

# YHTAR Focus

## Newsletter of Yorkshire and the Humber Transport Activists' Roundtable

Issue 16, November 2004

### In this issue:

- The "Northern Way" - back to the 90s?
- Way to Go in the Southern Pennines
- In Town Without My Car Day in South Yorkshire
- We Can Make Our Roads as Safe as We Want
- RSS: is the Leeds City Region sustainable?
- YHTAR Transport Seminars
- Road Policing in West Yorkshire
- A Return to Nidderdale
- The Northern Way and its Dodgy Case for Airport Expansion
- Transport Stateside

### The "Northern Way" - back to the 90s?

*Anthony Rae, YHTAR Chair, comments on the backward thinking in the northern 'Sustainable Communities' plan.*

'Can transport investment boost the North of England's economy?' asks the journal *Local Transport Today* in their analysis of the Northern Way strategy report. It's a very important question, and on page 9 of this edition of *YHTAR Focus* we comment on the dodgy economics used in the report's support for airport expansion.

But more generally it's astonishing how some very important, painfully learnt, lessons - that development should be *sustainable* development and not just economic; that there is no certain correlation between transport infrastructure and economic regeneration, and that a 'two-way road' can as easily carry jobs away as bring them in - can be so quickly forgotten.

Many of direct economic proposals of the Northern Way report are at least benign - responding to the skills needs of employers and encouraging a knowledge-based and more entrepreneurial economy, for example. It's when the report starts to tackle the relationship between transport and regeneration that it starts to go wrong. Like Rip Van Winkle the authors seem to have slept through the last decade, and

the commitment from year 2000 of the regional strategies to promoting genuine sustainability, and the careful analysis of the SACTRA report from 1998, has passed them by.

Another thing they haven't heard of is ... climate change! How else do you explain their absolute determination to promote aviation expansion, maybe even beyond the extremes of the recent Air Transport White Paper? The report sets out in great detail how a 'Northern Airports Priorities Plan' will promote Newcastle as an 'international gateway' airport alongside Manchester; deploy route development funds even for domestic flights; and divert scarce public expenditure into road and rail connections (for example, a rail link to Leeds Bradford, which would cost £100 million and could never be commercially viable).

How unfortunate therefore that they could only manage to include just one sentence on the need to upgrade the East Coast Main Line - the railway spine that connects the City of London to the centres of Leeds and Newcastle - and where the TAR has recently proposed to our Regional Assembly and RDA that they must be much more proactive in promoting a transregional lobby; we even suggested using the 'Northern Way' process!

This issue of *YHTAR Focus* has kindly been sponsored by First Group.



(Continued on page 9)

## CPRE's Way to Go Campaign for the Southern Pennines

Anne Robinson reports.

Traffic crossing the Peak District can be a problem, as you will know if you have queued in Mottram where the A628 and A57 meet and a mix of through lorries and local traffic converge. However, the proposed solution of a bypass around Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle and an upgrade of the A628 Woodhead Pass road would lead to severe damage to the villages and their surrounding countryside with doubling of traffic flows over the next twenty years.

To date, without any supporting evidence, new road building has been driven by a perception that the economic regeneration of Tameside and South Yorkshire depends on a speedy connection using the A628. The value of the Peak Park's qualities to the economy is being overlooked. It is therefore essential to rigorously examine alternative measures that would result in sustainable travel throughout the area.

The bypass is one of the main components of the South Pennines Integrated Transport Strategy (SPITS), which was launched 6 years ago to reduce the impact of through traffic on the high quality environment of the South Pennines. The idea was that all the traffic impacts would be channelled onto one corridor by redistributing all cross-Peak District traffic onto the A628 corridor and introducing traffic calming all other through routes.

SPITS may have been ahead of its time in bringing together a partnership that worked strategically across traditional administrative boundaries but its proposals rely on the outdated 'predict and provide' approach. The partnership has no formal powers or funding stream, and has to rely on its constituent local authorities for implementation of measures. Consequently, during its 6-year existence few of its objectives have been achieved and various parts of the package have been discarded or discredited.

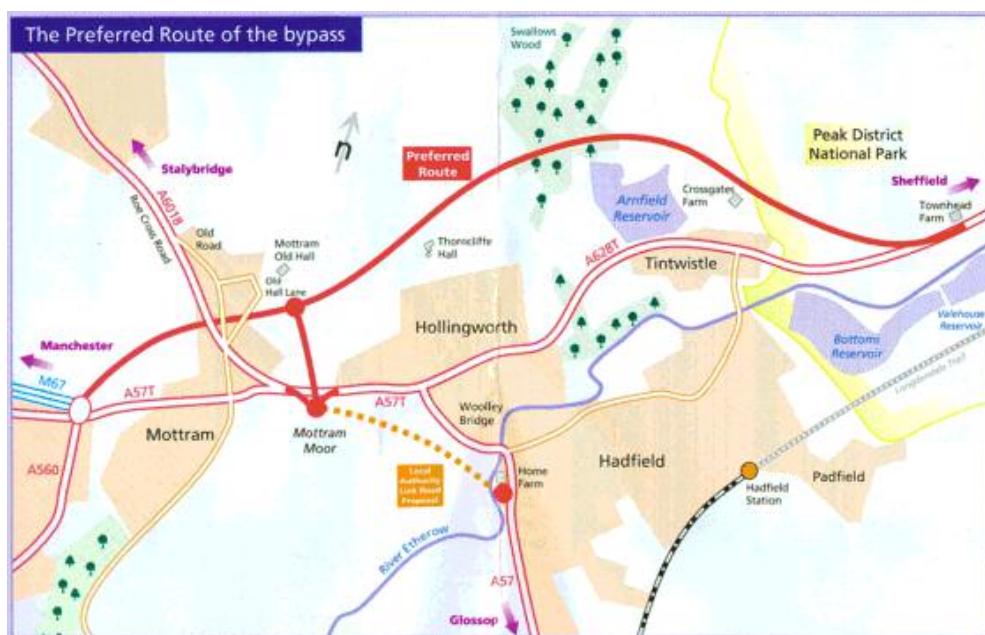
If this a timely moment to review SPITS, it is also an opportune one. The recent Transport White Paper offers devolved budgeting to regional assemblies and funding of

innovative packages to solve transport problems. The Government intends to lead on the road pricing debate and wants candidates for experimental local schemes. The three northern Regional Development Agencies have substantial investment plans for transport in their Northern Way and Local Transport Plans are under review.

In order to contribute to the debate on SPITS, CPRE PDSY\* has costed measures to address the Peak District's transport problems using the excellent Way to Go campaign as a template. Using weight and height restrictions, lorries on the A628 would divert onto the motorways around the Peak Park (the M1, M62, M60 and M67). Traffic calming through the villages would prevent the road becoming a rat run for the remaining through traffic of cars and vans. To discourage congestion caused by local traffic, people would be strongly encouraged to travel in other ways. A 'Streets for People' programme of pavement, footpath and cycle-way improvements would encourage walking and cycling for short journeys. Excellent bus and train services and discount travel would shift medium-length journeys from cars to public transport over the whole of the Peak District.

CPRE's package would cost the same as the road-building costs of £99 million - a much better deal for the National Park, its users and residents of the congested villages than a major road building programme.

\* Anyone who would like more details of CPRE Peak District & South Yorkshire's proposals please contact Anne Robinson by email at: [mail@cprepeakandsyorks.org.uk](mailto:mail@cprepeakandsyorks.org.uk)



## In Town Without My Car Day in South Yorkshire

*First, Sheffield City Council and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council teamed up to promote 'In Town Without My Car Day' on Wednesday 22 September 2004.*

Commuters who usually drive to work were encouraged to leave their cars at home and travel with First on 22 September in two initiatives designed to promote public transport across South Yorkshire.

In Sheffield, Car User Survival Kits (CUSK's), including bus route and timetable information were distributed to major employers within the city to raise awareness of the role of public transport as an alternative to taking the car to work.

Cllr Jan Wilson, Leader of Sheffield City Council said: "Using public transport instead of your car is much better for you, and for the city. It's good for our environment, for our health and cuts congestion. Initiatives such as the survival kits are a fun way of getting that message across."

David Young, Head of Transport Integration at the Transport Executive, commented that he hoped by handing out public transport information to car using commuters, it would encourage more people to give public transport a try.

In Doncaster, a new 'Park and Ride' scheme launched at the start of September offered car using commuters free parking and a free bus ride into the town centre to promote 'In Town Without My Car Day'. A fleet of new low floor Volvo B7 buses were supplied for the event to demonstrate the facilities available in a bid to encourage more people to get on board. If the new 250 space Park and Ride facility proves a success similar vehicles could be dedicated to the new route.

Mayor of Doncaster, Martin Winter said: "A free Park and Ride in conjunction with First on September 22<sup>nd</sup> offers everybody the chance to leave their cars at home and try travelling by bus into and around Doncaster. We all have an impact on the environment and by thinking differently and trying out other ways of doing things, we can make a difference."



Gary Nolan, Managing Director at First in South Yorkshire, commented: "Commuters are given the opportunity to relax and enjoy the journey to and from work, rather than endure the hassle and stress of driving into town." He added, "First has invested over £13 million in the past 2 years in 115 new state-of-the-art buses in order to continue to improve the quality of journey for our customers."

The 'In Town Without My Car Day' campaign origins date back to a street party event during Green Transport Week in Bath in June 1995. In 1998 the event expanded across France, and the following year to Italy and Switzerland; 1999 and 2000 saw massive expansion across most countries in the European Union. In 2001 and 2002 the day spread across most of Eastern Europe and well beyond. Last years event was celebrated by 112 million citizens in 1,500 towns and cities from 40 countries around the world including the participation of 60 UK towns and cities.

'In Town Without My Car Day' now forms part of European Mobility Week. A number of events were organised across the Y+H region during the week, including a bikers breakfast for anyone in Leeds cycling to work and the launch of new walking to school schemes.

For further details see:  
[www.mobilityweek-europe.org](http://www.mobilityweek-europe.org)

## **We can make our roads as safe as we want**

*An opinion article by Nick Ross on road safety. Nick Ross is a broadcaster best known for Crimewatch UK. He has presented a wide sweep of political and factual programmes and debates, mostly for BBC radio and TV, and in the 1980s produced and directed a campaigning TV film on road accidents called *The Biggest Epidemic of Our Times*. He is a former vice chairman of the National Road Safety Committee of RoSPA and is a Council Member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists.*

Driving is all about freedom and fun, while road safety is for spoilsports and interfering busybodies. We all know that. You can picture the people it attracts: vicars' wives, prim suburban nerds, the tiresome anti-car brigade and damp-palmed bureaucrats, the sort who wanted horseless carriages to be preceded at 100 paces by a man with a red flag and, now that favoured restraint has gone, call for speed cameras and traffic calming road humps. Safe is dreary.

So when, over lunch in a BBC canteen in the 1980s, I accepted a dare to construct a TV programme out of the dullest, most worthy subject my colleagues could think of, after only the briefest of huddles, they chose road safety.

My despair over the challenge was short-lived. I soon discovered what a battlefield it was out there, with an unrelenting production line churning out over 6,000 corpses every year; yet, as one academic put it, that there were solutions lying around just waiting to be picked up. The resulting programme was almost pornographic in its violence, opening with the entire population of Wallingford in Berkshire lying in the town streets to represent the annual cull, and followed by human dummies smashing into dashboards, life-like plastic babies hurtling through windscreens, wild-eyed volunteers experiencing the terror of a simulated crash, and all amid the showered, twisted and bloody debris of real accidents and real victims with screaming ambulances, silent mortuaries and the dismal knock on a door in the night as the police arrived to tell a wife and mum that she was now a widow.

The anger of the film was restrained by the expertise: the highways engineers who explained how roads could be realigned, the academics who showed how vehicles could be modified to avert a collision or absorb the energy of a crash or be less murderous when meeting a pedestrian, the doctors who illustrated how savage injuries were caused by



thoughtlessly bad vehicle design, the epidemiologists and statisticians who demonstrated how seat belts and helmets could save so many lives, and the injured and bereaved who pleaded for more to be done. Never mind BBC neutrality, the programme took on a meaning of its own, in effect proposing that there is no right to die or to kill accidentally, and that in any case most of the dead and injured were not the result of accidents so much as the consequence of commercial indifference and public policy.

As TV goes, this went well. I won my wager with my colleagues. The programme was a hit on BBC2, was repeated, then transferred to BBC1, then updated and shown yet again, turned into a schools programme and so far as I know the video is still in circulation.

But it changed nothing. Until then, like most people, I had assumed that the media were hugely influential, with the power to transform attitudes and public policy. Yet six months on, the film might never have been transmitted, as though we had all rubber-necked an accident and driven more cautiously for a few miles beyond, but soon relaxed and gone back to the accelerator.

Yet the power of television works in strange and wondrous ways. I was invited to address the Institute of Highway Engineers (as it was then called) where I proposed they set a target to kill 4,000 (rather than 6,300) by the year 2000. To my surprise they instantly agreed. Emboldened by this, I wrote to the Transport Minister, invited him to lunch, and urged that the government adopt the same objective. Most politicians in office would

*(Continued on page 5)*

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have recognised that there are no votes in road safety, but Peter Bottomley, like Barbara Castle before him, became enthused with the idea of doing good just for the sake of it. I was invited to the Ministry to face an army of advisers and civil service inquisitors and the next thing I heard, to my astonishment, was that the government had agreed.

Well, not quite. No one would accept my ambition to "kill 2,000" by the turn of the millennium (a deliberate reference to the causal rather than accidental nature of the carnage) but they did agree to save 2,300, which more or less amounted to the same thing.

It soon turned out that the academics and engineers had been right: there were indeed solutions just lying around, and when they were picked up, with very little noticeable restraint on motorists' freedoms, the death toll started to fall consistently and rapidly. We overshot the target substantially, managing to kill only 3,400 in the year that brought the 20th century to a close. After 50 years of crushing, stabbing, burning and bleeding to death well over 6,000 people every single year, we had changed our minds, changed our approach and slaughtered barely half that number.

I have learned two lessons: how powerful and suffocating fatalism can be ("with millions of people

in millions of vehicles you're bound to have that many accidents") and how liberating and magnificent human ambition can be.

Of course, those who don't know history are condemned to repeat it. A few drivers, egged on by one or two irresponsible journalists, are in denial about the laws of biology which govern human reaction times and of the principles of physics which dictate vehicle stopping distances. They delude themselves that speed is not a factor in accidents and that enforcement is too strict. They even convince themselves the police are motivated by money rather than safety and have campaigned to undermine traffic calming measures. Shamefully the Government has been equivocating. It has already panicked and, without reliable scientific evidence about the consequences, it caved into demands to paint traffic cameras yellow. The tide of complacency may yet sweep back in, and we may return to our bad old ways of killing on a grander scale.

I have no quarrel with that, provided killing is what society wants to do. But let no one claim the deaths are accidental. Transport is intrinsically risky. Let's decide how risky we want it to be and adjust things accordingly. We can decide our own destiny.

*This article was written in support of Transport 2000's campaign to reduce road crash casualties and make roads safer for all users. More information about Transport 2000 is available at [www.transport2000.org.uk](http://www.transport2000.org.uk) or on 020 7613 0743.*

## **RSS: the Leeds City Region - is it sustainable?**

*Anthony Rae reports on RSS developments.*

In words that are now becoming rather well known and quoted, the Sustainability Appraisal undertaken of the draft 'spatial vision' for our developing regional spatial strategy (RSS) concluded that:

"The visions for the Leeds City Region and South Yorkshire area are so economically focused that they are unlikely to be sustainable even if interpreted "sustainably". For instance, 'Promote the development of a transport system without barriers to daily movements to work' cannot be implemented without considerable environmental impacts."

The equal question is: could it ever be implemented at all? Is it physically or financially possible to build ever more infrastructure links to permit commuting to expanding employment in the centre of Leeds?

The TAR, in its consultation response (September 2004) argued that the approach to this subregion will need to be comprehensively revised until it can receive a positive sustainability appraisal.

More detailed proposals which promote development opportunities within three 'transport corridors', and for a Leeds Bradford Airport heavy rail link - 'critical if proper integration of the city region's airport is to be achieved, and the competitiveness of the city region is to be enhanced' it is claimed, without evidence, will also have to be challenged.

The TAR's conclusion?: "This appears to be the critical spatial issue for the opening phase of RSS". You can get a copy of the TAR response and other related documents from our new RSS webpage at: [www.yhtar.org.uk/rss](http://www.yhtar.org.uk/rss)

## **Transport Seminars**

YHTAR recently organised two transport seminars, each attended by over 40 people.

The first seminar, on Sustainable Transport, was held at Shipley Town Hall on July 6th, and covered “The Yorkshire Bus Project”, “Success with Sustainable Transport in Oxford”, “Bus Quality Partnerships” and “The Case for Active Travel”.

The second seminar, on Road Safety, was held at Keighley Town Hall on November 2nd. Chief Inspector Gary Parker spoke about “Roads Policing in West Yorkshire”. He was followed by Mr Mike Mullins of Blazefield Holdings talking about “Driver training from a company perspective”. We heard about “Driver Hire” from Mr Ian Ware and “On-Vehicle Intelligent Speed Limiters” from Dr Tri Tjahjono of Leeds University Institute for Transport Studies. Steve Thornton, Chair of the West Yorkshire Casualty Reduction Partnership, spoke about “Safety Cameras - Serving Local People”. Finally, Tony Walker, Community Engagement Inspector for West Yorkshire Police launched “Police & Community Speed Watch”.

Both seminars are fully reported on the YHTAR website [www.yhtar.org.uk](http://www.yhtar.org.uk).

We also had a very interesting and informative visit to Oxford on 10<sup>th</sup> September to see sustainable transport in action, with transport kindly provided by Blazefield Holdings.

YHTAR would like to thank Cllrs Paul Flowers & Lynne Joyce of BMDC for suggesting the seminars and giving valuable support. We would also like to thank Bradford Council Labour Group for funding the Shipley Seminar and Keighley Town Council for hosting the Keighley Seminar.

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## **Road Policing in West Yorkshire**

*Chief Inspector Gary Parker of the Operations Support (Roads Policing) Division provides an update on current practice, based on his talk at the Road Safety Seminar In Keighley .*

West Yorkshire Police, by working with our partners, aim to make our roads safer and reduce road user related crime. Through our policing activity we look to improve road user behaviour and reduce the number of fatal and injury collisions. We attend and investigate all serious road traffic collisions and in collaboration with other agencies we encourage the development of safer roads and safer vehicles.

We adopt a consistent approach to detecting and prosecuting offences of speeding. Speed is a contributory factor in just over one third of all collisions and is by far the biggest single contributor to casualties on our roads. Around 70% of all casualties are car occupants. Despite this too many people continue to take a cavalier attitude to speed.

Traffic speeds are also a factor in air pollution, emissions of green house gases and noise, all of which affect people’s health and quality of life.

Ultimately the goal for any Speed Management Strategy must be for drivers to take responsibility for their own actions and abide by speed limits. For limits to be respected they not only need to be appropriate for the road, but also to be understood. Inappropriate speed limits are often ignored and lead to lack of respect for the speed limits.

Consistency in setting speed limits is extremely important, and they should conform to national guidance.

Our speed management measures are effective but the challenge is how to encourage drivers to choose appropriate speeds over all of our roads. To achieve this we need the co-operation and understanding of drivers and their respect for speed limits.

Our vision is to work with our partners (West Yorkshire Casualty Reduction Group, district councils, the Highways Agency and the health authority) to change drivers’ attitudes and behaviour through education and publicity campaigns and, for those that refuse to heed the message, enforcement and penalties.

We actively target through an intelligence led approach those criminals using the road system. We have established and maintain appropriate standards and resource levels for road policing duties, which I will describe in greater detail later. These officers are equipped with appropriate skills to deal effectively with the incidents they face on a daily basis.

This force has over 5,000 police officers, of whom around 1,000 are deployed on specialist duties. That leaves over 4,000 officers to perform day-to-day policing duties. In addition to the police officers the force has a further 3,000 full time equivalent

*(Continued on page 7)*

(Continued from page 6)

police staff members. Clearly we police round-the-clock 365 days a year. So in order to achieve this less than a quarter of our officers can be on duty at any one time.

Out of this number there are 285 constables and sergeants dedicated to roads policing throughout 11 divisions across the county. Additionally, located centrally within my division there are a further 93 officers who focus on the motorways, accident investigation and specialist support.



To give you an idea of what demands are placed on this force here are a few facts.

Just over 2 million people live in West Yorkshire. That means that there is on average one officer on duty for every 2,000 people.

In a typical day West Yorkshire Police respond to over 1,106, '999' calls with many more of a routine nature and attend 1,818 incidents. We deal with 892 new crimes, making 276 arrests, attend at 276 road traffic accidents and patrol a distance of 24,585 miles of the county's roads (Who says you can never find a police officer when you need one?).

When we look at the number of calls that this force handles the numbers are staggering—over 2.1 million telephone calls every year. That is one every 15 seconds. We receive more than 9,300 '999' calls per week, that is at a rate of one per minute. Each year the force handles three quarters of a million incidents, of which 500,000 are attended by a police officer. Around 1 in 4 are prioritised as requiring an immediate response, almost 90% of them are attended within 15 minutes.

In order to provide you with some idea of scale, on average each police officer must cover an area of two square kilometres, containing 880 houses, 1,400 cars, 2,000 people and 11 kilometres of roads.

The county has almost 7,000 miles of roads and

1.4 million vehicles licensed to West Yorkshire residents. Around 450 police vehicles are available to patrol these roads and respond to incidents. That equates to one police vehicle to every 3,000 cars on the road. These police vehicles cover some 15 million miles per year.

To underline the scale of the problem with regard to road policing this can be illustrated by comparing the following statistics. In 2002 there were 886 murders in this country while 3,431 people were killed on the roads.

Working with all our partners our approach to improving road safety can be summed up as education, enforcement and engineering: educating drivers, enforcing the law and ensuring roads are engineered to reduce the risk of accidents.

The police can educate drivers, many forget the effect that poor weather can have on driving conditions – how a wet road, for example can double braking distance. On average, accident rates double in wet weather.

To move onto the issue of safety cameras, on average 7,000 tickets are issued each month, of which approximately 70% are paid on time. A specific example of how effective these devices can be is illustrated by Thornton Road in Bradford, it had 24 casualties in 2000. This rose to 43 in the following year. Safety cameras were installed in 2002 and the number of casualties dropped to 11.

According to the findings of a government report published in June 2004, casualties have fallen by 72% on roads in West Yorkshire where safety cameras have been introduced. Since 2001 the number of road deaths in the county has fallen from 144 to 102.

Finally, I would like to mention automatic number plate recognition (ANPR). This is the latest crime fighting tool available to the police and is the process by which moving cars have their number plate read via video camera and matched against various computer databases. ANPR is estimated to be around ten times more effective than normal traffic policing methods, primarily because its system can identify suspect vehicles that may not normally attract police attention. During the past year over 13,000 cars have been stopped in West Yorkshire as a consequence of ANPR activity and this has resulted in almost 800 arrests being made.

## A Return to Nidderdale

*Rail Campaigns Co-ordinator Peter Davies reports on a visit to Nidderdale.*

Following the announcement last March of a new concept in bus travel between Leeds and Ripon, operated by Harrogate and District Travel, I was requested to make a journey on this bus and compare it with rail travel.

My journey commenced at Brighouse railway station, and I used the once daily direct service from Brighouse to Leeds via Dewsbury. The provision of rolling stock on this route is erratic, and consists of Pacer Units, Class 150 and 156 Sprinters, and occasionally a Class 158 puts in an appearance. The provision for this journey to Leeds was a Class 150 Sprinter, which was not clean on the exterior, and offered cramped seating with very little leg room. However, the train was punctual and the conductor was welcoming and helpful.

A cup of coffee at Leeds station fortified me for the unknown journey ahead. A walk of around a mile to the bus station in Leeds is mostly a traffic free experience, however, there is a need for a bus station serving all routes to be nearer the railway station. The completion of the local bus station adjacent to the railway station has gone somewhat towards this.

I arrived at Leeds bus station and made my way to the Metro Travel Centre, and asked if there was a special ticket to Pateley Bridge from Leeds, but the staff were unaware of such a ticket. I made my way to the bus stand for the 36 bus to Ripon which duly arrived. An enquiry to the driver, who was very obliging, provided me with an 'Explorer' ticket at a cost of six pounds.

Stepping aboard the vehicle was entering a different world. I sat on the lower deck, and noted immediately the large amount of leg room which was available. The seats on the lower deck are high-backed, high quality fabric seats, and tinted windows absorb glare. The interior lighting is excellent and both the upper and lower deck of the vehicle has closed circuit television, and recording equipment for added security.

Both the upper and lower deck screens display next stop information. Space is available for a 'buggy' for a child, and the vehicle has low entrances which kneel to kerb height for easy access. There is also a designated area for a wheelchair.

This was quite a different experience from rail travel, and I enjoyed the outward journey to Harrogate. I changed buses at Harrogate and

conveniently made a connection for Pateley Bridge. From Pateley Bridge I walked to Beverley and joined the Nidderdale Way for a rather misty Autumn walk by Yorke's Folly and Guisecliffe to Summerbridge. The weather cleared just beyond Guisecliffe, and the domes of Menwith Hill radar station appeared on the skyline. Towards the east the Hambleton Hills rose above the Vale of York, and I was almost certain I could identify the tower of York Minster. Descending to Dacre, crossing the route of the former Nidd Valley light railway, I made my way to Summerbridge for the return journey.



*Upper Deck View of Service 36 Bus*

The bus was punctual, and a very good connection was made to the 36 for the return journey to Leeds in Harrogate. This time I travelled on the upper deck, and enjoyed the luxury of a leather backed seat with an armrest. This was very comfortable, and I once again thoroughly enjoyed the journey.

It is a very great pity that more investment cannot be made into our railways, although there is the possibility that the twenty year old Pacer Units may be replaced by new trains from China when the new Northern franchise begins operating in December 2004. This will be subject to a value for money exercise by the Strategic Rail Authority, and as this is the north of England it is doubtful whether or not the new trains will be provided. I express the hope that the new trains will be ordered, and improved travel facilities provided for passengers.

The investment of £2.25 million pounds by Harrogate and District Travel is to be applauded, and even though I am a dedicated rail user, I certainly recommend that you travel on the 36 bus between Leeds and Ripon via Harrogate if you have the opportunity.

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Many of the Northern Way's other transport proposals, including the development of northern seaports and improved public transport between and within the regions is sensible, but most of this is also just the 'reheating' of long-established schemes, increasingly starved of central

government funding and unlikely to proceed.

What a huge lost opportunity this is - in many respects a backward looking strategy founded on discredited thinking and upside-down priorities, rather than the sustainable transport future we really need.

## The Northern Way and its Dodgy Case for Airport Expansion

Someone once said "The bigger the lie, the more it will be believed", and an outstanding example of this today is the claim that major aviation expansion is positively essential for the UK's economic future, and particularly for productivity and employment growth. Uttered once everyone then repeats it; but in the end somebody was bound to overreach themselves.

As it begins its justification for major airport expansion, the *Northern Way* report confidently states: "Oxford Economic Forecasting found that there is a direct relationship between airport activity and productivity". Except that THEY DIDN'T.

For example, here are the conclusions of two distinguished and independent analyses: "OEF's failure to confirm a link between growth in air transport and productivity growth in the UK economy raises serious concerns about their conclusions on economic losses due to capacity constraint." *Institute of Public Policy Research 2001 p.12* And then: "OEF could not demonstrate a relationship between aviation capacity and UK productivity growth." *Berkeley Hanover 2000 p.29*

If the more academically minded wish to check the OEF report itself, then they will find the following statement on page 39: "We have been unable to identify in the data a separate effect [on productivity] for aviation from that caused by the transport infrastructure as a whole." And bear in mind that OEF were paid by the aviation industry itself to come up with this analysis, which the DfT then helpfully and uncritically slotted into the White Paper.

From this erroneous starting position the report then proceeds to a fallacious claim that the demand management of aviation growth would therefore result in an actual reduction in GDP. This is easily refuted: money not spent on air travel would "instead [be] spent elsewhere. This would support a different distribution of jobs and economic output" *IPPR 2003 p.22*.

But one howler isn't enough. The principal recommendation is to support growth at northern airports - "in order to secure the maximum economic benefits" (see earlier!) - and in particular growth of business and inbound leisure passengers, "as a key contributor to the overall target of 82 million passengers per annum identified in the White Paper". Except that the White Paper DIDN'T identify a target; indeed the cleverness of the DfT has been to distance themselves from the airport growth implementation process. That's down to the market.

And why just 'inbound' leisure passengers? Were the authors so embarrassed by the economic *dis*benefits caused by the huge expansion in outbound leisure air travel - as domestic tourism revenue, and the regional jobs it could support, just flies out of the country - that they decided that the best way to deal with the issue was ... to ignore it. Last year this UK 'tourism deficit' amounted to £17 billion.

Is this just an obscure debate about productivity analysis etc, or does it actually matter to decisions we have to take about airport expansion? Of course it does, and the reason why takes us back to our original quotation. The aviation industry knows that it is not environmentally sustainable (with their UK climate change emissions forecast to increase by 150+% by 2030 instead of being cut back like everybody else's), and it's not socially sustainable either (think of the wide ranging noise pollution impacts). So in order to 'balance out' - and this itself is an illegitimate exercise; sustainability requires progress by all three pillars together, not trade-offs between them - these large negatives, it has to 'invent' an equally large economic positive. But if the economics aren't as good as the industry needs them to be, then they simply have to be misrepresented.

Anthony Rae – for more information on the sources cited email: ar@anthonyrae.com

## **Public Transport Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA**

*Simon Geller investigates the transport scene in a major US City*

In Pittsburgh for a conference, I took advantage of my spare time to investigate the local transport system.



*Downtown Pittsburgh – the 'Golden Triangle'*

As a former steel town Pittsburgh has similarities with Sheffield, but on a grander scale - you could lose the Don in the Ohio River many times. Walking into Bessemer Sq, however, I felt an immediate sense of recognition - as if Disney were running Kelham Island or Magna.

The downtown area, known as the 'Golden Triangle' sits at the junction of two rivers.

The city has quite a good public transport system, run by the Port Authority (the rivers are large enough to carry ocean-going vessels, but most of the water traffic I saw was tourist-connected). There is a comprehensive bus service making use of a system of "busways" - bus-only



*Photo courtesy Dr. Jon Bell, Presbyterian College, Clinton SC*

roads, not lanes - and it looks as though the intention is to add tramlines to these at some point (although I gather that the old streetcar system was converted to buses in the 1960's). The existing trolley system heads from downtown, past the popular Station Square tourist district, through a tunnel, with two lines passing through the prosperous-looking South Hills suburbs.

Both the trolleys and the funicular railways that climb Mount Washington (formerly Coal Hill) carry bikes. One funicular car has tip-up seats. Some buses have bike racks as well.

Two well-used freight lines run along the south shore of the river with the familiar sight of mile-long mixed freight trains.

I asked the conference organisers where the Amtrak station was. They didn't know what Amtrak was! Amtrak run 2 services a day through Pittsburgh, both of which call in the early hours of the morning. Their reputation for unreliability is growing.

There is no real alternative to flying to the US (I understand that the cheapest berth on the Queen Mary 2 costs £4,500) but having got there I would prefer to switch to a high-speed rail network to get to my final destination. This option isn't available except between the large East Coast cities of Boston, New York and Washington, so flying short distances is commonplace. 9/11 saw an increase in interest in travelling by train but President Bush responded to this by shoring up the airlines whilst Amtrak remains under funded (rail gets around \$1bn per year - highways get \$34bn).

I didn't see much utility cycling going on, and this could have been to do with the hilliness of the suburban area, as well as the distances involved. (On the other hand the thunderstorms and torrential downpours we were treated to could have had something to do with it too!)

Much of the cycling I did see was on the sidewalk ("pavement" means roadway in the US). Sunday, however, saw the leisure cyclists out and about, many using



Atlanta

Having a 6 1/2 hour layover in Atlanta, I took the opportunity to try the MARTA system. This is very similar to BART in San Francisco, a modern high-speed metro system with a north-south and an east-west line along with some branches.

At a fare of \$1.75 and weekly and monthly passes, the system seemed very well used by Atlanta's predominately black urban population. Bikes are of course carried and the system sensibly reaches the airport.

Photo courtesy Dr. Jon Bell, Presbyterian College, Clinton SC

recumbents and other specialist bikes.

Nevertheless the car remains king in the US, with a comprehensive highway system taking up valuable city-centre space and making walking difficult. The air pollution above US cities is highly noticeable. Separating Americans from their cars is a task that seems practically impossible.

I investigated whether I could get to any of the local state parks by public transport, but it didn't seem to be possible, although a well-used freight railway runs through the Laurel Hills park (the location of Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater house).

The trains are two-car units run in multiples of up to four at busy times.

Transport Snippets from the States

- The family of an American footballer have failed in their attempt to sue General Motors. He died when he overturned his SUV. He was not wearing a seat belt at the time.
- The New York transit authority is suing Amtrak over its failure to provide a high-speed rail service along the East Coast. Amtrak, whose funding has been cut by President George Bush, declined to comment.
- The Environmental Protection Agency has admitted that its assessment of the environmental impact of new vehicles is based on tests that are more than 30 years old.
- Despite rising prices US motorists are using more fuel than ever before.
- Reading "Bicycling" magazine, it was interesting to note how many adverts there were for SUV's.
- Sales of the Hummer H2 - have fallen 22% in the year to date. Apparently it appeals to 14 year-olds and 40 to 50 year-olds but no-one else.
- According to Andrew Goudie of Oxford University, 4x4s can cause dust storms in desert areas. Left to itself desert ground is stable, but heavy vehicles break up the surface.



The Duquesne Incline - Bikes carried!

Have you experienced best practice in transport provision in the UK or overseas? If you have, please write to YHTAR Focus and tell us about it.

# Yorkshire and the Humber Transport Activists' Roundtable

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## [www.yhtar.org.uk](http://www.yhtar.org.uk)

Why not take a look at back issues of *YHTAR Focus* and our range of useful transport-related links next time you're online?

An online RSS portal is also now available on our website.

## **YHTAR Focus**

*YHTAR Focus* is produced three times a year on behalf of the YHTAR.

It is mailed to over 350 people, including M.P.s, councillors, officers, bus and rail management, and campaigners around the Y+H region.

*YHTAR Focus* is currently available free of charge,  
if you know of anyone who would be interested in receiving a copy please contact:  
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