

Railway Herald welcomes correspondence and comment from readers, whether it is on memories from the rail scene of years gone by, or a comment on the current rail industry, UK or overseas. We welcome the input from readers, either by letter to the editorial address or by email to the Editor. If you have something to say - tell us!

Rail rovers

Dear Editor,

On the subject of Railcards, anyone holidaying in the area should not miss the wonderful Freedom of Severn & Solent Rover, which covers an area from Cardiff to Swindon and from Worcester to Southampton. Three days travel in seven for £42 (down to just £28 with a Senior Railcard. Terrific value!

John Kedburgh

Scottish retreat

Dear Editor,

In marked contrast to announcements from Westminster, the Scottish Government has announced the virtual scrapping of its flagship rail project, the Edinburgh to Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP). The SNP Government attempted to promote this as a good news story, but it soon emerged that the vast bulk of this imaginative project will not now happen.

EGIP would have brought electrification across the Central Belt leading to accelerated journeys, a more robust timetable, opportunities for new stations and services and all the wider

benefits of electrification. What now remains is simple electrification of the core Glasgow to Edinburgh via Falkirk High -- and very little else.

All the more worrying is that the announcement took both Network Rail and ScotRail by surprise, Network Rail having spent large amounts on consultation and preparatory work. This comes on top of earlier cancellations of both the Edinburgh and Glasgow Airport Rail Links.

In the early days of devolution, Scotland rightly enjoyed a reputation for its pro-rail policies with line and station reopenings all performing well ahead of projected figures. The SNP has retreated from this and raided the rail budget to fund its massive road-building programme. This smacks of 1960s solutions to 21st Century transport problems.

Paul Tetlow, Transform Scotland

Raiding the piggybank?

Dear Editor,

Over the years we have seen no end of improvement and refurbishment projects, along with a few rebuilds and

new-builds. While I applaud the principle and welcome with open arms any improvement in the network, how can simple things such as the extension of a car park cost the huge amounts of money that they do?

Looking at one of the operators in my local area, London Midland, the improvements to Wolverton (new station building), Cosford (new platforms/shelter), Telford (station refurbishment) and Chase Line stations comes to more than £7.2 million! Even the provision of 1,000 new parking spaces at various stations came to £8 million - that's a construction cost of £8,000 per parking space! Given the average daily rate to park is around £5.50 at London Midland stations, that means that each of the new spaces would have to be occupied seven days a week, 365 days a year, for four years just to recoup the expenditure!

I welcome the investment, but given that we are looking at how efficiently money is spent, surely such projects could be undertaken cheaper than they are!

Paul Kemberton

Below: The attractive signal box and level crossing at Kirkham Abbey on the York to Scarborough line is the setting for Class 185 No. 185122, as the signalman watches its passage forming the 12:38 Scarborough to Liverpool First TransPennine Express service on 27th July. Built around 1856 for the York and North Midland Railway, the box was restored by Network Rail last year. Amazingly, the station building survives, just visible behind the '185', despite the station having closed to passenger traffic in 1930. *Paul Braybrook*

