

## This is your platform...

## SEND YOUR VIEWS &amp; OPINIONS

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environmental protection.

Maybe I am missing something, but why can't the new line simply run alongside the M40, which goes in the same direction? Any damage to the countryside from the rail line would be incidental to the damage that building the road must already have done.

Rob Edwards, Harrogate, Yorkshire

**Ally HS2 to local buses**

I remain to be convinced either way on the need for HS2. However, I do believe that tackling local transport needs is more important.

In the early 1970s, when the Swiss railways ceased to be profitable, voters were offered a choice between a "Beeching" and a strategy based on high-speed rail.

They rejected both and eventually came up with the strategy that the country has been pursuing ever since, based on a comprehensive multi-modal network where regular interval operation is used to provide integrated connections.

By contrast, in England and to some extent the rest of the UK, we are about to embark on a strategy of massive cuts to local buses. If this is taken to its logical extreme, it will completely undermine sustainable tourism (which is typically based on using rail to get

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to a holiday area and buses to get around it).

Even if through trains are restored to Keswick, Minehead and Swanage, people won't be able to get to the rest of the Lake District, Exmoor and Jurassic Coast.

High-speed rail might cut an hour or more off the journey time from London to Windermere or Keswick, but what's the point if all passengers can then do is spend their holidays admiring the mountains from traffic-jammed towns without being able to visit them?

Simon Norton, Cambridge

**Dawlish? Foolish**

Lena Smith ("Third rail tests in Devon", RAIL 662) suggests that third rail tests should be carried out along the coast through Dawlish. This is not a good idea.

The line through Teignmouth and Dawlish is one of the most 'open' and accessible stretches of line anywhere in the country. The effect of water on an electrical supply is dangerous to say the least - it would be just yards from the sea,

and we know what effects that already has on the line.

If it were to go ahead, fencing would be needed along the whole stretch, costing thousands. Why spoil such a lovely and outstanding stretch of coastline?

Andrew Cooper, Hampshire

**Number cruncher**

I have a great admiration for Barry Doe's wizardry with fares and timetables, but his tirade against the 12-hour clock being mentioned is just wrong (RAIL 661).

Not everyone loves numbers, Barry. You are trying to use two incompatible systems - counting dozens (in which all time is measured) with a decimal system. It doesn't work, and "too stupid" peasants such as myself have to convert some of the times back into English to understand them.

You say it's confusing for a guard to say "we will be arriving at five past eight" when he should say "we will be arriving at 2005".

Poppycock! I can assure you that on an Intercity train there will be several people who are confused by 2005. What's more, if you could find one person on that train who spoke English and was confused by "five past eight", I'll buy you 0.004732 hectolitres of beer.

Benedict le Vay, London

## Briefly...

**Sorry to see WSMR go**

I was sad to hear that Wrexham Shropshire & Marylebone Railway is to cease operating (RAIL 663). I often used this to get to and from London, and was always impressed by the well-informed and friendly staff, clean carriages and the direct service from Shrewsbury.

P Williton, Ludlow

**WSMR: a big mistake**

The multibillion-pound case for support of HS2 rests heavily on the West Coast Main Line becoming saturated. Yet for the sake of just a few million pounds, Wrexham Shropshire & Marylebone Railway trains have folded (RAIL 663).

Chris Huntingford, Oxfordshire

**Better service, please**

HS2 will provide the lucky few travelling from London to Birmingham with a quicker journey, but will do nothing for the rest of us. Rather than making the best brilliant, can we just make the ordinary slightly better?

Paul Godfrey, Southampton

**Parking fare is unfair**

To catch a non-peak train after 0900 and purchase a London Travel Card costs £17.70. This has no return time restrictions. I now have to pay a further £5.50 car park charge, which is 31% extra. Can something be done to highlight this extortion?

David Cable, Hampshire

**Daily '380': no thanks**

I took a trip in a '380' (RAIL 662). The ride was smooth and quiet and the big windows are a good feature, although the seats do not align with the windows. The seats are thin and hard, and the overall feel is that of a ward in a modern hospital. I would not want to commute for an hour a day in these trains.

Roy Brown, Glasgow

**Well done GBRF**

Full marks to GBRF for going back to its beautiful livery (RAIL 662), the best and nearest thing to British Rail large logo!

Kevin Sawyer, Reading

**Unjust transport pricing puts rail at a disadvantage**

There is a great danger of the railway industry slipping into a further round of naval gazing when looking at future demand and how it is best managed.

Let's not forget that we already have demand management by price on the railways - those travelling at peak times pay premium fares, yet there is talk of further price hikes to stifle demand. This is in stark contrast to rail's main competitor - the car. Here the vast majority carry just one occupant at peak times.

So we have a publicly funded road network running at only 25% efficiency, as most vehicles carry at least three empty seats. Contrast this with the railway, where not only are passengers paying peak fares, many are standing.

Any future transport policy decision should be based on treating all modes in the same manner, and it is high time that politicians start looking at this bigger picture.

And before any of your motoring readers start bleating,



Passengers board a busy Class 378 at Dalston Junction on August 21 2010. While roads are operating at 25% efficiency, the railway is overcrowded. PAUL BIGLAND/RAIL

let me remind them that car travel is heavily subsidised by the rest of society - a recent study by Leeds University showed that

drivers only meet between a third and a half of their total cost to society.

Paul Tetlaw, Transform Scotland