable Transport
TRANSform Scotland AGM & talk
HiSpeed links (UK)
Borders Transport Forum - inaugural meeting (Autumn 2005)

Other projects:

Far North Line
Glasgow and Edinburgh Crossrail

Liaison

Links with other rail campaigning organisations

Friends of the Far North Line
Campaign for Borders Rail
Rail Action Group East of Scotland
Capital Rail Action Group
St Andrews Rail Link
Forthright Alliance

Nationally we have Committee Members on the Boards of:

TRANSform Scotland
CTC (the UK's national cyclists' organisation)
We have no member on the Railfuture (UK) Board

Publicity

2 issues of Branch Notes (4 sides of A4) mailed to all members in Scotland (April and November).
Web site to give general aims and policy information together with Scottish news (due to other pressures this has been rather neglected this year).
2 Open Meetings (see above).

Edinburgh Trams

The Leader of Edinburgh Council reported at the January Council Meeting:

"Edinburgh's tram network is to receive a £45m boost from the City of Edinburgh Council. A report detailing the funding which will go towards the construction of a phased network was agreed at a meeting of the Full Council this afternoon.

"Subject to Parliamentary approval, the two proposed lines will be built in phases. The first phase of development would be the route from Leith Waterfront to Edinburgh Airport, including the section from Haymarket to Granton Square, providing that funding and works costs permit. The next phase to be built would be the section of route between Granton to Leith along the Waterfront and the extension of the airport route from Ingliston to Newbridge completing the network."



Artist's impression of the Roseburn Corridor

The Council's contribution of £45million will come from a range of sources related to tram development income and receipts, rather than from general funds or from Council Tax. This will include, for example, land contributions by the Council, anticipated development gains accruing to the Council on Council owned sites and third party developer contributions.

One local paper which is generally scathing about the benefit of trams published this implying that the Council had been compelled to abandon one of the lines (Line 3 of course already in abeyance since the fall of the Congestion Charging proposal). In fact Lines 1 & 2 have Princes Street to Roseburn in common, so Phase 1 is most of Line 2 (only omitting Airport to Newbridge) plus Line 1 in two parts - St Andrew Square to Ocean Terminal and Roseburn to Granton. In fact the only bit of Line 1 held back is the bit along the shore between Granton Harbour and Leith Harbour.

Vacancy

After several years as Treasurer of the Scottish Branch of Railfuture, Brian Balmain has decided to retire. Many thanks to Brian for his competent management of our finances. He did give us one year's notice of this, but we have not yet got anyone lined up for the job.

There are not many transactions and all subscriptions are handled on a UK basis, so the job is not too demanding. The Committee would like to have a name BEFORE we get to the AGM, so if any members would like to offer, or even discuss it, please contact either Donald MacPhee or Mike Harrison (phone numbers & emails on page 4).

snippets

CARRYMYLUGGAGE.COM

All Railfuture branches have been targeted by email with an announcement of a new service to rail users. Called "Carry my luggage" the service provides next day luggage delivery services for travellers in the UK, as well as the EU, USA and other worldwide destinations. For instance they will deliver a 30kg suitcase from Edinburgh to London for just £30.00 + VAT. You can make a reservation via their call centre on 0845 009 0362, and by quoting your Rail User Group name they will automatically apply a discount to your order. Reservations may also be made via the internet, www.carrymyluggage.com. Anyone giving this a try, please let Railfuture know how you get on



At least one satisfied customer...

One contented cyclist from Invergordon writes "I have not heard of any changes or ideas being floated on cycle carriage. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of trains running between Inverness and Easter Ross (an increase to Lairg as well). This should help rail travellers with bikes coming down from Caithness as there is now less likelihood of the bike spaces being "blocked" nearer the south end of the journey. Its a wonderful service now, 8 or 9 trains a day between Inverness and Invergordon, no need to book the bike (so far), also much cheaper than the bus which does not take bikes anyway."



New Year Price Hike

What's the real effect of the price increases. I have just purchased a business saver return to London. Before Christmas the normal price was about £65 with railcard. Today it is £91 for the same ticket.

I have had a letter from another member who makes a similar journey, quoting the same prices. He says: "The GNER staff initially thought it was a mistake. All regard the price hike as obscene. When I called the so-called Customer Relations department at York, I was told it was a one-time hike to get the ticket in line with other fares. Oh and once when I tried to have a conversation, the phone was simply hung up on me."

RIP-OFF RAIL PRICES

In October, the Which? report asked 755 train travellers whether ticket prices had stopped them making a train journey in the past two years - a period in which revenues from fares rose by 8%. Around 47% said they had, with those aged 25 to 34 deterred the most. The Rail Passengers Council said the findings are in line with a survey it did earlier in the year. But transport expert Barry Doe warned: "If those 47% took the train, the trains would not be able to cope". - from Which? Magazine, Dec 05.

The report concluded with this Action Point: "Train firms must release cheap tickets nine weeks before the date of travel. If they don't, contact the RPC on 08453 022 022."

ECML RUS

The "Consultation on Capacity Study for East Coast Main Line" was released on Dec 23rd and ended on Jan 10th - that's 7 working days to digest and comment on an 86-page technical document. A representative of Railfuture North-East commented "It is disappointing that such a critically important document should be handled in this apparently dismissive manner. In particular, the time available has been completely inadequate to review in detail the carefully constructed argument presented in the report."

Between Newcastle and Edinburgh the situation is simple (whether solvable or not is a different question). With the proposals for Grand Central to run trains to Sunderland and for GNER to increase the number to Leeds the further south one gets the more complex and apparently insoluble it becomes.

On Jan 27th Grand Central announced: "Grand Central welcomes today's announcement from the Office of Rail Regulation that it is minded to approve new track access rights to Grand Central, enabling it to launch new high speed rail services from Sunderland/Hartlepool to London Kings Cross. The new services are expected to commence in 2007"



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