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RDG takes action on engineering works

Better management and timing of major engineering work is needed, says report

AN independent report into how major engineering possessions are planned and timed has set out a number of suggested improvements which will now be taken forward by the Rail Delivery Group.

The review was commissioned by transport secretary Patrick McLoughlin after the overruns in late December 2014 at King's Cross and Paddington.

It was led by rail consultant Anton Valk, who has previously worked for Abellio and is now a member of the Rail Advisory Board at UK Trade & Investment, with support from Graham Smith and Christopher Garnett.

The main conclusion is that the scope for carrying out major work in and around London other than at Christmas and Easter is extremely limited. However, the industry could reduce the risk of overruns by moving some schemes which do not need significant closures to other dates. There is also room for improvement in the way major possessions are planned and managed.

"An increased focus on extending possessions on midweek nights will allow a cascade of work from weekends. In turn, weekends can take work that is currently undertaken at Christmas, Easter and on Bank Holidays, though this needs to be balanced with the growing demand for weekend passenger services."



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Planning and Timing of Engineering Works on the GB Rail Network (May 2015)

The report recognises that the continuing growth in passenger numbers is an issue that needs careful thought, with the possibility that the opportunities for Christmas possessions could be reduced still further if more trains

run on Boxing Day in future years.

Anton Valk said: "Major improvement works – such as those carried out last Christmas – are crucial to the continued improvement of Britain's railway. This independent review will be key to driving change and I look forward to seeing the rail industry working together, providing the necessary leadership to deliver on these vital recommendations".

Rail Delivery Group director general Michael Roberts said the RDG will be taking action. He explained: "There will never be a good time to close parts of the railway, but with £38 billion being spent on our network in the five years to 2019, the industry aims to ensure passenger disruption is kept to a minimum. We are now focused on developing a delivery plan to follow up the report's recommendations."



Some work could be retimed in future, although the London area will always present a particular challenge

"There is a case for reviewing the type and volume of work done at Christmas. It appears that work is added to Christmas possessions because the route is already closed for a major possession. Some of this work should be moved to other times to concentrate on those possessions that must be done at Christmas and to reduce unnecessary pressure on resources. This may also allow the development of services on Boxing Day, which all parties recognised is something for which demand is increasing."

Planning and Timing of Engineering Works on the GB Rail Network (May 2015)



"The railway plays an increasingly important role in Britain, underpinning jobs and driving economic growth." – Michael Roberts

Growth on GB Rail continues

THE Office of Rail and Road has published data showing a continued increase in the number of passenger journeys being taken on our railway.

The figures show that:

■ 1.65 billion passenger journeys were taken last year, an increase of 4.2 per cent on the previous year and up 69.5 per cent since 2002-03.

■ Passenger revenue was £8.9 billion, an increase of 7.3 per cent

The data supports the RDG's message that Britain's railway is carrying more passengers, which is increasing revenue and boosting the amount of money being returned by train operators to government for reinvesting in a better railway. RDG figures published last year showed this amount increased fivefold, from £390 million in 1997-98 to £1.96 billion in 2012-13.

Britain's railway has also been growing faster than its European counterparts. According to the ORR, since 2008 the number of passenger journeys on the GB rail network has increased by 23.0 per cent - more than in any other EU country that reports its passenger figures.

The ORR's figures also show how the rail network is becoming increasingly busy, with timetabled train kilometres up 18.2 per cent since 2003-04 to 529.9 million. Passenger kilometres grew 4.5 per cent last year, and now stand at 59.7 billion.

Responding to the figures, Michael Roberts, director general of the Rail Delivery Group, said: "The railway plays an increasingly important role in Britain, underpinning jobs and driving economic growth. After two decades of growth in people and goods travelling by train, our nation leads the way on rail in Europe.

"There is still much to do, particularly to ensure that more trains arrive punctually and we keep passengers better informed when disruption occurs, but good value fares and a focus on improving services are attracting more people to travel by train."

Working with Samaritans to keep passengers safe

A gentle intervention at the right moment can save a life

FOR the last five years, the rail industry has been working with Samaritans as part of the life-saving suicide prevention programme.

The cornerstone of this work has been the provision of two training courses; the Managing Suicidal Contacts course that provides rail personnel with the confidence and skills to identify, approach and support someone in need, and the Trauma Support Training course that provides rail staff, particularly managers of people, with an understanding of trauma and the skills to identify and support

those affected by it.

Very soon the numbers of rail industry personnel who have been trained on these two courses will surpass 10,000. This is a great achievement for all involved in the suicide prevention programme, and thanks should go to those working within train and freight operating companies, Network Rail, British Transport Police and the wider industry, who have all worked hard to promote these award-winning courses.

In terms of the impact of the courses on the frontline of our rail network, to

date there have been over 140 reported interventions made by attendees of the Managing Suicidal Contacts course.

One such intervention by Sharon Willett from East Coast in 2012 began a journey of suicide prevention activity that culminated this year in Sharon being awarded an MBE by Prince Charles. She said: "I encourage people to do the course and learn emotional first aid. Three little words; 'are you okay?' can make all the difference to someone's future".

While preventing rail suicide is the priority for the suicide prevention programme, supporting those affected by them is essential, and the Trauma Support Training course plays an important part in this.

"Many railway people can feel traumatised by suicide on the tracks. Just understanding trauma, having the right communications techniques and being confident will help. And it's those skills the course offers," says Steve Tollerton, a Samaritans trainer.

Reaching the 10,000 milestone will be a huge achievement – however there is a lot more work still to be done.

For more information on Samaritans' two courses, and to enquire about available dates, please email: railcompa-nies@samaritans.org.



Fencing on some stations now shields the fast line platforms, helping to discourage someone in distress from accessing them

New political rail map reveals key facts for MPs

THE General Election in May saw 182 new Members of Parliament enter the House of Commons. A new map available on the RDG website will tell them, as well as returning MPs, all they need to know about the railway in their constituency.

It will also be an invaluable tool for passenger and freight operators, Network Rail and other rail companies to use when engaging with and responding to their local MPs.

The new map, which covers Great Britain, includes the number of stations, the length of railway track and the major freight terminals in each constituency. Other useful data includes the number of people using the constituency's main stations as well as historic and forecast passenger growth.

The map explains where the Network Rail route boundaries are in relation to each constituency, and there are also relevant contact details.

To see the map, visit www.raildeliverygroup.com



182 new Members of Parliament entered the House of Commons after the General Election in May

FACTS AND FIGURES

The data reveals that:

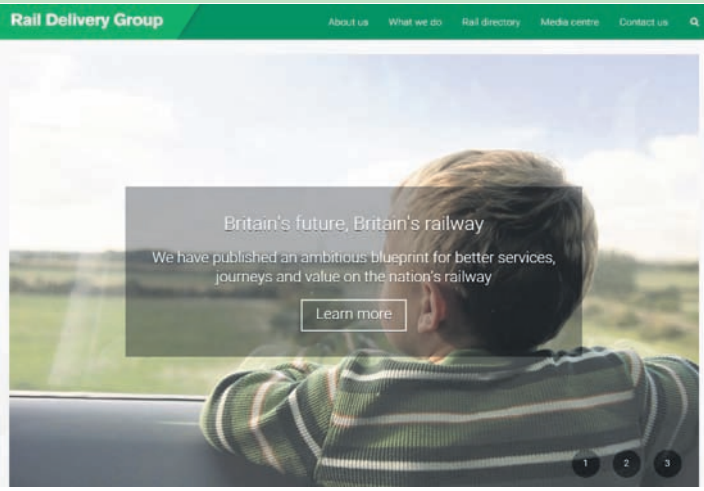
- the constituency with the most railway track is Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, with 247km
- the constituency with the largest number of stations is Dwyfor Meirionnydd, with 63 National Rail and heritage stations



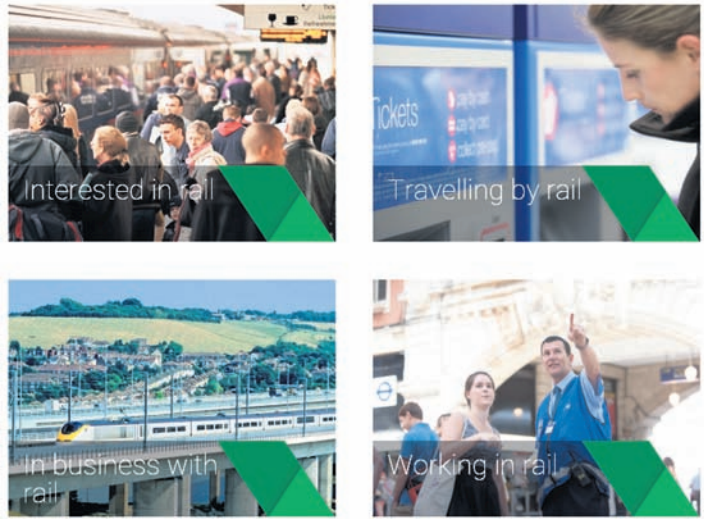
Publicity at stations presents a reminder that Samaritans is always there

Who are Samaritans?

Samaritans support anyone in need, 24-7, 365 days a year. The service is delivered through 201 branches and by over 20,000 volunteers across the UK and Ireland. Throughout July Samaritans branches will be engaging their local communities as part of the 'Talk to us' annual awareness raising event that will see volunteers on high streets, in shopping centres and railway stations, all in the name of promoting Samaritans' services and emotional wellbeing.



The new RDG website offers useful links



New and improved RDG website

THE RDG has launched a new and improved website (www.raildeliverygroup.com). The aim is to provide a better service for member companies, rail organisations and other people interested in the railway.

The new site plays an important role in demonstrating how the RDG is helping the industry to work more closely together and the value this brings to industry stakeholders. It explains each area of RDG's work and contains useful links for people based on whether they work in rail, do business with the railway, are travelling by rail or are just interested in the industry.

- The site is easier to use and more visually engaging. New features include:
- Cross-industry events calendar
 - Directory of rail-related links
 - Mobile compatibility
 - Searchable press releases and publications
 - AA accessibility standards

The RDG website will continue to improve to reflect current and future requirements. The next phase of development will include integration with social media (@raildeliverygrp) and performance data streams, plus a new interactive rail map.

Wheelchair? There's no need to book ahead

This London scheme is set to make thousands of rail journeys easier for passengers with disabilities

PEOPLE with disabilities are being invited to arrive at more than 30 stations in London without booking ahead, in a major advance which could be set to make many thousands of rail journeys easier in future.

Although the rail industry has been working hard for many years to welcome passengers in wheelchairs or with other disabilities, they had been advised to give at least 24 hours' notice of journeys to guarantee receiving extra help, such as the placing of wheelchair ramps to connect platforms and trains.

Now, assistance is available on a turn-up-and-go basis, thanks to a ground-breaking scheme which is being tried at stations in the London area. These stations include some of the major terminals as well as key places in the suburbs ranging from Wimbledon and Cheam in the south to Woolwich Arsenal and Upminster in the east.

The launch of the six-month trial follows detailed research which was carried out with the aid of passengers with disabilities, and covers journeys between 36 stations run by Abellio Greater Anglia, c2c, Network Rail, Southern, Southeastern or South West Trains.

All stations in the scheme have level access to platforms and staff available to help.

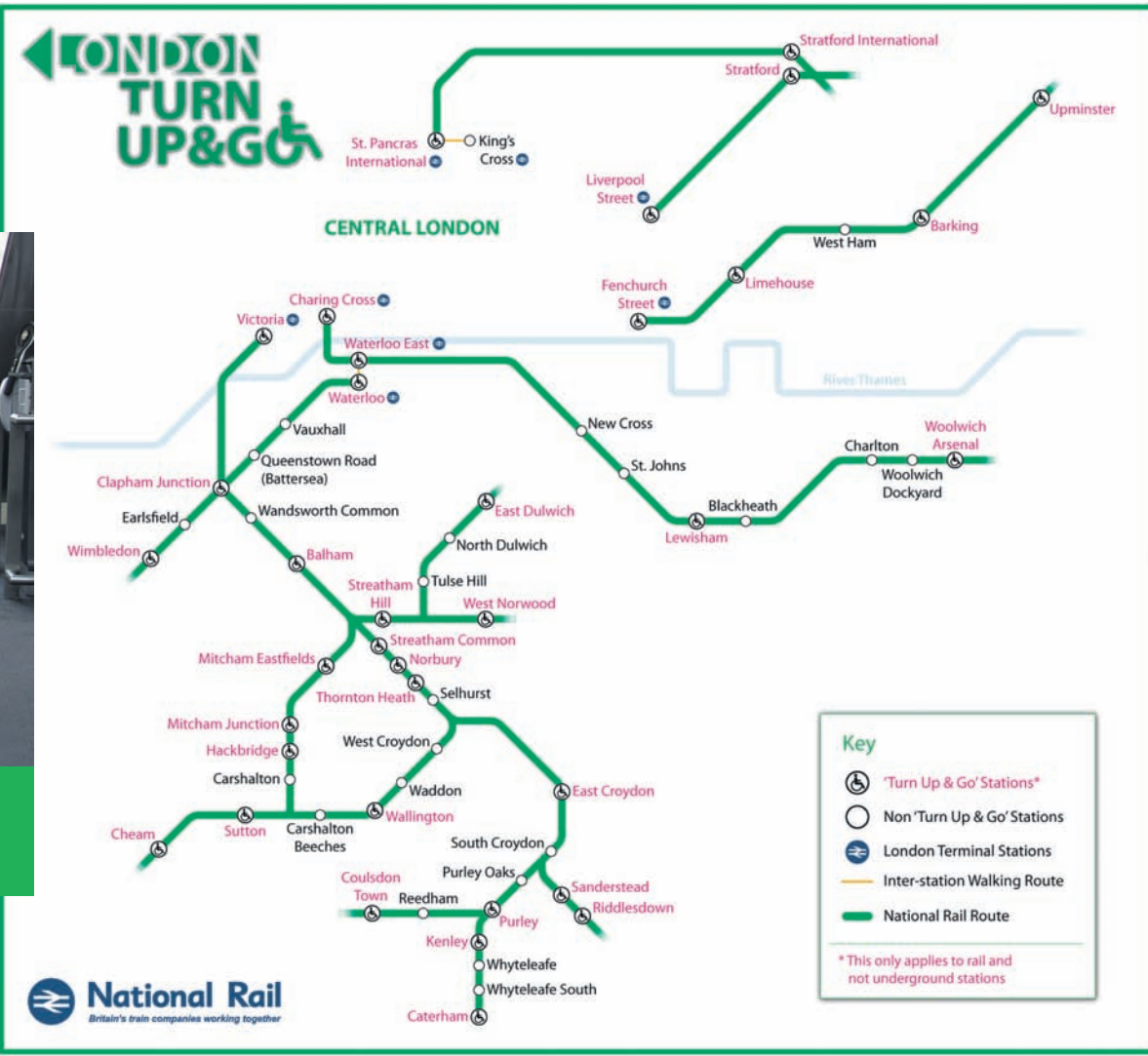
Around 70 million journeys on National Rail services are being made

annually by passengers with disabilities, but although less than one per cent of those involve pre-booked assistance, the number of Disabled Persons Railcards issued and journeys made using them both rose by 12 per cent in 2014.

David Sindall, head of disability and



Above: The rail industry works hard to welcome passengers in wheelchairs or with other disabilities
Right: The new Turn Up and Go area in central, south and east London



"Rail services are now far more accessible than ever, and we are committed to continuing to make travel by train an attractive prospect for disabled people."

Isabel Dedring, who is deputy

mayor for transport in London, added: "The Mayor has made improved transport accessibility one of his top priorities, which is why he set out to deliver Turn Up & Go services on London Overground. We know that it has

been really well received since its launch last year. I'm delighted that more people will soon be able to travel by train more easily and without the need to book ahead."

m-Ticket pilot is launched in North

TRAIN travellers in the north of England can now download their tickets to mobiles for journeys to and from 86 stations, using the trains of more than one operator for the first time.

Tickets on smartphones and other mobile devices, known as m-Tickets, have been available for a while, but in the past they have been restricted to a single train company.

The new scheme means that passengers can now use two or more operators to make their journeys within two pilot areas. These include



How an m-Ticket appears on the screen of a mobile device. The rectangular barcode contains digital data which defines the journey, fare, date and other details

Newcastle and York in the east and cover lines between Preston and Carlisle in the west.

To take part, passengers just need to download an app to their mobile device from any of the participating train companies or retailers, and when buying tickets online or via the app choose to receive an 'm-Ticket'. Third-party retailer Trainline is also taking part.

Mostafa Gulam of National Rail, representing the rail companies and retailers, said: "We're excited about the new flexible m-Ticket, which will give people an opportunity to see for themselves the benefits of being able to buy and download tickets straight to their mobile device for use on a number of operators' services.

"Rail journeys have doubled over the last 20 years and the industry is determined to see that continue. By working together and looking for new ideas like the flexible m-Ticket, we want to make buying train tickets simpler, easier and quicker."



The range of tickets that can be bought and downloaded now includes popular flexible fares such as Standard and First Class Anytime, as well as Off-Peak and Super Off-Peak fares. Terms and conditions remain the same, and so do the prices.

The m-Ticket is just one of the early benefits for passengers of the rail industry's long-term plan to make buying tickets more convenient.

Above, left: The western pilot area includes part of the West Coast Main Line as well as several connecting routes

Above, right: The eastern pilot area stretches from Tyne & Wear to North Yorkshire

Lest we forget: new exhibition charts vital role of railways in war

New display produced by the RDG recalls wartime contribution made by railway staff



The new exhibition was launched at Edinburgh Waverley, where it remained until 8 June. It will shortly be moving to a major station in London

A NEW exhibition presented by the Rail Delivery Group has started to tour the country as commemorations of the First World War a hundred years ago continue.

The exhibition focuses on the vital role of the rail industry between 1914 and 1918, and in particular on the employment of women in many jobs which until then had been given only to men.

As the war intensified, the demands of the armed forces meant that women were needed to replace the thousands of men who had gone to fight.

Over 100,000 railwaymen joined the forces, and of those 20,000 gave their lives.

Many women kept essential train services running so that troops, horses, military equipment and medical supplies could be transported for embarkation to the Continent.

Other special trains carried returning injured soldiers and sailors from the ports to hospitals in this country.

The free display charts how the railway helped sustain the war effort and is a complete redesign of the original exhibition which toured stations last year as part of the start of the centenary celebrations.

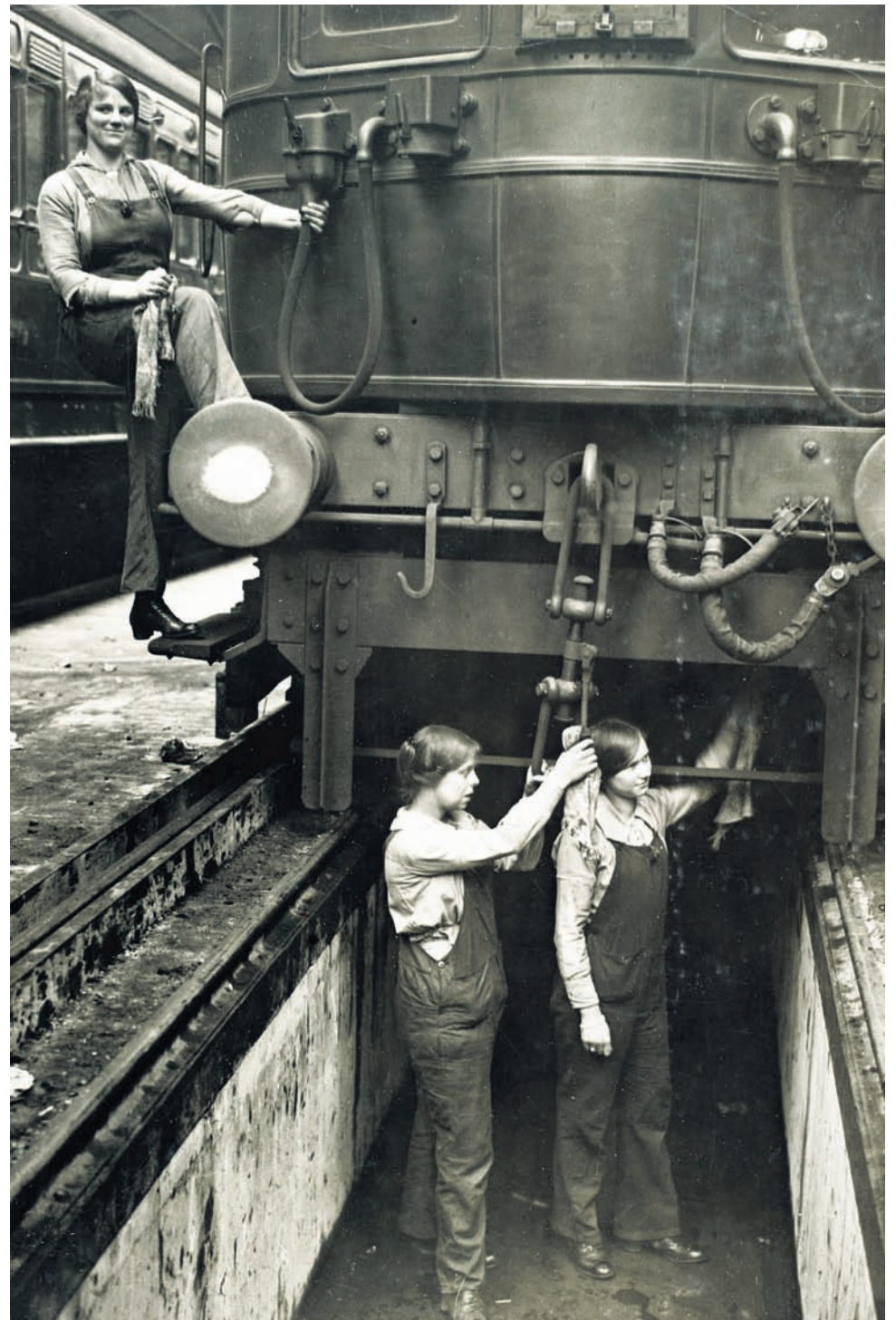
Visitors have also been researching their ancestors who died in the war, through Poppy Scotland's 'Everyman Remembered' interactive screen.

Another new feature recalls the disastrous collisions and fire at Quintinshill in 1915 in which more than 200 people were killed. Lessons learnt from the tragedy had a long-term effect on railway safety including the abolition of gas lighting on trains.

RDG director general Michael Roberts said: "As the nation commemorates the centenary of World War I, it's important we remember the

railway's role sustaining the war effort, without which the nation's troops, military and medical supplies would not have been operational.

"Our rich rail heritage made Edinburgh Waverley an ideal location to launch this exhibition, with the recent station redevelopment providing a timely link to the golden age of the railway and the current period of major investment."



Above: Railway cleaners, 1918: women played a crucial role in keeping the railway working during World War 1 (National Railway Museum)



Left: An ambulance train and nurses at Liverpool, 1916 (National Railway Museum)

ANY QUESTIONS?

If Railnews readers have any question to ask of the Rail Delivery Group – or wish to make any comments about what they have read in this supplement – let us know by emailing media@raildeliverygroup.com