

YHTAR Focus

Newsletter of the
Yorkshire and The Humber
Transport Activists' Roundtable

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Issue number five
June 2001

YHTAR – a tiny and unrepresentative minority?

The motoring section of the *Daily Telegraph* probably isn't the usual reading of most YHTAR members, but a few days before the election its motoring correspondent produced a "manifesto" on behalf of the "Motoring Majority" – the 50 million of UK citizens he claims are regular users of private cars.

With the usual and utterly predictable list of demands including all motoring taxes to be spent on new roads and bypasses, cuts in petrol taxes, minimum 60mph speed limits on motorways, removal of pedestrianisation schemes, cuts in "wasteful" rural buses, and (yes) compulsory taxing of cyclists, was a hymn of hate for the "tiny and unrepresentative anti-motoring lobby" who he urged MPs and planners should immediately stop listening to.

In case anyone has not yet got the message **that means you**.

So who's the lunatic fringe? T2000, CPRE, CTC, FoE, RA, RDS with their few thousand members between them or the *Daily Telegraph/Mail/Sun* and with their tens of million or so readers, not to mention the motoring organisations and the millions who share almost totally car-based lifestyles?

With a new Government in place the lobbying will soon begin. Despite the worthy Prescott Transport White Paper of 1999, the road and motoring lobby scored huge victories in the previous administration. The fuel duty escalator was abandoned. Heavy goods vehicle duty was slashed. The Ten

Our Chairman, Colin Speakman, writes

Year Transport Plan offers £60 billion's worth of road improvements including 100 new bypasses and motorway widening schemes – many in our region, with reported Government moves to "speed up" the planning process, ie reduce the democratic rights of objectors.

The Confederation of British Industry (which now includes the British Roads Federation) is urging government to reduce environmental constraints on transport-related planning development, including ever more out-of-town retail centres, no doubt to the delight of developers and the motoring press.

ENERGY PRICE RISES

Of course as we all know throwing money at new roads is the quickest way to generate new traffic which creates yet more jams, more pollution, more frustration, the decline of inner city areas as car-served suburbs and their mega shopping centres spread ever wider into unspoiled countryside. Ironically, by 2005 world oil demand will outstrip supply, and huge energy prices rises are inevitable, no doubt leading to more truckers' blockades and supermarket shortages, as our energy-profligate lifestyles collapse in freefall.

What is this to do with YHTAR? As a wide ranging group of conservation bodies active in various ways throughout our

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YHTAR Focus is edited by the YHTAR Co-ordinator, Steve Broadbent, 35 Bromley Road, Bingley, BD16 4DA, West Yorkshire. Tel: 01274 569280. e-mail steve@yhtar.org.uk

"Platform" comes to Sheffield

Transport 2000's Platform rail group headed north for the first time when it held a conference in Sheffield on 23 April. The day was introduced by David Brown of the SYPTE, who briefly described the PTE's vision for 2020. This was followed by a presentation by Nick Brown of Midland Mainline (standing in for a colleague, Richard Brown, who is also chairman of ATOC) who looked at the problems facing the railways as a whole rather than MML in particular.

The third speaker was Laura Wren, Assistant Director of Government Relations at the SRA, who had things to say about the Rail Passenger Partnership of particular interest to those seeking to introduce new services, trains or facilities.

RAIL PASSENGER PARTNERSHIP

Laura said that there was still over £80 million available for Rail Passenger Partnership funding in the present financial year.

When initiated by the 1998 Integrated Transport White Paper, the RPP had a budget of some £105 million, spread over the three financial

years 1999/2000, 2000/01 and 2001/02, but so far only £20 million has been committed. "It is our planning assumption that RPP will continue and that we will be allocated further funding in the next CSR round", Laura said, "so any monies not committed (as opposed to spent) in the third year can be rolled forward. However, we are expecting all the money to be committed, as there are a lot of schemes in the pipeline."

Although "virtually any body, not just PTEs and TOCs" can apply for an RPP grant, several delegates pointed out how complex and time consuming the application process is. Shire counties often do not have the resources or budgets to pursue applications, which may need the help of consultants if they are to be completed to the required standards.

PTE SUCCESS

On the other hand, delegates also spoke of the reluctance of some TOCs to even discuss proposed RPP-funded service enhancements. First North Western was specifically mentioned (in respect of two service enhancements in Derbyshire and Cheshire), where it claimed it had no resources due to the

burden of the re-franchising negotiations.

In the first two years of the RPP there have been 170 expressions of interest, with 20 schemes approved and some 30 currently under appraisal. The approved schemes range in size from part-funding of the eight extra class 333 trailer cars for the WYPTE (£3.4 million from the RPP) to a £50,000 part-funding of improvements on the Gospel Oak-Barking line. (Since the conference, an RPP grant of some £9 million has been announced to facilitate train services between Cambridge and Norwich.

It is understood that the WYPTE is submitting four or five RPP bids this summer to cover the five new stations detailed as Phase One in the RailPlan5 document, and additional trains for the Airedale/Wharfedale line on which two of these stations will be sited.)

Transport 2000 has sent all those attending the presentations and other information from the day, and these are available from me, but only electronically – they are in PC Word and Powerpoint format.

Steve Broadbent

Leader – "Tiny minority", continued from page 1

region, we may be numerically small with very limited resources. What matters is not our numbers but the quality of our arguments. Ignorance may have the majority vote, but congestion, pollution and energy shortages will ultimately quickly rubbish the "motorist-friendly policies" of the road lobby pressures groups and their cohorts in the popular press.

Our job is to constantly alert opinion formers and decision takers about the real economic, social and environmental consequences of their decisions and to ensure that alternative, truly sustainable networks – walking, cycling, trains, light rail and bus networks – are in place as the great car economy faces, as it will within a generation, a disastrous collapse.

By working together, supporting each other, sharing information electronically and in print, we can make a difference. With a (very) part time Secretary and Editor Steve Broadbent now co-ordinating our efforts, and some excellent members of a small Regional Committee, YHTAR has an opportunity to at least warn people in our region about what lies ahead.

But, let's not for one moment under-estimate the magnitude of the task ahead, nor the strength and immense reactionary power of the opposition.

Colin Speakman

NB Look out for Michael Palin's BBC Documentary *The Road to Hell* to be screened on June 20th.

Please spread the word!!

Although I usually circulate as much information as possible to members by e-mail to save costs, and this newsletter ought to be no exception, I am deliberately mailing all members a printed copy of this issue, with the specific encouragement to copy or pass it to anyone else you feel may be interested. YHTAR needs as many members as it can get, but more than that, we need to spread the word as to who we are and what we do, and to gather support. If you need further printed copies for distribution, please let me know – it would be appreciated if you could send at least three first class stamps to cover the cost of up to three issues, more for more!!

Rail round up

There can be no doubt that, even given the hiatus caused by the Hatfield rail disaster of October 2000, that the buds of a rail renaissance are still in evidence in our region. And while the delays in the re-franchising process of our three major franchises – Trans Pennine Express, Northern and East Coast main Line (GNER) – can be doing nothing but harm to the region's economy as the present operators soldier with ever older trains in an air of business uncertainty, matters do seem to be on the up for the first time in many a year.

The worst news is that the Northern franchise, which only last autumn was due to be let by October 2002, has been delayed until 2003/4, largely due to the serious southern bias of the SRA which puts London's commuters a strong first and Northern travellers, indeed I would argue the North in general, a distant last. In the meantime, the region's rolling stock gets older and ever more clapped out!!

LEEDS 1ST

Of course, we have the much-publicised £165 million Leeds 1st programme, now well underway and beginning to show signs of the improvements its conclusion will bring in just under a year's time. By the time these words are read the much delayed ECML franchise ought to have been awarded (and the Trans-Pennine franchise is also expected shortly after the election dust has settled), and whether it is to GNER or Virgin, we should soon see firm plans for the next stages of the ECML route upgrade with, for example, improvements at Wakefield and York. Some new trains have very slowly entered service on two commuter routes into Leeds, but elsewhere in the region the arrival of desperately needed new stock has been delayed and delayed by the re-franchising saga.

SO WHERE ARE THESE BUDS?

In March, the planning committee of Ryedale District Council turned down the planning application by Safeway plc to build a supermarket on the trackbed of the former Pickering – Malton line near to Pickering town centre. While it is not

known, as I write, if Safeway will appeal, were the supermarket to be built it would preclude re-opening of the line for ever: NYCC is said to be planning a second, more detailed, feasibility study into the re-opening later this year. The council is now pressing for an early decision as to whether the rail line should be reinstated (at an estimated cost of some £20 million), so that other local planning issues can be resolved.

A group of transport campaigners here in Yorkshire, led by a Transport 2000 contingent, but including RDS, CPRE, FoE and others, have linked with their Lancashire counterparts to form SCRAP, the Skipton-Colne Rail Action Partnership. Lancashire County Council seems determined to put a road along the trackbed of this line from Colne to the North Yorkshire boundary under the misleading title "A65 villages by-pass". The trackbed, remarkably intact after so many years' disuse, is being slowly encroached by *ad hoc* development. Many local councils and residents are strongly in favour of the rail line's restoration and we hope to be able to harness all of that mind to bring the rail scheme forward and to consign the road to history.

CROSS-BRADFORD PUSH

And among other campaigns, Transport 2000 is helping Otley council in its aim to restore the railway to that town, and indeed to re-forge the link from Menston to Arthington. It is also starting to make noises about a cross-Bradford rail link, something which was granted an Act of Parliament in 1890, and is needed as much today as it was then. Sadly, early indications are that Bradford Council seems totally against this scheme and a retail development is going ahead on the line of the most likely route.

Elsewhere, the Wensleydale Railway's share issue is a huge success, and should enable this 22-mile rail restoration scheme to start forging ahead: rumours are that NYCC is more in favour than it used to be. **Wensleydale Railway plc**, which was set up by the 2500 member voluntary Association just before Christmas, has already raised over half a million pounds through its first Share Offer. "The faster

money comes in, the sooner passenger trains will return to Wensleydale," says chief executive Scott Handley. "The eventual return of the railway will breathe new life into this Dales community, now sadly affected by foot and mouth disease." The share prospectus is available from Mr. Handley at 35 High Street, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8EE, Freephone: 0500 824166 or online at www.wensleydalerrailway.com

And the "dark horse", the long-running campaign to re-instate the line from Harrogate-Ripon, and maybe even north to Northallerton is gradually gaining positive momentum. A proper feasibility study, funded from a yet-to-be-confirmed Single Regeneration Budget grant to Ripon Council could get underway in 2002. The pressure group has issued a briefing paper, which I have on disk if anyone wants to read it, it can be easily e-mailed.

Back on "BR" the WYPTE is submitting Rail Passenger Partnership bids for five new stations later this year. SYPTE and WYPTE are together working on an RPP bid for improvements on the Leeds-Barnsley-Sheffield route, while additional Virgin services from May 2002, and Midland Main line services from May 2003 will see major improvements on Leeds-Sheffield via Wakefield Westgate. And finally, as these words are being set to page, something of a mini war of words is breaking out between Railtrack and GNER which could see the latter introduce Regional Eurostars on the Leeds-London (no, sadly not Paris!) earlier than the planned May 2003 date.

Buds? I can do no better than to close this round-up by copying the final paragraph of the Ripon group's prospectus: All in all there are now real prospects of railway reinstatement, much more so than in past years. We believe that all obstacles can be overcome. Ten years ago no-one was interested. Now the majority of experts and politicians, local and national, take railways very seriously indeed.

(if anyone wants further information or discussion on the points above, please e-mail me at svb@globalnet.co.uk - Editor)

It can be done!!

Bus ridership can be increased dramatically with a little initiative, as the press release below well indicates. Blazefield, which operates H&DT, also owns Keighley & District and recently took over two depots from Stagecoach Ribblesdale. Blazefield's communications manager is Graham Mitchell, long-time chairman at the Keighley & Wetherby railway, and well known for his cameo role in the film "The Railway Children"!

"Quality partnership with Customer" achieves 21% growth!

North Yorkshire bus operator Harrogate & District Travel has made a major peak hours up-grading of its flagship interurban Route 36 between Ripon, Harrogate and Leeds, as a response to the huge recent growth in customer numbers.

"Since we increased the service frequency in November 1998 customer numbers on Route 36 have grown by a massive 21%" said H&DT Managing

Director Stuart Wilde. "This is the highest rate of growth ever achieved by Harrogate & District Travel."

H&DT admits that recent disruptions to the rail service between Harrogate and Leeds have brought extra custom but Operations Director Dave Alexander is keen to stress the consistent growth rate of the two year period under review and is in no doubt as to the principal reason for H&DT's success.

"The Company has committed itself to a Quality Partnership with the Customer. We have invested heavily in new low-floor vehicles, advanced driver training and effective marketing to provide a high quality service at low fares".

All journeys entering Leeds up to 0900 are routed via City Rail Station to serve the rapidly developing "Business Quarter" as well as the City Bus Station.

New timetable leaflets are available on buses and from H&DT offices in Harrogate and Leeds.

PPG13 issued...

Denise Carlo, the TAR coordinator at Transport 2000, circulated this message by e-mail and it may be of interest to our members who are not “on the web”...

“Just to let you know about the final version of Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 on Transport was published at the end of March. Core TAR groups have decided to advise their member groups via their newsletters rather than a briefing for reasons of resources.

Copies PPG13 can be downloaded from the DETR web, or purchased from the Stationary Office.

The publication of PPG13 was delayed by many months due to lobbying from business interests, notably Tesco and IBM, who opposed the idea of maximum parking standards for major land uses. The Treasury took the side of business but

Prescott refused to delete the requirement for maximum parking standards. As always, a compromise was agreed. PPG13 establishes the principle of maximum parking standards, although the standards are pretty lax, eg for B1 including offices the standard is set at one space per 30sq.m. However, establishment of the principle means that the standards can be tightened up.

Although “reduce the need to travel, especially by car” has been given greater prominence than in the draft, this objective is to be achieved through the land use planning system as opposed to influencing people's travel behaviour in a serious way.

The final version is friendly towards car travel in rural areas. (“The car will continue to have an important part to play and for some journeys, particularly in rural areas, it will remain the only

real option for travel” *para 5*.)

Transport assessments should be prepared, “where developments have significant transport implications”, thereby replacing traffic assessments.

A controversial addition is the use of green belt land for park and ride sites. Draft guidance described park and ride schemes as “inappropriate developments in green belts”. By contrast, the final version states, “there may be cases where a green belt location is the most sustainable of the available options”.

The new PPG13 covers the potential impact of information and communications technology on travel patterns. “Although the effects of ICT are difficult to predict, it is creating opportunities to reduce the need to travel” (*para 33*).

Denise Carlo

...and PPG12 in action?

The application by Safeway plc to build a supermarket on the trackbed of the former railway in Pickering met with strong opposition, and the pinioning committee recommended the application's rejection. One of the reasons for the recommendation, I was told, was because of the provisions of PPG12, and the extract below was sent to me by way of explanation. This may be of

use when it comes to other similar applications to build on such things as former railway trackbeds. It does seem that, just as railway restorations are becoming feasible, some less-enlightened councils are not aware of the potential resource and are considering developments which, perhaps 30 years after the line closed, would preclude restoration in the foreseeable future.

Extract from Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 – DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Safeguarding Transport Routes

5.22 Where planning authorities wish to safeguard land for a future transport scheme (eg a new road, rail link or restored canal), they should do so through a proposal in the local plan. When the precise route of a particular proposal is known at the time of preparation of the plan, this should be clearly shown on the proposals map as the route to be safeguarded. Where the precise route is not known but where the proposals are sufficiently advanced, the authority may define on the proposals map the area over which it intends to apply a safeguarding policy. However, in safeguarding land local authorities will need to be realistic about the prospects for the start of the project in the plan period and sensitive to the implications of blight (*see paragraphs 6.24 – 6.26*). They should consult with appropriate transport infrastructure authorities (eg the Strategic Rail Authority for rail schemes) to ensure the feasibility of a scheme commencing within the lifetime of a plan. For the sake of clarity plans should list any transport schemes which have previously been safeguarded and are now to be abandoned.

5.23 The Government's White Paper on Transport makes it clear that development plans should give better protection to those sites and routes (both existing and potential) which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choices. Alternative uses related to sustainable transport should be considered first for sites now surplus to transport requirements. Local authorities should therefore consider the potential of disused railway trackbeds and routes for possible future transport schemes, including rail (both passenger and freight), metro and light rail projects, cycling and walking, and apply appropriate protective policies where justified. Similar protective policies are appropriate for rail and waterway connections to existing or proposed manufacturing, distribution, and warehousing sites adjacent or close to the rail and inland waterway networks and to coastal ports.

Local authorities may also wish to safeguard sites for transport related development which might otherwise be lost to other development, such as sites adjoining railway sidings or wharves alongside waterways and ports.

YHTAR's first AGM

The YHTAR held its first AGM in April, and formally adopted a constitution, elected a committee and confirmed my appointment as Co-ordinator. These moves, and others, will mean that the YHTAR can now receive the monies it is due from the Countryside Agency, which helps fund our activities, through Transport 2000. Some of this money helps me undertake my role, which involves a lot of co-ordination and attendance at meetings, while it will also help others liaise with outside bodies to lobby for our aims. While most readers will have had copies of the AGM minutes and the constitution, again these are available from me, or can be found on our website.

The next General Meeting of YHTAR is confirmed for Saturday, 29 September 2001, in Room 4 of the York Railway Institute, Queen Street, York, starting at 2.00pm. (From York Railway station turn right and walk for about 300m. The RI is on the right, adjacent to the site of the FORMER Railway Museum, just before the traffic lights.)

YHTAR Committee 2001/2

Chairman:	Colin Speakman (Ilkley; Transport 2000)
Vice Chairlady:	Pam Ashton (Bradford; Cyclists' Touring Club)
Treasurer:	Graham Collett (York; Railfuture, formerly RDS)
Committee Members:	Jim Burton (Ilkley; CPRE)
	Anthony Rae (Hebden Bridge; Friends of the Earth)
	Brian Whitty (Hull; CPRE, CTC and T2000)
	Peter Davies (Brighouse; Railfuture)

Two other members have been asked to join the committee to make it more geographically and gender balanced, but arms are still being twisted!

Things that are "available from me..."

I (that is Steve Broadbent, your editor and YHTAR co-ordinator) will hold copies of all documents I receive, whether by e-mail or on paper, so that they can be made available to members. Such documents will be mentioned in issues of this newsletter and also in round-robin e-mails. While donations to YHTAR funds are always most welcome, I am happy to e-mail electronic documents for free, and to post them for the donation of (at least) two first class stamps, unless I indicate that their size/weight means other conditions apply!!

...and about our website

I have also taken over the management of our humble website, or rather my wife, Viv, has "volunteered" as she is the expert in these parts! On the site you will find full details of YHTAR, its objectives and constitution, as well as past minutes and newsletters. And there are a host of links to related sites, pressure groups, local papers etc etc.

Suggestions for additional information we can put on the web are always welcome, but please provide full details – don't leave it to others to do the research!!

Ideas to Viv at viv@yhtar.org.uk

**Our website address is
www.yhtar.org.uk**

The next newsletter...

...will be published in the autumn. Copy to me during August, please, a firmer date will be advised by e-mail nearer the time. I apologise this issue is not terribly well balanced, but the content is largely up to you, the reader!!

Finances

YHTAR has limited funding, and we hope, of course, that lots of members will join YHTAR, sending in not only a subscription, but also, if at all possible, a modest donation. And, reflecting our beloved Chancellor, we must be prudent with what we have got, and not assume that funds will flow in to any set extent in the future.

The funding, largely from the Countryside Agency, helps pay for my time and expenses in co-ordinating between Transport 2000 and other bodies, and members, etc., but is also available to help members travel to meetings or obtain useful publications.

"Rules" will doubtless be imposed, as is the way of the world, but for the time being here are guidelines.

a/ All expenses must be cleared by me before you embark on any trip or purchase. I cannot guarantee to say "yes" even if there is money in the pot, and I will not pay anything that has not been pre-agreed. Rail fares must be at the lowest possible fare, eg APEX if available, the highest rate payable will be the Saver fare. Car travel, if essential will be paid as per a Saver rail ticket.

b/ I need something for the money, normally a report on the meeting attended, for example (for use in the newsletter and general circulation). No report, no pay!! And don't say "I am the only one interested in this topic so there is no need for me to report – we won't know who else is until we tell everyone what is going on, and we need every resource we can get!!

c/ Any sum greater than £50 will need pre-clearing by the whole committee, so give me plenty of time to attract their attention. You might find it useful, if you attend regular meetings, to submit a budget to the committee for "block authorisation".

The funding is there to help our members campaign and liaise, but when it is spent it is spent, so it needs caring for!!

Membership – join now!!

Now that YHTAR is formally constituted and has its own bank balance, it was agreed at the AGM to institute a more formalised membership system. Some of you will know that we are currently part-funded by the Countryside Agency, and this is hugely welcome and much appreciated. However, it may cease in the future and we, as YHTAR, must be able to continue our work if that day comes. To some degree, therefore, subscriptions are our investment against a rainy day.

We are inviting everyone who supports our aims to join YHTAR, whether by ratifying their previous informal membership or by joining “new”. By so doing, you will be supporting the broad aims of all the public transport pressure groups in the region, and you will be contributing to the growing debate about, and pressure for, better “sustainable transport”.

Paid-up members will receive four

issues of this newsletter a year, regular updates from me (wherever possible by e-mail to keep our costs down) and will be able to attend and vote at General Meetings as appropriate.

For the year 2001/2, the AGM agreed that two classes of membership, Individual Member and Affiliated Group, would be available. The former is open to any individual who shares YHTAR’s aims, while the latter is open to those representing local branches of national bodies, or others, who are willing to pass on YHTAR-type information to/from a wider audience. For the present year all subscriptions have been set at just £5.00, which, we hope, will encourage those from larger organisations to offer a donation to YHTAR’s funds!!

YHTAR really does need your support – only by being a large and very active umbrella group will we taken seriously by councils, NGOs and government bodies and representatives.

Do please join if you possibly can!

To join YHTAR for 2001-02, simply complete the form below and return as indicated as soon as possible. Please note that only one representative of any one society Branch or Group is permitted, and should be ratified by that Group’s committee. Others who are also members of the same Group should join as YHTAR Individual Members. Only paid-up members may attend the next General Meeting in York on September 29, and they will also receive the next newsletter.

The YHTAR e-mail forum – accessible via majordomo@foe.co.uk – remains FREE and open to all.

YHTAR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR 2001-2

To: Steve Broadbent
Co-ordinator YHTAR
35 Bromley Road
Bingley
West Yorkshire BD16 4DA

From: Name.....

Address.....

e-mail address..... Contact tel no:.....

Signed.....Date.....

Representing(Group) (if applicable)

I am a member of the following related organisations (eg CTC, T2000, CPRE, FoE).....

I enclose £.....(min. £5) subscription to YHTAR for 2001-2
(please make cheques and postal orders payable to “YHTAR”, subscription is valid until the AGM in April 2002.)

