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POSTS INSIDE

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Rail Professional

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Great transformations



Mark Hopwood, managing director of Great Western Railway on why the customer-facing parts of the industry need to lead its future

Customer Reports

Relaying the good news



Occupational cancers

A need for vigilance



Freight

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editor's note

Season's greetings! How interesting that, despite George Osborne's loud rhetoric about a 'Northern Powerhouse', a BBC-commissioned survey has found that 64 per cent of those in the north have either not heard of it or don't know what it is. I'm no expert on website design, but Transport for the North's offering isn't exactly inspirational. With no search engine, no trendy blog and no Twitter or Facebook links, it's hardly getting down with the kids. And don't bother clicking on the Jobs section because there are none.

It was a pleasure to meet Mark Hopwood, managing director of Great Western Railway, who rightly describes the future structure of Network Rail as one of the industry's biggest intellectual challenges. This is a man who clearly wants more than anything else to bring his passengers big improvements in capacity, punctuality and reliability, and I actually felt quite moved to witness the impact of the painful uncertainties around electrification.

On another note, devolution is a good idea in principle. And the really good news is a mayor is not an essential condition according to Simon Ridley, Department for Communities & Local Government director general of decentralisation and growth.

Provided 'focused leadership and clear accountability' are in place, a wide variety of models of devolution are acceptable, he told the annual conference of ADEPT (Association of Directors of Economy, Environment, Planning and Transport). I think we can breathe a sigh of relief therefore, that there won't be Boris replicas springing up everywhere.

Clearly some authorities are nervous about their new powers though and will feel the need for room to experiment, and Ridley assured his audience that deals will be evolutionary and 'none will ever be final'.

But everyone is going to have their work cut out. As president of ADEPT Heather Barnes pointed out, devolution is happening at a time when most authorities are facing tremendous challenges balancing the books while providing vital services with greater efficiency. A soothsayer at the DfT declared that where powers are devolved, transport gets more investment and more policy focus, but it will be interesting to see if that's actually the case in the long-term.

With so much devolving and dividing going on, Network Rail is joining in by potentially transmuting into eight businesses, to get 'closer to communities and the customer'. So it was refreshing to hear from Rob McIntosh, NR's new London North Eastern and East Midlands route managing director, that the organisation '...can be seen as difficult to engage with'. Will a new model include a change of culture then?

Also in this issue we have a piece from IOSH on preventing occupational cancers, and I urge the rail industry to do all it can to work on eliminating those dangerous workplace situations that cause private devastation for thousands.

Lorna Slade Editor

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Influencing your energy strategies
with integrated solutions

“ ...actually a very large quantity of the negative Twitter comments come from a small number of people. I don't know, maybe they need to get a hobby

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News in brief...

Go-Ahead into German market

The group is set to enter the German rail market having been awarded Netz 1 _ Lot 2 and Lot 3 of the Baden-Württemberg rail network. The contracts, starting in June 2019 and running until 2032, are expected to generate combined revenues of around €1.6 billion. Operating company Go-Ahead Verkehrsgesellschaft Deutschland will run 3.7 million train kilometres each year for Lot 2 and 4.4 million train kilometres each year for Lot 3. Go-Ahead CEO David Brown, said: 'We are pleased to be able to bring our expertise to the German market.'

A rail tax

Campaign for Better Transport has warned that continued rail revenue growth could result in passengers effectively being charged a 'rail tax,' equivalent to an income tax of up to five per cent for commuters, or £7.50 per intercity journey, with an ever growing percentage of income from fares transferring directly to the government. Its new report into the future of rail financing Future Rail Funding: Passenger Opportunities says government income from rail franchise premiums could increase to up to £3.7 billion by 2020.

Record high for LU

More people are using London Underground than at any point in its 152-year history says TfL. The busiest day ever was 9 October which saw 4.735 million customers. The previous record was 28



Report on gender balance calls for change

Just 0.6 per cent of women working in the rail industry have progressed to director or executive level according to a ground-breaking report from industry group Women in Rail.

The study, which reveals that out of the 87,000 people working in rail, only 13,492 are women, represents one of the first times that data on gender diversity has been collected for the rail industry as a whole, and across its different subsets.

The report was released at Women in Rail's annual conference opened by Claire Perry, parliamentary under secretary of state at the Department for Transport, who pointed out that the number of women working in rail now is almost exactly the same as in August 1914, at the dawn of the First World War.

'The result is' said Perry, 'that when it comes to gender equality the rail industry risks looking like the industry that time has left behind.'

Talking about the fact that half of women working in the sector are in operational, customer-facing areas such as catering, ticketing and stations retail, Perry said she was 'glad' these women are leading the way for the rest of the sector, but that it is 'wrong' that only 19 per cent of women in rail are in managerial roles, and that they make up only four per cent of rail engineers, and that only 0.6 per cent have progressed to director or executive level.

This 'lopsided' distribution of women in rail does damage to equal pay, Perry pointed out, with the starting salary for a station assistant starting at £12,500 a year. Meanwhile Network Rail is advertising for engineers at starting salaries just under £40,000 rising far beyond that after promotion.

'So when women are prevented from taking the jobs they could excel at just because they are women, they're not just having their choices restricted, they are missing out economically,' said Perry.

Talking of the good evidence that teams and boards that include women make better decisions, as long as the industry fails to draw on the 50 per cent of available talent represented by women it is likely to be less innovative, less efficient and less productive than it ought to be. 'Other sectors learnt this lesson long ago' said Perry, and 'if they have made such progress there really is no excuse for rail. There's so much more to do.'

Perry suggested the industry could look at shift patterns and teaching girls the value of engineering qualifications so they can enjoy 'fantastic lifelong careers'.

She concluded: '100 years ago, we kept the railway running during the greatest challenge it had yet faced. We might have started the war with 13,000 women working in rail, but by its end there were 70,000. It shouldn't take another World War to see change like that again.'

Adeline Ginn, founder of Women in Rail talking of the report said: 'For the first time we have an actionable benchmark upon which companies can identify and target the key areas for change. It is extremely important that the rail industry confronts this gender imbalance, as a first step towards changing it for the better.'

Picture across the industry

Across the rail industry's subsets, rolling stock companies have the highest proportion of women with 31.3 per cent. This is followed by technology service companies at 22 per cent, train operating companies at 20 per cent, manufacturers at 12 per cent and suppliers at the lowest proportion at five per cent¹.

The conference also featured presentations from HS2's Beth West, Anna Walker of the ORR and HS1's Nicola Shaw, who spoke about her work on the Shaw Report into the future shape and financing of Network Rail.

¹ data sourced from across the whole industry



Claire Perry



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News in brief...

November 2014, with 4.734. The final week of October was the busiest week ever, with 28.614 million journeys. TFL expects both the daily and weekly records to be broken again before the end of 2015.

We know where you live

BTPA has published all the contact details of senior BTP officers who manage the policing of the railways. This is constantly kept up to date and gives direct access to officers across the country. Click on each plan to find the details underneath: <http://btpa.police.uk/news-events/policingplans/divisions> or visit www.btpa.police.uk/policingplans

Years of our lives

New research from Watchshop.com says the average person spends 4.1 years of their lives commuting. Men average 4.1 and females 4.3 years, or 1557 days. It was revealed recently that 1.8 million UK residents had a commute of three hours or more. The good news is that an EU ruling has declared time spent travelling to first and last appointments for those with no fixed office should be counted as time spent at work.

Mastering freight

DB Schenker Rail UK has teamed up with the CILT to sponsor a dissertation award for masters students. The theme is Rail Freight Logistics – the role of rail freight in the intermodal supply chain of the future. The winning student will receive £500 and the chance to deliver a presentation at DB Schenker Rail UK's Intermodal Port Conference 2016 and CILT membership for one year.



Scope for comment on Shaw scoping paper

CEO of FirstGroup Tim O'Toole has warned that changing the structures that run the railways 'risked more delay than it would help solve'.

Speaking to *the Guardian* newspaper, O'Toole said that while Network Rail's record could be improved by better planning in consultation with train operators, the situation was overblown and that 'in some respects this is a phoney crisis'.

Stating that while 'pointing your finger at one party was not the issue', O'Toole said costs are not turning out as estimated because they were made by the ORR 'way too early and too optimistically', and that it is 'critical that you have a very good regulator'.

O'Toole's comments came in the wake of the publication of Nicola Shaw's scoping paper, ahead of her report next year on the longer-term future shape and financing of Network Rail, which has elicited a wide range of responses across the industry.

Shaw states in the paper there is consensus that:

- the way we do long-term planning for rail could be improved – in a variety of ways
- the processes we have in a number of areas are frustrating and time-consuming and could be considerably slicker and more effective
- there is a concern that, even if the rail industry is extremely efficient, the funds required for investment in rail infrastructure won't be available in future because of the changes to Network Rail's finances now that its debt is part of the government balance sheet.

However, she says, 'there isn't yet consensus on how these could be dealt with'.

Campaign for Better Transport's James MacGill said the paper 'shows proper attention is being given to the potential value of devolving planning and decision making to the

regions. However, the fixation with running the network like a business will only lead to a repeat of disastrous mistakes and we are concerned that full privatisation of Network Rail has not been ruled out.'

Toby Hughes who leads on rail for pteg (Passenger Transport Executive Group) is 'pleased' that Shaw recognises that one of the challenges is working with city areas to help rebalance the national economy. 'In particular we share and recognise the concerns that the report highlights around long-term planning processes that don't fit with wider city region and pan-regional transport planning, and the cost, bureaucracy and delay in getting the rail schemes implemented that our areas need as part of their wider growth plans.'

He continued: 'In the next stage of the review we will be making a strong case for a much closer alignment between the way the railway operates and the way in which more transport decision making is being devolved.'

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: 'Network Rail must remain a public body that – looking ahead – sits at the heart of a safe, integrated, publicly-owned railway system. We are pleased that the report recognises the TUC's call for unions to be more involved in the future of our railways. Our message to policymakers is clear – we would warn against a return to the days of privatised rail infrastructure which resulted in years of under-investment. The last thing the travelling public needs is more fragmentation of our rail network and more money being siphoned off to shareholders.'

RDG's Paul Plummer said: 'We are working with Toc's, Foc's and NR to put forward areas of agreement and potential differences.'

Consultation has begun, with written responses invited by December 24. The final report is expected to be delivered to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in early 2016.

New body to deliver major projects

Infrastructure UK (IUK) and the Major Projects Authority (MPA) are to merge into a new organisation, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, which will bring together government expertise in the financing, delivery and assurance of major projects such as Crossrail for the first time.

The Authority will come into formal existence on 1 January 2016, reporting jointly to the chancellor and minister for the Cabinet Office. Its CEO will be Tony Meggs, currently chief executive of the MPA. Geoffrey Spence, chief executive of IUK, has decided to leave for the private sector.

Chancellor George Osborne said: 'We are moving to the next stage in our plan to ensure Britain's economy gets the transformational projects it needs.'

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Matt Hancock said: 'By combining projects expertise with funding authority we will improve the government's ability to deliver, and the economic security that comes with it. Tony Meggs has been a hugely respected chief executive of the MPA and has the leadership and capability to make the new IMPA a great success.'

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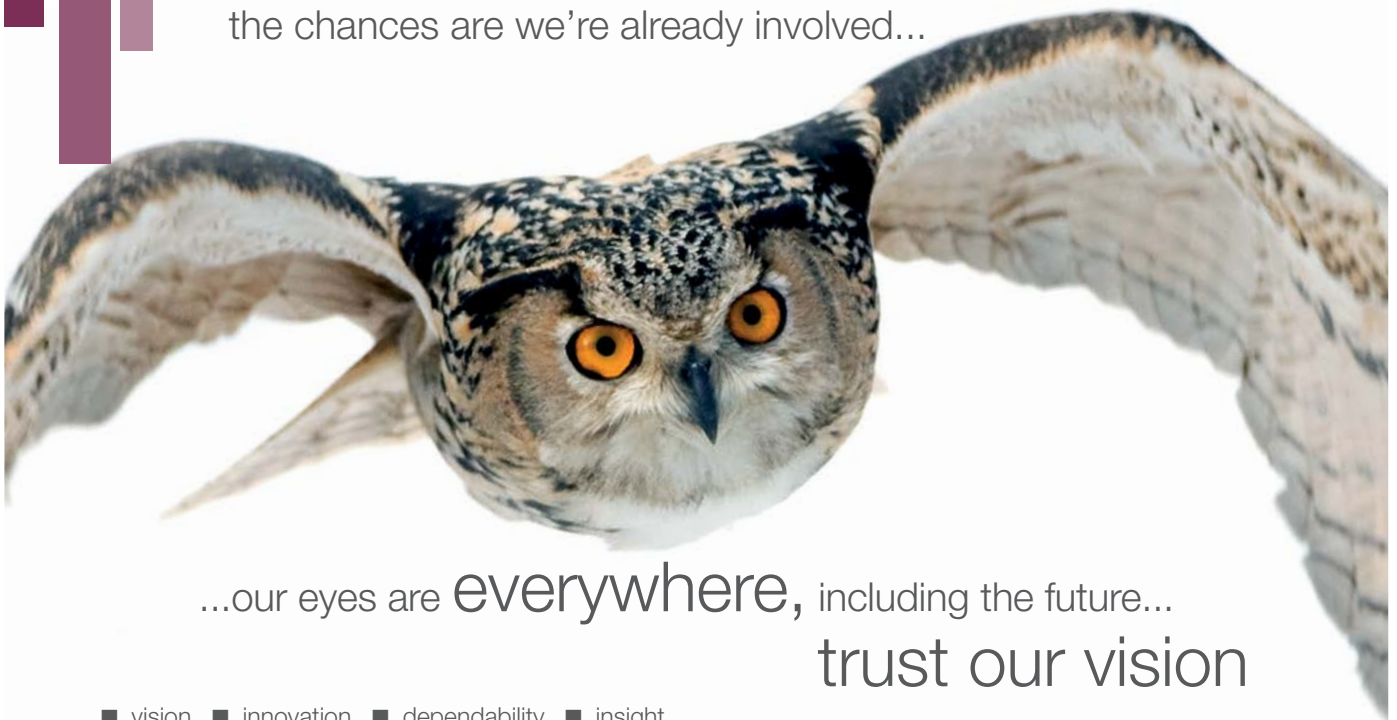
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News in brief...

CRP launched

The new Highland Main Line Community Rail Partnership saw guests including deputy first minister John Swinney and Phil Verster, MD of the ScotRail Alliance at its launch. Sally Spaven, chair of HML CRP paid tribute to 'the many people who have worked with us over the past two years, since our 150th Anniversary celebrations, to bring this CRP to life.' Those with projects that could be of interest should email: info@highlandmainlinecrp.co.uk

Rolling into old age

Responding to ORR figures showing Britain's rolling stock is at its oldest age in 14 years, Campaign for Better Transport's Martin Abrams, said: 'The problem is there's no national rolling stock strategy from the government. We're glad the new Northern and TransPennine Express franchise agreements are being used to get rid of the Pacers and this ambition needs to be replicated across the country so our rolling stock doesn't become a laughing stock.'

Transparency online

Transport Scotland's quarterly internal audits of ScotRail's service performance will now be made available from the Transport Scotland website, in a move that supports a Scottish government commitment to make information more accessible and transparent. The Service Quality Incentive Regime (SQUIRE) report has a reputation as one of the toughest audit regimes of its kind in the UK.

Devolution concerns

The Independent Transport Commission has published an occasional paper, *Devolution in England and Transport: Key Issues*, which explores issues surrounding the balancing of local and national strategic needs, and the particular transport requirements of non-urban areas as the English devolution process accelerates.

The report, authored by transport legal expert and ITC commissioner, Mary Bonar, alerts policy-makers to issues including: potential impacts on fares and transport funding; questions of accountability and expertise; needs of non-urban areas, and opportunities that might arise for closer integration of transport services.

ITC's director Dr Matthew Niblett said: 'As the scoping of the devolution and national infrastructure planning agendas progresses, we welcome the fact that the government has not applied a one-size-fits-all approach in the first wave of settlements across metropolitan areas like Manchester and Sheffield, and rural Cornwall.'

'The feedback from our transport industry consultation demonstrates support for local, more responsive decision-making and a hope that expanding the effective model used in London will lead to more widespread integrated transport, land use and economic development planning with better multi-modal public transport outcomes.'

'It is important that where good commercial practice is being executed, that combined authorities seize upon, support and use these skills and resources.'

'The real point to be resolved is the balance that needs to be struck between national strategic transport needs and demand for better local and regional transport solutions.'

'An element of harmonisation of approach is needed across English combined authorities and devolved administrations in order to avoid incompatible and competing national outcomes.'

Rail User Group awards

Set up by campaign group Railfuture to recognise and reward the achievements of the country's 300 rail user groups over the past year, the awards were presented by Railfuture president Christian Wolmar at the group's annual meeting in Bristol last month. The judging panel consisted of Railfuture vice-presidents Ian Brown, Roger Ford, Stewart Palmer, and Lorna Slade. The full list of winners is:

Best campaign

Harrogate Line Supporters Group – gold award

TransWilts Community Rail Partnership – silver award

Best Campaigner Clara Zihali Award in memory of a stalwart Railfuture campaigner Brian Dunsby, Harrogate Line Supporters Group – gold award

Dave Horton, Abbey Flyer users group – commendation

Bob Morrison, Great Western Coffee Shop Forum – commendation

Best New Group – The Oliver Lovell Award in memory of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group founder

Saltford Station Campaign

Best Newsletter

Friends of the Settle and Carlisle Line quarterly newsletter – gold award

Ribble Valley Rail – commendation

Lakes Line User Group – commendation

Best Website

Abbey Flyer users group – gold award

TransWilts Community Rail Partnership – silver award

Best Social Media Promotion

TransWilts Community Rail Partnership for The Weymouth Wizard

Judges' Special Award

Railfuture Scotland

UK Rail Market 2016 report available

The new, fully updated and revised UK Rail Market report provides a concise overview of the structure of the sector in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The report's content reflects the rapid pace of development of Britain's main line and urban rail networks, often described as 'the fastest growing in Europe'.

It outlines the role of government in leading development and regulation of the system. It summarises the latest status of Network Rail's spending plans for the Control Period 5 and defines the timetable for Control Period 6. Also covered are HS1 and the planned HS2 high-speed lines.

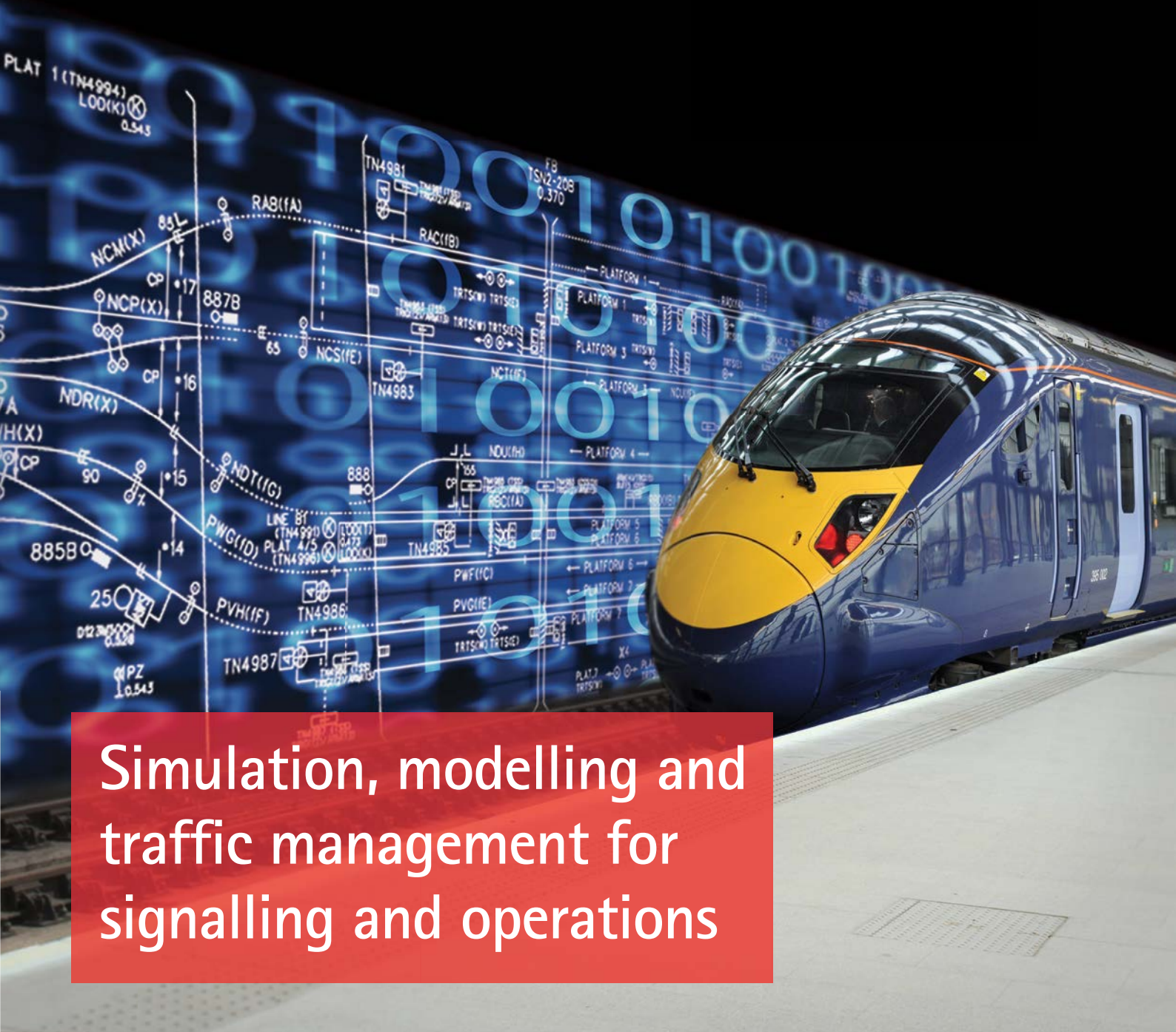
An overview of the current status of passenger rail franchises is included, summarising contract periods and providing traffic figures for 2014-15. Coverage is also included of non-franchised passenger operators, and freight train operating

companies are listed.

A section on Transport for London features the Crossrail scheme, as well as coverage of London Underground and its modernisation and extension projects, the London Overground and Docklands Light Railway systems and the proposed Crossrail 2 scheme. The report also includes a briefing on UK light rail and light metro systems that includes the latest traffic figures and details of development plans.

Current rolling stock orders and likely future procurement programmes are listed, plus coverage of principal train leasing companies and a sector-by-sector guide to principal suppliers to the UK rail market. Numerous links are provided to organisation websites and to key documents.

The report is published by Brooks Market Intelligence Reports and reflects the status as at November 2015. Visit: www.brooksreports.com



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News in brief...

Touch and go for c2c

c2c is offering passengers 'bPay by Barclaycard' contactless payment wristbands to help them access cheaper rail travel. 8,000 local rail passengers in East London and Thurrock will use the wristbands, which contain a small contactless chip that allows 'touch and go' payments in the same way as a contactless credit or debit card. c2c passengers 'who would benefit from switching' are being sent a unique code to register.

Rail benefits

RBF has launched its first apprenticeship scheme. Over two years students will either study at home or at college for an NVQ or an AAT accounting qualification. They will be released from work one day a week and potentially receive a job offer at the end. Abi Smith RBF CEO said: 'You often find it's good for people who want to work while gaining qualifications. Exams are not for everybody.'

Freight growth

Vital freight route The Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Mediterranean, is to be extended to London by November 2016: in preparation for this Network Rail has joined the corridor's management board. This means NR's freight customers and other European freight operators will be better able to understand and secure capacity for freight service growth to and from the UK, linking with France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland via the Channel Tunnel.

Disabled access to public transport 'worse than before 2012' claims Paralympics star

Improvements made during the 2012 Paralympic Games have been lost, with some public transport services even worse now for disabled access, according to a new survey by charity Whizz-Kidz.

The seven to 24-year-old wheelchair users told the charity they were not as independent as they would like to be. Many felt excluded from job opportunities or were put off using health and education services. Disturbingly, two in three completely avoid using buses and trains due to access issues, said Whizz-Kidz.

Paralympian and charity patron Hannah Cockcroft said: 'During the Games people felt confident, but things have gone backwards.' Almost half of disabled young people said their main issue is having areas on public transport which are not accessible to them. Just under a fifth said they had experienced a lack of support when travelling, and 12 per cent said the biggest problem was a negative attitude from staff and passengers.

One recalled falling out of their chair and into a train carriage when their wheels became stuck in the gap, saying: 'The trains are never level with the platform.'

Almost three quarters of people outside London said they had more difficulty with public transport, which was reported not to be as accessible as buses, taxis and trams in the capital. Most people said they choose to be driven by their parents or get a taxi rather than use public transport because there are too many barriers in their way.

The charity, which used survey responses from 128 wheelchair users and their carers, as well as focus groups, to compile its Get On Board report on the use of public and private transport, is calling on the government and other providers to make improvements so travel is more 'inclusive'.

New team boosts care

Railway Mission has welcomed four more staff members to complete its new-look team and boost care for rail staff.

The national Christian charity, founded in 1881, employed four new rail chaplains in the Spring and has now recruited four more to meet rising demand from the industry. Angela Levitt-Harwood, Christopher Henley, Dan Godwin and Helen Bartlett have completed their initial training and are now offering a listening ear to rail staff.

Levitt-Harwood is serving as chaplain for Yorkshire and Humberside, centred on York Station. Henley is serving in Cambridgeshire and East Anglia and is based at Liverpool Street Station. Godwin is caring for staff on the London Underground, working alongside Dylis George. Bartlett is the new rail chaplain for the Northeast, covering the Tyne and Wear area as far north as Berwick-Upon-Tweed.

Railway Mission executive director Liam Johnston said: 'The challenges faced by railway staff and passengers can sometimes

seem daunting, but our chaplains are there to bring a little light and comfort.'

Railway Mission's chaplains support Toc and Network Rail staff as well as BTP officers. They are also available to staff at



other railway-related businesses and offer support to passengers in times of distress and anxiety. The charity relies entirely on voluntary donations.



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Great Northern spots bullying

Charity Red Balloon Learner Centres hosted a reception for 100 politicians, councillors and other supporters to highlight the effects of childhood bullying.

The event, held at the Houses of Parliament and sponsored by Toc Great Northern, heard from Cambridge MP and shadow minister for transport Daniel Zeichner, who praised the charity's work in educating children who can't or won't go to school because of bullies.

Also there was Red Balloon student Hannah Letters, 15, who described how school bullying left her feeling suicidal, but now,

thanks to the charity, she sees a future for herself and hopes one day to go to university.

Red Balloon has trained Greater Northern's station and train staff to spot the signs of bullying among children travelling to school, and in what action to take.

Charles Horton, CEO of GTR, said: 'We are committed to helping raise the charity's profile and awareness of this serious issue.'

Visit: www.redballoonlearner.org



Hannah Letters with (to her right) Charles Horton, Dr Carrie Herbert of Red Balloon, MP Graham Brady and Quintus Travis of Red Balloon

Letter to the editor

To nationalise or not to nationalise (yawn). Here we go again. Sadly, this subject seems to be based on politics. One lot say 'Nationalisation good; privatisation bad' and the other lot say the opposite.

It would be really good if one could see an informed, costed analysis of the subject, although I suspect it would be expensive and the query arises as to who would pay.

My gut feeling is that a nationalised railway should be more cost-effective. But, going back to the 'bad old days' of British Leyland et al, there are fears of nationalised industry inefficiency. On the other hand, there are the real concerns about 'greedy shareholders' milking the railway.

Only an in-depth analysis could get us anywhere near the truth.

Politicians don't really understand railways. For example, we have had, over the last decade or so 'Don't electrify' and now 'Electrify (almost) everything' policies,

that seem to have been neither properly considered nor evaluated.

We had politicians trying to get Crossrail shoe-horned into the north side of the Circle Line to save building a big new tunnel and then proposing to re-electrify the Southern Region (retro-terminology) at 25kv. Who dreams up these fantasies?

On the other hand, the 'Big Four' did a good job running railways - and hotels, and buses, and ships, and aircraft...

It essentially depends on the quality of management you have, and that need not depend on whether the railway is nationalised or not.

Personally, I believe that the Transport for London model is good. The 'owner' (TfL or a revived British Rail(ways)) specifies what is wanted and gets people to bid for the job. But at least a consistent quality is demanded. Oddly, governments seem happy to have that model in London, but virtually nowhere else in the country. I wonder why!

On another note, I was glancing through some back *Railpros* and came across comments you made in the Editorial of September 2014. A fellow passenger wrote to you about a Braintree - London through train that sometimes started from

Witham 'for operational reasons'. But, if the 07.24 (or whatever) from Braintree starts from Witham, is it any longer the 07.- whatever from Braintree? I would say it is not. The Toc may decide beneficially to start a train from Witham in the path of the errant train to accommodate some of the passengers, but it is not and cannot be the 07.24, so it cannot be shown as arriving on time at Liverpool St.

I believe this is just part of the system of cockamamie targets politicians set. Some years ago, we had Key Performance Indicators on the Underground. My boss's boss complained to my boss that four trains went to one branch and none to another. But the KPI's ruled that way, whereas the controller, in the 'good old days' would have diverted one train at least, to balance the service. The Controller and his boss (also my boss) were judged on the KPI's, not common sense.

If the setters of these targets don't know what they're about (as mostly they don't) we are doomed by these stupid political diktats.

Oh for a return to common sense! Is it possible?

Eric Stuart, France



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Delivering the goods Chris MacRae

A troubling picture

The situation with the migrant crisis has worsened, but other factors aren't helping the low take-up of available Channel Tunnel rail freight capacity, says **Chris MacRae**

In the September issue of this magazine we wrote about how the disruption of the English Channel ferry and tunnel routes by the migrant crisis was also having a dangerous effect on Channel Tunnel rail freight. We make no apology for returning to this subject again now as although the media attention to the issue has waned due to the lack of the very public sights over the Summer of the disruption, for rail freight matters have actually got worse.

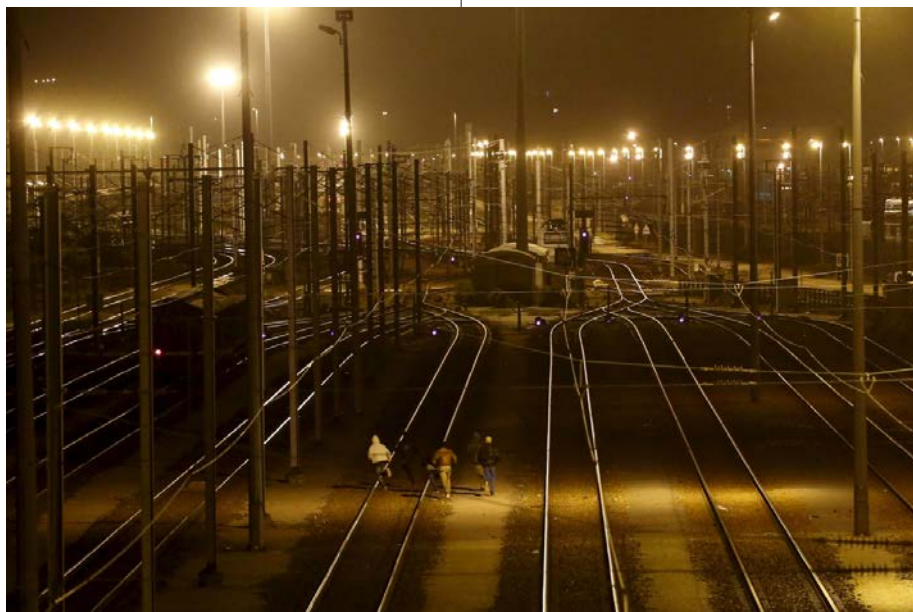
During the Summer we quoted that one business in Scotland that regularly used the tunnel for rail freight traffic had managed only five out of a planned 25 train services in the then past five weeks at a loss of around £150,000. And another rail freight operator had at the time said the situation was 'the worst since 2001/2'. The situation currently is no better: some key services have been stopped and those

'While the UK government is funding extra high security fencing, what is needed is effective and continual policing of the fences and perimeter on the French side and inter-agency and police co-operation in France with SNCF and its property'

that continue face on-going disruption.

Feedback has been that Eurotunnel has responded better this time than in 2002, but Channel Tunnel rail freight services are facing an onslaught of disruption caused by criminally-organised people traffickers, cynically exploiting possibly the worst humanitarian refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. While the UK government is funding extra high security fencing, what is needed is effective and continual policing of the fences and perimeter on the French side and inter-agency and police co-operation in France with SNCF and its property. Recently the Gendarme policing has become more effective but this needs to continue.

While the UK government's Department for Business Innovation & Skills has been supportive, there are concerns about the insurance industry



‘The main barrier to growth has always been the high freight track access charges (higher than on the mainland network in Great Britain run by Network Rail) that Eurotunnel charges through-tunnel freight trains’

and any extra costs certainly won't be borne by customers: traffic will simply be lost to road. Also, so far the civil penalty regime of fines for being caught with illegal migrants on board rail freight services has not been applied as it was in 2001/2; if it is it could compromise the continuation of services.

Not the sole reason

But the migrant crisis of today, like the migrant crisis of 2001/2 is not the sole reason for low take up of available Channel Tunnel rail freight capacity. Historically, before this crisis cross-channel via Channel Tunnel rail freight was running at a small portion of that capacity reserved for it. The main barrier to growth has always been the high freight track access charges (higher than on the mainland network in Great Britain run by Network Rail) that Eurotunnel charges through-tunnel freight trains. It is simple economics in FTA's view that were the charges to come down, more rail freight traffic would run (migrant crises aside). The contention is over whether Eurotunnel operates a marginal cost policy or seeks full sunk investment cost asset return on the cost of building the Tunnel (it does the latter), and whether it pre-dates the EU Directives on track access charging and marginal costing for freight as 'special infrastructure'. Eurotunnel has introduced a time-limited discount scheme for new start up rail freight services and other headline price cuts that had seen traffic grow (pre the current migrant crisis) albeit from a low base. It really is important that this underlying issue is addressed as the fundamental cause of lower-than-planned

Channel Tunnel rail freight traffic. Obviously the disruption issues of recent months like those of a decade ago have been highly damaging, but rail freight volumes were low before then for other cost reasons outlined above.

FTA is engaged in developing the *Agenda for More Freight by Rail* that lays out the industry challenges set by major shippers for rail to win more freight market share from other modes of transport, and that includes increasing cross-Channel rail freight services.

Visit: www.fta.co.uk/export/sites/fta/_galleries/downloads/rail_freight/14094_agenda_for_more_guide.pdf

The Freight Transport Association can trace its origins back to 1889 and is recognised as the voice of the freight and logistics industry, representing the transport interests of companies moving goods by road, rail, sea and air. FTA members operate more than 220,000 goods vehicles – half the UK fleet – consign over 90 per cent of the freight moved by rail and 70 per cent of sea and air freight.

For further information on FTA's rail freight policy work contact:

Chris MacRae, rail freight policy manager

Email: cmacrae@fta.co.uk

Tel: 07818 450353



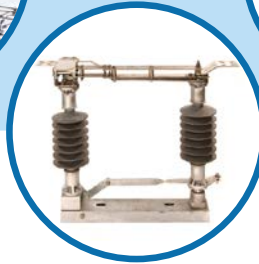
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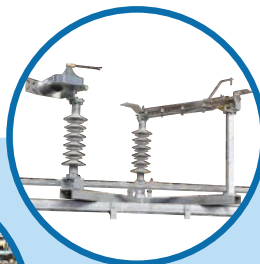
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Laying down the law **Kate Hindmarsh**

Shocking new indirect discrimination decision

At first glance the recent ECJ decision about the height of electricity meters on electricity poles in Bulgaria would not be expected to have a direct impact on employers, says **Kate Hindmarsh**

While the case involved discrimination in the provision of services rather than in employment, the concepts are still relevant in an employment context and this case may have a profound impact on disability laws within the UK, which all employers need to be aware of.

Two types of discrimination

In UK law there are two types of discrimination which are set out in the Equality Act 2010: direct discrimination

and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination is simply when someone with a protected characteristic (see top tip 1) is treated less favourably as a result of that characteristic. Indirect discrimination is when a provision, criteria or practice would put someone with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to someone who does not share the protected characteristic.

The wording of the Equality Act 2010 makes it clear that to bring a claim for indirect discrimination, the person bringing the claim has to have the protected characteristic themselves.



This is in marked contrast to direct discrimination where the idea of discrimination by association has long been established, *i.e.* the reason for the discrimination is due to a protected characteristic of someone they associate with.

The Bulgaria case

This particular case was about racial discrimination and the EC Race Directive, which prohibits indirect discrimination based on racial or ethnic origins. It is also forms part of the basis for the indirect discrimination provisions in the Equality Act 2010.

The case involved a shop owner, Ms Nikolova, who lived in a predominantly Roma area of Bulgaria. In Bulgaria electricity poles have fixed electricity meters which show how much electricity

Top tips for employers:

- 1** Firstly keep in mind all of the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 2** When introducing new practices or policies do not limit the extent of its impact to just your own members of staff. Consider how the practice could affect a wide range of different employees. If you have a diverse range of employees with various different characteristics already this should be easier for you.
- 3** If any staff raise an issue with a practice or policy that has been introduced, listen to their concerns in a fair and balanced manner. Do not be dismissive just because they don't have the protected characteristic in question.
- 4** Remember that with indirect discrimination an employer has a defence to any actions it takes which is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Consider the problem you are trying to solve and if there are any alternative means of achieving the solution. If there are none and the problem you are solving is serious then there is a good chance that you would have a defence to an indirect discrimination claim.
- 5** One of the most common claims for indirect discrimination is a requirement that someone works full-time. When recruiting or considering flexible working requests investigate if there are any alternatives to the role being full-time such as job sharing.

the customer is using. In most areas the electricity supplier places the meters 1.7 metres off the ground to allow the customers to view their usage, however the electricity supplier in this area, CRB, put the meters six metres off the ground. CRB's justification for the height of the meters was that there had been a large number of cases of tampering with the meters and unlawful connections to the network in this region. Ms Nikolova argued that she had no way of checking how much electricity she was using and was being charged a higher rate to compensate for losses elsewhere in the region.

As the policy disproportionately affected Roma people this was a clear case of indirect discrimination. However the reason that this case went all the way to the ECJ is because Ms Nikolova was not herself Roma nor did she have any close Roma relatives and so the question which the ECJ needed to consider was whether in an indirect discrimination case the person bringing the claim had to have the protected characteristic.

The ECJ considered the wording of the EC Race Directive and determined that there was nothing in the wording which meant that the person suffering the disadvantage had to share the protected characteristic. In this case it meant

that although Ms Nikolova was not of Roma origin, Roma origin was the factor which gave rise to her less favourable treatment, the practice was found to be offensive and stigmatizing and so the ECJ determined that there had been a case of indirect discrimination.

How the decision affects employers

This decision has potentially significant implications for UK law, as the Equality Act is now incompatible with the Directive and will have to be amended to cover associative indirect discrimination. This judgment has potentially huge implications for employers. It will mean that employers can no longer look at the various protected characteristics of their employees when deciding whether something they wish to do might be discriminatory.

An example of indirect discrimination is the requirement for a role to be full-time which is potentially discriminatory towards women due to the perception that women take a greater role in child care than men. The recent ECJ judgment means that, where an employer with all male employees may not previously have had to worry about indirect discrimination claims, if they have a blanket ban on part-time working, they may now find themselves liable for such

claims.

However, employers should not let these new concerns about indirect discrimination claims prevent them from implementing new policies or practices. There are occasions when indirect discrimination can be justified, if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example an employment tribunal has previously held that a policy which prevented Sikh employees in the prison service from carrying a ceremonial dagger, while technically was discriminatory, was a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

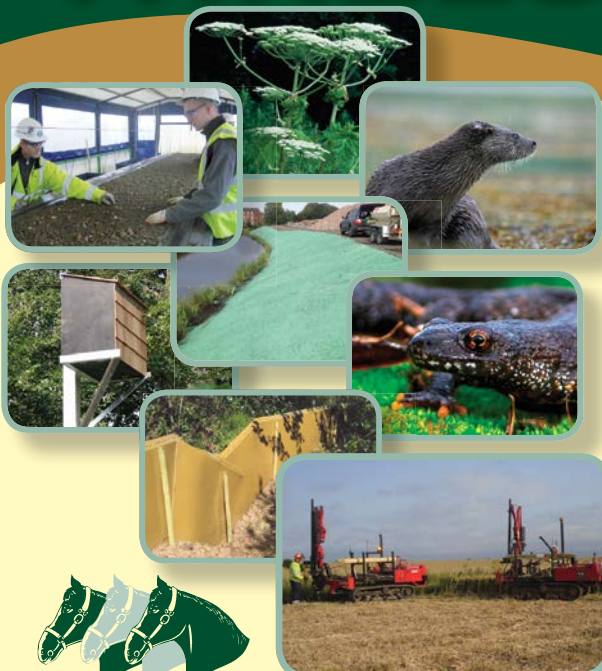
Conclusions

Discrimination Law is complex and ever-changing, as this case reveals. It is likely that the UK government will need to amend the Equality Act to extend the scope of indirect discrimination. It is also likely that employers' policies, rules, decisions and practices will be more vulnerable to legal challenge and employers need to be aware of this decision when considering their policies and whether they can objectively be justified.

Kate Hindmarsh is a partner and head of the employment law division at Langleys Solicitors LLP.

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Getting Women on Board

With Women in Rail's new report revealing that only 19 per cent of women working in the industry are in managerial roles, we need to work together to change this, says **Adeline Ginn**

Women in Rail was created in 2012 to provide networking opportunities and support for all women working within the railway industry, promote rail as an attractive career choice, develop strategies for engaging the younger generations to consider a career in the sector and to influence key stakeholders and undertakings to support and encourage initiatives aimed at improving gender balance and bridging the skills gap in the railway sector.

In the three years since its launch,

Women in Rail has achieved a tremendous amount, growing from strength to strength and moving closer to attaining its vision for the rail industry.

The railway industry is full of fantastic and talented men and women, but more people need to know this. Women in Rail's recent study showed that less than one quarter of the workforce is female and the number of women in the top positions is even lower.

The power of a more gender-balanced workforce has been proved time and time again. Studies have shown that companies with more women on their boards outperform their rivals with a 42 per cent higher return in sales, 66 per



'Women in Rail aims to bring together key stakeholders in the hope that collectively they can improve gender balance within rail along with helping our members grow stronger and foster key relationships'

cent higher return on invested capital and 53 per cent higher return on equity. With a more diverse workforce comes different perspectives, experiences and skill sets, as well as new ideas and ways of working, all of which ultimately bring about positive change within companies. To keep its competitive edge, the British railway industry needs to focus on getting more women to join the sector but also to support them progress the career ladder in the company within which they are employed.

Time for change

The latest report from Lord Mervyn

Davies, the government's champion of gender equality in the boardroom, has seen the percentage of women on boards grow from 14 to 26.1 per cent in just five years. However the rail industry is often misconceived as an unattractive industry. In reality, rail is one of the most dynamic and exciting industries in the UK to work in at the moment. At a time when many sectors are struggling, Crossrail and HS2 are experiencing billions of pounds of investment.

Our report released in November shows that the number of females working in the rail industry is 16.4 per cent of the total workforce, with only 1.3 per cent of these women working in senior roles. These results show there is an imperative for change and we need to work together to make this happen.

Our report also discusses what we as an industry can do to amend the outdated image that rail has in our society. With some of the leading names in the rail industry providing their thoughts and opinions on the current situation, Women in Rail has been able to draw conclusions on how to tackle the problem at hand. Most notable is the need to promote the industry more positively among our young girls and women. After all, given rail's rich history and heritage in this country, our young generation should

be excited to be a part of it.

Striking the balance

Women in Rail aims to bring together key stakeholders in the hope that collectively they can improve gender balance within rail along with helping our members grow stronger and foster key relationships.

We hold workshops and events addressing the key issues our members have told us prevent them from pushing themselves forward in their career. We have also introduced our 2015/2016 mentoring programme, developed to help women in the industry receive the advice and guidance they need to get a better understanding of the rail industry they work in but also get support in furthering their career.

Women in Rail is currently the only independent organisation in the rail industry that focuses on fostering the women working within the sector. It is an initiative that benefits us all, so if you can help, please do contact us. We are always looking for individuals and organisations to work with us and help us to showcase rail as the modern, dynamic and exciting industry it is.

Adeline Ginn is founder of Women in Rail and general counsel at Angel Trains

Visit: www.womeninrail.org

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Bringing academia and industry together

The recent Rail Research UK Association annual conference was its biggest to date

Two-way knowledge transfer and strong partnerships between industry and academia are key ingredients for innovation and the benefits it generates. As new technology develops, so too does the demand for an increase in expertise and knowledge. This is where the role of Rail Research UK Association (RRUKA) comes in.

Facilitated by RSSB and Network Rail, RRUKA was established in 2010 to bridge the gap between those who do research and those who can use it and fund it. RRUKA brings together groups of academics from different disciplines allowing knowledge transfer which also brings those researchers not traditionally associated with rail, together with the established industry to break down barriers to innovation. Its strength is

illustrated in its numbers; RRUKA has expanded a railway research community from eight institutional members to 49 in just four years.

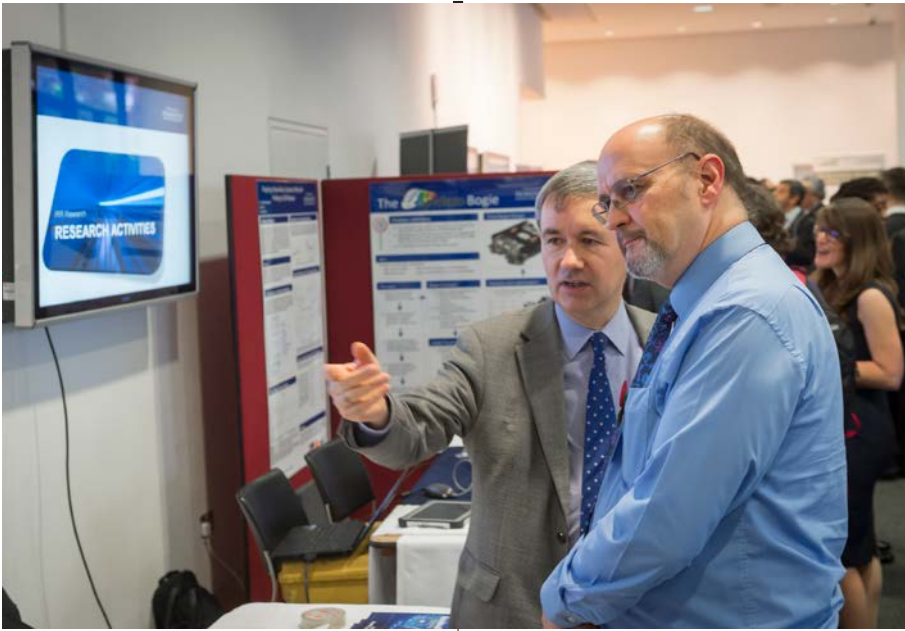
The RRUKA Annual Conference, held each November in London, provides a platform to showcase academic railway research carried out by RRUKA members over the past year and is also a networking opportunity, which helps to further bridge the gap between academia and industry.

The conference aims to showcase the skills, expertise and capabilities of academic railway research groups and institutions,



Luisa Moisio, Koji Agatsuma and Stuart Hillmansen





Sam Bemment with Professor Simon Iwnicki

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS), Professor John Perkins, who reinforced a vital need for industry across all sectors to encourage and nurture young people, particularly women, to consider STEM careers.



Best young researcher

The facilitation of the nationwide Best Young Rail Researcher award is one way in which RRUKA supports the drive to nurture and retain existing talent and highlight the achievements being made by those already engaged in and starting out their engineering careers.

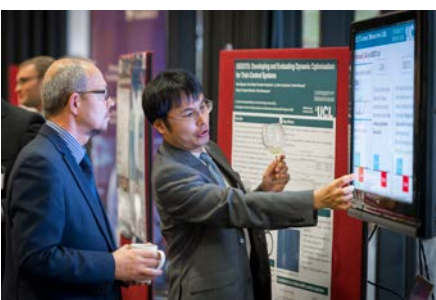
This year's winner of the award, Loughborough University's Sam Bemment, presented his REPOINT project, a radical new approach to Switches and Crossing design which seeks to eliminate a 200 year old railway problem.

Initiated by funding from RSSB and Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and further developed by RSSB's Future Railway programme, REPOINT applies 'failsafe' design principles and will be more reliable than traditional point designs and uses safety concepts derived from aerospace and the nuclear industry.

The blue sky village, featured for its second year, provided 11 RRUKA members with the opportunity to showcase their work and network with delegates keen to know more. The exhibition helped to place greater emphasis on the work of research groups and institutions providing opportunities for live demonstrations and interactions with academic researchers.

As outlined in the association's 2016/17 development plan (available via the RRUKA website) targets and goals for 2016 will focus on three strands; bridging services, supporting the rail industry vision and attracting people to rail. The conference conveyed a strong industry appetite for this and we look forward to working to achieve this in the coming year.

To find out about more RRUKA and its members, visit www.rruka.org.uk Conference proceedings can be found via www.sparkrail.org



Collaborative projects

Plenary session presentations took the form of research presentations, examples of good collaborative projects and taster five minute presentations designed to give a flavour of research. This covered a wide range of topics from the use of magnetic flux techniques to detect wheel tread damage, to improving the communication of railway safety information to teenagers and young adults.

There was also a specially-dedicated session to disseminate findings of the RRUKA facilitated feasibility studies which looked at finding new ways to achieve predictable and optimised braking. These feasibility studies were the output of a joint call sponsored by ATOC and organised in collaboration with the RSSB Future Railway programme.

The conference featured two insightful keynote speeches. The first, from Hitachi Rail Europe's head of engineering, Koji Agatsuma, reflected on the importance of innovation in rail and collaboration with the academic community. The second came from former chief scientific adviser to the

demonstrate how these capabilities have been used to apply fresh thinking to rail challenges, and provide opportunities to share information about the research that is being carried out.

2015 was the biggest conference to date and marked RSSB's head of research and development Luisa Moisio's first public appearance in her role as industry co-chair of RRUKA. Alongside academic co-chair, University of Birmingham's Dr Stuart Hillmans, Moisio outlined how the association helps to find solutions to some of the most pressing challenges the railway faces today.



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Operational planning into the high speed era

William Barter is the IRO tutor for Operational Planning and has followed closely the progress of the HS2 project. A recent North East Area event saw members share his experiences of planning for major projects.

The timetable is an important input to the business plan and infrastructure design, so is an essential tool in project development to determine the optimal infrastructure, fleet size and labour force from the very earliest stage in planning a new railway. HS2 is essentially that, and William made direct reference to the challenge of a blank sheet of paper, and perhaps many such, as various iterations of the plan are tried.

The basic principles for planning for high speed remain the same in that a successful plan has to reflect and optimise operational costs (fleet management, fuel, staff *etc.*) and capital costs (rolling stock and infrastructure) against revenue. There have to be strict but realistic planning rules which ensure a reliable and workable timetable. If this is right then the system will be right.

A lot of the planning processes for high speed are no different to those required for conventional railways. The commercial specification and system design are key inputs, although the draft plan can influence the viability of both and should suggest where improvement can be made. The planning rules have to include such fixed factors as sectional running times, station dwell times, headways, junction margins, terminal times *etc.*, many of which will have to be calculated for as yet unrealised assets using simulation tools. It is possible however to recommend infrastructure changes at this stage to improve performance and viability.

A new railway such as HS2 incorporates features which do change the way that operators think about the plan, including infrastructure features such as grade separated junctions, shorter headways, operation at terminals and key junctions, standard train formations, and standardisation of turnrounds to maximise utilisation of capacity at terminals. In fact a modern high speed railway has features not dissimilar to an intensively-worked suburban railway, regardless of the top speed. However, because of the greater speed and closer headways the timetable needs to be more accurate. Timings to less than half a



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minute may indeed be required.

Certain constraints will present themselves. Modern permanent way design aims to simplify station and junction layouts so as to design-out sources of failure. This is a worthy objective but can increase junction margins and restrict layout flexibility, which may have to be offset by additional facilities elsewhere.

Members were very appreciative of the insights William provided. These included many personal observations based upon his experience of operational planning for a range of major projects over the years. *If you are a member of the Institution and would like a copy of William's presentation please email David Monk-Steel, North East Area Secretary:*

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I think it's time for the trades unions to step out of this 1970's time warp and start recognising that they need to work with us and the people they represent to really address the agenda in the future

I had tweeted that I was on my way to interview GWR's Mark Hopwood but was held up by Greater Anglia, again. A wit from 'GA Complaints' responded 'Can you ask him to make sure First wins the next franchise please', and I commented to Hopwood how surprised I was that Greater Anglia would ask that. After grabbing his mobile and quickly ascertaining that GA Complaints is not Greater Anglia's official customer twitter feed and of course he couldn't possibly discuss the franchise competition, both Hopwood and his press officer became so embroiled in checking Twitter they forgot I was there.

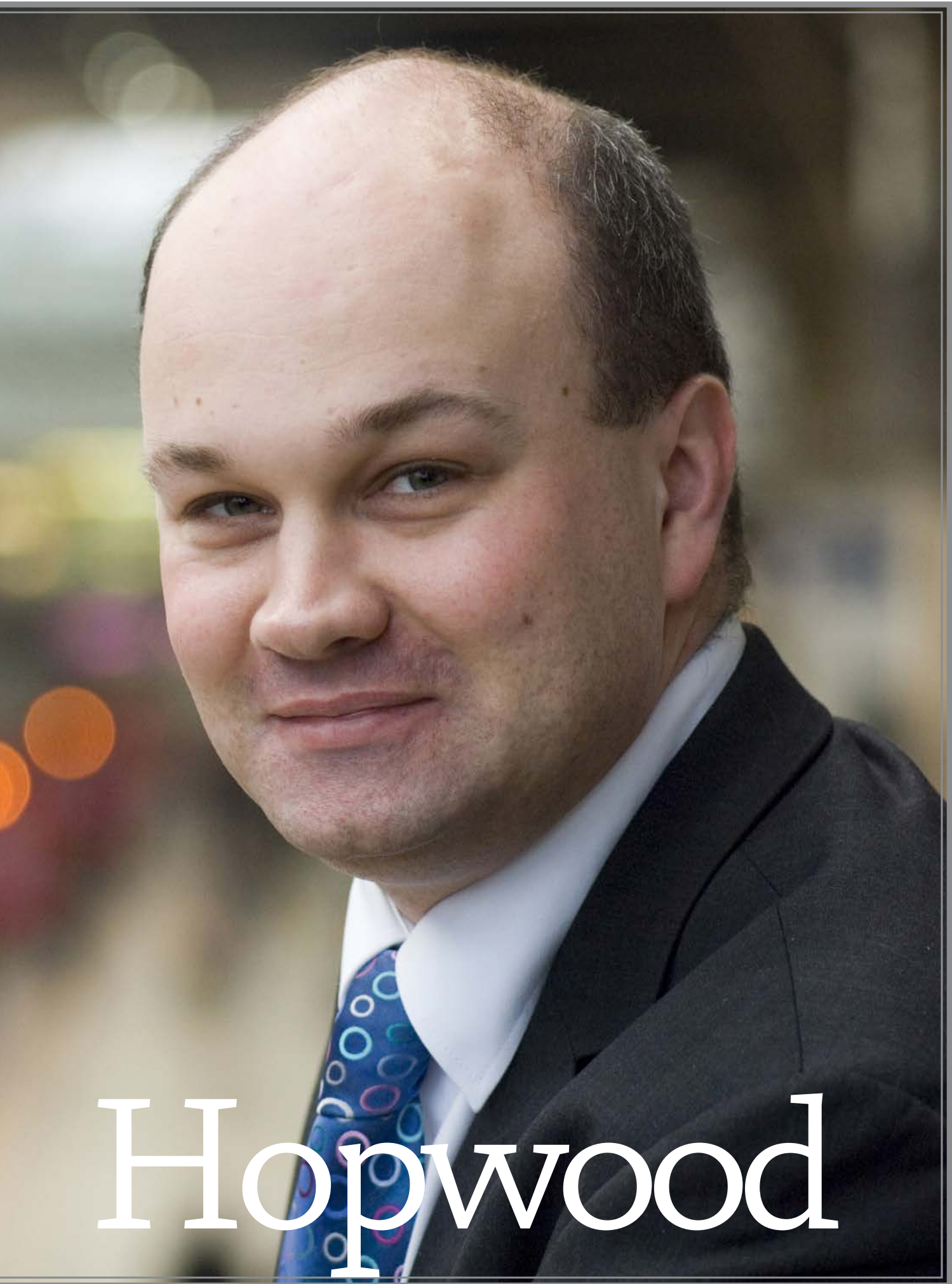
So from breaking the record for 'most embarrassing start to an interview', we moved on to talk for more than an hour – another record and something Hopwood must have felt was warranted.

The re-branding to Great Western Railway, done around the start of the extended franchise on 20th September received a 'very positive reception on the whole' according to Hopwood after I pointed out media speculation that it was done to wipe the slate clean. 'Clearly there are some people who are seeing, in many ways, the business they saw a few weeks ago but we've got huge investment plans coming and we've signalled very clearly to our customers that things will be very different. Some people are sceptical, I understand that and they'll believe it when they see it; and it's my job and the team's job to win them over.'

Asked what advice he would give to other Toc managers about change and crisis management, Hopwood had no intention of being drawn into a heart-to-heart about what must have felt like an *annus horribilis* in many ways. Few reading this could fail to be aware of the unfortunate *Dispatches* documentary earlier this year and the long-drawn out and ongoing battle with the unions over the design and staffing of the new IEP trains. 'I'm not sure it's my job to give advice to other Toc MD's, my job is to run GWR. This is the biggest Toc in the UK and we're going through a considerably large amount of work with Network Rail in terms of re-building the railway. I think across the industry more needs to be done to catch up with customer expectations.'

Lorna Slade spoke to Mark Hopwood, managing director of Great Western Railway, about the transformation of his business, the perils of Twitter, that *Dispatches* documentary, the unions, and why he's pretty relaxed about it all

Mark



Hopwood



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Some of the things you've referred to around ticketing reflect the fact we operate in a regulated environment, and there's no doubt many of us would like to move towards a simpler fares structure. But it's quite difficult to achieve that at the same time as protecting all the aspects of the ticketing system that people want protected. So that is a challenge.' And before I could move on to the next question, Hopwood reminded me that GWR won Rail Business of the Year at the Rail Business Awards 2015, which he saw as recognition 'that this is a business that has had an awful lot thrown at it but has responded well.'

'We've got an investment programme in this franchise that delivers more for customers than pretty much any other in terms of rolling stock, seats and stations; and we haven't just achieved that by chance or luck,' he continued, 'we've achieved it by an awful lot of hard work actually, putting together the business case and getting it agreed with the DfT. Clearly there are people out there who would like to see everything achieved tomorrow - I'd like that; but the reality is some of this stuff takes time. We have plans now to completely transform this railway, and if you look at how much capacity we've already put into it and investment in the business, we have a track record we can be proud of.'

Having put me in my place, Hopwood moved on to state that the biggest challenge in the railway today is one of capacity, which 'to some extent is a nice problem to have'. 'There are a lot of businesses in decline,' he elaborated, 'and we're in growth. You don't get lots of people travelling with you just because the economy turns up; we've seen in some other transportation modes that growth doesn't come automatically, so fundamentally we have a good product. But we've got to tackle the capacity challenge and I'm sure other operators would recognise that's important.'

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Not expecting any sympathy

Interviewed in September 2012 by the previous editor of *Rail Professional* when FGW was entering the final year of its then franchise, the first paragraph mentions that before Hopwood took the helm in December 2009 the company was having a 'rough time'. 'Overcrowding was terrible, staff were becoming demoralised and disenchanted, passengers had re-named the operation 'Worst Late Western.'

While the piece credits Hopwood with restoring passengers' faith in the company, frankly it looks like he has always been fire-fighting, which can't be easy on a personal level? Again Hopwood was having none of it: 'Maybe I have spent some of this last year fire-fighting but only a small proportion. Actually the vast majority of my time has been spent on delivering the strategy we've now signed up to, so I don't think it's fair to say that when we've put together probably one of the biggest transformations in the industry and had the government sign up to it.'

Battling unions over a train design that you had no say in, writing explanatory letters to customers and being targeted by a consumer documentary must have taken its toll though? But Hopwood was, perhaps understandably, steely in his defence against a more intimate viewpoint.

'At the end of the day I've voluntarily taken on this job. I enjoy the job, it's a challenge. There are always people in the external world who will want to express an opinion but ultimately I'm here because FirstGroup want me to be and because the DfT is keen to keep this team in place. Of course when you're running a business with a billion pound turnover and getting on for 6,000 employees and you're in the public spotlight there is some pressure on you, but I'm not expecting any sympathy for that; I'm very happy to take the challenges. There's a lot of pleasure in this job and when people see the fruits of investment they will see what we've been doing.' And again Hopwood talked me through the extensive investment programme including further trains for the West Country set to begin operating from 2018.

Struggled to keep up with demand

In the years preceding GWR Hopwood worked for National Express running the UK's smallest franchise, c2c, which he admitted in the previous interview hadn't been enough of a challenge. I wondered if it had been a case of 'be careful what you wish for' now? 'When I was running c2c I was also responsible for running Gatwick Express and Silverlink as well, so that was a fair challenge but yes I did think it was time to move on. c2c has been a great success story because it saw huge investment in new rolling stock in one go and in new signalling, and the management team has carried on improving



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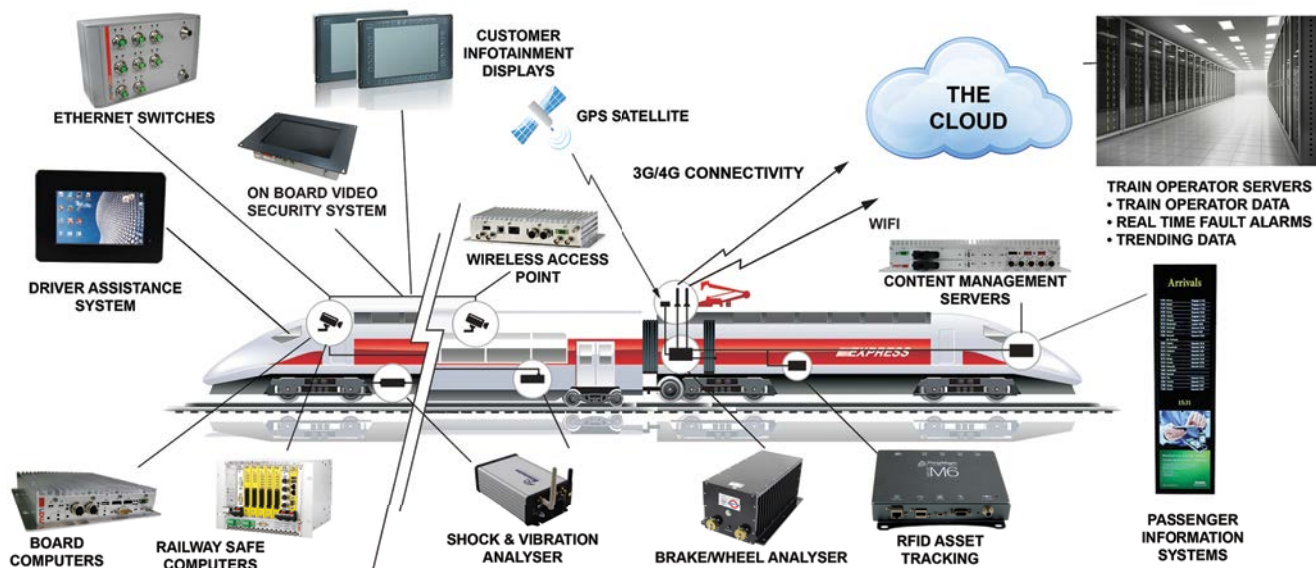
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the product. One of GWR's challenges is that we operate in one of the most economically prosperous parts of the UK and if I'm honest the industry, including us, have struggled to keep up with demand, so although we've added thousands of extra seats we haven't been able to add the capacity that our customers would like to see, which is why we're so pleased to have this new franchise with transformational increases in rolling stock. But having said that, punctuality and reliability are also part of the concerns our customers have and it's no secret that Network Rail's performance on Western has been disappointing.'

Time to get real

Living in Essex at the time, I remember the fuss the unions made in 2003 when c2c introduced the guardless Class 357 Electrostars. The end of the world was nigh – the trains were meant for long distances and wouldn't like breaking, they warned, and without a guard there would be terrible consequences. I wondered if that experience helped Hopwood in his current stand-off?

'I actually introduced the driver only operation at c2c and I've had experience of changing the method of operation on other train operators, so yes. In fairness my predecessors had

'... many of our customers have jobs and work in businesses that have been through very considerable change, and they find it annoying that sometimes they are affected by industrial action from people who aren't willing to accept change in their own workplace'

that they need to work with us and the people they represent to really address the agenda in the future, which is that this is actually an expanding industry that has offered their members much better terms and conditions and more opportunities, and that's going to continue. But there will be some change and I think most of our customers find this very frustrating,



done a lot of the hard work before I got there with the dispute and I arrived a few weeks before the scheme went live. But my perspective is this: I've got an enormous amount of respect for trade unions and the trade union movement; all of my mother's family come from South Wales; my grandfather there was a union official in the NUM and trade unions have played a really important role in building up the rights of working people in the UK, and people today benefit, and continue to benefit, from that. But I think they have lost their way a little bit in the last few years because we've now got an expansion agenda in UK rail which is about carrying more passengers, about creating more jobs, and actually nobody anywhere politically is suggesting that we should have a smaller railway and that we should have a railway that has fewer jobs and less opportunity. But there are clearly opportunities for us and other train operators to take advantage of modern technology, not just for efficiency but also to deliver better standards of safety, better standards of customer service and better standards of punctuality.

'I think it's time for the trade unions to get real and accept that,' continued Hopwood firmly. 'We have added well over 1000 extra jobs into this business in the last five years, and those are real jobs to do with maintaining trains, they're drivers' jobs, they're guards' jobs; they're customer service jobs on the station. We plan to carry on recruiting people and I know a number of other train operators do as well, so I think it's time for the trades unions to step out of this 1970's time warp and start recognising

because many of them have jobs and work in businesses that have been through very considerable change, and they find it annoying that sometimes they are affected by industrial action from people who aren't willing to accept change in their own workplace.'

Get a hobby

The period after the *Dispatches* documentary saw quite venomous criticism aimed at GWR on Twitter – that it 'deserved this kicking' for example. Regarding how such a level of hostility could have built up, Hopwood has a theory. 'The whole social media phenomena is quite interesting, but I think one has to be careful because if you look at our Twitter feed there are quite a lot of positive comments every day. But we have a small number who dedicate a large quantity of their life to posting negative stuff. At the end of the day it's a great thing for us to live in a democracy with free speech and people able to say whatever they like, but it's worth noting that Pareto's Rule applies, because actually a very large quantity of the negative comments come from a small number of people. I don't know, maybe they need to get a hobby. But if you look at what our regular customers are saying there's a mixture of views and we're responding to those quite quickly.'

'On the other hand social media has given the customer more of a voice, hasn't it' I commented. 'Yeah' agreed Hopwood looking down, 'I mean I wouldn't want to be overly negative

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about it. GW has more Twitter followers than any other rail business; clearly that's partly a reflection of our size but there is some evidence that we're using Twitter effectively, and dealing with tweets in real time has allowed us to improve the customer experience. All I was trying to say is that it needs to be taken in context, and if you look at the number of people travelling with us compared to the number of vociferous twits, sorry tweets, then you need to bear the maths in mind.'

Disappointed at *Dispatches*

Asked about the atmosphere in the company in the days after the intended exposé it's clear Hopwood is still sore. 'I think there was disappointment that we had been portrayed that way. A number of companies had previously complained about the approach used by *Dispatches*'... and returning to the theme of living in a democracy and free press, which one sensed Hopwood would have been delighted to see constrained in this instance, he moved on to point out that GWR found it quite difficult to get its side of the story across to the *Dispatches* team. 'They had themselves deceived people in order to create the programme because they allowed someone to apply for a job who hadn't been entirely honest about their intentions in the first place, and they had mislead colleagues in the workplace as to why they were there and what they were doing, which I don't think sets a great example. But they had to hunt quite hard to find things and ultimately the reporter had to come to head office and have two conversations with two managers, who probably put slightly the wrong perspective on what they were saying, and actually it was some off the cuff comments that became the story rather than the actual policy of the company.'

Regarding the big debate about split ticketing between Newbury and London, Hopwood feels that proportionally there was 'something missing' in how it was covered. On the other hand he admits the programme did 'highlight one or two issues around the training of staff'. 'As *Dispatches* accepted, we'd already corrected the problem they'd spotted – during the training course the person was on. It wasn't something we dealt with once it became the subject of a TV show. But they didn't accept it in the spirit that we would perhaps have liked them to. So we've explained our position, the ORR has asked us about those issues and as far as I know I've explained them to their satisfaction.'

At that point the press officer pointed out several welcome increases and decreases in NRPS results, and Hopwood was reminded that a recent ORR report had shown GWR to have the biggest fall of any Toc in complaints. Speaking of complaints I referred to the executive in GWR's customer service department, who appeared in *Dispatches* to recompense customers according to how polite they were. Did Hopwood think it was also unjust for the programme to film her? 'The best opportunity for me to win people around to our agenda is to deliver the investment we've committed to and the improvements in customer experience that people want. I don't sit here feeling we're being unfairly treated. In terms of how we respond to individual customers I don't think we are any different to other businesses in that if we had we sat there in an interview and said we never use discretion and behave like robots who blindly treat everyone the same and issue the contractual minimum levels of compensation to everybody, we would have been criticised for that. So I'm perfectly comfortable with the concept that I employ intelligent people who look at each case on its merits and decide what the right answer is. And if that's what we've been charged with, well guilty as charged.'

Shortly after *Dispatches* Hopwood was in the news again for saying passengers should be responsible for finding and/or asking for the cheapest ticket. Didn't that make him sound somewhat overly-hard given the negative aftermath had still not properly died down? 'It was the text of a letter we sent to customers,' he said without any trace of irritation. 'This is quite a complicated subject and you can often get into difficulty when you try to distil these down to a simple message. Ultimately



'I think there was disappointment that we had been portrayed that way. A number of companies had previously complained about the approach used by *Dispatches*'

what we were saying is that our ticket office staff will always work with the customer to give them the best value for the journey they're making, but the key part of that sentence is 'the journey they're making', because what we're not obliged nor expected to do is take every customer's journey and chop it up into little segments and sell them separate tickets. If they want to ask for them we will sell them, but we are not going to go through that process for every customer. At the end of the day we operate in quite a tightly regulated environment and currently where split tickets exist they are not the accepted form of ticket for that journey in terms of what we sell. Now if somebody wants to change that regulation there are clearly consequences for that because if it meant a fall in our revenue and a fall in the revenue of other Toc's then there would be ramifications. Ultimately it is important for us to operate in the regulated framework that's provided by government and that's what we do.'

Pretty relaxed

Having listened to Hopwood at some length, my planned question as to his management style left me easily imagining being hauled into his office for a telling off. Usually interviewee's eyes light up at such a light hearted opportunity to mine their egos, but Hopwood was stern. 'It's very difficult to summarise. Hopefully people see that I'm firm but fair. I'm very keen to try and manage some of the big strategic issues but also to stay in touch with the detail that's important to the customers and to our frontline colleagues. I'm very lucky that I grew up in the Thames Valley and I know the GW network fairly well – annoyingly well for some of my team because sometimes I pick up on things they don't always want me to pick up on. We've got a large number of employees and rely on many more people in organisations like Network Rail and rail gourmet and rolling stock providers, so it's not my job to try and do their jobs for them but it is my job to set the right environment, to show some leadership and make sure all the things we need in GW, from government and the rest of the industry are provided.'

Rather sweetly, Hopwood wanted to have a role in managing the railway on GW as a child. 'We didn't have Toc's and MD's in those days so I never pointed to an organisational chart when I was seven and said 'I want to do that job' but I'm pleased to have

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achieved that, and some other senior roles in the industry lack the opportunity I have to play the leading role in delivering for our customers and shaping the future agenda. As for the future, to be honest I'm too busy worrying about what I do now but I feel a lot happier knowing I haven't got some great big career plan that I have to achieve. I've been able to tick most of the boxes I set for myself and I'd like to carry on working in the industry for some time. I've no idea what structure the industry may or may not have in the future and whether that offers any opportunity but I feel pretty relaxed about it actually.'

Hopwood used to DJ for a hospital radio show and is hoping to return to that. 'I've been pretty busy lately but yes I did it at university and it's good fun and I enjoy it. I've also been seen driving some steam trains on one or two preserved lines but I'm not a big fan. I must admit I'm a bit too young to have grown up with steam trains but I do have an interest in railways, both in the UK and overseas.'

He's also interested in politics but has no political ambitions. 'I'm in the lucky position that I can watch with great interest without getting too excited about the direct impact on me. I studied politics at university and find it quite fascinating. The railways operate in a very political environment – a large amount of government funding comes in and most politicians recognise that rail is important to the country, so that relationship between politics and the railways is very interesting.'

In that case he can't fail to have an opinion on Network Rail's future? 'The honest answer is I have no idea. Longer-term it's clearly a huge challenge for the government because whatever model or all of the models that have been adopted in terms of Railtrack being a government body and then having been floated on the stock exchange, Network Rail as a sort of quasi-public/private business with its members, and then Network Rail in the public sector, none of them have been particularly successful. I think it's one of the biggest intellectual challenges in the industry today. All of us need and want Network Rail or whatever succeeds it to be tremendously successful because we need to see improvements in safety and performance and customer service day-to-day, and we need to see that investment going into the network. And lots of us have a view on perhaps how it could be structured, but ultimately the government is going to have to decide how it structures what is now NR, to try and get the best out of it. There are some great people working really hard to try and move things forward and what they need is some good quality leadership and direction to help them achieve what they're capable of.'

'So not Mark Carne then?' I ask. Hopwood pauses with a semi-smile, 'I haven't said that.'

Get NR to understand we're its customers

GW has worked quite extensively with the DfT's Rail Executive and Hopwood referred to Passenger Services' director Peter Wilkinson as a 'breath of fresh air'. 'I think it is very difficult trying to mix the need for a very controlled, considered approach in the civil service, which is clearly essential, with the ability to be imaginative and dynamic and entrepreneurial in how you deal with Toc's, and Peter has brought those two slightly conflicting priorities together very well. He's been tremendously supportive of everything that we're trying to achieve; he's given us the space in which to work and been supportive of the proposals we've put forward to deliver improvements for customers. I think we would want to carry on working with Peter in the environment he's creating and obviously I'm proud to work for FirstGroup, and GW is an important part of the FG portfolio. But I think in fairness to our colleagues elsewhere in the industry, there are lots of other improvements coming forward and the DfT have helped facilitate that.'

Returning to Network Rail, Hopwood actually feels that Mark Carne has a very difficult job and is doing his best to provide leadership. 'But I think what Peter Wilkinson and



'All of us need and want Network Rail or whatever succeeds it to be tremendously successful because we need to see improvements in safety and performance and customer service day-to-day'

other colleagues at the DfT need to do to help us now is to get NR to understand that the train operators are its customers. British Rail was criticised for many things, quite rightly, and the industry did stagnate under it in some ways, but towards its later days it did create, through its profit centres, a focus on the customer, and I think it's really important that we don't allow the production or engineering sectors of the industry to dominate when actually it's the customer-facing parts of the industry that ought to be leading where the industry is going. We don't want the needs of the customer subordinated to the needs of engineers or project managers, so that's a big challenge for us.'

Electrification uncertainty

Having been initiated under the last Labour government, the arrival of the IEP trains and the fanfare around them must be quite something to experience, and Hopwood describes himself as 'really pleased'. 'I remember the excitement in 1976 when the current InterCity 125's were introduced – they completely transformed the customer experience, and Claire Perry tells me she remembers as a girl being taken to Bristol for one of the launch events. So it's important that we see just as much excitement at the Super Express trains come into traffic for us over the next few years.'

While rightly pointing out that his job spec doesn't include 'advice' to other Toc managers, by now there must be some pearls of wisdom Hopwood could give to managers of other lines now due, again, to be electrified. 'Well my main focus is on running GWR, but I think some observations are perhaps more around the approach Network Rail took, which is that it has been very challenging for it to manage the relationship with a whole host of local authorities and local stakeholder groups. And perhaps with the benefit of hindsight if we'd actually have thought as an industry about getting a Transport and Works Act passed to include all that work in one piece of legislation, rather than having to go off and have hundreds of individual negotiations, that would have worked more effectively. We read with interest the report that Anton Valk, Christopher Garnett and Richard Morris published after the Christmas possession issues and were encouraged that it mentioned GWR as the only Toc that had really developed a very effective relationship with the major projects part of Network Rail, because NR's Route MD's aren't responsible for the delivery of projects – that sits within a projects team, and I think that relationship is important, so maybe other operators might want to consider that.'



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At the time we met, one of the earliest and most visible commentators about the growing problems on the Great Western Route Modernisation Programme was Philip Hoare at lead designer Atkins, who described it as 'pretty challenging and demanding' and opined that earlier and closer collaboration between the parties involved, as at Stafford, could have prevented some of the issues from arising. Unexpectedly, Hopwood was circumspect. 'Oh right! I don't know what he means by that so no doubt he can explain more. It's clearly been challenging – it's taking NR longer than it would have liked to electrify the line and costing more money, and clearly I guess that's a concern for everybody. But we are seeing some of the benefits of the work coming to fruition. Clearly we've got a lot more to deliver, but if you travel out of London now electrification is no longer a theoretical concept; NR is well advanced on getting the masts in, not as quickly as they perhaps they should have done but we have seen progress being made.'

Our interview however took place on the very day the Public Accounts Committee lambasted NR's chief executive Mark Carne, ORR and DfT's Philip Rutnam after learning that the cost of electrifying the GW mainline has tripled to as much as £2.8 billion, and that the works might not be completed in time to receive the new Hitachi Super Express trains.

Via subsequent telephone calls and LinkedIn messages, Hopwood expressed his real concern: 'I feel pretty disappointed. Network Rail has given a number of commitments in CP5 to deliver electrification. We don't yet know the full extent of the delay and hopefully we will know more when Sir Peter Hendy publishes his report. My main concern is around the impact on our customers, as most of the big benefits we're proposing to offer need electrification. Clearly we can't undo the problems

Network Rail has faced but I think it's really important that we don't have any further slippage in dates. Once we've seen NR's revised and hopefully more robust plans we can then plan the impact on our passengers and on our business, in terms of when we'll be able to introduce the electric service and cascade the rolling stock.'

Disappointment is the key word then I commented. 'Yes' Hopwood replied without hesitation. 'When Lord Adonis stood up in 2009 he promised that electrification would be complete to Bristol, Cardiff and Oxford by December 2016. Network Rail is a government-owned company now so it's not as if he just made those dates up; that was the date he was committing NR to and it has not delivered against that. It has lots of good reasons why it hasn't delivered, but ultimately I worry that it's the customers who will suffer. We have three of the top ten most overcrowded trains in the country according to the DfT's latest list. My customers expect me to address that, and we had a strategy to introduce electric trains which would have made a real difference.'

Pointing out that GW has an integrated plan which relies on a number of components being delivered on time, Hopwood's words if not his tone betrayed his upset: 'It looks as though Siemens, Hitachi and Bombardier are on track to deliver their contribution, but Network Rail won't be. It's always disappointing when one party fails to deliver when everyone else has made the effort, but our focus now is on trying to limit the damage to our customers and ensure they see the capacity and timetable benefits of electrification as soon as possible.'

I'm sure whatever happens, few could be better equipped to manage the situation.



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A year in review

David Sidebottom, passenger director at Transport Focus looks back on the news around passenger satisfaction during 2015



David Sidebottom

Do passengers trust the rail industry to put them first?

We know passengers' key questions remain: 'Will my train be on time? And will I get a seat?' Getting the basics right matters and is the first step in putting the customer first. Looking back at the year gone by, much has improved – but do passengers trust the industry to get them from A to B?

Passenger Focus to Transport Focus

This year we gained a new name – from Passenger Focus to Transport Focus – as we added road users to our remit. We continue to represent passengers and are now also looking after the interest of all those who use motorways and the most significant A-roads; the Strategic Road Network (SRN).

Our principles remain: we focus solely on what users experience and want, we are useful to those that make the decisions about transport services, and we base everything on evidence.

Our work for road users has driven some innovation in other areas for us.



Thinking about how you capture road user satisfaction has made us think more creatively. We are developing ways to use social media and other techniques to track passengers' emotional reactions to their journey. Alongside our *National Rail Passenger Survey* (NRPS) this will help to boost what we know about the passenger experience.

Passenger satisfaction

This year passenger satisfaction dropped overall. Poor performance, especially in the south east, played its part in this. Satisfaction with punctuality is down to 75 per cent (from 77 per cent in 2014) – this figure drops to 65 per cent for commuters. Value for money ratings are below the half-way mark, at 45 per cent. This has got to change if the customer is to truly come first.

The London Bridge rebuilding scheme in particular has caused problems. We're now working with train companies and Network Rail to try and minimise the impact on commuters. Following months of disruption in the south east area, Transport Focus is part of a taskforce to help tackle it. Set up by rail minister Claire Perry, the group is focussing on immediate improvements for long-suffering passengers in this region.

Putting the passenger at the heart of design

'Passenger first' was right at the heart



of our work on HS2. Over the last year, we've been running an online community where panellists provide regular feedback on key issues around the development of line. After the first year, we published a summary of the findings and will publish the second year's findings in mid-2016.

We asked passengers what they would like out of HS2. Passengers expect trains and services that are a source of pride throughout Great Britain; a national asset from which the whole country can benefit. Building a brand new railway presents a unique opportunity for



Claire Perry and Louise Ellman with Transport Focus chair, Jeff Halliwell, at a briefing event in Parliament



passengers. It's clear that HS2 has the potential to transform travel between our major cities, but this can only be achieved by really understanding the needs of passengers. These findings are vital not only for the building of HS2, but also for today's rail services.

Customer Reports

It is essential that the experiences of passengers, through the results of the NRPS, are at the heart of all new franchises. We are pleased to see National Rail Passenger Survey satisfaction targets included in franchise contracts like Great Western Railway.

Passengers have also reacted positively to train companies clearly setting out their plans and commitments to passengers in the new Customer Reports. The government now requires new franchisees to produce a report at the beginning of its contract and to provide updates at least once a year. These should detail what has been achieved to date, plans for the franchise and the performance targets against which progress can be measured.

Ticket to Ride

Our report, *Ticket to Ride*, remains a must read for train companies. Passengers really do make honest mistakes and train companies acting with discretion goes a long way. Earlier in the year we published an update to this 2012 report. While industry seems to have accepted the need for change, there is still much debate around the shape this should take. And, while there have been some improvements, the outlook for being caught making a mistake can still be bleak.

One of this year's lows for the industry has to be the sharp practice revealed in Channel 4's *Dispatches*. What this highlighted is that the onus is still on the passenger to identify and ask for the best deal. In a complicated system how on earth are you meant to know what you want? The responsibility should be back on the train company to ask you what you want and to sell you the right ticket.

On a brighter note, train passengers

who face delays are now able to claim refunds in cash instead of vouchers – a big win. We are still concerned however that too few people claim refunds when their trains are delayed. We are looking forward to automatic compensation systems, now being used by Virgin, hopefully being introduced across all operators and ticket types. Our work on passengers' knowledge and experiences of claiming compensation for delays will be out next year.



Will my train turn up on time?

Our report *Reacting to extreme weather on the railways*, considered what passengers expect from train companies when the country is battered by extreme weather, whether it be snow, wind or rain. This research showed the importance of quality, timely information to help passengers make informed decisions. Our recent report, *Train punctuality: the passenger perspective*, found that many commuters have a real lack of trust in how the industry measures punctuality. The research, in partnership with the Office of Rail and Road asked almost 11,000 passengers what they thought of train punctuality. We found for every minute of lateness, that is, after scheduled arrival time, overall passenger satisfaction declines by one and a half percentage points. Among commuters the decline in overall satisfaction is steeper at three percentage points per minute of lateness.

Tram passenger satisfaction continues

Meanwhile for tram passengers the *Tram Passenger Survey* results showed that most passengers are satisfied with their service. They continue to view trams as a

cost-effective method of getting around town, with just over six in 10 passengers expressing satisfaction with value for money.

This year, for the first time, we were able to survey tram passengers in Edinburgh. Passengers gave a resounding yes to their service in Edinburgh, with overall satisfaction at 95 per cent. Continuing high levels of tram passenger satisfaction nationally demonstrates what can be done when these survey results are used to identify and deliver improvements that matter most to passengers. And the evidence from some areas shows they are doing just that. For example, the introduction of more new trams in Manchester and the West Midlands has increased capacity and enhanced the passenger experience. The right approach can make a big difference.

Network Rail's performance

I couldn't look back on the year from the passenger perspective and not mention Network Rail. The Secretary of State's announcement about changes to Network Rail and pausing the electrification programme came as a bitter blow for passengers. This follows years of above-inflation fare increases, crowded carriages and engineering works. What passengers want is a clear plan of action, setting out exactly when Network Rail will start to deliver some of the promised improvements. They want to know that somebody is getting to grips with this and putting the customer first. By the time this column appears we may have seen the Hendy review. I look forward to reading it very much!

The year ahead....

The noise from the announcements about delays to the rail investment programme has drowned out the fact there is still a lot of money committed and work going on. Making sure the passenger is at heart of these changes will be crucial for the year ahead. Future engineering projects such as work at Waterloo and Euston will present big challenges for the industry. London Bridge highlights how things go wrong if the passenger perspective is not considered at the start and communication with passengers is poor.

Passengers do need to feel that someone is 'in charge' and a plan is in place to reassure them when things go so badly wrong. Research to help the rail industry understand passenger awareness levels, information requirements and satisfaction with the information they are seeing in the run up to and during the work goes a long way.

If passengers are to trust the rail industry to put them first it is critical that industry and government continue listening to what passengers are saying, and basing investment and day-to-day decisions around this.



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The personal touch

Sarah Baxter looks at the steps operators can take to square the circle of squeezed budgets, rising passenger numbers and increased customer expectations

There's no doubt that we are experiencing a technology-led revolution in the world of rail transport. The past five years has seen the planning, purchasing and management of a journey move from the ticket halls of the train station to the tips of passengers' fingers – and with it has come an expectation of convenience, fluidity and reliability.

Meanwhile, Britain's urban populations are booming. London anticipates 10 million inhabitants by 2030, while Waterloo station alone has seen passenger numbers jump fifteen per cent during the past five years. Infrastructure improvements are coming, but perhaps not quickly enough to release the pressure that this rapidly rising population is starting to create. In an era of prevailing austerity, the capital simply isn't there to speed the process up.

Rail operators face a transport trilemma: how to reconcile the three conflicting pressures of fixed (or more likely, reduced) budgets, rising passenger numbers, and ever-increasing customer expectations. With transport currently featuring high on the agenda of politicians and the general public, now is the time for operators to consider how to



tackle this challenge with new ideas and a fresh approach.

Embracing technology

Public transport has not historically been the most forward-thinking of sectors when it comes to innovation, but credit must be given to the industry for the fervour with which it has embraced new technologies in recent years. There has been a seismic shift in the way operators approach their customers with the focus now firmly on the passengers' end-to-end journey experience; a change that has been largely facilitated by technology.

Contactless payment was launched in 2014 to relatively little fanfare but has had a huge impact on the ticket purchasing process for passengers and, like the Oyster card, has had secondary benefits such as speeding up transfers between different transport modes, improving the flow of customers through stations and giving operators the opportunity to bring employees out from behind the ticket windows and deploy them in other roles.

Meanwhile, the 'appification' of the journey planning and management process have given the end-user an unprecedented level of control and autonomy, while the customer service function is now largely delivered through the medium of Twitter and other social networks.

While a well-designed app and a responsive social media team can allow operators to deal with more customers more efficiently, it should be remembered that to many passengers there's no substitute for a helpful, friendly face – particularly when problems arise. A recent study conducted by Transport Focus into passenger experiences of the East Anglia franchise found that customers did not consider technology to be an adequate substitute for the role performed by employees, especially in terms of providing information.

Supply chain collaboration

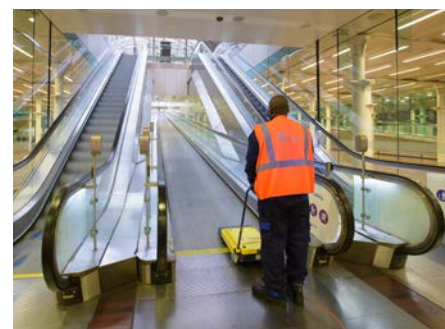
It's vitally important that operators retain as many passenger touch points as possible – and given ongoing budgetary constraints, that means boxing clever when it comes to deploying their employees.

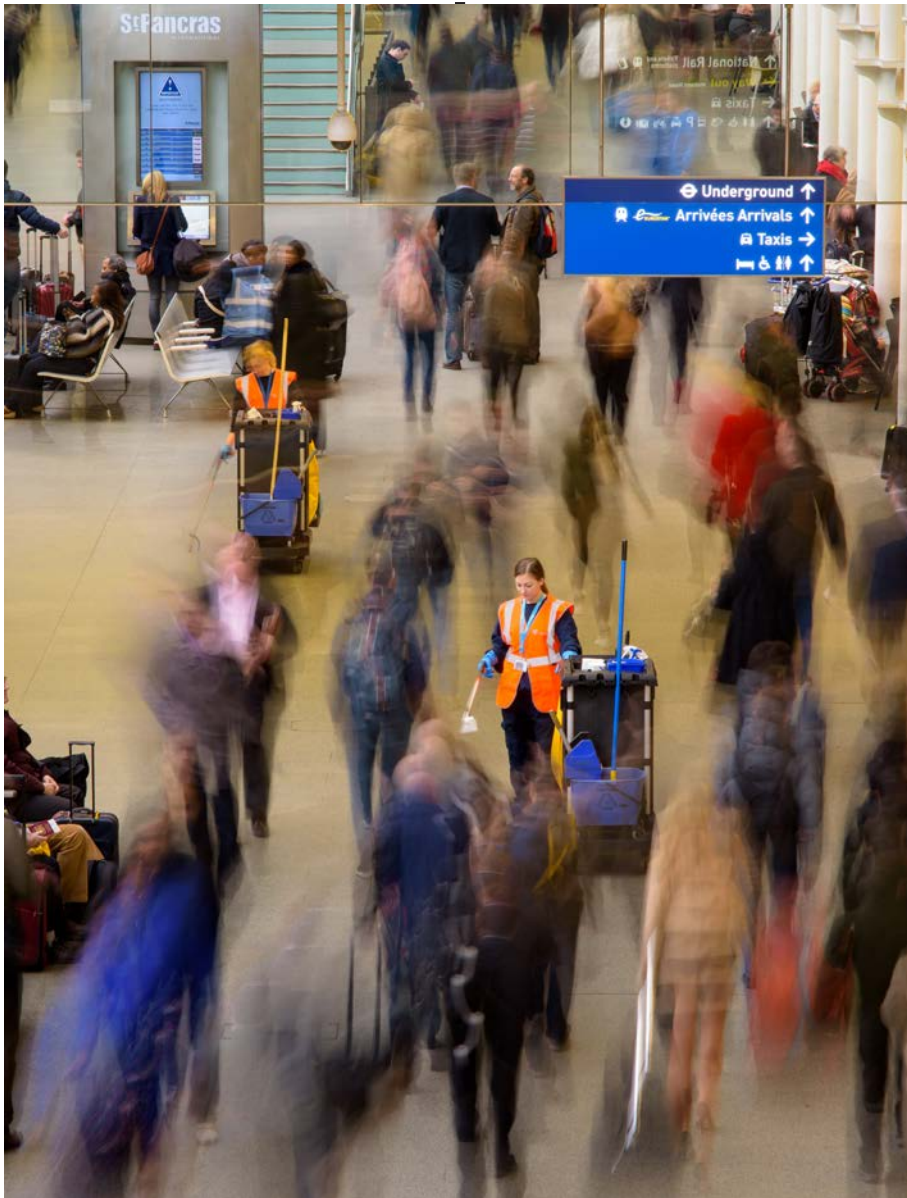
More and more, rail operators are using operatives from their facilities and



support services provider as extended members of their own customer service teams. Members of the public will naturally gravitate towards any person wearing high-visibility clothing if they have a concern or query, regardless of whether that person is a cleaner, a security guard or an actual member of the customer service team.

We have worked with rail operators to capitalise on this; providing customer service training to all of our employees through a dedicated Ambassador Programme. Maintenance operatives, cleaning teams and security guards are all given extensive customer services training, such as how to respond to platform enquiries and guidance on conflict management.





Employees are also armed with station packs specific to their shift locations, detailing suitable responses to questions most likely to be asked by visitors to a particular area. During peak times when stations are beset by thousands of tourists – many of whom are lost – these additional touch points act as an invaluable release valve to alleviate pressure on information desks and ticket offices.

The importance of cross-skilling

It's not just in the customer service arena that the supply chain can help to alleviate pressure on rail operators' own teams. Operators are waking up to the fact that employees can be quickly up-skilled to provide support to other teams across a busy station environment. Cleaning employees, for example, are now being routinely trained to provide eyes on the ground both for in-house security teams and the British Transport Police.

Our cleaning operatives are trained

to use the 'HOT protocol', as developed by the British Transport Police, to distinguish between routine lost property and potentially threatening unattended items which need to be reported. The HOT protocol questions an item based on three criteria: is the item *hidden* i.e. has it been deliberately concealed from employees and the public; is the item *obvious*, for example in its physical appearance or placement; and finally is it *typical* of what one would expect to find in that environment.

Training employees in this process is relatively simple, but has proved highly effective in ensuring that all operatives working at a station are vigilant against potential threats. Just as importantly, it has also provided added capacity to the security detail at key stations, without the need to hire more security employees.

Innovative thinking

Technology may have led to a decline in direct interaction between rail operators



and passengers, but it might also provide a way to bring it back. If we look beyond our own borders, there are some truly innovative examples of the industry using technology to communicate with passengers and provide more responsive customer service.

In the Black Forest region of Germany, European online ticketing giant Deutsche Bahn has trialled a virtual customer service system in which ticket office personnel were completely removed from the stations themselves and relocated to a centrally-based hub; contactable by passengers through a direct video link from the ticket machine in the station. Although services had essentially been rationalised and employees at the coal face replaced by an automated machine, customers still enjoyed the comfort of having face-to-face access to employees with local expert knowledge.

Solving the transport trilemma

As passenger numbers continue to rise and budgetary constraints show no signs of abating, the state of our nation's infrastructure and transport is front of mind for the government and the public, and operators need to use every tool at their disposal to ensure the quality of the passenger experience is preserved. Technology certainly has a role to play, but it's not a universal panacea. The personal touch remains a vital component of good customer service.

By continuing to seek out new technologies and solutions while embracing a more collaborative model with suppliers and partners, operators will be able to maximise existing resources to help solve the transport trilemma; meeting the rising expectations of an increasing number of passengers, without breaking the bank.

Sarah Baxter is account director at Interserve



Know your market

While it may be easy to view customer engagement as another marketing campaign, it is important for rail businesses to recognise the growing power of the customer and fully meet, and even exceed their expectations, says **Nick Steer**

We have all heard the saying a thousand times: 'The customer is King'. But what does that mean for businesses in the rail sector, and how can you use a customer engagement strategy to develop a robust customer loyalty programme?

Technical developments such as smart media, social technology and integrated buying make for an extremely competitive landscape. Customer service is no longer an isolated function in business, which is why customer engagement has become so influential and why businesses need to invest in their customer journey more so than ever before.

Ensuring you provide real-time experiences that meet customers where they are at is imperative. Whether it's an in-app purchase tool, geo-mapping technology that shows your product is available at customers' fingertips, or easy online purchasing navigation, you must ensure you are meeting customer needs even in ways they don't yet realise they have a need for.

The railway industry is somewhat different from other sectors – while we all understand the need to acknowledge the importance of customers – at the same time it's vital to drive customers for commercial success. Developing new customer communication strategies can lend itself to raising other difficulties.

A train journey is a service and a fundamental difference between a product and a service is that the latter is made and consumed at the same time. The consumer finds him/herself 'on the shop floor' so to speak, and experiences the service within the physical facilities of the organisation.

On a train journey the passenger expects the carrier to be aware of his/her most important needs, such as safety, reliability, speed (travel time), ease, comfort and experience.

DfT didn't focus on the experience

In 2012, the government launched a campaign through the Department for Transport for the railway industry *Putting the Customer First* – yet its mission of

using railway franchises to lead towards a reform of increased transparent, modern and flexible approach to fares and ticketing, was predominantly focused on reduced passenger fares – and neglected to focus on the actual experience of users via their journeys, which is where the impact is really made.

Another initiative by government was introduced in February this year to also develop a strategy to improve the experience for rail customers – this included a £6 million support fund for railways to invest in new digital technologies.

The 30-year vision, that prioritises improvements in use of data and information and their translation into systems and services that cut cost, as well as improve operations and benefit customers, closed on the 15th April 2015, and will shortly be announcing projects that it will support in the future.

So how can railway firms really put travellers first and enhance customer experience? Here are our top three tips.

Start a conversation

We recently commissioned content agency BraveSpark to create an innovative customer engagement campaign around customer experience. The new video campaign was born from a desire to

enhance the experience of railway travellers, and address the key issues they face during journeys, regardless of whether they travel with Virgin or not.

The campaign was also a tool to communicate that we are listening to customers. In one video we explained that our new website was a direct response to their feedback which creates a sense of ownership among our customers and reinforces the message that a two way dialogue with them is important.

The development of technologies such as social media and interactive video marketing mean that your market is at your fingertips – all you need to do is engage with them.

You should be striving to deliver a seamless and consistent customer experience across all channels and touch points to customers, whether it is personal interaction on a train, a mobile device interaction, a phone call, a tweet, or an email.

Customers are in the driving seat and more informed than ever. Building informative engagement with your market means that you will continue to be part of their customer journey and indirectly influence their buying habits.

Provide real-time benefits

Customers want to experience personal



fun messaging when dealing with brands. They want a service that doesn't simply address their 'need' but stimulates 'wants' in a customer-centric approach.

Public transport is not often seen as a delightful customer experience, so it is important to find new and innovative ways for train travellers to connect and engage with the brand, before, during and after their journeys, turning train travel into an overall more pleasing and exciting experience.

Conscious that we needed to move away from the static traditional explanations that we are used to seeing from the rail industry, the short film campaigns have been created with the modern railway user in mind – shot in animation, breaking down typically mundane information in an informal, interactive and fun way.

We also integrated the video campaigns with social media activities; which is important as it gives customers immediate access, builds up a strong profile, and sparks a dialogue and sense of ownership among followers. At the same time (from a marketing perspective),

it also changes the way that travellers communicate, further impacting on their journey experience.

Anticipate and act

Modern technology improvements mean that brands can now integrate marketing tactics such as video, and extend this into a seamless integration with sales measurement.

In essence, what this means for customer engagement is that their 'journey' becomes slicker and more connected to your company, and as a result you can convert to a sale at the maximum point of engagement, increasing ROI.

Our campaign was built around a customer-centric attitude from the beginning – considering the entire range of challenges rail users feel today when, despite technology being at their fingertips, some of the age-old questions are still left unanswered, such as the different type of tickets available for travellers (ensuring maximum discounts) through to how to book in groups, travel with bicycles and use smart-technologies such as the 'interactive journey planner'



app. The crucial element of customer engagement is content which must be based on your audience, be it their lack of knowledge, queries, sweet spot (need) or indeed complaints and barriers they face in the railway industry and within your company. How can you make their experience with you fun, interesting and relevant?

While it may be easy to view customer engagement as another marketing campaign, it is important for businesses to recognise the growing power of the customer, and to rethink their strategies to fully meet and even exceed their expectations.

First, understand your market structure; who are your customers, where do they live, what makes them engage, and most importantly, what makes them buy – and then, exploit it!

Nick Steer is brand design & content manager for Virgin Trains

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Time to face facts

What matters now is how well organisations probe to gain greater insight about the needs and drivers of their customers' behaviours, says **Jo Causon**. Those that do will prosper as the relationship economy matures

Whether it's because the new Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn, has announced his intention to renationalise the railways or because Lord Adonis has been appointed head of the newly created National Infrastructure Commission, the rail industry has been hitting the headlines in recent weeks. For an industry often in the news when things go wrong it is refreshing to see the news agenda being used by some in the industry as a chance to debate about how to move forward and how to improve.

Rail not part of the transport turnaround

However, that conversation can only be complete if customer experience is the central tenet of debate. And with that in mind it is encouraging to note the latest findings from the UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI). They suggest that the transport sector is starting to turn its reputation for customer service around. Last year proved disappointing for the sector, with customer satisfaction reaching its lowest mark since 2010. However, progress has been made with the most recent UKCSI revealing that customer satisfaction has risen by 0.8 points over the past 12 months. To put this into perspective, this improvement was also above the national average of 0.2 points.

Unfortunately, rail companies have not made as much progress – scoring just 70.4 (out of 100) in the latest Index. There are pockets of progress – with organisations such as Southeastern trains and TheTrainline.com among the most improved. The results across the rail companies demonstrate a polarisation of performance – but if these companies' results are anything to go by there is no reason to suspect others cannot follow their lead.

Complaints go online

Research from The Institute has shown that, in the transport sector as a whole, speed of service continues to be a problem with customers giving a score of 74.1 – lower than the national average of 75.9. It's an area that rail companies should look at; after all, keeping passengers happy doesn't just benefit the Toc. There is a bigger

picture at stake for the UK economy as, if workers are transported to their place of work on time, through a reliable and consistent train service, they are more likely to be productive in their working day. In other words, a better customer experience on the way to work can ensure rail companies positively influence Britain's economic performance and go some way towards shrinking the productivity gap.

It must be said, though, that the rail industry is not alone. Speed and immediacy is a common theme that runs throughout the UKCSI when it comes to the priorities for customer service. UK consumers are becoming more demanding of organisations and there is an expectation that any problems are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Central to this is the fact that we have moved away from a transactional-based economy to one driven by relationships. It means that a long-term focus on customer needs is the approach that will reduce complaints and increase satisfaction.

This is being clearly demonstrated through the increasing use of social media. The Institute's report *Service Goes Social* found that one in four social media users had used the likes of Twitter and Facebook to make a complaint to a business, an eight-fold increase from January 2014.



Technology and new channels of communication have created fantastic opportunities but there are, of course, challenges that businesses need to be aware of – and be prepared for. On the one hand, there is an opportunity to provide customers with timely and relevant information and create a genuine dialogue with customers. However, there is also the chance that social media channels may expose any failings in the customer



experience, meaning that there is a real need, now, to ensure a truly integrated channel strategy.

Diffuse difficult situations fast

When it comes to social media skills there is no 'test' for the range of knowledge and aptitude required. The ability to diffuse difficult situations fast is one thing that is really needed – but this has to be achieved in a genuine manner, meaning that these skills have to be developed with improving the customer experience in mind. It is not about short-term fixes.

This is something that many organisations in the rail industry still need to address. It is telling that the highest performing business within the rail sector is TheTrainline.com, the online ticket booking website. According to data from the Institute, if organisations in the sector simply focus on making ticket purchasing and travelling easier for customers, there would be a considerable and immediate uplift to their overall score. Does this mean that 'online' is the only way to go? Of course not – and there is plenty to suggest that the sector is responding to changing customer needs.

In fact, the latest UKCSI indicated that the greatest opportunity for improvement is with face-to-face interactions between customers and staff. There also needs to be consistency, as the most common response to a complaint is either 'an apology' or 'disinterest', an inconsistency that can severely damage reputations.

Put together it points to one thing: what matters now is how well organisations probe to gain greater insight about the needs and drivers of their customers' behaviours. Those that take the time to do so will be the ones to prosper as the relationship economy matures.

Jo Causon is CEO of The Institute of Customer Service

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Lorna Slade spoke to Sarah Youngusband, head of franchise contract management in Passenger Services, a section of the Department for Transport's Rail Executive, about the new requirement for customer reports from Toc's

Sarah Youngusband

What's your involvement in customer experience?
When I joined Passenger Services just over a year ago I asked if anyone had heard of the Institute of Customer Service (IoCS) and all the good work it's doing, and everyone looked at me blankly. The majority of rail owning groups are members of the Institute but that's about it – they're not doing much with their memberships in terms of achieving the Institute's ServiceMark Accreditation. I felt this was something we should pick up on and explore the prospect of forming a partnership with the IoCS. We have the National Rail Passenger Survey, however what the IoCS offers is a little bit different, it's more about surveying the emotive side of the customer experience and that's something I'm passionate about.

Where did the idea for customer reports originate?

I've not been here long enough to know the exact origin but it is now policy that all new franchises and direct awards have a requirement for customer reports.

The specific objective of these reports is not to improve the customer experience, although it is a contributor; it's more to do with driving improvements in engagement and transparency. Their content and frequency of publication varies at the moment but there are a number that have already been published which look and feel very good.

We're focusing now on what we could recommend as best practice in terms of content and whether the frequency of their publication needs to increase or decrease. However we're conscious that if we specify too strictly what goes into a report it denies the operator the flexibility to make it look and feel their own.

We'll also be looking at how the reports will be communicated to passengers: an extensive piece of research done by Transport Focus has questioned whether customers are even aware they exist at the moment; we know they haven't seen something like this in recent times, so unless the reports are really pushed in their face at the moment they might only become aware of them by chance, for example if they go to the ticket office but don't usually. Customer comments in the research included, 'I thought this was just a corporate report' or 'It's not really engaging with me as a leisure traveller, it feels more targeted at commuters'. The positive thing is that they are a step in the right direction, but we also need to review them and check what impact they're having.

What is the purpose of them?

The reports are an opportunity to engage passengers and demonstrate all the good stuff that's going on to improve the railway. We're quite good in this industry at saying when things go wrong but not so good at telling people about all the positive developments. They also tap into the transparency agenda – some of them are required specifically to break down performance by line of route, which wasn't done before. From a customer point of view that's more meaningful messaging, and from the Toc's point of view that's quite powerful as it sends out a revealing message, and the public reputation that goes with that. For an operator to consistently see one of their lines of route right at the bottom of the tables puts more impetus on them to really address those issues.

Customer reports are also capturing the kind of information that will inform and enhance passengers' understanding of rail finances – what the money that they pay for in fares is going to pay for; what it's being used to achieve and so on. They also represent the challenges operators face, because it's not easy trying to operate a complex railway at the same time as keeping your passengers and your executive board happy, plus us at DfT and all the other stakeholders in this industry.

It's a fine line though isn't it? If I was having a bad experience and someone thrust a brochure in my face that would annoy me even more.

Absolutely – and customer reports should not be handed out when there's disruption. In that respect Toc's Passenger Charters still very much have a purpose and the information they contain about passengers' core rights remains vital. Customer reports have a different purpose – they should be a tool to engage customers to say 'This is all the good stuff that's going on'.

So trying to get a warm feeling and have passengers understand what's going on?

Yes and why shouldn't franchises sell the good news about the money they're investing from their own purse into improving services and the customer experience and train performance? Why not tell people all the things you are doing to improve their experience? The reports may allow the customer to have a bit more sympathy with the operator or appreciate that the money they're paying in fares is supporting improvements to their railway.




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So if things aren't going well, a Toc can explain the complex position it faces?

Yes that's something that should be picked up, although customer reports are a bit of a sales pitch, even if a Toc is not making improvements to one of the core areas for a train service – rolling stock, stations, staff *etc*, for whatever reason, there should at least be an explanation as to why it isn't happening.

The Institute of Customer Service is a real treasure isn't it – I've been running features from it for some time and it's great to work with.

Yes. I like it because it can compare rail to other sectors, so rather than try to benchmark and be best in class in rail, why not try and be best in class across all sectors?

Is that how you see it?

Definitely. We can be guilty of being inward-looking in this industry. There is a whole raft of best practice and opportunities externally. Rail is a big industry but it's also very much operationally-focused, or it can tend to be if you lead it that way.

If we're more dynamic in our thinking about how other sectors approach customer experience there's no reason why we can't learn from organisations whose customers are doing it in a better way.

Which other sector do you most admire?

Probably retail, so organisations like John Lewis and Amazon. They empower their employees to deal with customers in a human way rather than appearing to follow a lot of rules and regulations. But that responsibility lies with the Toc's and how they're managing their businesses. So how can the DfT or Passenger Services influence that? It's by putting passengers at the top of our agenda and making sure they're at the top of Toc's agendas as well. The more emphasis we put on the importance of the customer experience, the better. But everyone's objectives have to be aligned,

it won't all change overnight, and even when that happens, changing passengers' perceptions will take even longer, so it's a slow process.

Are there any other customer service initiatives in the pipeline?

Each ITT has a specification to continuously improve the customer experience, and Toc's have been more dynamic and innovative in their approach to that. We know that you can build and improve the infrastructure and stations and trains to improve the customer experience, but what about the softer touches? So we're trialling in the East Anglia franchise an outcome-based specification for customer experience, which will mean bidders can put forward as many initiatives as they like to deliver the outcome of improved customer experience, but they choose whether or not all those initiatives are deployed in life. As long as they meet the scoring criteria then we're going to give them flexibility as to whether they think investing multi-millions of pounds in initiative X is a better option than giving out free ice creams or coffee for improving the customer experience. Because many aspects in bidding are scored on quality and price sometimes little things like that get lost, but they could possibly have as much impact as spending millions.

Everyone's version of good customer experience differs doesn't it, for me it's about having staff around.

Working with the IoCS and getting its perspective on the customer experience will mean looking at the more emotive side as well, rather than just looking at all the hard measurements on cleanliness or train performance *etc*. I can't say whether we will push an agenda for, for example, more staff on stations and trains, as a result, but working with organisations like the Institute that bring a cross-sector perspective to the customer experience will help drive improvements in a wider range of areas potentially.

The Institute has a whole raft of material on training as well. It has fresh thinking on how organisations are training their staff to



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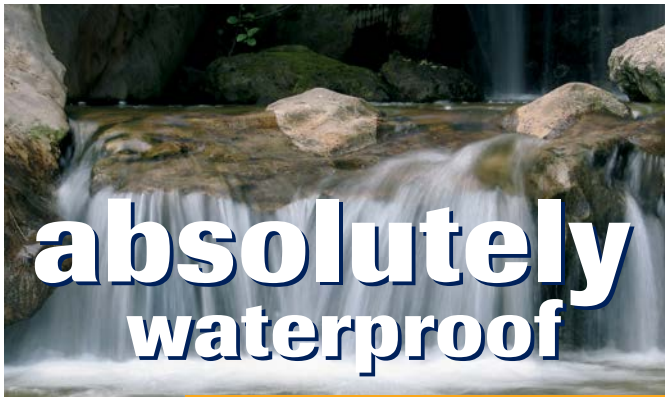
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deal with customers. It makes us think about how we are checking whether or not current training programmes actually achieve an outcome we want. Actually testing what benefits we're seeing from training in the way the Institute recommends could turn out to be much more meaningful.

I've heard it on good authority that some of the hardest people to persuade as to the benefits of being open and transparent are Toc's' comms executives. So they're going to have to get used to customer reports I guess.

Yes. Unless you place customer experience at the top of your agenda at executive level it won't filter down through the organisation.

Often people say 'It's rail, it's different', but there's a whole political side to the industry and I do sympathise with the comms and marketing teams within operators, because the message you want to give to passengers needs to complement the message you've got to give ministers as well.

Operators that are competing with other operators on their line of route have a marketing strategy or customer offering that usually surpasses those commuter Toc's that have a guaranteed market. But that's changing and we're also seeing those Toc's that have a guaranteed market up their game in terms of the quality of service and marketing they offer.

So maybe there's scope to be more honest in these reports?

I'm surprised that Toc's haven't done this on a consistent basis already. Maybe it's a fear that if they don't achieve their promises on time they're going to be held to account, not only by the DfT but by passengers as well.

But failure to meet a deadline for the commitment of obligations is really quite rare and Toc's work really hard to achieve these.

So how is getting passengers' engagement and sympathy going to be of benefit ultimately?

It would be quite good for rail to be a trendy option for travel and employment and to get rid of the stigma and preconceived perceptions which are kind of still around. The customer reports are about demonstrating all the investment and hard work that's going into our railways and boosting the appeal of the travelling experience.

We won't please everybody and it's not easy to change people's views on something if they've had a bad experience – if you miss a football match because your train was delayed or you try to get a refund and it was quite complicated, that experience will sour your view for quite a while. But rail is a public service, so it's really important to get engagement right.

How's it going in Passenger Services?

Good. For me, having the in-life management teams integrated with the project and specification teams is definitely helpful – we're not working in silos anymore. We also have to keep the passenger at the forefront of our mind-set in managing contracts.

So the Toc's are responsive to customer reports and happy to do them?

These are small things that don't cost a huge amount of money. If you can engage passengers and get them to advocate, appreciate or sympathise with you, you might be able to change and improve their view and the national view of our railways.

Next year it's the turn of Northern and TransPennine and East Anglia isn't it, so they'll have to come up with good customer reports.

Yes. The ITT's had a strong focus on the customer experience in relation to what we've been talking about, so watch this space.



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A deeper connection

Sean English looks at the secrets to Grand Central's success

Grand Central is a relatively young company, entering the rail market late in 2007 with handpicked staff bringing a fresh outlook to customer service. We have consistently scored 90 per cent plus satisfaction rating in the National Rail Passenger Survey with a latest score of 94 per cent in the Spring 2015 wave. In addition, research by Transport Focus into passengers' and stakeholders' relationship with the rail industry showed that we are the most trusted long-distance rail company in the UK.

Our brand ethos is at the heart of everything we do. We try to get the very basics things right. We aim to provide a warm and personalised experience with transparency in our service offering. We want our services to be accessible and strive to make things better for customers and within the industry. It's the unexpected touches by our people which make a GC journey stand out.

So how does that translate to the customer experience?

By drilling down into what is really important to the customer through a number of avenues, but essentially what the customer tells us, what our excellent staff suggest and through our leadership team spending time at the coal face engaging with customers and staff. We act upon this insight to improve and evolve our product and service, for example keeping our Wi-Fi free because we know it is valued by our customers. Having a dedicated First Class host engaging with customers on all our trains, even though they are just five coaches long and First Class occupancy can be variable.

Statistically we are different from the industry norm, with a comparatively young workforce and a higher level of female staff. Many on-board staff have joined us from outside the industry with great customer service skills. Railway knowledge can be trained but someone is either a people person or not. Our people love people. As we don't call to pick up/set down more passengers between York/Doncaster and London our people have time to interact with customers, answer their queries, entertain and empathise with them.

Our customers tell us they choose GC

rather than other operators because of:

a. price: our Advance fares are used by the majority of our customers, available right up to the night before travel (subject to availability) and always keenly priced. Customers wishing to buy on the day or have some flexibility in when they travel are not penalised and can buy our GC-only Off Peak and Anytime fares (or our range of Carnet tickets) at prices which suit their pocket. This enables customers who have previously not considered train as an affordable option to try us out

b. convenience: having a direct service from their local station and running non-stop from York/Doncaster to London. No hassle of changing trains en-route and we are able to deliver great customer service and give our customers individual attention without an influx of new customers boarding as the train heads to/from London. This adds value to the GC offering.

By taking the time to understand the detailed dynamics of our business behind the scenes we are able to take a 'train by train' approach to many aspects of our business that embrace commercial, customer service and performance. We are small enough to do this but have made sure we have all the right tools and people we need to take a highly sophisticated approach, with measurement of results being key.

We strive to make journeys memorable; simple things can make



great journeys. For example we recently had a band travelling with us and when we spotted their instruments the crew encouraged them to provide a rendition for their fellow customers to enjoy. We actively seek to engage with the talent that exists within our communities to create a unique environment by bringing that talent on board, an example being renowned Yorkshire watercolour artist, Ashley Jackson, making railway history by taking Yorkshire art to the people. As well as carrying his name on the side of one of



‘We play a different role in our customers’ minds and hearts to other operators as they see us as deeply connected to their community; an enabler to economic prosperity, social mobility, job opportunities, civic pride, etc’

our Class 180 units, his art is a permanent feature on-board for our customers to enjoy.

We play a different role in our customers’ minds and hearts to other operators as they see us as deeply connected to their community; an enabler to economic prosperity, social mobility, job opportunities, civic pride, etc.. We do this through:

- Station Ambassadors Scheme – promoting the local community and rail as well as supporting the rail customer
- CSR policy – actively promoting our own policy by working with stakeholders, for example our station ambassadors, community groups, local personalities and media, to highlight the beauty of the North East and Yorkshire as travel destinations, as well as developing new partnerships which demonstrates our desire to improve the lives of local people living in the communities we serve
- community engagement – hosting our annual Heart of the Community Awards to celebrate the success stories of great people doing great things in the towns and cities along our routes. Angela Curran, 2015 Community Champion in West Riding, recently won the award having raised more than £50,000 for Overgate Hospice and for her extensive community work in Hove Edge and Brighthouse
- investment in local station facilities – investing in the restoration programme of what was seen as a derelict and run down station
- promoting and attending local events – ensuring we have a key presence at

local initiatives such as Brass Factor which has been created to develop young, talented musicians of the future and help protect the legacy of brass banding for years to come.

During 2014 we received notice that our application for extended access rights had been agreed allowing us to operate trains between London, the North East and Yorkshire until 2026. Backed and fully supported by our parent company Arriva, the extension to our operating rights will unlock further investment to our people, our trains and the stations we call at. Going forward we will strengthen our fleet during 2017 and complete a further refresh to our Class 180 units. We seek to offer new journey opportunities, building upon our grass routes by serving towns and communities that have been poorly served in the past. We will continue to build our brand through connecting and engaging with our people, sharing Arriva’s vision and look to inspire our staff, customers and the marketplace in which we operate. We do believe that great things happen when we get people moving.

Sean English is acting managing director at Grand Central



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Time to tackle occupational cancers

Rail organisations have pledged to support an Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) campaign to tackle occupational cancers. **Keith Morey** discusses how the sector can make a difference

A record-breaking 1.66 billion rail journeys were completed across Britain in 2014-15, thanks in no small part to the industry's 190,000-strong workforce.

The success, however, came at a cost. Tragically, four rail workers lost their lives in the course of their duties. They included two train drivers who were killed in accidents at rail level crossings.

The death toll among rail workers could have been higher. A further 80 staff suffered major injuries after electric shocks, slips, trips or falls, or collisions with objects or other people.

In its annual safety report, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) reiterated support for the rail industry's efforts to take a more proactive approach to managing safety.

Managing the health of those working to keep the railways safe shouldn't be forgotten either.

Around 8,000 people in the UK die each year from cancers they developed as a result of their work. Almost 14,000 new cases of work-related cancer are registered each year.

While around half of the cases are related to the construction industry, rail workers are among the most likely to

be exposed to cancer-causing materials and substances in the course of their jobs.

The causes of work-related cancers are often predictable and preventable. Small changes in how work is managed or carried out can make a real difference in the level to which workers are exposed to carcinogens, and the resulting risk of developing cancer.

No Time to Lose

Work is the fifth biggest cause of avoidable cancer in the UK, behind lifestyle choices like smoking or diet.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) lists more than 50 substances which are known as probable causes of workplace cancer.

To raise awareness of the issue and help businesses take action to prevent workers being exposed to these carcinogens, IOSH has launched the *No Time to Lose* campaign.

The initiative sheds light on the subject as a whole, while also providing key information about tackling five of the most common factors associated with work-related cancer registrations and deaths in the UK – asbestos, diesel engine exhaust fumes, silica dust, solar radiation and shift work.

More than 100 businesses across the world have formally signed up in support of *No Time to Lose* in the last year, including the ORR, CIRAS, Crossrail, Transport for London and MTR Corporation.

The factors being highlighted through *No Time to Lose* are especially relevant to workers in the rail industry. Whether it is possible exposure to asbestos in an old rail depot, breathing in silica dust while

handling track ballast or facing harmful UV rays while working outdoors, employers and staff should be mindful of the health risks associated with their day-to-day tasks.

Diesel engine exhaust fumes

Diesel-powered trains remain the workhorses of services from London to the West of England, South Wales and along the Midland Mainline to Nottingham. Additionally, diesel units are still the usual mode of transport for passenger traffic on branch lines which link into the main rail network.

Replacing these diesel locomotives with electric-powered engines will take years. Take the electrification of the TransPennine Express railway and Midland Mainline as a case in point.

Following the government's decision earlier this year to pause both projects – only to resume them a few months later – it is estimated that it will be 2023 before both lines are fully electrified.

Replacement of older diesel trains for newer equipment is also seen by many companies as a non-starter. This is due partly to changes in EU regulations for diesel emissions, which have caused the cost of new trains to rise dramatically.

It appears, therefore, that diesel-powered engines will continue to be a mainstay of our railways over the coming years. But what could be the health implications for rail workers?

Breathing in high level exposures to diesel exhaust fumes in the short-term can irritate the eyes and lungs. Continuous exposure, however, can cause chronic respiratory ill health and there is an increased risk of developing lung cancer.

More than 650 people a year die of lung or bladder cancer in Britain as a result of being exposed to diesel exhaust fumes at work, with around 800 new cases being registered annually.

Traction maintenance depots and mainline stations are two obvious areas where workers, and also passengers in the



latter's case, are exposed to diesel fumes. Many depots, however, date back to the end of steam and are not equipped with modern exhaust ventilation or extraction equipment to deal with the fumes.

Stations may also have diesel trains standing for some time with their engines idling before they accelerate away. In enclosed terminus stations like Paddington and Kings Cross there is already a policy of shutting down engines until they are ready to depart.

By managing the risk and understanding what produces the high risk areas of concern, we can reduce the levels to which workers are exposed to diesel fumes.

Silica dust

Most dusts we breathe in are captured and filtered out by the body's natural defences. Silica dust, however, is so fine that it can go unchecked and end up deep in our lungs.

Heavy, prolonged exposure to this particular dust can lead to the development of chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases such as bronchitis or emphysema, as well as silicosis and lung cancer.

The Health and Safety Executive estimates that in order to prevent people from developing any of these lung diseases, workers should breathe in no more silica dust than if gathered together would produce a clump around the size of half a grain of rice.

Sadly, nearly 800 people a year die in the UK as a consequence of having breathed in respirable crystalline silica at work.

Rail track workers potentially face being exposed to silica dust when handling ballast, or cutting or grinding down concrete.

The ORR recently issued Colas Rail with an improvement notice after 25 workers were exposed to ballast dust at

Watford railway station.

As reported by *Rail Technology Magazine*, the workers had been carrying out track works without appropriate health and safety measures being in place.

Colas Rail said that while its management system was suitable for controlling the risk, it hadn't been applied at the time of this incident. The company has strengthened controls in light of the breach.

It has been estimated that if compliance with current control measures was increased from present levels – estimated at around 30 per cent – to 90 per cent, then around 600 cases a year of work-related lung cancer deaths could be prevented.

IOSH will be launching new guidance around the issue of silica dust at the start of 2016.

Solar radiation

Skin cancer cases are rising faster in the UK than anywhere else in Europe.

This is of particular relevance to those in the rail sector who regularly spend long

hours exposed to the elements all year round.

IOSH-commissioned research conducted by Imperial College London found that malignant melanoma – the most deadly form of skin cancer – kills nearly 50 people each year in the UK because of exposure to solar radiation at work, with 240 new cases being registered annually. This does not include the 1,500 non-melanoma skin cancer cases caused by work each year.

The findings led IOSH to urge businesses to develop sun safety strategies that include elements such as regular updates on the UV index from weather forecasts, minimising sun exposure in the middle of the day and asking employees to wear long-sleeved, loose-fitting tops and trousers. While using high-factor sunscreen is helpful, it should not be relied on as the only barrier to the harmful rays.

In summary, much good work is being done within the rail industry to manage health risks but employers and staff need to remain vigilant.

Employing the tried and tested safety and health philosophies of elimination, substitution, reduction and prevention is vital when assessing any potential exposures to carcinogens at work.

The ORR is among organisations to have published guidance around occupational cancers. It can be seen at <http://orr.gov.uk/what-and-how-we-regulate/health-and-safety/guidance-and-research/occupational-health-guidance/occupational-cancers>.

For more information about IOSH's *No Time to Lose* campaign, including free-to-download guidance, visit www.notimetolose.org.uk.

Further details about the IOSH Railway Group can also be found at www.iosh.co.uk/railwaygroup.

Keith Morey is chair of IOSH's Railway Group

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An environmental issue

As well as technical skills it's just as important that government supports UK companies' organisational skills, to deliver the ambitious pipeline of rail projects, says **Ian Hay**

After decades of underinvestment in the UK's railways, the sector is experiencing newfound momentum. Investment plans on a Victorian scale are taking shape. With the number of journeys taken almost doubling since the 1990's and the network now operating at full capacity, this investment is clearly needed. The inextricable link between rail infrastructure and economic growth adds further weight to the need to invest. The rail network is critical to the movement of people and goods that many businesses rely on. The 2015 CBI/AECOM Infrastructure Survey – published last month – underlines this, revealing that the majority (81 per cent) of UK firms see intercity, commuter or freight rail as either crucial or important to their operations.

There are also other, wider economic benefits to rail investment that help to demonstrate just how vital railways are to economic prosperity in the UK. Take the recently reopened Borders Railway in Scotland, on which AECOM was lead design consultant. The re-established and extended line, which was originally closed following the Beeching report in 1969, will bring many new economic opportunities to communities along the route.

The government's £38 billion rail investment programme is clearly welcome news, with 95 per cent of CBI/AECOM

'The UK economy simply cannot afford to have important infrastructure plans kicked into the long grass and delayed by never-ending reviews'

Infrastructure Survey respondents keen to see delivery of what was promised in the last parliament. However, nearly half (45 per cent) of the 722 respondents want government to go even further and increase capital spending. Yet the stalling of upgrades to major routes show that there are still major challenges to delivering on existing commitments.

Delays to important upgrades only serve to elevate concerns surrounding the risk of a possible railway capacity crunch. The UK economy simply cannot afford to have important infrastructure plans kicked into the long grass and delayed by never-ending reviews. UK business needs confidence that the network will cope with future growth, providing a robust and reliable means of getting staff and resources from A to B.

With passengers expected to make 400 million additional journeys a year by 2019 – 2020, it's hardly surprising that the vast majority (90 per cent) of respondents see increasing capacity as a priority. And with a number of key rail lines due to



‘The creation of the National Infrastructure Commission is welcome news. However it is not yet clear whether the newly formed body will have the required binding decision-making powers to initiate projects’

reach full capacity in the near future, including the West Coast Mainline and the Southern line to Brighton, the case for capacity increases is even stronger.

HS2 concerns

HS2 is key to increasing capacity on the network. While the majority (55 per cent) of businesses support the scheme, a quarter are yet to make up their minds. When asked what would improve support

for HS2, the top priority for businesses was a clearer indication of how the project sits within a longer-term plan for UK rail. HS2 is undoubtedly a vital element of the UK’s overall rail strategy. Yet greater visibility of other rail projects also currently receiving investment would help to eradicate any concerns that HS2 is an alternative to these schemes.

The creation of the National Infrastructure Commission is welcome news. However it is not yet clear whether the newly formed body will have the required binding decision-making powers to initiate projects. A long-term approach to planning is required to boost business confidence in the UK’s ability to deliver critical infrastructure. After all, major infrastructure projects like Crossrail span governments and parliamentary terms so the creation of a committee that looks beyond the next parliament is essential.

However, major projects under construction, such as Crossrail, also serve to highlight strains on the UK’s skills base. Despite being the largest construction project in Europe, Crossrail is being delivered by a workforce that is nearing retirement and the industry is struggling to attract new talent. In this context, urgent action is needed to upskill the UK’s workforce.

The government needs to create an environment that encourages the development and export of technical skills. This sentiment is resonated by business, and the answer for many is better apprenticeship funding, with 81 per cent of firms believing that this is a key factor in addressing the skills challenge. A more collaborative approach between government and industry would no doubt help address the UK’s current skills gap.

With the UK’s ambitious pipeline of rail projects, it is more important than ever that the right skills are available to get Britain building. And with business calling for more investment in rail, it is also essential that government supports the development of UK companies’ organisational skills. The creation of an environment that encourages the necessary delivery models such as joint ventures, partnerships and alliances is just as important as technical skills. Moves like this will be vital for the UK’s ability to deliver the rail projects so critical to the country’s future economic prosperity.

Ian Hay is director and head of rail, Europe – transportation at AECOM



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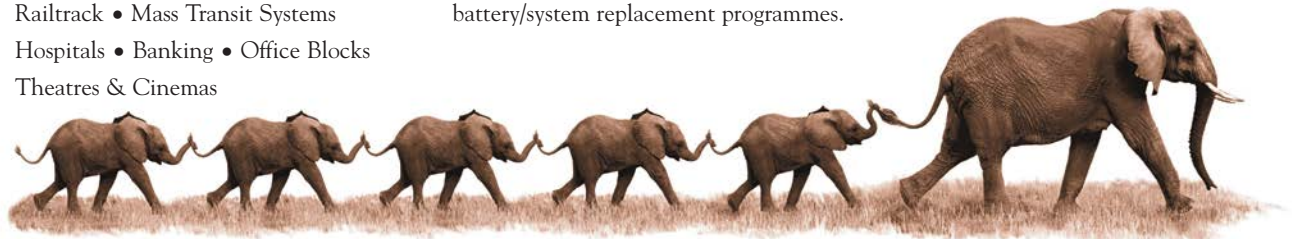
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A journey to remember

Toc's can no longer rely solely on the commuter and regional traveller demographic to succeed: our industry must inspire the traveller, says **Mirja Sickel**

Today's consumer is used to having everything they want at the click of a button or the swipe of an app, which has a knock-on effect on their expectations when it comes to the service experience of every industry, including travel. To secure future growth, rail companies must go further than simply meeting traveller expectations – they must exceed them by providing the highest possible level of customer care.

Customer care is ultimately about increasing customer satisfaction and developing strong customer relationships. In today's digital age, this goes beyond face-to-face interactions: rail providers can now count on technology to create an unparalleled customer experience.

If we look at the travel lifecycle, we can see there are numerous opportunities for the rail industry to embrace customer care throughout each step of the journey: inspire, plan, book, on trip, and post trip. Rail providers through technology can engage with travellers at each stage, ensuring a customer-centric approach that provides an enjoyable travel experience.

'Responding to customer-led trends such as multi-modality ensures customers feel the rail industry is listening and working to meet their needs'

Throughout the journey

Even before the booking stage, travel providers can inspire potential travellers by understanding their needs and preferences and providing personalised offers. For example, a customer might be interested in an immersive experience of a particular country; a rail journey could offer him the chance to experience a culture 'on the ground', the same way locals do, free from the hassle of

navigating roads and immersed in the country's scenery and society.

This level of understanding gained from existing data can go a long way to show a company cares about the experience a traveller will have from their services. Analysing big data and packaging this information to work in getting closer to customer needs will inevitably have a bottom line result.

At the point of planning a journey, there are many ways to maintain customer satisfaction and build relationships. Responding to customer-led trends such as multi-modality ensures customers feel the rail industry is listening and working to meet their needs. Rail providers are increasingly integrating with other modes of travel to create a seamless door-to-door journey that is easy to plan. For example, since the beginning of this year, UK travellers have been able to package their Eurostar tickets together with hotel accommodation on lastminute.com. In a first for the rail industry, travellers making a reservation on lastminute.com now have access to all Eurostar fares, covering all levels of flexibility and price, including promotions and negotiated rates. This is one example of how the industry can give travellers a wider range of options when planning their trips while keeping rail at the centre of their journey.



During the booking stage, rail providers can continue to prove the customer is at the heart of their business by offering a simple booking process that gives the traveller what they need – for example, suggesting an aisle or forward-facing aisle



seat for someone who has historically preferred one, or a quiet carriage for someone who might be travelling for business purposes and needs to work. They are simple offers, but can have a big impact in showing that you care. It's also important to ensure that the traveller can book as and where they wish: whether this is via an online travel agent, through a travel management company, or directly via the rail company's website or call centre. Increasing efficiency during the booking process, so that travellers simply book, pay, and immediately receive a ticket, also encourages customer satisfaction.

CRM systems

Once the traveller sets off on the trip, technology continues to play a key role in ensuring a seamless and superior travel experience. Keeping customers informed of up-to-the minute platform changes or delays in real time, for example, via a mobile app, is crucial; maintaining relevant and timely communication with them ensures they feel cared for and improves the travel experience, even in times of disruption. As passenger numbers continue to rise, employing CRM systems to collect customer data will become particularly important – they allow rail companies to better

understand their customer's needs and tailor communications to the individual traveller's preferences. Rail companies can also use a CRM system as a marketing tool, contacting loyal customers with the latest deals, weekend breaks, and other promotions that would fit with that customer segment.

After the traveller has reached their destination and the journey is complete, there remain vital opportunities for Toc's to maintain the relationships they have built. Soliciting feedback ensures providers can help build a clearer picture of the individual, thus allowing them to make sense of what might inspire the traveller, bringing about a return to the inspirational stage of journey planning and encouraging more rail journeys with the same provider. Toc's could also look for activity on social media networks to better understand their customers' experiences and perceptions of their journey – and, of course, how those customers may influence other travellers.

Opportunities for Toc's

Toc's can no longer rely solely on the commuter and regional traveller demographic to succeed in the current market: our industry must inspire the traveller. We must recognise that travellers are individuals, with their own

'Soliciting feedback ensures providers can help build a clearer picture of the individual, thus allowing them to make sense of what might inspire the traveller'

high expectations that rail providers work to meet.

The travel industry is increasingly becoming a customer-driven sector, and rail providers are able to adapt their offers using new technologies to ensure a hassle-free experience throughout all stages of the journey, meeting the customers' needs and, in turn, driving loyalty and repeat bookings. As rail providers capitalise on new technology to enhance their customer care capabilities, the result will be a more personalised journey for each traveller, and increased growth for the industry.

Mirja SICKEL is head of rail sales and marketing at Amadeus

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A constructive development

Although the rail freight industry saw a significant fall in coal volumes over the last year, it is performing well in other sectors, explains **Maggie Simpson**

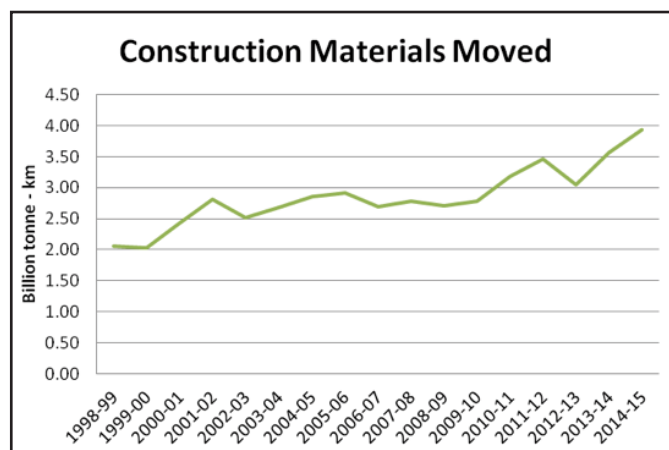
The UK construction sector has increased its use of rail significantly in the last decade, with volumes reaching a record high in the last financial year (*see graph*). Coupled with a growing confidence among businesses in this sector, this is all good news for rail freight.

According to the CBI, 93 per cent of the construction supply chain is sourced domestically and it says 'greater collaboration, innovation and capacity are game changers in building more effective supply chains.'

One example of increased collaboration is the joint initiative launched by Rail Freight Group and the Mineral Products Association (MPA), with the aim of developing rail freight logistics in the construction sector. (*see separate box*).

In terms of innovation, the rail freight sector continues to design and develop new equipment and state-of-the-art technology to allow the freight operating companies (FOC's) to carry heavier loads for longer distances, ensuring that each train is operating to its full potential. In the last 20 years, the investment (for all types of freight rolling stock, terminal handling facilities etc.) has totalled more than £2 billion.

The construction sector has increased its use of rail significantly in the last decade, with volumes reaching a record high in the last financial year.



Network Rail is also playing its part by upgrading routes to provide additional capacity and allowing extra wagons to run on each train. They are also investing in yards and sidings where they have the freehold.

The statistics show a significant increase in rail freight efficiency. Train numbers have fallen by 30 per cent since 2003, yet freight tonnes lifted has increased by 30 per cent resulting in an increase in tonnes per train of more than 80 per cent.

In the construction market at the moment, an average of about 60 trains move stone, sand, cement and other products to be used in the construction of new houses, offices and infrastructure. Industry forecasts suggest that further growth of around 2.5 per cent p.a. is likely as investment in infrastructure continues, and rail increases its share of the market.

Coal outlook different

The outlook in the coal market is completely different with a significant fall in coal volumes, especially since April.

While decline in this sector has been predicted for some time, the rate of that decline this year has surprised the market, leaving operators struggling with uncertainty in their resource planning.

The key driver for the falling coal volumes was the near doubling of the 'carbon floor price', a UK government power generation tax related to our commitment to climate change



initiatives which makes it harder for coal power plants to compete against gas and other alternatives.

This rise in the carbon tax, coupled with high transmission charges, has forced Scotland's largest power station, Longannet, to announce its closure from next March, and the future of other coal-powered stations, including Eggborough, is also uncertain.

There is good news in that movement of biomass has increased, including the new flow from the Port of Liverpool to Drax. However it is highly unlikely that biomass volumes will ever replace coal's role as the main baseload bulk traffic.

The steel market is also in the doldrums. The difficulties were highlighted by the much-publicised closure of the SSI plant in Redcar, although the plant's very limited use of rail freight means it did not significantly affect the total volumes moved by rail. But, overall, steel volumes on rail are down as overcapacity in the market keeps prices low and demand is still affected by the worldwide economy.

Moving freight to and from the Continent by rail has been affected by many of the same issues as the road hauliers face in terms of disruption on the French side of the Channel. Damage to goods and equipment is common as migrants seek to hide in curtain-sided containers and on wagons. But the most significant aspect is the unreliability that has resulted from delays and cancellations through the Channel Tunnel. Some customers have already switched to alternative (road) routes and the fear is that others will follow as the underlying issues are unlikely to go away any time soon. However, there is ongoing pressure to retain and support services, and investment by both governments, Eurotunnel and the freight operators to increase security.

The good news is that the intermodal market continues to prosper with the

launch of new services, including the 31st service linking the Port of Felixstowe to inland terminals (in this case BIFT at Birch Coppice) and the new service between Teesport and Mossend and Grangemouth in Scotland. More than one in four containers arriving or departing from UK ports is carried by rail.

We welcome the fact that planning consent has been given for Phase 3 at Daventry International Rail Freight terminal and we hope for the same outcome for several other strategic rail freight interchanges presently in the planning system.

Rail freight sensitive to government

Rail freight markets are sensitive to government policies and to government support so at the RFG we continue to monitor and, where appropriate, comment on all statements related to the three on-going rail reviews being undertaken by Dame Colette Bowe, Sir Peter Hendy and Nicola Shaw.

It is vital that network enhancements for freight, essential for providing capacity for continuing growth, continue to be funded through these reviews, especially the Felixstowe to Nuneaton route but also in relation to paths out of the ports of Southampton and Liverpool.

We are also pressing for a continuous, nationwide operation of critical functions

Collaboration in the construction sector

Rail Freight Group and the Mineral Products Association (MPA) have launched a joint initiative setting out five steps to develop rail freight logistics in the construction sector.

The five steps are:

1. improve the sustainability of construction logistics by encouraging modal shift and enhancing the safety and environmental performance of rail operations
2. aim to achieve a 20 per cent average increase in the payload per train within the next five years
3. support development of the rail network and terminals so that major routes can routinely accommodate trains of 450m length, with 2000 tonnes of payload
4. be responsible users of the network, working to improve performance, increase efficiency and optimise and safeguard network capacity
5. make rail freight the preferred solution for supplying major infrastructure schemes.

The MPA hopes the alliance will help 'unlock the full potential of rail for transporting key materials such as aggregates and cement from production sites to construction markets and to help ensure future national demands can be met'. Joint working groups have already been established to make sure that real progress is made in each of the five steps.

Network Rail's National Supply Chain, which is responsible for running, maintaining and developing the UK's rail tracks, is actually the largest customer in the UK rail freight sector. The major freight operating companies carry ballast, sleepers and equipment to site and, working closely with the National Supply Chain, ensure the lines are open again on schedule.

no matter what decisions are taken on devolution of powers to different routes or regions. Transport for the North is now on the way to becoming formalised, and has been very supportive of rail freight to date and we hope to see this continue as it becomes more established.

Other regional devolution schemes involving transport, such as Midland

Connect, are some way behind but we continue to work with them as well – and all stakeholders – to ensure rail freight is always considered as an integral element in the planning stages, not something to be bolted on afterwards.

Maggie Simpson is executive director of the Rail Freight Group

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Stick to your principles!

France and Germany have conspired to kill much of the governance parts of the 4th Railway Package that would bring competition and growth to the sector, says **Tony Berkeley**

France and Germany's railways are falling apart; other member states may not wish to follow them. Both countries still lobbied the Transport Council against the changes that could revitalise their railways. Now, with the EC/EP/Council Trilogues already started, where have these railway 'leaders' got to? France and Germany have conspired to kill much of the governance parts of the 4th Railway Package that would bring competition and growth to the sector. Instead, they are dragging the whole sector into what could be terminal

decline – on the basis that, if Deutsche Bahn (DB) and SNCF fail, they will ensure that no other rail company will succeed; the winners will be road transport.

In Germany, there are reports that DB is in severe financial trouble, seeking to sell off parts of Arriva and DB Schenker and cutting 30 per cent of its freight network. A senior DB manager admitted at a conference in May 'DB cannot survive without transferring funds from infrastructure manager to its railway undertakings.'

This all may explain Germany's very strong actions against any liberalisation

and transparency proposals in the 4th Railway Package. Several diplomatic sources indicate that Germany had a crucial influence on the development of the project compromise on governance, making it easier for financial movement within the holding companies (Article 7d). This governance reform does nothing to improve the current situation and favours the incumbent.' (Contexte.com). DB's forthcoming restructuring could reduce its rail freight by 30 per cent. Will it sell its assets to competitors to enable them to take it over?

Hidden subsidies from DB Netz, itself part-financed by the German



states, will also help DB buy more rail companies abroad as well as Chinese trains. Here trade union IG Metall and the supply industry organisation VDB have complained jointly to the German government about DB's intention to buy trains and spare parts from China in the next three to five years. They argue that it is unacceptable that a German state-owned enterprise buys subsidised Chinese products with German taxpayer's money, which jeopardises the German rail industry and its prices. All these are good reasons for keeping transparency in the 4th Railway Package.

Situation in France deteriorated

The general rail situation in France has clearly got worse as a result of the reintegration of SNCF and RFF into a vertically integrated monolith that does not seem to know what it is doing. SNCF is said to be the most hated company in France and, according to FNAUT, the infrastructure is degraded, lines are closed and the quality of the services is no longer acceptable. Increases in passenger fares and freight access charges are driving customers to road.

Now with the French transport minister stating publicly that transparency should be put into the system, taxpayers will discover how

much money is actually spent on what and where. In the meantime, SNCF is still trying to stifle competition in the passenger sector by seeking to delay it until 2030, by which time its senior management will have retired; it is also doing its best to wreck any attempts by freight competitors to improve their service quality and grow.

SNCF is also in trouble financially, so its easy way out is to put up access charges, using the extra cash to subsidise its incumbent operators and preventing by all means any fair competition with other passenger or freight operators.

So France and Germany have led the way to ensuring that the Transport Council allows these crumbling monopolies to stagger on, with no transparency or regulation on possible unfair subsidies.

In the UK, Network Rail and ORR are both in trouble over cost increases of enhancements to the network, but the network is generally in good condition. Our problems are one of managing growth – a possibly doubling of traffic in 20 years. We have transparency and an inclusive and fully independent infrastructure manager.

So where are the other member states in all this? Still frightened of Germany and France?

Where is the competitive single market to which EU institutions and member states have signed up?

How to put it right

Now there are indications that the European Commission is bowing to German pressure once again and accepting the dilution of the transparency clauses so as to allow DB and SNCF operators to receive subsidies without any disclosure and, along with all the other barriers to entry (such as incumbents having priority input to infrastructure managers), to make any competition as unfair and as risky as possible.

The European Parliament can still put this right in the forthcoming trilogies with the EC and Council, by strengthening the rules on transparency, resisting hidden financial subsidies, and going back to the original role of the infrastructure manager with full and independent responsibilities.

That is what will attract private investment and grow the rail sector.

Tony Berkeley is a member of the UK House of Lords, chairman of the Rail Freight Group and a board member of the European Rail Freight association.

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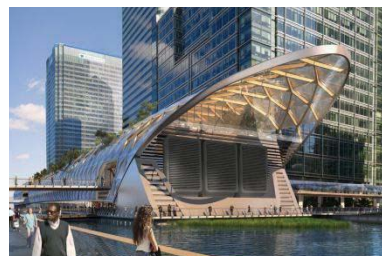
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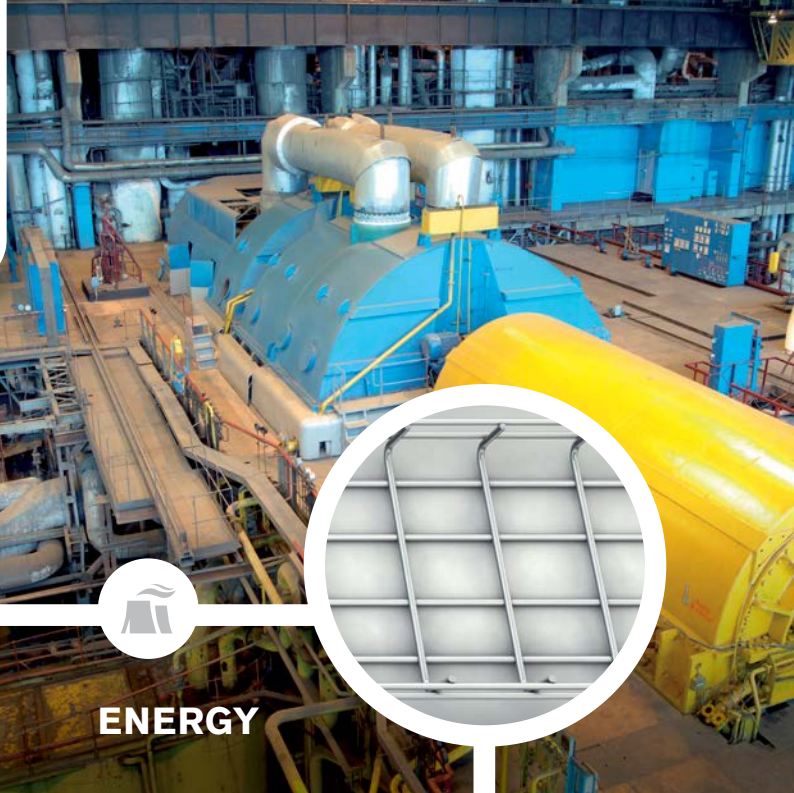
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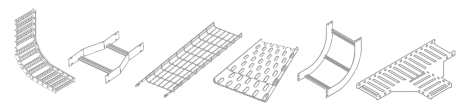


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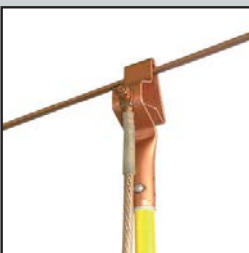
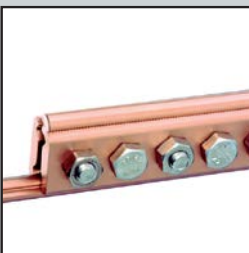


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Dynamic and divergent

With more than 456 projects totalling €341.04 billion underway and scheduled to complete by 2020, **Shyam Raman** analyses European investment in rail infrastructure and rolling stock

Rail systems across Europe tend to have grossly different characteristics, even though they are subject to similar environments. There are several social, economic, political and technological factors that determine which rail systems are patronised. This is reflected in the investment and procurement patterns of infrastructure and rolling stock across Europe. Investments in infrastructure can be broadly classified under five broad categories: electrification; European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS); new Infrastructure; major enhancements and high speed rail.

From the total budgeted spend on infrastructure projects an estimated €194.26 billion is still service addressable. The service addressable market is the amount of funds that are available from total planned investment for all projects still in development from 2014–2020. With more than 43 per cent of the total spend, the main priority across Europe is towards increasing existing capacities or to revitalise rail corridors for increased rail traffic through critical enhancement

projects. Patterns in spending are largely dependent on the current state of the local rail environment and the government policy towards investment in the rail network. Contrasting priorities are evident in more developed rail systems in Germany, France and the United Kingdom. France is investing more towards new infrastructure and high speed rail as compared to Germany, where more than 76.4 percent is directed towards major enhancement of existing infrastructure. In France, the new Paris-Normandy project is expected to commence in 2017 and complete by 2025 with a total cost exceeding €9,500 million. The railways in the Picardy region will have received a total €2,500 million by 2020 through a massive undertaking to increase line capacities.

In Britain, under Network Rail's Control Period 5, electrification and increasing line capacity are the main priorities of its strategic business plan. The three largest projects budgeted in the CP5 are the Thameslink at €2,067 million, Crossrail at €1,805 million and the electric spine program at €1,771.3 million. Electrification of the Great Western mainline, Transpenine and the North

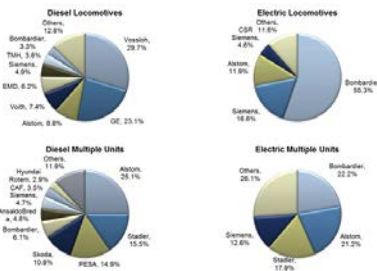
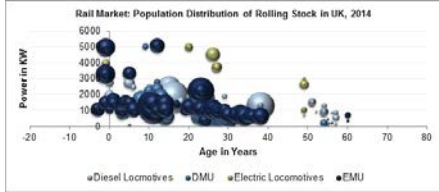
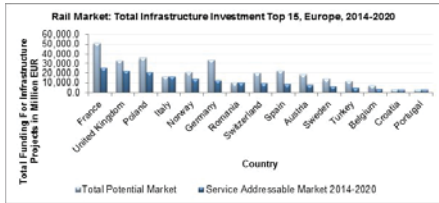


'Chinese rolling stock are starting to make their presence in the European region and it is expected that this will tighten margins for traditional European OEM's to remain competitive'

West corridors is expected to increase train availabilities and reduce emissions. To aid freight traffic, work is planned for gauge enhancement that will allow larger containers on the network. With increased electrification in the UK, it is expected that future orders for rolling stock will largely be towards electric locomotives and EMU's. EMU's already dominate the rolling stock landscape. There is a clear trend of increasing power requirements from locomotives; future locomotive orders are expected to be concentrated within 2,000KW to 5,000KW. By 2020, the number of electric and dual locomotives will increase sharply with deliveries of new locomotives that will meet new demands as well as replace an aging fleet.

Over the last ten years, Bombardier has been the largest supplier of electric





rolling stock. The Bombardier TRAXX and Siemens Europrinter locomotives continue to be the most popular electric locomotives in the European region with more than 1,823 combined deliveries in

the last decade. Stadler's FLIRT EMU has seen wide acceptance and the acquisition of Vossloh's rail division is expected to strengthen their expansion across Europe. Other than a handful of market leaders, there are several market participants but their market share is fragmented. Chinese rolling stock are starting to make their presence in the European region and it is expected that this will tighten margins for traditional European OEM's to remain competitive.

ERTMS installation varies

ERTMS is another priority project across the European rail landscape. However, unfamiliarity with the high level of technology coupled with skilled labour shortages, high cost of implementation are slowing down the adoption rate. Different strategies are being used for ERTMS installation. For example Denmark aims to have ERTMS level 2 deployed on its national network by 2021 as compared to the United Kingdom where the focus is more on the East Coast Mainline, Great Western Mainline and rolling stock.

With projects that total more than 12.8 billion, over 18,870 km of European train networks are expected to be ERTMS level 2 ready by 2020. With such large scale investments across the value chain,

European rail systems will ensure that they are not only relevant but integral to Europe post 2020. Embracing the digital age through ERTMS will allow rail systems to interface with digital communication platforms of the future. For rail to remain an attractive and viable mode of transport, it must evolve to cater to the changing needs of customers. Entities that innovate or participate will survive while the rest risk obsolescence.

The new excel-based study from Frost & Sullivan, *Strategic Dashboard of Investment in Rail Infrastructure and Rolling Stock in Europe 2014-2020* (<http://www.frost.com/mb28>), is a complete database that can be used for analysis, forecasts and the development of strategies. The database is organised by country, railway company, infrastructure project, rolling stock original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and model. Clients can analyse data by parameters such as country, age of service, application, OEM and project type. The study covers more than 40 countries, 456 projects, 604 rail operators and 75,250 rolling stocks.

Shyam Raman is senior research analyst, at Frost & Sullivan

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Business News



Let there be light

Aura Lights has fitted Virgin's Pendolino trains with energy-efficient LED spotlights as part of the Toc's plan to reduce its yearly CO2 emissions by 2.5 per cent until 2017.

The light manufacturer's A-LED (white light for the aisles) and A-LED 2 (blue light for the luggage compartments) spotlights have been specifically designed



for the fleet that runs on the West Coast Main Line.

A large number of Aura Light's T8 Ultimate Long Life tube luminaires were also installed to provide sustainable lighting to the first class and standard carriages, luggage shelves and toilets. Greg Newport, Virgin Trains' customer systems manager, said: 'Not only has the new lighting improved the energy efficiency of the Pendolino trains, but overall is a vast improvement compared to the standard of the previous lighting.'

By replacing the low-efficiency 20W and fluorescent lamps, Virgin Trains has managed to reduce maintenance costs by around 75 per cent due to the lights having an 80,000-hour life.

Visit www.aura-light.co.uk

Plugging the skills gap

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers has purchased training company Amber Train as part of its plan to address the engineering skills shortage.

Amber Train provides traineeships and apprenticeships to those just out of education or towards the end of prison sentences. Successful trainees gain the necessary skills to work for Network Rail-approved subcontractors and achieve City and Guilds qualifications.

The Nottinghamshire-based company operates from a combination of training centres on heritage railway sites around England, enabling students to learn in a real rail environment.

Stephen Tetlow, chief executive of IMechE, said: 'Amber Train is not only equipping people to pursue valuable, worthwhile careers, but is providing much needed skills for the UK rail sector.'

He added that it would allow the institution to build on Amber's work, making skills available not just to rail but also other engineering industries where there are critical skill shortages. 'This is the Institution taking action to help plug the UK engineering skills shortage and provide more opportunities for those aspiring to become professional technicians and engineers.'

Visit www.imeche.org



Stephen Tetlow

'A long-term commitment in Wales'

TXM Plant has had its new depot in Cardiff officially opened by the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, Edwina Hart.

Previously based in Cwmbran, Newport, the road-rail supplier now has nine depots located across England, Wales and Scotland.

TXM Plant has an extensive fleet of road-rail vehicles for hire in the UK. The addition of its new facility close to Cardiff city centre has increased the size of its workforce and includes on-site workshops and large modern offices. There are also plans for a dedicated test track that will enable equipment testing and support on-site training.

The company's managing director, Gareth Richardson, said: 'This secures our long-term commitment in Wales and provides a great opportunity for growth in creation of new employment for the area.'

Part of TXM Plant's fleet was on display during the launch, giving guests live demonstrations that showcased a number of machines.

Visit www.txmplant.co.uk



The Murphy team with the 293-tonne tunnel-boring machine

Far from boring for Murphy

Engineering and construction company, Murphy, has completed a major tunnelling operation for Network Rail using the UK's largest tunnel-boring machine (TBM).

The breaking through of the 293-tonne TBM at Farnworth tunnel near Bolton is a significant milestone in the full electrification of the route between Manchester, Bolton and Preston.

Once complete, the project will provide faster and more efficient trains that will be able to run between Manchester, Bolton and Preston.

The TBM work was completed in a month that also saw Murphy awarded a £6.5 million contract with Transport for London to refurbish stations on the West Anglia Rail route, which became part of the London Overground network earlier this year.

Murphy will carry out the work at ten stations over the next nine months and will include building new shelters and seating, refurbishing and upgrading station lighting, installing tactile paving at platforms and replacing handrails.

Staff offices, customer information screens, public address systems, transport help points and CCTV will all be refreshed, and Murphy will also carry out preparation works for new ticket gate-lines and ticket vending machines at some stations.

Visit www.murphygroup.co.uk

TfL gets Traction

Transport for London has awarded train engine refurbishment company, Brush Traction, with a contract worth up to £6.5 million to service and fit motors to its Piccadilly line trains.

London Underground's managing director, Nick Brown, made the announcement during a visit to the company's Loughborough factory with the MP for the region, Nicky Morgan.

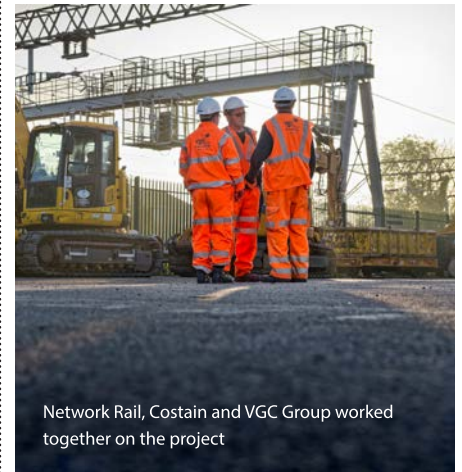
The latest contract given to Brush Traction, which has been involved in engineering and the supply of railway equipment since 1865, takes place on the line that serves Heathrow Airport and which carries around 200 million passenger journeys a year. The Piccadilly line will be the first on the Underground to run the planned air-cooled trains, which will enter service by around 2022.

Said Brown: 'Brush Traction is playing an important role in the modernisation

Trouble overhead

An integrated Crossrail team has come up with a solution to a common problem related to overhead line equipment (OLE): isolation splits.

The team from Network Rail, Costain and VGC Group worked together to provide crossing neutrals for road-rail vehicles (RRV's) to travel under live OLE. Due to the impracticality of switching off large areas of line, isolation splits are a recurring issue for complex rail jobs and require careful management of costs and time. As part of the £150 million Crossrail north-east spur project, cable route works required a series of isolation splits between Gidea Park and Crowlands in Essex.



Network Rail, Costain and VGC Group worked together on the project

The team, aided by Network Rail's maintenance staff, carried out full risk assessments and produced a detailed project procedure for Crossrail that allowed RRV's to travel under live overhead lines within possessions. Moving RRV's from one site to another requires communication between both parties, with permission needed from supervisors before they can enter. By arranging to run RRV's to and from worksites under live overhead lines in this manner, better use can be made of resources with a consequent saving in costs.

Visit www.networkrail.co.uk / www.costain.com / www.vgcgroup.co.uk

of London's transport network. We have invested more than £865 million with suppliers across the Midlands over the past year and we're always interested in hearing from other suppliers across the UK to see how they could work with us.'

Around 60 per cent of TfL's expenditure is spent with suppliers outside London, supporting around 60,000 jobs.

Visit www.brushtraction.com

Positive signals

Rail Minister, Claire Perry, and local MP's have visited DeltaRail's Derby headquarters to see its products in action and meet staff.

The guests toured the signalling company's facilities and spoke to those responsible for the delivery of the company's signalling technology. This included a live demonstration of a rail operating centre that utilises digital technology to manage traffic in real time and predict and prevent delays.

Perry said the government's investment in the railways is making the Midlands 'an engine for growth', with businesses such as DeltaRail 'creating jobs and boosting the economy of the UK's industrial heartland.'

DeltaRail

Imagine the journey

Highlighting the role that innovation and technology play on the network, DeltaRail's chief executive officer, Anna Ince, said: 'The visit by the minister demonstrates the importance of technology in the UK rail network in delivering benefits to passengers and the taxpayer.'

Visit www.deltarail.com

Five-star performance

York EMC Services has received five stars – the highest possible score – in its most recent RISQS (Railway Industry Supplier Qualification Scheme) audit.

The regulatory and compliance services provider was given top marks for demonstrating that its business management system meets the health,

York EMC Services

safety, operational and competence standards required for working in rail.

This year's award means it's the second successive year that York EMC Services has achieved the highest RISQS grade.

Chief executive, Nick Wainwright, said: 'Following the audit protocol changes in 2014, we achieved four stars – the highest score available at that time. Now, having achieved zero non-conformities for two years, we have achieved a five-star rating.'

'The audit demonstrates that we have robust processes, procedures and practices in place for the management of health, safety and environmental considerations while working on the rail network.'

Visit www.yorkemc.co.uk

A secure investment

A communication systems and security company that provides products for Crossrail and London Underground has received £5 million from an investment group.

KeTech was given the development capital from the YFM Equity Partners' British Smaller Companies VCT and YFM Equity Partners 2015 Co-investment Funds.

KeTech is currently working on a £7.2 million contract to provide train driver information systems for the Bombardier trains that will operate on Crossrail. It has also secured contracts from London Underground, Northern Rail and Thales.

As part of the deal, Richard Moon has joined as chairman from another company in YFM Equity Partners' portfolio, Seven Technologies, where he was previously non-executive chairman.

Ian Waterfield, investment director at YFM Equity Partners, and leader of the deal, said: 'Growing rail passenger numbers and continued security threats all signal strong market opportunities for KeTech's products. We will partner with the management team to address increased demand for the company's products from the UK and overseas.'

Visit www.ketech.com



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Power-sharing deal

Power sockets have been fitted on the first of ScotRail's 40 Class 334 trains, part of a two-year £36 million improvement project.

The changes are going ahead following feedback from customers who wanted power sockets, Wi-Fi and upgrades to the heating. The entire 334 fleet will be refurbished by the end of 2017.

The work forms part of Eversholt Rail's £36 million investment programme to improve the passenger environment and reliability of the trains.

ScotRail Alliance managing director, Phil Verster, said: 'Completing the first refurbishment of an electric train during our franchise is an important milestone, and a development that will make a real difference for customers.'

The refurbished trains will be rolled out at a rate of around two a month to ensure that the improvement programme does not impact upon timetabled services. Visit www.scotrail.co.uk





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Blazing a trail

The first apprentices at the National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR) have completed a week of theory classes and practical tasks designed to inspire and inform.

The 53 Railway Engineering Design Technician apprentices took part in Study Week at the Northampton facility, which was opened in October 2015 as part of the Trailblazer Apprenticeship programme.

The training included a range of workshops that taught the new recruits about rail technology and how rail networks fit together; group exercises and visits from recently-qualified engineers. There were also talks from guest speakers that included Kate Hall, director of the built environment at HS2.

During the week the teams were set a practical challenge to design and build a model bridge and programme a robot to drive over it. Completing the task provided valuable experience as to the importance of a staged approach and the need for trade-offs between cost, quality and time.

Simon Rennie, general manager at NTAR, said: 'It was hugely rewarding to see the facilities being properly used to showcase a broad range of current and future rail technologies to young learners working for such a broad range of companies.' Visit www.ntar.co.uk



Study Week included a range of workshops to teach new recruits about the industry

A surge in business

Network Rail has fully approved Ricardo Rail's pantograph monitoring system, 'PanMon' for use across the UK network.

The approval follows the successful completion of a two-year trial on the West Coast Main Line.

During the trial the system proved capable of providing continuous measurements of pantograph uplift forces and defects – including chips, damaged end-horns and worn carbon strips – from trains passing at speeds of up to 125mph.

PanMon provides high definition images of each passing pantograph through a combination of radar, laser, video and photo technology. The system automatically interprets data to provide condition reports of each passing pantograph.

Ricardo Rail's system is now designated for roll-out and will replace the current Panchex system.

Network Rail's project manager for the PanMon trial, Mike Dobbs, said: 'Getting new technology to work accurately and reliably in the rail environment can be challenging, but Ricardo Rail has worked closely with us during the trial to overcome the difficulties.'

Visit www.rail.ricardo.com



Recent New Members of the Rail Alliance as at end October 2015

Tekla UK: developer and supplier of 3D structural construction software. Models created are used widely in the building information modelling (BIM) process
www.tekla.com

Community Transport Association: membership body providing leadership and support to the community transport sector across the UK
www.ctsuk.wordpress.com

Matchmaker CNC: retailer of CNC (computer numerical control) machine tools and solutions
www.matchmakercnc.co.uk

Fishbone Solutions: cross-sector engineering and commercial consultancy serving the transport

industry
www.fishbonesolutions.co.uk

IBM: multinational technology and consulting corporation
www.ibm.com

Advanced Engineering Techniques: engineering provider to rail and other industries, supplying finished and assembled components to the lineside
www.aetuk.com

Mayflower Engineering: supplier of a full turn-key engineering service, including design; project management; specialist fabrication and machining; and site installation
www.mayflower-engineering.co.uk

Construction Composites: manufacturer

of composite materials. The company offers a consultancy service and has site installation specialists that can undertake on-site lamination
www.constructioncomposites.com

Tidyco: designer, manufacturer and supplier of flexible hoses, rigid pipework and associated kits for complete train systems, such as engine hoses, brake rafts and water-filler systems
www.tidyco.co.uk

Brown & Holmes (Tamworth): designer and manufacturer of work-holding equipment, automated special purpose machining and precision subcontract machining solutions, and supplier of gauges and gauging equipment
www.brownandholmes.co.uk

Strong lines of communication

A partnership has been formed that will see the roll-out of digital communications for rail workers; one of the companies involved, **ADComms**, provides details on the deal

Working practices on the UK's railways are becoming increasingly digital across the industry as Network Rail's GSM-R (Global System for Mobile Communications – Railway) upgrade gathers pace. ADComms' new partnership with Funkwerk will provide much-needed handhelds across the industry and are set to change the way the industry communicates forever, as Richard Shaw from ADComms explains.

As Network Rail's digital upgrade programme ramps up across the rail industry, big changes are starting to be seen in the way workers communicate, particularly when it comes to trackside working. The upgrade includes the eventual replacement of analogue radio systems. The move will bring a host of benefits across the industry, including improvements in safety and efficiency on the UK's rail network. By reducing maintenance on site, this will substantially cut the number of engineers required trackside.

Hardy, flexible and durable

As part of ADComms' role in helping the industry to digitise its communications, the company is working to supply Network Rail with Funkwerk's RailFocX GSM-R OPH – a handheld solution for trackside workers, and it has formed a partnership with the German GSM-R company Funkwerk to exclusively supply the units in the UK.

Beginning with maintenance and trackside workers, the upgrade will subsequently be rolled out to train operators, with a driver's version of the technology provided in the future to ease communication between the signaller and the train.

Hardy, flexible and durable, the RailFocX handhelds are designed to withstand extreme temperatures, shocks and vibrations, dust and high levels of humidity. The RailFocX is a versatile handheld GSM-R radio that

has been awarded compliance by TÜV Rheinland against the GSM-R functional and system specification requirements within EIRENE.

The handheld device will enable safer conditions for workers on site, thanks to lone worker protection technology wired into it. Train operators and engineers alike will be able to tailor and customise RailFocX's software via its easily configurable web-based tool. ADComms anticipates that the devices' initial roll-out will be followed in due course by operators taking them up across the network.

Strong track record

A specialist in GSM-R technology, ADComms was recently commissioned to install a new leaky feeder system across Merseyrail's tunnel structure beneath Liverpool. Designed to replace the legacy wireless communications infrastructure in place, the link-up was effective on all routes adjoining the tunnels and also complied with EIRENE specification.

The project, which played a key role in supporting Network Rail's nationwide GSM-R roll-out programme, involved



the installation of nearly 15 km of wireless infrastructure across 12 km of tunnels. This was followed by ADComms' contract win to extend GSM-R coverage from the Great Western Main Line across Heathrow Airport's rail tunnel infrastructure this year.

The installation will be key to the introduction of Crossrail services through to Heathrow Airport and, once complete, it will provide one of the first functioning European Train Control System (ETCS) Level 2-compliant systems in the UK.

A new partnership

Funkwerk has a reputation for providing



The roll-out of digital communications will bring improvements in safety and efficiency on the UK network



The partnership between Funkwerk and ADComms was signed on October 1st 2015

further opportunities.'

So far, Network Rail has put 600 units into the hands of engineers, with support from systems integration specialist Hima-Sella. Eddy Turnock, sales director at Hima-Sella, said that ADComms and Funkwerk are well-suited: 'We're sure this will be a very successful partnership that will allow Hima-Sella and ADComms to strengthen their relationship, with the potential to produce complete SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) systems solutions for the rail sector.'

Rob Illsley, ADComms sales director, rail, said: 'It's incredibly exciting to be launching this product partnership with Funkwerk. Access to GSM-R handhelds will help maximise safety on the railways – something that is a key area of concern for the sector.'

Richard Shaw is business development manager at ADComms
 Tel: 01724 292 200
 Email: info@alandickcomms.com
 Visit www.alandickcomms.com

GSM-R radios for drivers and track workers and has experience of working with leading rail bodies such as Network Rail, OEBB (Austria), Jernbaneverket (Norway) and Eurotunnel. Already used across railways in Germany, Denmark, Morocco, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Funkwerk's RailFocX handsets are a vital tool for an environment where speedy, efficient communication is essential.

The agreement, signed on October 1st 2015, will see Funkwerk work with ADComms to provide handheld radios across the UK. Serving as an official product partner, Funkwerk will be able

to benefit from ADComms' experience as a telecoms interface provider, further bolstering the German-based company's presence in the UK.

Funkwerk's director of product management, Hendrik Holz said of the new partnership: 'ADComms is the ideal partner for us. With the combination of the company's expertise in the UK's GSM-R arena and our proven technology, together we can continue to strengthen our presence in the UK, develop new solutions and explore






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A 'typical' derailment in a freight siding

Re-railing, recovery and wheelskating services

Train derailments are a risk to all operators of rolling stock and are a cause of real concern to those running a railway. They can also be expensive, not only from lost revenue due to cancelled trains, but also from repairs to the vehicle itself and the track that the trains run on.

Re-railing is something that no Toc really wants to have to do but it's a service that it needs to have in place, should a derailment occur. Railway Support Services' re-railing service operates either on a contract or a call-out basis for all Toc's nationwide from its main depot in the west Midlands.

Derailments can occur at any time of the day or night; Railway Support Services is fully-staffed 24/7 for that reason, as it appreciates the effects that such an incident can have on a train operating business. Teams are generally mobilised immediately, and the company offers a four-hour response time to locations bound by Carlisle in the north west and Newcastle in the north east; to Dover in the south east and Exeter in the south west.

Response times to locations outside this boundary will take slightly longer however, clients will be kept informed with a progress report every 30 minutes – Railway Support Services believes communication is key during such events.

As well as a re-railing service, Railway Support Services also offers wheelskating. This is used should an affected vehicle that's still on the rails be suffering from failures that include wheel flats, collapsed



Provision of remote controlled battery operated shunt locomotives

bearings and traction motor seizures. In such situations, recovery of rolling stock is vitally important and just as time-sensitive.

Again, communication with the Toc's is key and is built into the planning of

the recovery of the vehicle, and Railway Support Services will work with the customer to ensure that the vehicle is moved when required. It will provide the wheelskate(s), the fitting crew, a recovery engineer and a technical rider, as well as



Wheelskate fitted to a Mk.II coach that has suffered from severe wheel flats

A Moveright International haulage lorry loaded with a Class 08 shunting locomotive



removal crew to assist with the recovery and removal. The process is streamlined in order to provide a quick, efficient and most importantly, safe recovery service.

Road transport

There are a number of occasions when railway vehicles are required to be moved by road. These can include one-off moves that may be too cost-prohibitive to move by rail or, as is most often the case, the vehicle has sustained damage and needs to be moved for repair.

Regardless of the reasons why a vehicle cannot be moved by rail, Railway Support Services works with heavy haulage and abnormal load specialists, Moveright International, which specialises in the movement of rail vehicles by road. Due to the nature of the vehicles being moved, special movement plans have to be put in place and strictly adhered to due to because of the size of the pieces being transported. Despite these complications, nothing is too much trouble to move and the company is fully insured for the loading, transportation and off-loading procedures put in place. Moveright International operates across the UK, Europe and the world, making it well-

placed for any haulage needs that a company requires.

Class 08 locomotive hire and maintenance

Despite the age of the Class 08 shunting locomotive, it has yet to be beaten for its all-round durability. Railway Support Services recognises this and the company not only has its own fleet of locomotives, which it offers on short or long-term hire arrangements to cover for changes in customers' business opportunities, but it also offers an on-site maintenance service for customers that operate their own locomotives.

By working out a maintenance regime, the locomotives can be inspected and examined to any standard up to 'B6' standard. Services such as the fitting of electric fuel and oil pumps, as well as additional headlights, can also be undertaken. And it doesn't stop there; should more detailed work be necessary – such as the fitting of TPWS and GSM-R, wheelset changes, re-wiring and re-whitemetalling – the locomotives can be taken off-site for the work to be completed to an agreed budget. As part of the service, a replacement locomotive is

offered to ensure no disruption is caused to the customer's business while the work is ongoing.

Battery shunt locomotives and other services

An area of railway services that Railway Support Services has recently expanded into is the provision of remote-controlled battery shunt locomotives. The company works with a supplier in the Netherlands, where a machine built to customers' exact specifications is produced.

Other areas in which Railway Support Services can assist railway installations is through the rental of two 'switch and crossing' tamping machines and the provision of a fully-equipped machine shop capable of manufacturing one-off parts. The company also offers a fully coded welding service and vehicle repainting.

Contact Railway Support Services for more details on the opportunities available.

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Full steam ahead

Pod-Trak provides services to a range of disciplines in the rail industry and has introduced in-house training at its depots to tackle the busiest Control Period yet

Pod-Trak was established in 2007 by the current owner Paul O'Donnell and began by providing specialist labour for rail-related works on Docklands Light Railway. Building on this, the company then started to deliver overhead line and third-rail works. Since being set up, Pod-Trak has seen positive growth in various areas and it maintains a focus on building valuable and loyal relationships with its clients.



Pod-Trak's safe and reliable delivery of rail works has allowed the company to widen its scope and accommodate works from a number of disciplines, bringing about the civil engineering and permanent way areas of its business.

Pod-Trak has already delivered multiple conductor rail installation projects including aluminium and steel type rail. It provides a complete multi-disciplinary installation package to its clients for rails and the associated cabling, in addition to support for any smaller maintenance works. In recent years, Pod-Trak has taken full advantage of Network Rail's effort to provide electrification upgrades to a number of routes and it has delivered some high-profile projects that proved beneficial to growing the Pod-Trak business and team. This, in combination with investment into specialist equipment and staff puts them in a strong position for the future.

Not just electrification

While working to deliver important projects in rail and electrical installation, Pod-Trak engages in work such as drainage; concrete and foundation works; temporary works; installation of cable troughs and routes; UTX installations; and platform extensions.

By following its same core principles,



the company aims to bid for larger and more complete work packages. It has already delivered civils work for the Thameslink Programme Key Output 2, during which it demonstrated its ability to work in the field as a multidisciplinary contractor.

Pod-Trak has also delivered major permanent way and ETE (electric track equipment) works at Royal Victoria Docklands Light Railway – a project that required removal of the existing track, as well as the alignment and installation of a new track and conductor (third) rail.

Country-wide

In addition to work carried out in the south, the company has taken on major projects in Manchester, such as the Manchester Metrolink signalling and electrical systems upgrade, which also included the extension of the tram network for the M-Pact Thales consortium. This was followed by Pod-Trak's involvement in delivering the line to Manchester Airport. Being involved on projects with such varied requirements and specialties represents Pod-Trak's drive to widen and maximise its role in the delivery of significant work packages.

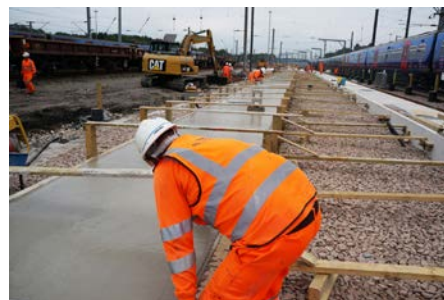


The company has offices in London and Manchester as well as a new depot in Tyne & Wear, which allows it to effectively resource and deliver projects

in a wide area. Its staff can undertake all overhead line installation works – from maintenance and general cabling services to continuity bonding, substation cabling, and negative track bonding – and they hold the relevant certifications required for their respective fields.

All trained up

As a measure of its growth, Pod-Trak's new London office is currently undergoing development for an in-house training facility. By implementing a training programme, the company will look to train existing staff. It has also set up an in-house training facility to address the country's limited capability to carry out specific works, such as on overhead lines.



Pod-Trak's Manchester office has seen recent expansion, with the addition of a complete plant workshop. As well as this, Pod-Trak has acquired large storage areas for the running of two growing departments – transport, and on-track plant. It owns a fleet of plant and vehicles that include vans, HGV's, trailers, and rail-adapted MEWP's (mobile elevating work platforms), including specialist small plant and hand tools – a result of major investment into overhead line equipment and plant to meet supply needs.

Pod-Trak has received a number of recent contract awards that reflect its continuous role in the advancement of rail infrastructure. The company looks to move full steam ahead into the newest and busiest Control Period yet and has put itself in a strong position to take full advantage of the numerous opportunities.

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On the up

Victa Railfreight's workforce has more than doubled in size in under a year. Now, as it pushes for yet more growth, it's looking for more diversity in its team as well

The last twelve months have seen more significant growth for Victa Railfreight. The development of the company, which had its rail freight operations support services profiled in *Rail Professional* November 2013 and 2014, has occurred across the full range of its activities and includes the impact of the first main line shunting operation at Barking, which began at the start of January 2015.

Victa Railfreight is also undertaking the early stage mobilisation of a contract to provide staff to operate construction trains for the ATC joint venture, which was awarded the 'system-wide' contract to equip and commission the Crossrail infrastructure under the centre of London over the next two-and-a-half years. This expansion has doubled the company's turnover in the last 12 months with a corresponding increase in profits, and led to a significant increase in the workforce with employee numbers rising from 22 in December 2014 to 48 as of November 2015.

Strong safety culture

Debbie Simmons, who recently joined as business development and delivery manager, explained that the strong safety culture and flexibility of response across the organisation are key factors in driving growth. 'For a relatively small company, we have very robust safety systems and have recently been audited by a number of train operating companies that were very complimentary about our processes and record keeping.

'This, coupled with a very professional, well-trained and adaptable workforce and a proven record of responding to customer requirements, has led to existing customers expanding the use of our services. In addition to this, our growing reputation has also encouraged a number of new companies to engage our services.'

'Since joining I have met the majority of the team and am impressed with their enthusiasm and commitment to the company,' added Simmons, 'as well as the blend of experienced and new staff. It bodes well for the continued growth in



Competence and rail safety training is provided to third-party organisations

business projected for the next 12 months. This experience has been a key factor in the development of the company and will continue to be so. The freight operating environment remains challenging to the staff on the ground, with freight shunting among the occupations that has seen the least impact of technology in recent years. By providing a programme of training and mentoring based on a mixture of theoretical instruction, practical application and anecdotal scenarios, Victa's ground staff team is well equipped to deal with the wide range of situations that such operations present on a daily basis. This ability to respond confidently, twinned with its customer-first ethos, provides its customers with a quality of service and flexibility that meets their needs and allows recovery from the inevitable service disruptions that occur from time to time.

Attention to detail

Victa's operations portfolio includes long-term contracted business, regular assignments and ad hoc cover for almost all of the licensed freight train operators in the UK, as well as operators of freight terminals and other related facilities.

A growing area for the company is the provision of ground staff to deal with engineering trains provided in connection with Network Rail track possessions. Here again, bespoke training and a close

"I've been very impressed with the professional approach, conduct and delivery of service Victa Railfreight has carried out and company certainly gets my recommendation to assist us in the future"

FOC production manager, following an eight month ground staff provision contract in the west Midlands

attention to detail in the provision of staff means that the company provides very high level of customer service, often in challenging and rapidly changing circumstances.

As well as the core day-to-day operations, Victa also offers training assessment and compliance services to third-party customers as well as management and consultancy support to a broad client base. In 2015, this included the supply of an interim management assignment for the Ministry of Defence's rail depot operations, following outsourcing of the defence logistics' functions.

To underpin the growth in business, the company is keen to further develop the skills, experience and capability of its workforce and to increase its diversity. The appointment of Simmons is a part of that strategy; Victa's managing director, Neil Sime, is keen to involve more women at all levels of the labour force. 'We find that women bring a different perspective on a wide range of disciplines, which complements the 'traditional' railway experience in the company, and often bring a more perceptive approach to human factors in the workforce.'

The company recently became a corporate member of the Institute of Railway Operators and is keen to offer the benefits of membership to its staff, as well as offering some freight expertise and education opportunities to the Institute.

Teaching the industry

The theme of educating the industry about freight is close to Sime's heart.

As a long-standing board member of the Railfreight Group, the trade association that represents a broad church of freight stakeholders, he is keen on getting the message out to the wider railway community. Freight exists in a truly private environment and depends on stability, certainty and commitment to allow the investment in rolling stock, interchange terminals and systems that are needed to continue recent growth trends.

In this respect the business invests considerable amounts of management time in arranging visits and briefings for a wide range of interested parties, ranging from politicians, DfT and ORR staff through to individuals and groups from across Network Rail.

'We recently spent some time with some Network Rail graduate trainees covering freight topics, ranging from a very strategic overview to how it works 'on the ground'. The session was very well received and a number of the attendees have asked for a mini placement with us to learn more about the issues affecting freight. This process is essential if we're to ensure that the next generation of railway men and women understand their industry, its challenges and capability in totality.'

Sime sees the continuous

Ground staff are provided to deal with trains in engineering possessions



improvement of its customer offering, which increases diversity and encourages the development of its staff, coupled with ongoing education of people from within the wider rail industry as key elements of its growth plans over the next few years.

'We have some innovative ideas about how to continue to grow freight traffic in the face of a challenging business environment with the loss of significant volumes of traditional 'trainload' business

arising from external factors such as changing energy policy and evolving global manufacturing patterns.

'The education of our staff and the wider rail community in the issues that we face – and the opportunities that an informed approach can offer – is essential to realise these ambitious ideas.'

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Making its Move

Coral Move FR is the latest addition to **Forbo Flooring's** wide portfolio of floor coverings for rail. The company explains how it came into being

Derived from Forbo Flooring's well-established textile entrance system, Coral FR, Coral Move FR is a tufted carpet solution that offers extensive custom design and colour possibilities to complement any rail interior.

Coral Move FR was created during the development of a product in a different segment. Raymond Koomen Bonnier, who has worked for Forbo Flooring as a senior designer for eighteen years, said that the company had received specific requests. 'Some key customers in the transport industry were asking for a product without the scraper yarn used in our Coral FR Entrance System.

'At that time I was developing a product for hotel corridors, which led me to show those prototypes to some companies working in the transport industry. The feedback was very positive.'



Functional and safe

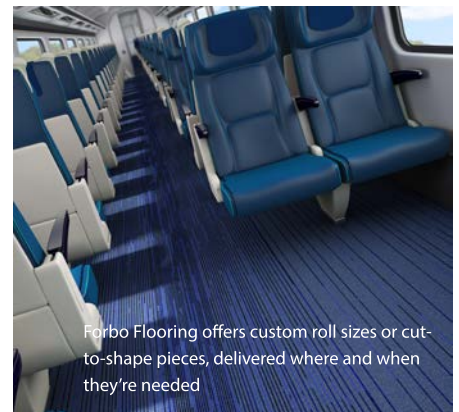
Business director at Forbo, Tom Kuijper, has worked for the company for seventeen years and led the team during the creation process of Coral Move FR. 'We wanted to offer our customers a floor covering that was both functional and well-designed. This means that we not only comply with all the legal requirements around safety, fire retardancy, smoke and wear, which are needed for the rail industry, but our customers can also use this platform to configure their own special product, with support from Forbo Flooring.'

With Coral Move FR, customers can focus on what they want in terms of design, end-consumer well-being and corporate identity. 'Meeting EN 45 545-2 HL2 is only the beginning,' said Jacco Vlaar, head of key account management for transportation, 'Comfort; easy daily and periodic maintenance; and a wide choice of colours are also some of the key benefits for our rail customers.'

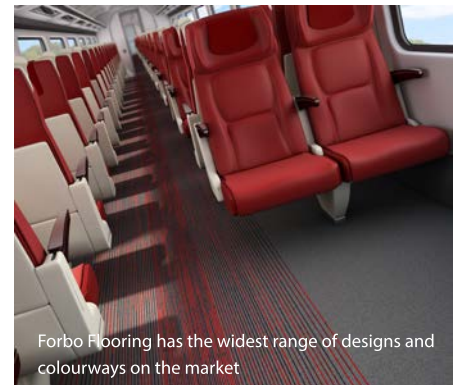
Tried and tested product

What sets Coral Move FR aside from other textile floor coverings is that it isn't a pre-designed product; it's simply a product construction, which gives design freedom to its customers. 'In essence we're providing a platform for designers, giving them a tried and tested product and the freedom to choose from 132 colours, resulting in thousands of different design and colour combinations,' said Kees Boon, sales service manager for Coral.

'The beauty of Coral Move FR is the immense flexibility it gives our customers.'



Forbo Flooring offers custom roll sizes or cut-to-shape pieces, delivered where and when they're needed



Forbo Flooring has the widest range of designs and colourways on the market

Coral Move FR's customisation capabilities don't stop at colour and design; we can offer custom roll sizes or cut-to-shape pieces, delivered where and when our customers need it,' added Vlaar.

Coral Move FR is produced using Econyl 100 per cent regenerated nylon yarn, ensuring high quality, durability and sustainability. Forbo Flooring offers a comprehensive and compliant flooring product portfolio for the rail industry including high performance entrance systems, linoleum flooring, broadloom carpets and flocked floor coverings. The company also offers a wide range of designs and colourways.

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Out-of-sight safety

Sonatest is a manufacturer of ultrasonic testing equipment that unobtrusively discovers weaknesses in safety-critical structures

Operating from the UK, US and Canada, Sonatest offers design, manufacturing, sales and service capabilities to industry. With more than fifty years' engineering experience in the non-destructive testing (NDT) sector, Sonatest's comprehensive portfolio provides leading-edge products, including phased array technology and traditional flaw detection instruments.

An extensive network of direct sales and distribution partners gives the company a global reach, with technical customer support, applications and bespoke project capabilities available to its clients across the industrial spectrum and with direct expertise in rail.

Ultrasonic testing

Engineering structures, whether

constructed from metal, ceramic, or composite materials, by their very nature carry an inherent risk of defects that potentially undermines their structural integrity. Specifically, wherever safety-critical structures are subject to risk of failure, human safety becomes the most significant factor influencing the design and manufacturing process.

For its part, ultrasonic testing remains an essential part of defining and maintaining the industrial procedures. This form of testing has been created to uphold rigorous safety standards, and therefore to meet the intense critical safety tests applied to detect cracking, delamination and corrosion. Such a need for rigour is very apparent in the rail industry.

Operating a commercial railway presents a unique set of challenges. With increasing demands from the travelling public and a

high media profile, safe and reliable railway services are a frequent topic of conversation across the globe. Passengers' needs create pressures on asset management within train operating companies to deliver services but they don't always understand what the delivery and maintenance of such services entails.

Never mind leaves on the tracks, the requirement for high reliability whatever the weather is a massive undertaking for Toc's – with high attendant costs. Beyond the penalties for delays to schedules, failure to deliver safe rail services can endanger lives.

24/7 reliability

Experience has shown that a wide variety of physical components associated with railways are critical to the safe and reliable running of the trains. The legislation surrounding approvals, certification, service delivery and safe operating practices is rightly stringent and specific procedures and equipment have been developed to perform safety-critical testing within a preventative maintenance programme across rail networks.

This work – test and measurement of rail components – is demanding, forming an essential part of 24/7 reliability inspection tests that are carried out all year round; in all weathers; and with a high degree of diligence and accuracy.

The equipment used in this process must also meet rigorous performance standards. By doing this it raises the probability of detection of any significant defects and ensures confidence in safety and reliability. Formal approval from Toc's is therefore an essential requirement for inspection equipment suppliers and demonstrates the importance of portability, operator-friendly use in difficult working conditions, physical ruggedness and practical reliability.

Sonatest has a long relationship with the rail industry, partnering the development of bespoke solutions supporting a range of asset and infrastructure needs. For example, the Sonatest 'Railscan 125' flaw detector was specifically designed to address the requirements of Network Rail's ultrasonic testing procedures and it has been used across the UK rail network for many years.

Masterscan 700

In 2014, the 'Masterscan 700' was approved by Network Rail for axle testing due to its advanced signal/noise ratio. This



Ultrasonic testing remains an essential part of defining and maintaining the industrial procedures

year, for the first time, a phased array ultrasonic testing unit has been accepted for defect analysis on live rails of the UK network. Using the Sonatest Prisma 16:16 (16 elements connected to 16 channels of electronics), defects such as Tache Ovale (a subsurface defect formed around 10-15 mm below the rail head surface) and bolt hole cracks can be accurately sized and rail running conditions assessed.

Sonatest has been designing and manufacturing ultrasonic NDT equipment and transducers since 1958. It has sold its products to more than 100 countries over the last 20 years, with exports accounting for 85 per cent of its UK production. The company currently has more than 110 distributors and agents operating in 77 countries, including 25 distributors in North America. This extensive network of partners makes the company a major player in the NDT sector and an essential strategic partner for industry.

Sonatest has always been an innovator in the NDT industry, and is one of the market leaders in traditional flaw detection and ultrasound techniques. It has a business culture built upon its founding principles of 'Simplicity, capability and reliability', and its ambition remains to provide 'flawless integration' of its products to the safety-critical testing industry. This company commitment is evident within the product

development programmes and customer relationships that it has developed.

Sonatest's NDT products are designed to give the user a powerful tool that is easy to use and will withstand the harsh environments in which NDT is carried out, particularly the SITESCAN and MASTERSCAN range of flaw detectors, which are reliable and have user-friendly user interface designs.

Always developing

Product design and development is a central feature of Sonatest's evolution and along with outstanding customer service, technical support, bespoke applications and R&D, leading to Sonatest's claim that: 'If Ultrasound can get through it, the Masterscan can test it'. Those who work in inspection and testing say 'data must become information, and information must inform decision'. This is true in every field of engineering, and is especially the case within rail inspection. Even the best ultrasonic NDT data is of little value without good interpretation, so software programmes such as 'UT-lity' and 'UT-studio' offer the ability to record the inspection, store it, transfer it to senior engineers, and compare it with previous data.

Easy-to-use instruments that offer easy-to-read results are essential, and the

effective presentation of information is vital. Yet however impressively the software program might represent or visualise results, good decisions start with the ability to collect and interpret such results. Measurement is key. The quality of the data acquisition itself is the essential ingredient and successful decision making can only be achieved when practitioners and managers have confidence in the quality of their data. Sonatest's design and application engineers understand this, and reliable measurement remains at the heart of its NDT instrumentation.

Looking to the future, as high speed rail – with all its new engineering challenges – begins to take shape and new materials and manufacturing methods become commonplace in rolling stock, it's reassuring to know that the safety and integrity of the structures that carry so many people every day are backed up by good engineering practices and solid, reliable inspection capability.

Sonatest remains a long-term strategic partner to the rail industry and intends to grow with the UK, European and global rail networks, offering its transducers, test equipment and data analysis capability to engineering specialists across the world.

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Simplicity

Capability

Reliability



Big on the circuit

Morris Line Engineering manufactures isolation and earthing units, using local suppliers to produce cost-effective products that fulfil specific customer requirements

The 21st Century is a global marketplace that brings ever-increasing competition for Britain's manufacturers. To succeed, UK producers have to develop products that deliver clear cost savings with increased product value, and innovate faster than their overseas counterparts. No small task.

Morris Line Engineering (MLE) has a strong history of driving efficiencies and being flexible to the fluctuating demands of the rail and power distribution markets. Over the past decade, MLE has increasingly needed to draw on its 40 years of design and field experience



MORRIS
LINE ENGINEERING

to develop new products, expanding its offering and targeting real customer-focused innovations and a result the company has moved into new markets.

Based in Bridgend, Wales, MLE has expanded its UK facility and in the process has created new products for its growing client base.

In rail, the company's innovation path has included the upgrade of its long-standing rotational isolator to the latest 1250A, 12.5kA rating. This product used some components common to MLE's previous product and could be fitted to the same isolator base, delivering efficiencies for both the company and its installers.

Manual and motorised

Being a familiar product to installers and



A three-position double pole rotational rail isolators with earthing

having a wide variety of configurations, the product has been widely used, leading MLE to hold modest stocks of both manual and motorised units to better serve the market. This reduction in lead time was beneficial to electrification projects where time scales are often squeezed by delays or changes in the early project stages.

Indication of blade position was an important consideration on the new isolator. With the window for night-time possessions becoming ever tighter on today's railway, motorised isolators have become a more popular choice and therefore confidence in knowing the equipment status becomes more critical. MLE positioned limit switches at three points on the isolator to give a triple-check process that ensures all parts of the isolator are correctly located. The most critical of these is the indication switch on the earth post, which is operated by the blade itself as it drives into the fixed contact.

In combination with the simple and robust nature of MLE's operating gear, the motorised 1250A range has now been further expanded to include a double-pole version (used on the North West Electrification Programme), a vertical break isolator using the same components as the rotating version, isolators with square bases for mounting over tracks, and elliptical drive operating gear for driving switches over tracks.

Down to earth

Following on from MLE's 1250A track switch, the company took on another challenge when approached by the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) project. The first phase of this project was between Springburn and Cumbernauld and the project received a notice from the ORR that affected earthing practices. There was a demand to earth out the overhead line equipment (OLE) in a more robust and rapid way; MLE developed the fixed earthing device (FED) in partnership with Network Rail and Carillion and the unit was to be installed at key points along the line.

In fact, MLE already had an approved earth switch, which was used on the Paisley Canal project, but it was clear after discussions with the Cumbernauld project team that there was an opportunity to create a simpler, more cost-efficient unit.

As with the rotating isolator, multiple limit switches were fitted, with the key unit being activated by the blade engaging the contact. After development and testing, a number of the units were supplied both to the Cumbernauld project and the nearby Rutherglen Coatbridge

project. Since their installation, the question of how the future of earthing will look has been unclear and industry discussions continue. What is clear is that – in both manual and motorised form – Morris Line's 25kV earth switches offer efficiencies in locations where isolations are regularly taken. Indeed, the cost of a manual switch is comparable with a flexible earth.

Gathering PACE

There have been competitive challenges for MLE to tackle over time; rail technology varies across the globe and this can introduce new developments into the international marketplace. A good example of this was the load-break isolator. A product did exist, but MLE believed there was opportunity for improvement in terms of developing its own 1250A isolator technology with additional functionality.

The product would combine the functions of the standard three-position off-load isolator with that of a load-break switch, something not previously available to the UK rail industry. This new product would require development funding, extensive assessment, evaluation of client requirements and forecasting of demand levels in a fluid rail industry.

MLE approached the Welsh government and was successful in obtaining a government grant to help cover some of the development and testing costs. The company has also been working in close partnership with PACE Networks, which supports project delivery and product development in a number of areas around rail electrification.

MLE and PACE Networks investigated options that would allow the isolator to operate on a live system, with the resulting arc to be extinguished in a safe and controlled manner. Morris Line looked at several options from existing European suppliers to break the load current, identifying a vacuum bottle from a major supplier with a proven track record that would meet the requirements.

The next step was to design and build a prototype model that could withstand internal and external testing and validation. Prototype housing for the vacuum bottle was produced using a 3D printing company local to MLE, which not only kept the development costs down but also drastically accelerated the time taken for the housing to be produced.

Going Dutch

During initial in-house testing, some minor modifications were seen to improve the operation of the vacuum interrupter head and a second prototype



Motorised earth switch (open)

was built – again, the local 3D printing made this quick and affordable. After initial validation from Network Rail, testing was arranged at Kema, an independent laboratory in Arnhem, Netherlands.

In August 2015, the fully rated load-break unit received Network Rail product acceptance. The new unit is suitable for operation on a live system, which means smaller sections of line can be isolated and earthed for operational efficiencies.

The combination of load-break, isolation and earthing in one device brings obvious cost-saving benefits. But more importantly it reduces the amount of time taken to make the OLE system safe for maintainers to work, allowing possession time to be maximised.

There are also benefits around reduced circuit breaker count and associated maintenance. The Morris Line Motor Mechanism requires no maintenance and the switch itself just needs brief inspection and greasing every six years. Five UK electrification projects are now in discussions about potential deployment.

Thanks to all the hard work of the development team in Bridgend, MLE now has the most complete range of rail isolation and earthing products developed on the UK network.

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Visit www.morrisline.co.uk

Signalling a new era

Alstom has been involved in the UK's European Train Control System activity since it was introduced more than 15 years ago. Its signalling company, **Signalling Solutions Limited**, is currently involved in the roll-out of this technology as well as initiatives to prepare it for the future

What is European Train Control System?

European Train Control System (ETCS), or with the radio communication backbone, European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), is the next generation system for rail traffic control.

Already in commercial use across many countries in the world, the aim is to replace the traditional system of 'lights on sticks' with a radio-based system that transmits 'movement authorities' to the train. This information can then be viewed on an in-cab display - the human machine interface (HMI).

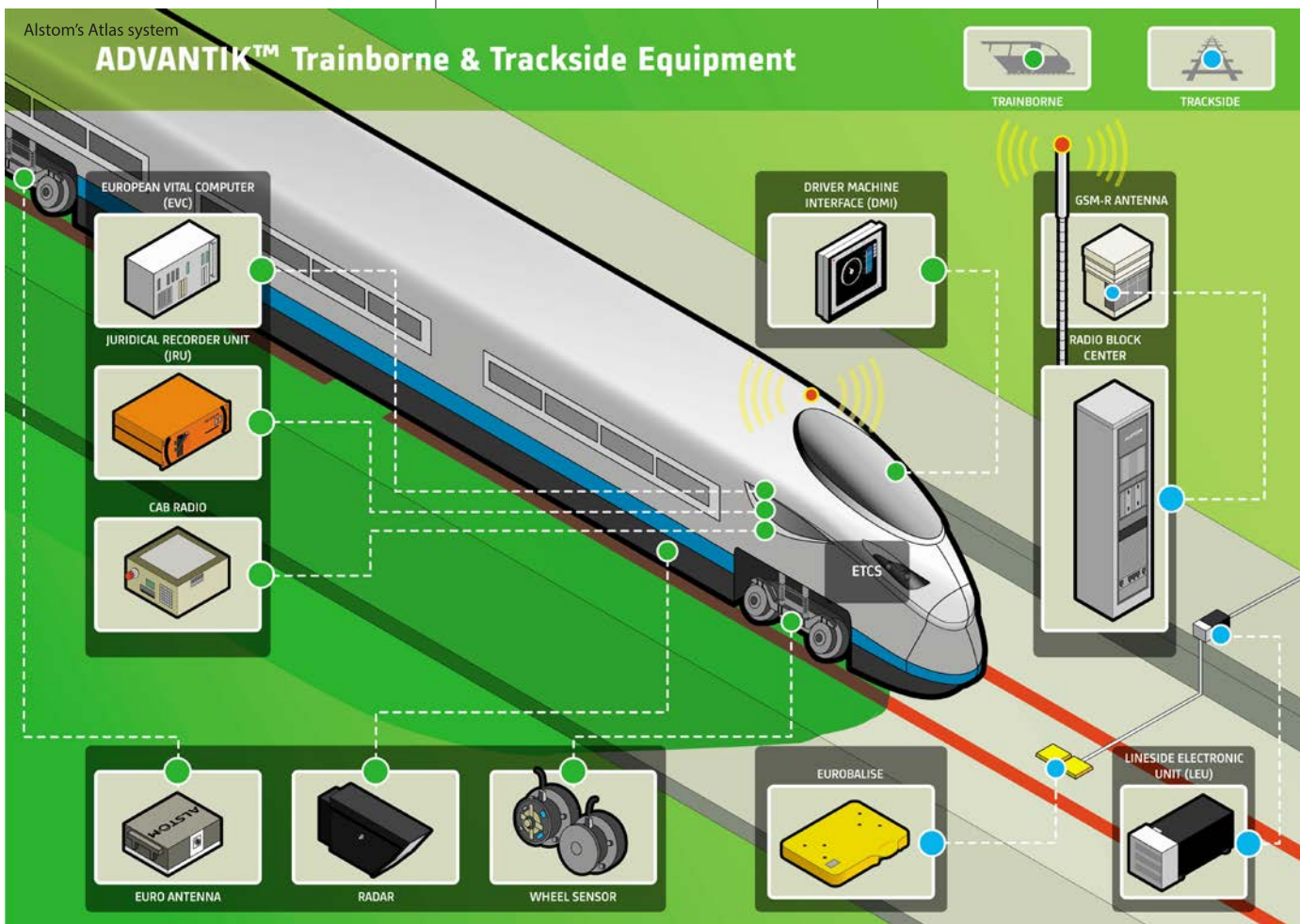
Key components in the system include:

- on-board computer - the European Vital Computer (EVC); the word 'vital' reflecting its safety-criticality
- the Radio Block Centre (RBC), which acts as the 'post box' for messages between the trackside and train
- various components to assess position and speed, with an overarching railway-specific radio network - currently Global System for Mobile Communications - Railway (GSM-R).

Key benefits of adopting the ETCS system include automatic train protection, optimisation of line capacity

and lower maintenance costs. ERTMS is a scalable solution to the implementation of train control, with three levels.

- **Level 1** - provides full automatic train protection, with coloured light signals usually retained as the general movement authority
- **Level 2** - the driver uses the in-cab display, although light signals can be retained in an overlay solution so that trains not fitted with ETCS can continue to use the line
- **Level 3** - instead of using conventional train detection devices, position reports (including train integrity status) issued by the trains are used



to determine track occupation. This allows for virtual block sectioning or a 'moving block' system to be adopted, which assesses safe distances between trains based on relative speeds and braking characteristics, optimising line capacity.

Using automatic train operation (ATO) will also optimise the train's acceleration, braking and speed, giving higher levels of capacity and stability that is also more energy efficient.

Alstom's Atlas products

SSL's ETCS solution is based on Alstom's Atlas product range, a scalable approach to implementation developed over many years and used in a number of locations across the world.

Atlas 500 offers the highest level of functionality, providing:

- compliance with ERTMS Level 2 or Level 3

speed line between Rome and Naples, which has been running for nearly ten years. In addition, the Atlas system has nearly a decade of in-service experience on the Betuweroute (Rotterdam to Germany) freight line and on the Mattstetten-Rothrist mixed traffic line in Switzerland, the latter carrying more than 270 trains per day.

The Atlas system is used on 70 per cent of trains and tracks under ETCS supervision, with a total of more than 100 million km travelled. Each month, the distance travelled by trains under ETCS supervision travel equates to more than two return trips to the moon.

SSL's projects

Signalling Solutions Limited's (SSL) involvement in the roll-out of ETCS in the UK is through Network Rail's ETCS framework contract. SSL was one of four companies to have been awarded this contract, which was signed in February 2012.

The first work stream delivered under

systems and to demonstrate track-to-train interoperability.

SSL is now working on the UK's first Baseline3 mainline project – for which it is implementing a Level 2 overlay on the Great Western Main Line, initially from Paddington to Heathrow Junction. Known as the '12 Mile Post', including the Heathrow Airport branch line, coloured light signals will be retained until 2025 to allow time for all trains using the line to be fitted with the train-borne equipment (which will be covered by SSL in *Rail Professional's* March issue). This will be followed by continuing the overlay to Bristol.

As one of the four framework contractors, SSL is also heavily involved in the procurement process for other projects, including the provision of test track facilities (Railway Innovation and Development Centres) and the ECML Phase 1 from King's Cross to Peterborough.

What next for the Digital Railway?

To date, only one ERTMS line (Cambrian) has been commissioned. However, there are now signs of a real drive towards implementation across the UK.

Mark Carne, Network Rail's chief executive, has set his team the challenge of considering roll-out in the next ten years rather than the 35 that was previously expected. This is being driven by a project known as Digital Railway, which has a vision of Level 3 with ATO being used UK-wide. The plan will be formulated over the coming months, and published in 2016.

As one of the four Framework contractors, Alstom, through SSL, is part of the collaborative team. This includes all four suppliers and Network Rail to define Digital Railway's 'Phase 3' (the roll-out of ETCS Level 3 with ATO across the UK) that will start in 2019. Alstom's experience gained from working with Prorail in The Netherlands will be valuable to Network Rail, allowing Alstom to propose solutions to the challenging issues encountered during degraded modes of operation.

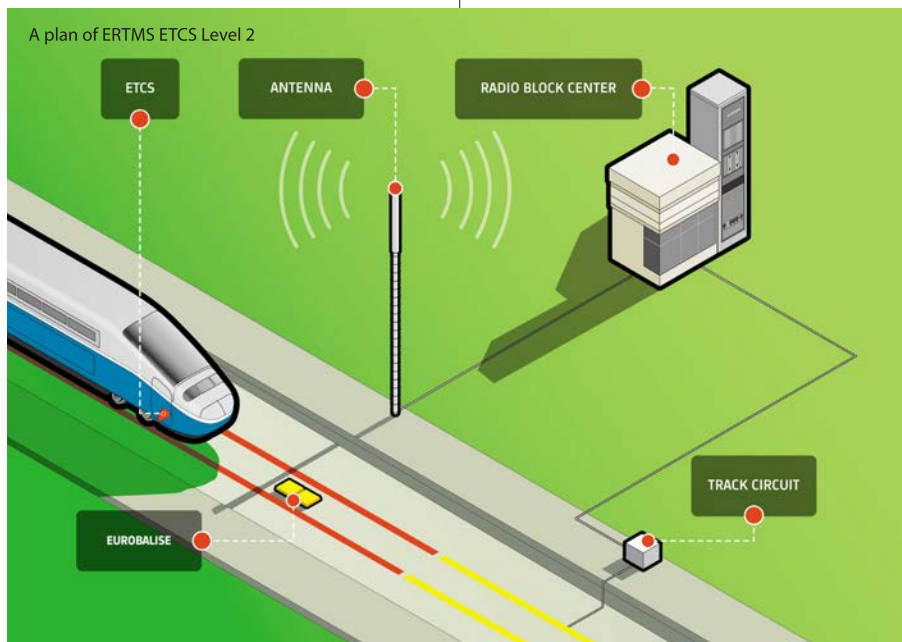
Alstom is continuing to develop its core solution, reflecting the fact that, as a leading-edge technology, ERTMS is a continually evolving product that can bring about major improvements in capacity, safety and costs. With some of the latest technology on offer, Alstom is providing its customers with improvements in functionality, capacity, maintainability, safety and costs.

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- continuous radio communications between trains and RBC, performed through GSM-R or GPRS for higher capacity
- scalable and interoperable ATO for higher capacity, with no infrastructure map on board
- ecodriving and energy saving features
- metro-like operation features, including platform screen door management
- traffic management system with traffic regulation, conflict detection and resolution.

References include the first ERTMS Level 2 system in operation – the high

the contract was the modification of part of the 'Hertford Loop'. The line to the east of the East Coast Main Line was used as an ETCS test track – now known as ENIF – the ERTMS National Integration Facility. SSL had already delivered the resignalling of the base infrastructure which also served as the enabling works for the ETCS overlay. By implementing bi-directional signalling on the up-line, this allowed the down-line to be used as a test track during off-peak hours while services continued on the up-line. SSL has retro-fitted a Class313 EMU with ETCS, with the train then being used by all four trackside suppliers of the ETCS framework to test their

A strong track record

Walker Construction has opened new offices in Ashford, Kent, as part of a move to develop its collaborative business style. The company gives an overview of its history

Walker Brothers (Civil Engineering) was founded in 1964 by brothers Hector, Stephen and Raymond Walker. Based in north London, the company initially specialised in local authority paving contracts but, following a move to Folkestone in the late 1960's, it expanded its operations to cover highways, structural and drainage works.

Taking advantage of east Kent's growing economy, the company expanded its operations and operating area, consolidating its position within the construction industry. It also changed its

name to Walker Construction (UK) to better reflect its core activities. Having celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2014, Walker Construction is firmly established and its building, civil engineering and rail delivery teams specialise in public works and rail infrastructure projects. Typical of its building and civils projects are Rochester and Medway fire stations, the Denison Building in Chatham's Brompton Barracks, East Kent College and the Folkestone Harbour Arm.

Rail

Walker Construction's rail division was created during the late 1980's as a result of



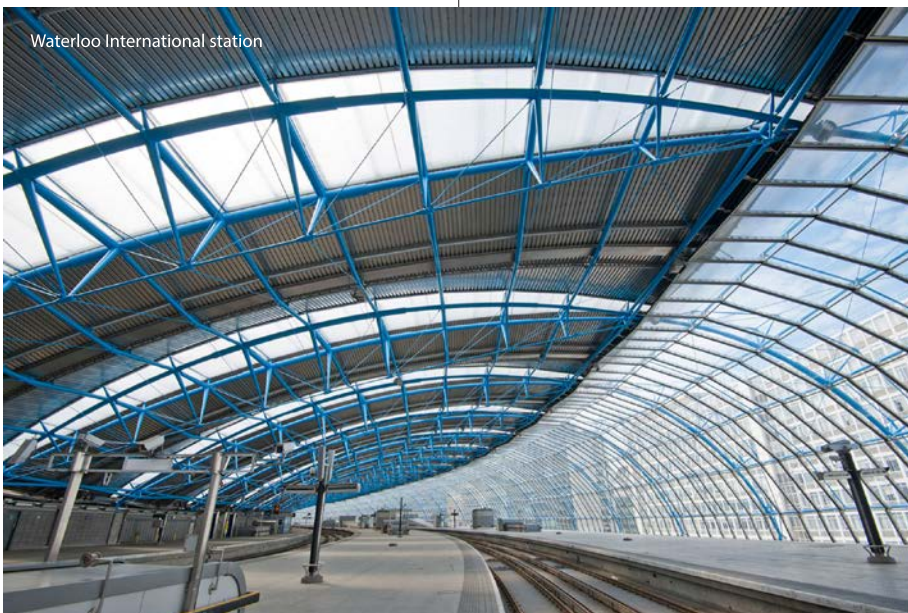
a programme of rail industry-orientated contracts for British Rail. The company now holds a Network Rail-sponsored Principal Contractor's Licence and is heavily engaged in rail infrastructure projects throughout south east England. Walker Construction recently completed



East Huntspill bridge in Somerset



Waterloo International station



Roof detail at Waterloo International



managing director in January 2013, gaining promotion from his previous role as rail director.

Collaborative working

Walker Construction’s philosophy has played a significant part in its success, highlighting the benefits of collaborative working between both its core business teams and supply chain. To consolidate and build on its recent successes, Walker Construction has centralised many of its key functions into a new office, Inca House on the outskirts of Ashford in Kent.

Although the company’s head office remains in Folkestone, Inca House is now home to the building, civil engineering and rail delivery teams, along with the company’s estimators, procurement, health and safety, technical and commercial teams.

Visit Walker Construction’s brand-new website for further information, or contact the company.

Tel: 01303 851111
 Email: admin@walker-construction.co.uk
 Visit www.walker-construction.co.uk

refurbishment of the 400m-long main roof at Waterloo International station and the final phase of the Crystal Palace station upgrade programme, with work ongoing at Fleet station, Blacksole Bridge and Network Rail’s Clapham depot.

Walker Construction has experienced healthy growth within all three core business divisions over the last few years; turnover increased from £28 million in 2013 to £42 million in 2014. This fiscal growth has been mirrored by an increase in the size of the company’s workforce, which climbed from 230 in March 2013 to more than 380 today. Much of this success is attributed to the company’s strong relationship with its staff, which

encourages and rewards collaborative working.

‘It’s a fundamental principle,’ explains managing director, Phil Webb. ‘As a family business, self-sufficiency and commitment to our employees go hand in hand with our success.’

‘Most of our employees have been with us for many years and we have a strong policy of promotion within the company that helps retain experience and skills. The commitment our employees demonstrate in return is testament to the success of that guiding principle.’

Webb is a good example of this approach: he joined the company more than twenty years ago and became

SMART protection

Train maintenance centres being built for the government's Intercity Express Programme (IEP) will benefit from innovative safety systems, courtesy of Zonegreen

The rail safety specialist's latest SMART depot personnel protection system (DPPS™) has been chosen by Hitachi Rail and VolkerFitzpatrick for Hitachi's new IEP maintenance facilities across the UK.

North Pole (London), Stoke Gifford, Maliphant (Swansea) and Doncaster, will be among the first to use Zonegreen's latest version of DPPS™, after the Sheffield-based company launched it earlier this year. Each protection system is tailored to each train maintenance centre's layout and controls vehicle movements, protecting staff and infrastructure while increasing the ease of depot operations.

Hitachi Class 800/801 trains

DPPS™ has already been installed at Swansea's Maliphant facility and its larger counterpart, North Pole, where it will be

used to bring vehicles in and then out on the six-road maintenance facility that has interlocks with gantry gates, two bogie drops, a wheel lathe and fume extractors.

The depot is receiving two variants of Hitachi Rail Europe's Class 800/801 trains – bi-mode Class 800's and electric Class 801's, which will replace the 40-year-old high speed diesel trains currently in operation on the Great Western and East Coast Main Lines.

Ross Cunningham, head of property and construction for Hitachi, said: 'Delivering a safe working environment for employees across all of our train maintenance centres is a top priority for Hitachi Rail and Zonegreen's systems help us put safety first.'

'Innovation is at the core of how we work and this technology brings to life one of our most fundamental company values.'



zonegreen
safe working solutions

Stoke Gifford

Work is underway to install DPPS™ at Stoke Gifford, a two-road maintenance facility that will be equipped with interlocking gantry gates, two bogie drops, mono rail cranes, overhead lines and protection systems for an underfloor carriage wash and wheel lathe road.

Doncaster will be the final IEP train maintenance centre to have the system installed and Zonegreen's engineers are in



IEP's North Pole Depot



North Pole derailleurs



An interlocking panel

the process of agreeing designs with main contractor, VolkerFitzpatrick.

Christian Fletcher, Zonegreen's technical director, said: 'Although the four installations will look and feel similar, they're configured specifically to meet the needs of each IEP depot. Hitachi was already familiar with DPPS™ as it is currently in operation in their Ashford depot. They will now benefit from the improvements we've made to the new-generation system, which is even safer and more reliable than the original.

'The new system enables users to stay up-to-date with the latest developments in personnel safety and benefit from future improvements as soon as we make them. It also delivers increased durability and reliability - key considerations when specifying depots that will be under pressure to return vehicles to service as quickly as possible.'

Intuitive functionality

Designed with export in mind, the next-generation DPPS™ offers intuitive functionality based on a four-button controller and a graphical interface that can be programmed in any language, accommodating characters and letters. It is operated using personnel datakeys and combines powered derailleurs, road end control panels, train detection equipment and warning signals.

The DPPS™ is an advanced, reliable and thoroughly-tested system that provides essential protection to personnel working within the maintenance environment. Zonegreen's technology will help Hitachi Rail safely maintain high numbers of vehicles, keeping the upgraded rail network operating at full capacity and improving the passenger experience.

Zonegreen has invested many hundreds of thousands of pounds in its new-generation DPPS™. A host of additional features have been added, following six years in development, and the system is now simpler to implement and use and more efficient to run. Remote

configuration and assistance has also been added, making overseas installations straightforward and cost-effective. The customer-centric focus of this new DPPS™ extends to its design, which is more ergonomic than its predecessor. A tactile membrane has improved durability, while improved electronic components have increased its reliability and reduced power consumption.

By continuing to utilise distributed intelligent technologies, Zonegreen has also ensured that if an error is detected on one road, normal operation can continue throughout the rest of the depot. This minimises disruption and represents a significant benefit over traditional project life cycle (PLC) systems.

Independent verification

Standardised software is used to run DPPS™, which means it can still be configured to the unique layout of each facility, but depots benefit from years of extensive development and testing. Every installation comprises hardware and software that has been verified independently and complies with safety standards, as defined in IEC61508 and EN50128/50129, as well as current electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) railway guidelines. In addition, it is easier for Zonegreen to share new features and updates with existing and future clients. Similar to the personnel datakeys that operate DPPS™, an engineer's datakey can be programmed with a depot's layout and used by engineers to transfer data to the equipment when inserted, minimising installation time.

The datakeys have changed in appearance, while additional levels of access have been added, providing improved encryption and security. Temporary keys are available for the first time, granting access for a limited period and, therefore, mitigating the distribution of duplicates should a member of staff forget their original.

All software is tested rigorously and repeatedly by Zonegreen's in-house team

to reduce the risk of errors and continued testing is carried out after installation. For example, if power is cut to the derailer, a message will appear informing the user of this change in status.

'These are exciting times for Zonegreen,' concluded Fletcher, 'We have the technology to vastly improve working conditions for depot staff and word is spreading about our capabilities worldwide. Although progress is being made within the rail industry, occupational health remains a considerable concern.

'We believe maintenance facilities should be doing all they can to protect workers and we're dedicated to developing innovative systems that not only respond to the needs of rail operators, but also have the flexibility to adapt to this rapidly-changing environment.

'International partners and existing clients are helping us shape the future of depot safety and we believe the latest version of our DPPS™ spearheads a product range that has the potential to transform the industry's health and safety record.'

Contact Zonegreen to find out more about its work with the IEP and its wide range of depot safety products

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Email: info@zonegreen.co.uk

Visit www.zonegreen.co.uk



Zonegreen's North Pole DPPS panels

A very clear warning

ZÖLLNER was established in 1949 and develops, manufactures and supplies warning devices for the global rail industry

For years, ZÖLLNER has been developing the Track Warning System (TWS) Autoprowa® and supplying it to customers in the UK, Germany and many other countries around the world.

ZÖLLNER is ISO 9001:2008 certified and its TWS are certified to comply with the highest Safety Integrity Level, SIL4, in accordance with CENELEC EN50126/128. Production is monitored by TÜV, a company that validates the safety of a wide range of products, which gives the TWS standards that have helped it to achieve various supplier accreditations in many countries, including the UK. The reliability and safety of the Autoprowa® system, as well as its competent and professional use by many customers, have allowed ZÖLLNER to become a TWS market leader.

ZÖLLNER UK was established in 2002 and its Leeds-based team provides service and support that includes training, mentoring, on-site support and a 24/7 hotline. Service Engineers are able to calibrate and repair all TWS equipment at its Leeds premises, which are fully equipped and include an un-echoing

sound chamber and light measuring facility. By using UK stock, ZÖLLNER UK can offer short turnaround times.

Track Warning System Autoprowa®

Track worker safety is a vital factor in planning worksites. The overall safety risk on track worksites caused by human error can be widely excluded by using fail-safe Automatic Track Warning Systems (ATWS). Not just improving safety, track warning systems also increase productivity.

ZÖLLNER Autoprowa® systems have proven their reliability in a large number of installations and the system's modular concept is the key for flexible applications. It offers tailored solutions for all possible worksites, including long and short duration sites, big renewal sites several kilometres in length, as well as short or mobile worksites.

All components can be combined with one another. As a result the system can be used as ATWS, semi-automatic TWS (SATWS), lookoutoperated warning system (LOWS) or even signal-controlled warning system (SCWS). Permanent installations are also possible, such as in

tunnels or when fitted to high-output systems.

One of the most important advantages of the system is the Autoprowa® effect. The warning signal level is automatically adjusted to the ambient noise to guarantee a warning that can be safely heard but which avoids unnecessary high signal levels. This feature also eliminates the need for horns with different noise levels, which means less expenditure and fewer logistics.

Fully-Automatic Track Warning Systems

In fully-automatic mode, warnings are activated and cancelled by train detectors. Warnings are given by a combination of horns and lights that are positioned along the length of the worksite. On long-term worksites ATWS will be hardwired, however radio-based ATWS or combinations of hardwired and radio components are also available.

In the UK the hardwired ATWS system Autoprowa® was accepted for use on Network Rail Infrastructure in 2001.

Mobile radio warning systems

The first radio-based warning system,





The second-generation Lookout Operated Warning System (LOWS)

ZAL, was accepted in 2004 and the first generation of ZÖLLNER's Autoprowa® ZPW LOWS came into use across the UK in 2007. The lightweight and easy-to-use concept helped to improve safety and productivity on many short-term and mobile worksites, such as during survey and patrolling activities. The latest upgrade to version 1.5, which is currently being rolled out, further improves the system's usability.

The second-generation Mobile Warning Radio Warning System (MFW) gained full Network Rail Product Acceptance (PA05/01540) in 2014 for LOWS application.

The advantages of the second-generation mobile warning radio warning system are:

- bi-directional radio communication – active acknowledgement from site to lookout
- improved radio range – no booster needed and less equipment needed
- LED flashing beacons – reduced power consumption
- ZPW warning devices can serve as the central control unit – no separate unit

needed

- only two types of battery and one charger – improved handling and logistics
- charge indicator on each battery – status can be checked any time
- new, lighter transport cases – easier handling
- motion sensor instead of vigilance button – easier operation
- transmitter ZFS can be used for LOWS and SATWS.

Semi-automatic track warning system

In semi-automatic track warning system (SATWS) mode, train detectors are connected to a transmitter. When a train is detected the transmitter ZFS sends the warning information to the central control unit on site. The SATWS controller cancels the warning manually when the train has left the worksite. NR/SP/OHS/501, issue 1 prohibited the application in semi-automatic mode, i.e. failsafe automatic warning activation by train detectors and manual cancellation. This application is now known as SATWS.

Since 2014, ZÖLLNER UK has trialled the SATWS application in conjunction with newly-developed training courses. As part of the trials, SATWS applications have been split into standard SATWS and complex SATWS; complex systems fall under the same regime as ATWS and have been safely operated under for many years. Standard SATWS are currently restricted to two detection points (strike-in points).

The trials have demonstrated that the equipment can be installed quickly and will work reliably. New training courses for SATWS controller and SATWS planner ensure a robust planning process to enable a safe and efficient application of SATWS.

The SATWS application is now accepted by Network Rail. The application is governed by G020501, an extract of the new NR/SP/OHS/501 TWS system standard, which is currently under review.

The SATWS system can be turned into a full ATWS by adding strike-out train detectors. Personal warning devices with audible warnings are integrated into the ear defenders and can also be retro fitted. The personal warning devices are an ideal solution for vegetation work.

Not just warning devices...

ZÖLLNER also manufactures other products for the rail industry, such as mobile, temporary level crossings, speed check devices and train horns. More information on the products, including videos, can be found on the ZÖLLNER website

Contact Frank Peters, managing director of ZÖLLNER UK

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Visit www.zollner-uk.co.uk

ZPW first-generation



Staying ahead of unstable power

The UK industry will become increasingly reliant on electricity to power the UK's trains, calling on reliable and safe systems; something that **REO** can help with

The first electrical locomotive ran in 1879 in Berlin and eleven years later London opened the world's first working electrical underground system. Electrical train systems have come a long way since then and are set to take another leap with planned high speed rail projects. REO UK gives details on how managing power quality and voltage stability on our trains is vital for safe, efficient functionality.

Reliable and consistent

From the moment trains traded in steam for electricity there have been measures invented, developed and adapted to reduce the risk posed to rail workers, passengers

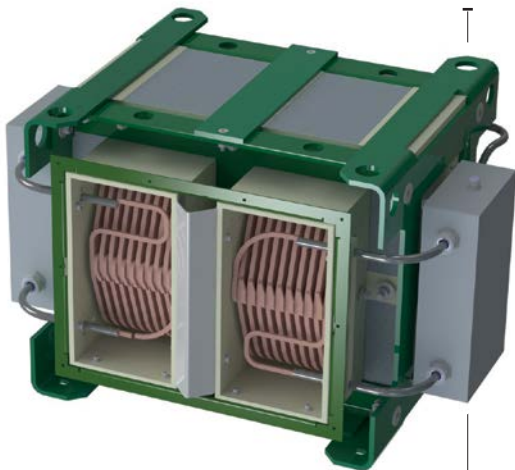
and trackside installations. In particular, train operators need to be able to rest easy in the knowledge that the electricity powering their locomotives is reliable and consistent.

Voltage stability is particularly vital, as voltage fluctuations or short-circuits have the potential to cause harm to passengers and businesses close to stations. Given the possible risks, it's vital that any potential electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) issues are handled efficiently and safely. Taking measures to eliminate EMC problems at source ensures trains are safer, meaning that things such as voltage changes and short circuits won't present a hazard to passengers.



Steve Hughes, managing director of REO UK





Air Choke Type NTT LD

One such measure is the use of air chokes, such as REO UK's Air Choke Type NTT LD. Designed for use in vehicles in direct current (DC) voltage systems, including underground and commuter trains as

well as trolley buses, an air choke is a complete operation unit that comprises an inductor, cooled air flow, suspension and connections.

This inductive component stores magnetic energy while filtering voltage peaks and preventing voltage dips. In doing so, the air choke keeps deviations from the ideal converter input as low as possible, as well as reducing circuit disturbances caused by parasitic components and switching operations.

Another major benefit of employing components such as air chokes on passenger trains is their ability to reduce harmonics.

High levels of harmonic output increases electromagnetic interference (EMI), which can have an adverse effect not only on physical components on the train, but also communications and other electronic devices.

There is also a risk that harmonic build up could have negative consequences for vital trackside functions, such as signalling and track circuits. Modern digital technology is particularly susceptible to EMI's disruptive nature and early in 2015 the roll-out of an upgraded signalling system for the UK's railway network was announced.

This upgrade will see the control of signal lights given over to computers and while this made headlines for the associated cyber security threat this could pose, there is also the increased potential for harmonic levels to cause problems.

Reducing potential harm

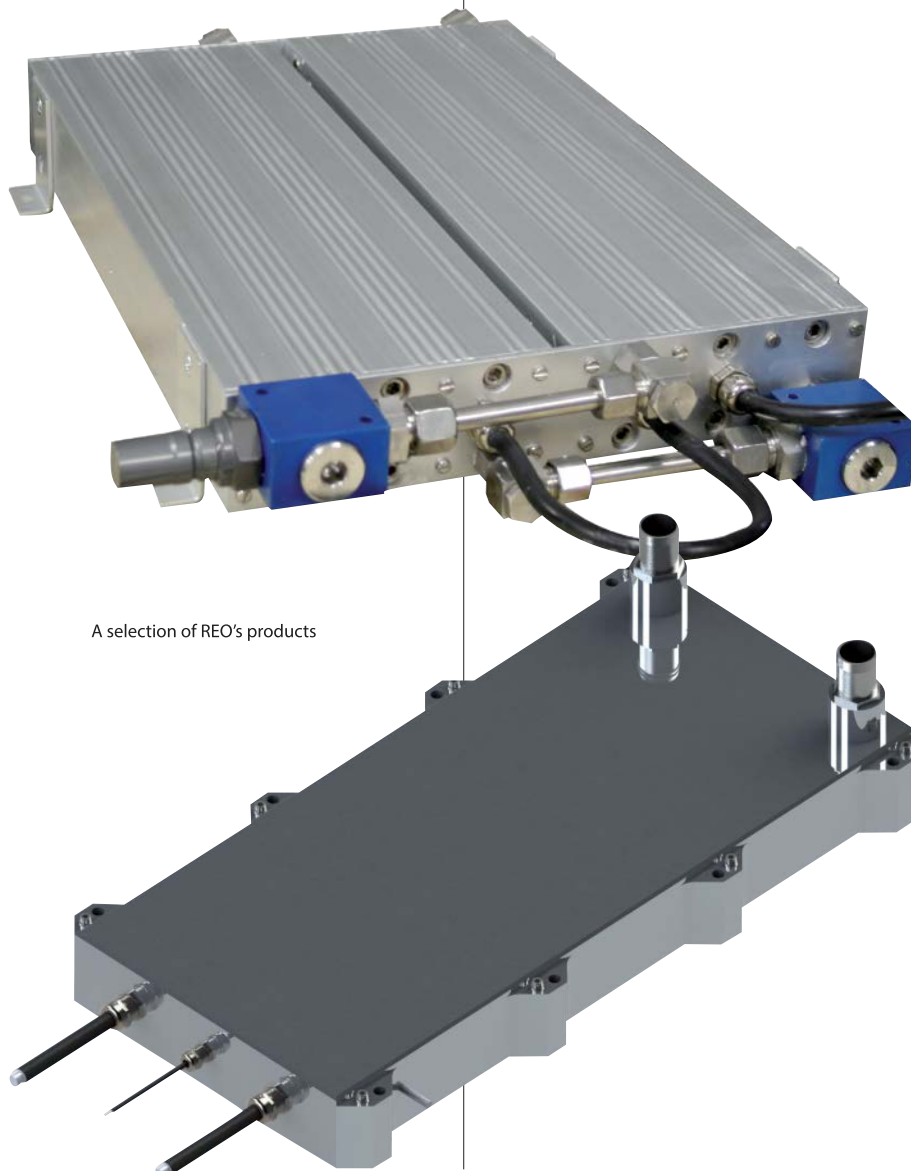
The disruption, should levels peak too high, could include anything from the suspension of train operation on a line, to a much more serious incident that could involve harm to passengers.



It's for these reasons that REO UK has developed a full power quality solution for trains, including chokes, resistors, transformers and inductors. All of which, like the robust and aerodynamic air chokes designed to be mounted on top of or beneath the train, are type tested and validated in accordance with EN60310 and which meet European fire protection standard EN 45545.

As the industry increasingly relies on electricity to power the trains and to manage the railways, the importance of stable, reliable power quality is only going to increase. With planned high speed rail networks and an increase in the number of trains on our existing tracks it's vital to get ahead of the possible issues that could arise from unstable power.

For further information contact Steve Hughes, managing director of REO UK
 Tel: 01588 6734110
 Email: main@reo.co.uk
 Visit www.reo.co.uk



A selection of REO's products

Very Light Rail innovation

The WMG centre **HVM Catapult** at the **University of Warwick** is helping to develop an Innovation Centre for Very Light Rail, and is looking for industrial collaborators

A government initiative to stimulate innovation and accelerate economic growth, Catapults operate across the UK in a number of industries. The WMG centre is part of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult.

With established centres of excellence in lightweight technologies and energy storage and management, the WMG centre is now expanding to include autonomous vehicles, power electronics and electric machines. This expansion allows the centre to address low carbon mobility challenges through a whole-systems approach, while transferring resulting technologies to other industries, including Very Light Rail (VLR).

Very Light Rail

A vehicle with a weight of less than one tonne per linear metre is considered very light weight by current standards. The development of VLR offers a significant opportunity for the UK to develop a new manufacturing industry that offers lighter, low-carbon transport.

VLR provides many benefits over the traditional rail systems such as reduced capital costs and installation time, as well as reduced operational and maintenance costs. There is a great deal of potential for VLR vehicles to be introduced on disused branch lines across the UK, many of which have not been in operation since the 1960's.

VLR Innovation Centre

WMG's centre HVM Catapult is a member of the steering group for a proposed VLR Innovation Centre, which comprises Dudley and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Councils; Network Rail; Centro; the Department for Transport; Future Railway; Knowledge Transfer Network; and the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority.

The VLR Innovation Centre will enable the testing and development of new ideas and solutions. It will be located at Castle Hill in Dudley and will cost around £28 million. The project has already secured £4.5 million from the Black Country LEP and is in the process of applying for further funding from European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF).

The centre will offer opportunities for a new UK-based manufacturing industry and encourage partnerships between SME's and research institutions. It will also provide educational courses.



The view from the back of the proposed VLR Innovation Centre in Dudley

The facility will include:

- coordination of strategic initiatives
- a resident R&D team with research labs and offices
- a workshop for the assembly of prototype vehicles and systems
- a test and evaluation track from Castle Hill to Dudley Port station for prototype
- vehicles and systems
- Masters-level courses
- training courses in maintenance and operation of light rail systems
- apprenticeships
- meeting rooms and networking area
- conference and exhibition facilities.

The VLR Innovation Centre will also offer opportunities for varied research in order to develop sustainable, cost-effective solutions. It will include open research labs creating an environment where the Very Light Rail industry can develop.

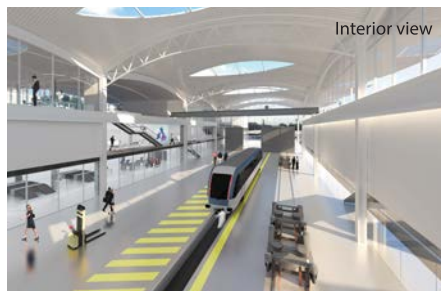
The research will focus on the following themes:

- lightweighting
- energy storage
- propulsion
- dynamics
- civil and infrastructure
- command control and communications
- passenger experience.

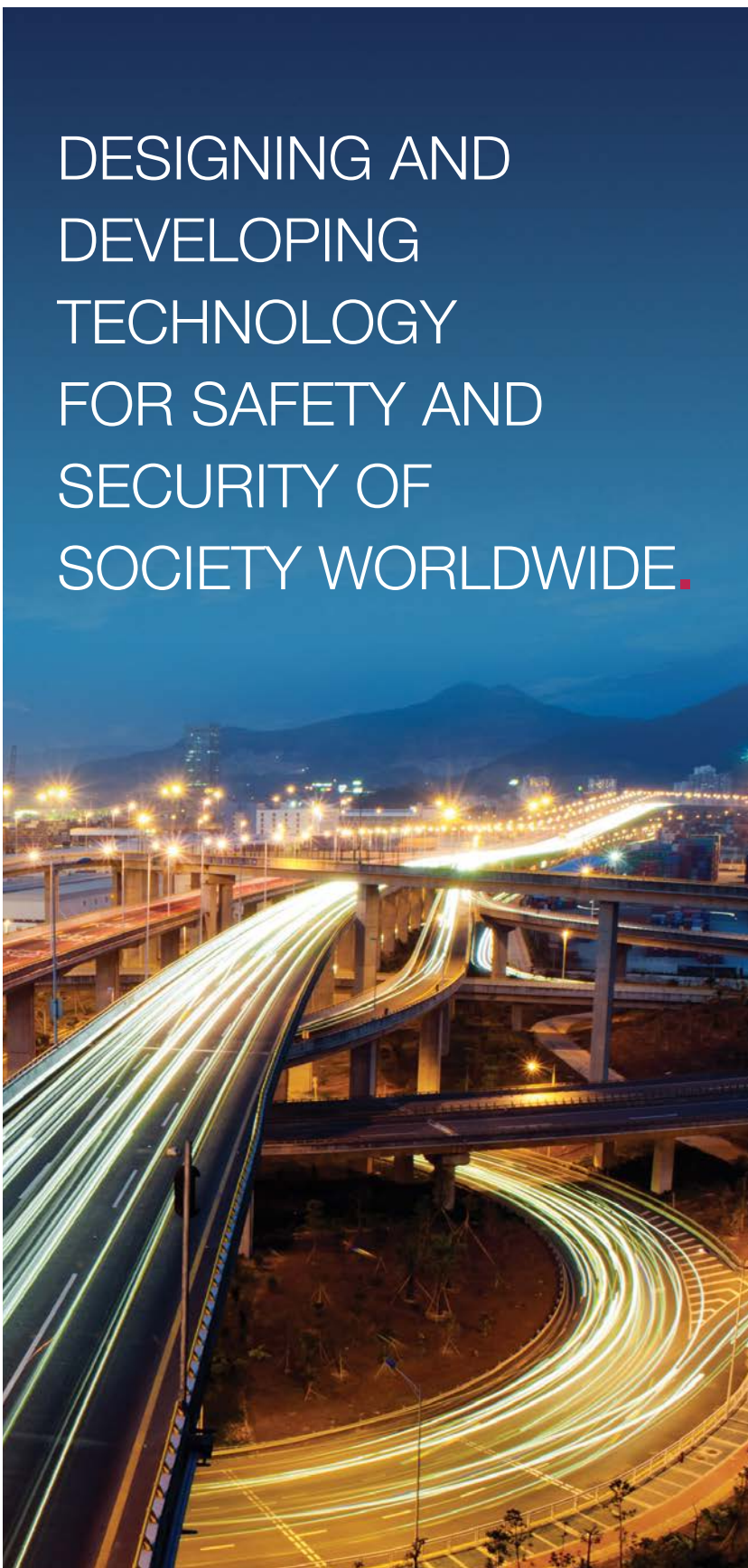
Industrial companies with or without current rail experience are welcome to join this opportunity and help shape the future of community rail in the UK.

For more information on how to get involved, contact the WMG centre HVM Catapult directly, or visit the website to keep up to date with the latest developments.

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Great Western Railway (GWR) provides high speed, commuter, regional and branch line train services, carrying more than 103 million passengers every year across the Great Western rail franchise area, which includes South Wales, the Westcountry, the Cotswolds, and large parts of Southern England.

First TransPennine Express provides vital connections between key cities in the North of England and Scotland, helping to create the Northern Powerhouse, as part of a national investment of more than £1bn in the North's railways.

First Hull Trains, our open access operation, is consistently one of the UK's most popular train companies, according to independent surveys. Since we started services in 2000 First Hull Trains has filled a vital gap in the market, making 90 journeys a week between London, Hull and intermediate stations, and transporting more than 800,000 people annually - a ten-fold increase since inception. We are proud to support Hull's status as the UK's City of Culture 2017.

Tramlink is a network we operate on behalf of Transport for London, which continues to see strong patronage. In 2013/14 more than 31m passengers used the network, an increase of 13m since the start of operations.

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A passion for innovation... and a passion for people

Frazer-Nash is a rapidly expanding systems and engineering technology consultancy with offices throughout the UK and Australia. We specialise in delivering innovative engineering solutions to clients across the defence, nuclear, power and transport sectors. We have experienced continued growth for a number of years, and are now looking to recruit skilled and experienced engineers to work on a variety of projects in the following positions:

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- Rail Systems Modelling Engineer
- Rail Systems Engineer
- Rolling Stock Engineer

Our staff are rewarded with a competitive salary, generous benefits package and the opportunity to work as part of a dynamic and successful team. We are always looking for strong talent in our key business sectors and across all of our locations in the UK and Australia.

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New CFO for Go-Ahead

The company has appointed **Patrick Butcher** into the role. Butcher, currently Network Rail's Group Finance Director since 2009, will join the group by May 2016. Go-Ahead's financial controller, Paul Edwards, is currently filling the role on an interim basis following Keith Down's departure last month.

David Brown, group chief executive, said: 'He will be an excellent addition to the Go-Ahead team, bringing strong financial management capabilities as well as significant transport sector and stakeholder experience.'

Mark Carne, Network Rail chief executive, said: 'I personally want to thank Patrick for his untiring support to me and for helping us to successfully navigate the transition into the public sector last year.'



National College for High Speed Rail appoints CEO

John Evans has been appointed to the role, joining from FirstGroup, where he was group HR director.

As CEO of HCHSR, Evans will be responsible for the development of the college in terms of shaping the curriculum, college design and liaison with stakeholders, including employers, to help deliver the new generation of engineers for the rail industry.

Chair of the college board, Terry Morgan, said: 'John's commitment and passion for people development will be vital as we move closer to opening the college in two years' time.'

The college will have two main sites in Birmingham and Doncaster. Both councils have recently received formal planning applications for consideration.



CILT announces new CEO

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in the UK has appointed **Kevin Richardson** FCILT as its new chief executive officer.

Richardson takes over from Steve Agg, who will step down after nearly ten years in the role on 1st January.

Richardson joins the Institute from XPO Logistics, formerly Norbert Dentressangle, where he was European development director. He has been a member of the CILT for 28 years.

Professor Richard Wilding, chairman of the CILT board said: 'He will lead the Institute with commitment, energy and a wealth of expertise into a new era within the logistics and transport sector.'



c2c appoints new engineering director

National Express Toc c2c has appointed **Dan Barrett** as its new engineering director. Barrett will be responsible for the on-going £12 million refurbishment programme of c2c's current fleet of 74 trains; projects such as the introduction of onboard Wi-Fi and the procurement of 17 new trains from 2019.

Barrett joins from Hitachi Rail Europe where he was the deputy head of engineering. c2c managing director Julian Drury said: 'As well as welcoming Dan I would like to say a huge thank you to our interim engineering director, Ian Papworth.'

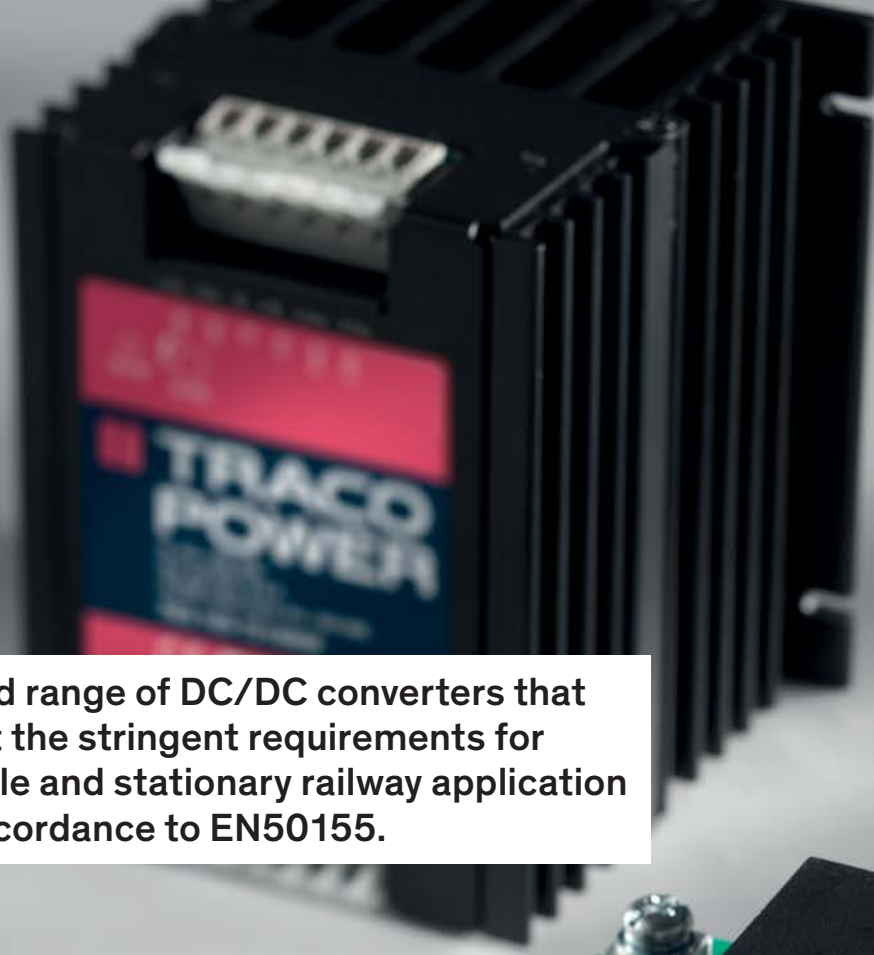
New regional Network Rail boss vows to work with communities

Network Rail's new route managing director for the London North Eastern and East Midlands route has been named as **Rob McIntosh**, who began his 19-year career on the railway as a graduate overhead line engineer in York.

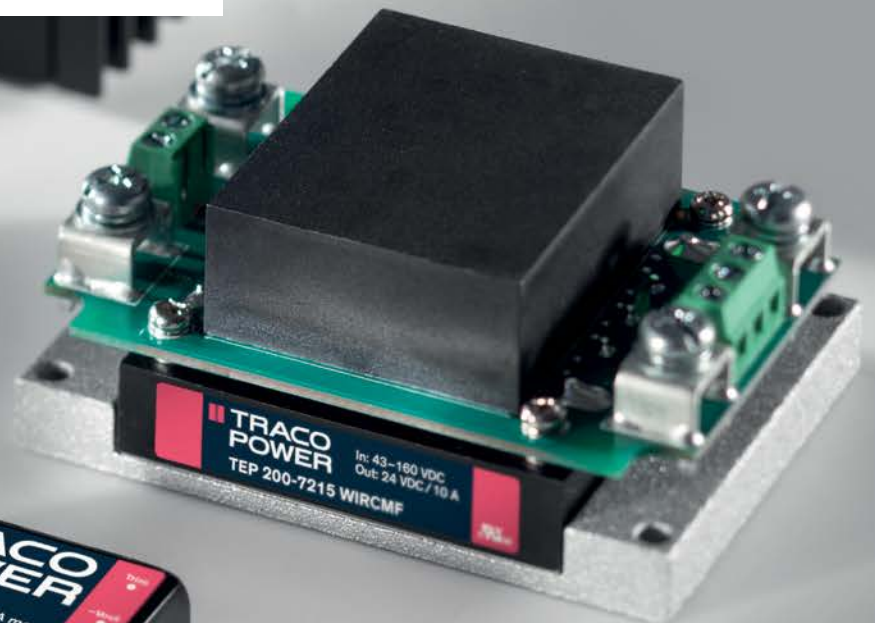


Ahead of starting the role in January, McIntosh spoke of the planned improvements on his route but also underlined the importance of the relationship between Network Rail and passengers, communities and lineside neighbours: 'Network Rail is a complex organisation and can be seen as difficult to engage with. I want us to change that perception.'

He joins the team in York having overseen the completion of the new Borders Railway in Scotland as regional director. Prior to that he worked in a number of roles at Network Rail including programme director on Crossrail, and before that as project director for the European train control system and traffic management.



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