



NOR4NOR

NORFOLK FOR THE NATIONALISATION OF RAIL

Bringing the railways back to the community

Newsletter No. 2 Winter/Spring 2018, FREE

HOW (NOT) TO RUN A RAILWAY!

THE PRIVATEERS' vision of the railway is dead and merely awaits burial.

The handing over of Britain's railways to unelected, unaccountable and unaffordable private companies like Abellio, Virgin, Stagecoach, and Arriva has now proved to be a costly and hopeless mistake, as big a mistake as the handing over of government services to firms like Carillion.

From 1980, British Rail began to be torn apart by Thatcher's governments, starting with the sell-offs of BREL, Sealink and British Transport Hotels and culminating in John Major's privatisation of the entire rail system in 1992. We have endured 25 years of a failed approach in which hundreds of contractors and sub-contractors have sucked the life blood from a railway that had delivered (and improved) integrated services for over 40 years.

The last two years have shown in graphic detail just how bad things have got under privatisation. From commuters packed like sardines on Southern Region to the utterly grotesque spectacle of Richard Branson's East Coast bail-out which will cost the taxpayer £2 billion. From trains without adequate toilet facilities for disabled passengers to fare levels that mean that thousands

■ **FARES UP 3.4%!**

■ **BAILOUTS COSTING £2 BILLION!**

■ **OVERCROWDED TRAINS!**

■ **HIGHEST FARES IN EUROPE!**

■ **£4.2bn RAIL SUBSIDY 2016-17!**



of people on low incomes cannot afford to use trains.

From companies that plan to close ticket offices to franchisees that refuse job security to guards and conductors.

FROM A PRIVATEERS' RAILWAY TO A PEOPLES' RAILWAY!

There are real alternatives to this sclerotic system. The current strike action has pushed the companies and the DfT back and shows that direct action today and tomorrow is the key to bringing closer the day when the banners hang out on stations declaring 'A Peoples' Railway'.

Clearly, there is also a debate, with some favouring a centralised railway on the lines of the old British Rail, others publicly-owned train companies or employee-owned partnerships. What's important is that a genuine plan for the railway must not be left to civil servants: local authorities, the rail trade unions, rail workers, devolved assemblies able to integrate transport, must be included in decision-making.

But we will also need to think about how people will work in a democratically-run organisation and the implications of new technology for the rail system.

The 2018 NOR4NOR East Anglian Rail Summit will be discussing all these issues.

■ **Stop Press 81% say they want a guard on the train in East Anglia**

NOR4NOR SAYS

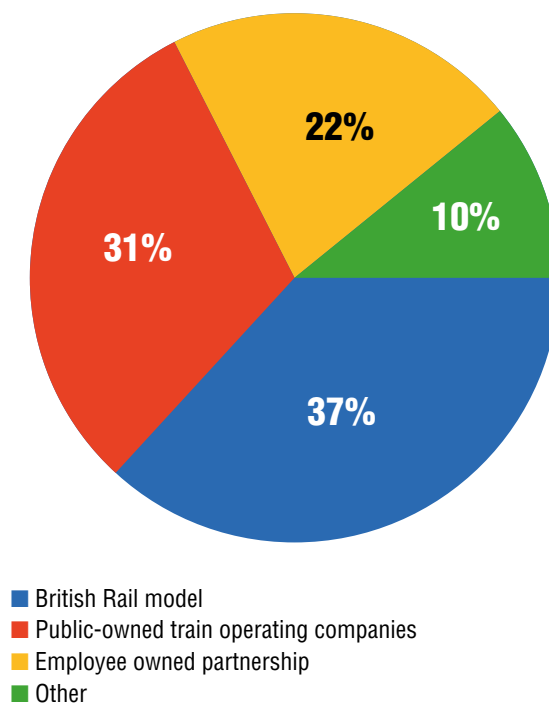
In 1948, the NUR's Railway Review called for the newly nationalised railway boards to demonstrate 'democratic socialist convictions'. Today, over seventy years later, we look forward to a government that will embody those same principles in a newly nationalised railway system. In fact, we have history on our side: many European states have owned their own railways over the last 160 years and we have the experience of half a century of public ownership in Britain to draw on.

NOR4NOR brings together passengers, transport union members and local union and community activists who believe there is an alternative to the rail privateers. We are committed to building a network across East Anglia, have held two Norwich public meetings in 2017 and provided speakers for locally-based political parties, union branches and trades councils.

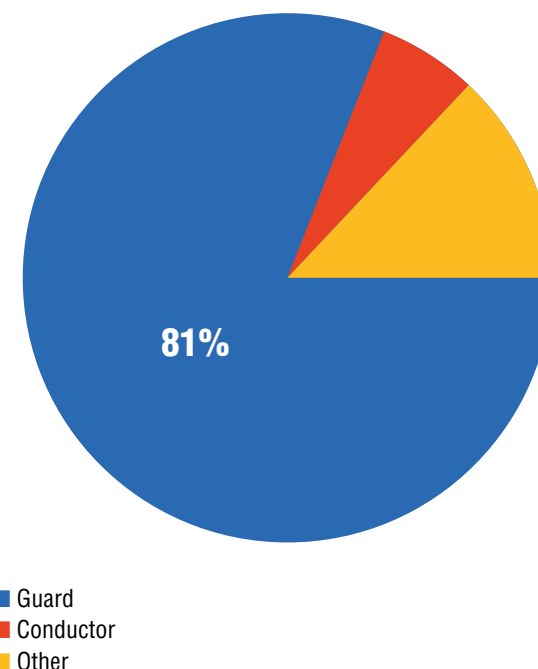
Go to www.NOR4NOR.org for more details.

NOR4NOR conducted its first passenger survey throughout 2017. Of the 205 people who responded, most travelled on Greater Anglia for leisure purposes (62%) followed by business (20%). They travelled monthly (35%) occasionally (32%) or weekly (21%). The results indicate a huge level of discontent with Greater Anglia's value for money (from 'poor' to 'dreadful' with satisfaction

If the railways were nationalised, which model of public ownership would you be most interested in? (193 responses)



If you need help on a train, do you think the Guard or Conductor is the best person to go to? (200 responses)



over facilities for disabled people being rated 'poor'. Most people found punctuality and frequency of trains 'good' but comfort at stations variable. Station facilities were rated from 'good' to 'poor' with staff presence on trains and stations generally 'good'. 52.5% said that there were 'too few' staff on stations and 59% that there 'too few' on trains. 81% said that the Guard or Conductor was the best person to go to for help on a train.

When asked about three options for public ownership, 36.8% wanted a British Rail model, 30.6% publicly-owned train operating companies and 21.8% employee-owned partnerships. 50% said that public ownership would improve punctuality of trains, 77.5% that ticket prices would be reduced, 44.5% that frequency would be increased and 64% that safety would be improved.

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NOR4NOR is supported by:
Clive Lewis MP Norwich South,
Norwich Green party, Norwich RMT,
GMB N24, Norwich Trades Council,
BBBR, Norfolk Unite Community,
TSSA, CATP and We Own It.

FOR A SAFE RAILWAY WE NEED GUARDS ON TRAINS

GUARDS ON six regions have taken industrial action on a scale not witnessed since the 1989 strikes on British Rail.

In the summer of that year, all RMT (NUR) rail workers went on strike once a week for six weeks, bringing the entire network to a halt with not a single train moving. Today, these co-ordinated strikes have rocked the private companies that have refused to negotiate over driver-only operation. Despite the huge public support for keeping safety critical staff on trains, the companies (Greater Anglia, South Western, Southern, Merseyrail, Arriva Rail North, Isle of Wight Island Line) have refused to guarantee that a guard will be on every train, arguing on Greater Anglia that trains with no guards would be run in unspecified 'exceptional circumstances'. On this region alone we have seen 8 days of strike action by guards and conductors with massive public support and NOR4NOR supporters joining picket lines.

The guards' dispute has become one of the vital connecting links between a failed privateers' railway and a new peoples' railway, bringing with it a widespread public debate about how to run the railway in the 21st century. Instead of the complete shambles of a huge number of private contractors, the guards have ushered in the alternative of a fully safe, fully accessible, and sustainable railway with secure jobs, affordable fares and transport investment which will link communities and join rail, bus, tram and bicycle in a way that benefits all of us.

Tyne & Wear Metro in Newcastle has just been taken back in-house by the local authority, showing that the tide is now turning.



RMT picket at Colchester station in November 2017.

AN INSIDER'S VIEW

Made Anywhere But in Britain

IF YOU'VE ever travelled on the branch lines of Norfolk, you've probably travelled on what is known in the industry as a 'Scud'.

Obscurely named after a clunky cold war Soviet missile system, the name is really quite appropriate as they are also outdated and obsolete. These ancient and rattling machines, which were literally developed from putting a bus on a railway chassis in the early 1990s, are hardly a fitting advertisement for rail travel. Abellio Greater Anglia have tried to roll this turd in glitter in the way only privatised Train Operating Companies (TOCs) know best: give them a fresh coat of paint and update the corporate branding on the outside to look good from afar, but save money and keep the old tired interior on the inside.

But the reality is that this old train is knackered. It should have been retired years ago and been replaced by a rolling programme of strategic national train renewals. But of course, such a thing doesn't exist, because privatisation keeps failing to deliver the long term stability to allow strategic plans to be delivered or seen through to the end: the goalposts keep moving and belligerence on the part of the Tory Government means they keep propping up the broken system even when presented with a chance to change things for the better, such as when the publicly owned East Coast franchise, created to keep the trains running when National Express walked away from their contract, paid £1 billion back into the treasury between 2009 and 2014.

If there's one thing the privatised railway is absolutely incompetent at, it is train (rolling stock) procurement, ie., building and buying new trains. The rolling stock is so old because for a multitude of reasons, there hasn't

been the steady influx of new rolling stock to replace worn out old stock. You need only look at the new Intercity Express Programme (IEP) trains being introduced on the Western and East Coast routes to replace the now forty year old HST125 trains to see how much of a mess we're in nationally. Private Eye has criticised much of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI)-esque deals behind the IEP train programme, which because of a high degree of financial risk to private investors, mean the programme is not cheap: an eye watering price tag £2.7 billion for 500 carriages. And we're paying for it too, that hard earned income tax you pay is effectively subsidising TOC profits and covering up for the failure of TOCs to procure new trains.

British Rail (BR) used to build its own rolling stock, had its own workshops and maintenance facilities and standard designs ensuring nationwide compatibility. BR owned the rolling stock and the maintenance facilities and had the benefit of cost savings that come with a natural monopoly, not to mention a world leading Research and Development department which made Britain a major exporter of rail expertise. All this went to pot when the railways were privatised by John Major's Tory government, with the inevitable fragmentation and its natural inefficiencies, such as duplicated management structures and loss of natural monopoly.

Rolling stock got sold off to Rolling Stock Owning Companies (Roscos), who now own 92% of all trains in the UK and was one of the biggest under reported financial scandals of privatisation, as undervalued assets made Roscos an overnight fortune, much like the undervalued shares in the Royal Mail privatisation deceived you and me, the taxpayer, of millions. British Rail Engineering

Ltd (BREL) was sold off, meaning that the building and maintenance of trains moved from a means of servicing a national transport system to another way for private finance and vested interests to extort profit from a public service. 'Market forces' and the ideological obsession with neoliberal free market ideas were ultimately responsible for former BREL facilities at York and Birmingham closing due to the uncertainty created over future orders in the post-privatisation era, thus decimating the British rolling stock building industry.

The inability of TOCs to commit to big capital expenditure in the volatile rail franchising market, combined with very weak national strategic direction from central government is partly why there has been such chronic under investment in rolling stock in East Anglia for several decades. At the extension of Greater Anglia's franchise in October 2016, an impressive fleet of over 1000 new carriages was announced. But dig a little deeper and it's more of the same – private finance investments profiteering from our real need for a public railway providing us a public service. Remember that firms like SL Capital Partners Ltd, who have invested in rolling stock for Greater Anglia aren't likely to be motivated by philanthropic public service over profit! Each layer of finance, contracting and sub-contracting throughout the whole ordering and manufacturing process dictates a multitude of firms, all taking their slice from the cake. It makes the old BREL arrangement look fantastically simple and sensible, doesn't it?

Whilst new trains are of course welcome in the region, it represents yet another missed opportunity. Like the many TOCs that are actually owned by subsidiaries of continental state run railways, rolling stock

procurement now siphons away the opportunity to rebuild British manufacturing and prevents the diversification of our economy, which is essential for financial resilience in a time of over-reliance on the service economy. The IEP trains are built in Japan, then shipped over to the UK to be assembled like a glorified Airfix kit of parts at a factory in County Durham, then given the dubious title of 'Assembled in Britain'. Oh how the mighty have fallen! Part of the deal brokered by Greater Anglia includes 378 carriages being built in Switzerland at a cost of £600 million and represents yet another missed opportunity to revive British train building.

For anyone travelling between Norwich and Yarmouth, it will be two years before new trains arrive and in the meantime the gridlock continues on the roads and the railway still sits idly by, bumbling along just like it has done for the past few decades. The branch lines of Norfolk are a hugely undervalued resource and a missed opportunity to get cars and lorries off the roads. It's no wonder with all this fragmentation that ticket prices are so high, as everyone in the business tries to take their cut, and these high prices deter people from taking the train over the car, or bus. It costs £5.50 for a Yarmouth to Norwich return on the bus and for that you get a leather seat and free WiFi. It's £10.30 on the train, and you get a 'Scud' with no legroom and no WiFi neither. When the new trains come, hopefully we'll get a bit of legroom and the internet, but you can be sure ticket prices won't be falling any time soon under the current regime. It's time to think seriously how we organise our railways, and start thinking about providing a service for passengers, not a business for customers. Another world is possible.

NOR4NOR PUBLIC MEETING

NOR4NOR HELD ITS second public meeting in Norwich on October 20th 2017. Here are the edited speeches. This well-attended meeting was chaired by Jan McLachlan of Norfolk Peoples' Assembly.

LESLEY GRAHAME

(Norwich Green party)

"Planning has an important part to play. And so do local railways. The big picture is a world of finite resources, especially the type that runs much of our transport – petrol/ diesel, oil. This is running out, and we know we need to leave much of what is left in the ground. We have to create a transport system based on sustainable alternatives. The government's decision to stop plans for electrifying the railways shows that it has its priorities upside down, and makes nonsense of their claims on clean air and cutting climate missions, never mind keeping Britain on the move..."

The most immediate issue is safety. We saw where cutting corners led us at Grenfell Tower - don't let's wait for a rail disaster to reverse the cuts to the things that make railways safe and trustworthy. Safety goes with accountability, not necessarily profitability. Accountability comes through democratic control, ideally, and through being subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), along with representation on boards. I think we'd all agree that FOI should extend to any company or person spending public money or providing essential public services...

So, return the railways to public ownership and re-regulate buses, investing in increased bus services especially in rural and other poorly served areas.

Make all public transport be fully accessible and step-free with a phase-in of free local public transport for young people, students, people with disabilities, and older people.

Invest in regional rail links and electrification of existing rail lines, especially in the South West and North of England, rather than wasting money on HS2 and the national major roads programme. Cancel all airport expansion and end subsidies on airline fuel, invest in low traffic neighbourhoods and safe, convenient networks of routes for walking and cycling, including safe places for learning to cycle, so people of all ages and those with disabilities can choose to make local trips on foot, by bike or mobility scooter."

JOHN MCDONNELL MP

"The Labour party position is for a safe railway network across the whole country. Passengers are being put at risk and we will not stand by and see that happen and that's why we support this [DOO] dispute. The rail companies want to break the unions and maximise profits and we are not going to tolerate this situation. Remember that Richard Branson said that the rail franchises were a license to print money. Accidents will happen and then people will turn around and say how did this happen? So there is 100% support from Jeremy Corbyn, myself and the front bench team for this dispute.

The only way to protect the services is public ownership. There is mass support for this around the country. BR is thrown at us as a failure but Catalyst analysed BR and found that it actually performed well but it was denied investment. It was set up to fail by governments so that eventually private companies would step in and make profits and get subsidies too. No wonder other foreign countries want a piece of the action- they can subsidised their own state railways! But there's a mood now here, an understanding of the way things are done (neo-liberalism) and people round the country are coming up with their own proposals for public ownership- don't forget the two successful state-owned regions: East Coast Mainline and Connex in the south-east- both effective and efficient. We say take the franchises back when they expire or are not delivered. We want the views of communities, unions and passengers, not top-down management but playing a key role in managing the services. The best people to run the railway are the workers and passengers and local community representatives."



MICK CASH

(RMT General Secretary)

"The Train Operating Companies get around £10 billion a year in fares, a lot of money. 1.7 billion passengers pay £10 billion but don't get much say! Is this a success story? I don't think so. In fact, it's about making profits for the few. Back in 2011, the McNulty report, commissioned under New Labour, said you could save up to £1 billion a year by getting rid of guards and all on-board staff, close ticket offices, and de-staff stations. DOO would be the default even with longer trains and 40% overcrowding. They now call it DCO or driver-controlled operation- one's spelt with a 'C' and one with an 'O' and that's the only difference. Last year we started a dispute with Southern and 400 guards members were on strike, the longest dispute now in our union's history. We are now in dispute with 5 companies and the nub of the problem is a human railway- the need for proper resources and staff. More staff not less! We are fighting for a safe, peoples' railway, accessible for all. So the battle needs to be sustained.

I have a letter here from Chloe Smith, MP for North Norwich, in which she talks about the 'hard-line RMT'. These RMT members are not revolutionaries, they are ordinary union members who voted in droves on Abellio for industrial action against DOO. Not 'hard-line RMT' but shame on you Chloe Smith for saying that! On First Great Western they have brand new trains but have kept the guard on the train. On Abellio ScotRail they have brand new trains but are keeping the guard on the train. Why is it good enough on Scotland but not for the people of Norwich? And who is paying for the new trains here, the passengers not the company! Taxpayers are paying for it! We now have a deal with the Welsh Labour government to keep the guard on the train with the new franchise. Grayling is in a time-warped based on McNulty. Companies like Abellio say they have no current plans to close ticket offices- what does that mean? 70% of stations are de-staffed on Arriva Rail North and they want to take guards off as well! Guards and drivers want a guarantee that safety critical staff will be on board to ensure there is a safe service on all trains."



From left to right: Mick Cash, John McDonnell, Lesley Grahame. With thanks to Dave Spencer Kent for the photographs.

REPORT



From left to right: Linda Laurie, Dave Welsh, Jan McLachlan, Mick Cash, John McDonnell

LINDA LAURIE

(Disabled People for Momentum)

"Today the reality for disabled people needing or wishing to travel by train is not a great deal different from 10 or even 20 years ago. We still are meant to give the privatized train companies at least 48 hours notice that we require assistance to get on and off trains, whether that assistance involves: being met at a drop off point at the station, such as a taxi rank; guidance to the platform and onto the train; a ramp to get a mobility scooter or wheelchair on to a train; guidance between platforms etc.

At smaller railway stations, where cuts have reduced staff numbers, we may find ourselves without the assistance we need to exit the train. If there is no guard on the train, or people in another part of the train require assistance from the guard, we may, and this has happened to me more than once, find ourselves stuck on the train until it arrives at the next station, where we have to get off the train, then get on another train and travel back to the station we wanted to get off at originally. When this happens the only option I have to avoid this situation is to put my feet in the doorway to prevent the train doors from closing.

Privatised rail companies have done little, if anything, to improve access for disabled people. We ask ourselves why that is – well we know that their main focus is not on providing a service, rather it is to make a profit and some of them aren't even any good at that. Over-crowding on trains is an issue for all of us and a huge barrier to many deaf and disabled people including those with mental health issues and learning difficulties. However Deaf and disabled people are not viewed as profitable and the cuts made by these rail companies, including staff cuts, do, as in many other instances, affect disabled people. Attacks on trade unionists and workers usually have a detrimental effect on disabled people.

All licensed train and station operators are required to establish and comply with a Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP), setting out how they will protect the interests of disabled users of their trains and stations. But research conducted by the rail regulator (ORR) in early 2014 found that of disabled travellers, only 10% had seen, heard or read information from train operators about disabled passengers' rights to assistance. Disabled People for Momentum stands in solidarity with trade unionists in their campaign to Keep the Guard on the Train. You can rely on our support. An attack on the rights of rail union members, is also an attack on the rights of deaf and disabled people."

ALTERNATIVES TO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

JANE LETHBRIDGE INVESTIGATES

THE REPORT *Alternative Models of Ownership* was commissioned by the Shadow Cabinet to inform discussions about future industrial policy.

Although it is not Labour Party policy, it does provide some insights into how the Labour Party is beginning to consider future economic and social policies and their links to a more democratic way of running organisations.

The report identifies the pursuit of short-term shareholder value as the main problem with private property ownership, which has led to increased inequalities and decisions which are not beneficial to long-term social and economic development. It explores the possibilities of cooperative ownership, municipal/locally-led ownership and national ownership. As well as arguing about the damage created by private property ownership, automation in the economy is discussed both in terms of a reduction in the number of jobs and as a radical change in the type of jobs. It concludes that automation will impact on the economy and the nature of work. It predicts that if there are no changes in the way in which work and businesses are organised then there will be job losses and rising inequalities. The only way of addressing these problems is to develop different types of work, new ways of organising working time and redistributing income and creating new jobs. The report argues that rather than see automation as just resulting in loss of jobs, particularly low-paid/low-skilled work, there could be benefits as long as work and the way it is organised are reformed.

The three forms of ownership are outlined with both advantages and disadvantages within current economic models, with suggestions about how a future Labour government could introduce legislation and public policies which would help these three forms operate more effectively.

Five types of cooperatives are discussed: worker cooperatives; consumer cooperatives; purchasing cooperatives; producer cooperatives; and multi-stakeholder cooperatives. Cooperatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who control the capital of their organisation. The legal framework in the UK is not as prescriptive as in many other

countries where a more precise definition is used, e.g. Italy. Examples of how cooperatives are run in France, Italy and Spain demonstrate their potential. In the UK, the differences between employee ownership and a worker cooperative are unclear. One of the problems facing cooperatives in the UK is that they find it difficult to access finance and, even in countries with a more favourable legislative environment, success is dependent on having secure access to capital. Two possible solutions to the problem are improved access to banking support networks or creating 'shelter' organisations which would provide direct access to capital.

Municipally and locally-led ownership draws from a long history of municipally owned organisations and can cover activities such as waste management, park management and the operation of public transport. Locally-led ownership refers to the involvement of local people in the decision-making of business organisations operating in a locality or region. It covers the sense of 'owning' the local economy rather than it being 'owned' by corporate interests, so that community interests are prioritised in any business expansion, leading to 'community wealth building'. This depends on the involvement of local government to create a supportive environment through its policies. The example is given of Preston, which has been working in partnership with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies to create 'community wealth building' by encouraging high spending local institutions, called 'Anchor Institutions', such as Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Constabulary and local colleges to procure goods and services locally. Other supportive activities in Preston include promoting credit unions and working with the local Chamber of Commerce to help retiring business owners sell their companies to their employees.

National ownership refers to public or state-owned enterprises which are created by government and operate commercial activities on behalf of government. Government may be a full- or part-owner and can provide some democratic accountability in the organisation of production. Examples of national public enterprises include the BBC, Network Rail and Highways England. There is evidence

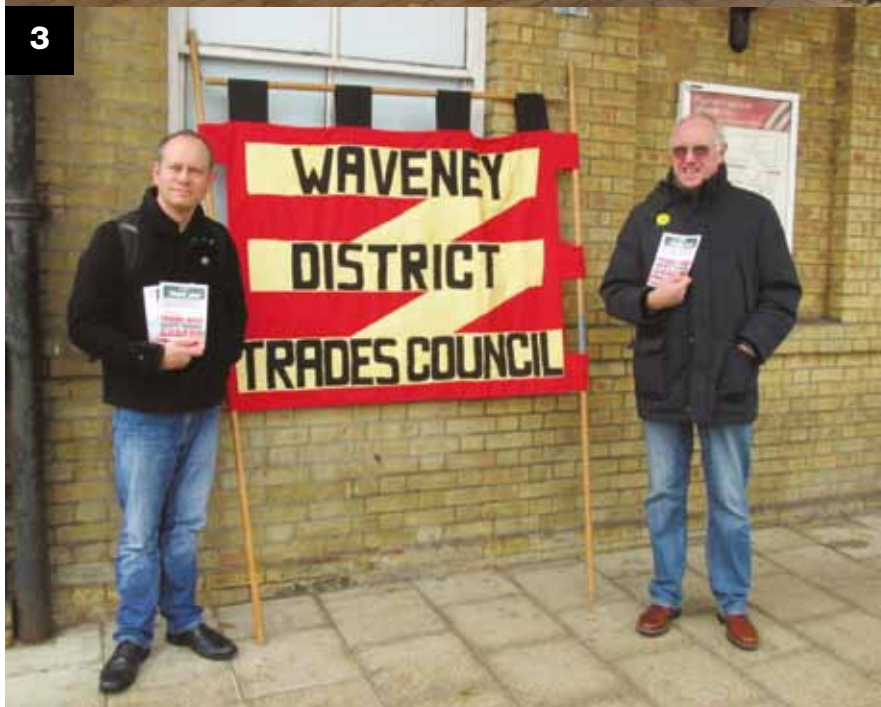
to show that publicly-run organisations are as efficient, or even more so, than private companies, which counters the argument used to justify the privatisation of many public enterprises in the UK in the 1980s. Publicly-owned enterprises are able to take a much more long-term view and borrow capital at a lower rate than private companies. They also provide services which are universally accessible for low and high income users, important in public services such as electricity and water. Many countries in Asia, with high rates of economic growth, have state-owned companies which provide long-term infrastructure support. The challenge for new state-owned enterprises in the UK is to create decentralised models which challenge the top-down model of many post-war state-owned enterprises and involve the workforce and stakeholders in decision-making. Some sectors may require different models of democratic control because they deliver services in different ways.

The report *Alternative Models of Ownership* challenges the dominant model of ownership and control and makes several recommendations for how a future Labour government could develop public policies which support alternative models of economic/social organisation. It recommends that key sectors of the economy are identified which should be the focus for action in relation to reversing privatisation, re-nationalisation and supportive legislation. A second recommendation is to draw up a list of public policies, including Right to Own, which would support democratic participation in economic decision-making, which would be opened to consultation with stakeholders. A third recommendation is the creation of a network of activists/experts to discuss issues of governance in collectively/publicly-owned organisations.

This report has implications for education at all levels. How can people be prepared for working in more democratically-run organisations? This needs a radical rethink of how people are either prepared for work or supported to work in different ways. Introducing the idea of how workers can be the centre of decision-making at work would have implications for their participation in democracy more widely. Educational institutions could also start to think about how they could operate on more democratic principles.

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PICTURE ROUND-UP OF ACTION AT STATIONS IN THE REGION IN 2017-18



- 1: RMT picket at Ipswich station
- 2: CATP fares protest at Liverpool St station
- 3: Waveney Trades Union Council at Lowestoft station
- 4: Ely station: fares protest at Ely station.
- 5: RMT picket at Clacton station

TALKING ABOUT THE RAILWAYS

JO HAMMOND TALKS ABOUT WORKING AT LIVERPOOL ST STATION IN THE 1990S

Well, I'd been on the Underground; this was the railway. It was partly to do with the turn, but I also loved transport, I loved trains, I loved travelling, so the railway was the place. OK, I'd have a cut in salary, but I would have free tickets and I didn't mind shift work. I applied to all the stations and then, lo and behold, Liverpool Street said 'OK'. I went for this test, it was Maths, English and Geography...

It wasn't privatised then. I was there fighting privatisation. I was having wonderful conversations with the passengers, because I was cleaning trains but also blowing the whistle, sending trains out. It's really funny when you learn to send the trains out, because you're really nervous at first, but it just comes automatically. ... [After privatisation] the trains were divided: the ones that went to Clacton and Norwich – of course, you had the Inter Cities that went to Norwich, and then you had East Anglia and West Anglia. Of course, West Anglia doesn't exist now.

I used to get up in the mornings at 4am, and get a bus at about 4:30am. It was wonderful riding on buses at that time in the morning: there'd be shift workers, cleaners and some partygoers who were going home on the buses. I used to really like it. Then you'd get to Trafalgar Square and change to a Number 11 bus. I'd see Big Ben and everything, and there was nobody around. It was the best time of the day I discovered. So, yeah, I did shifts. I think there were 3 shifts: 5 till 12; 12 till 8; there was an overlap again. But I did shifts, yeah; late shifts, too. Getting



home wasn't too difficult; and I worked weekends sometimes. I think I used to get something like £600 a month. That was in 1996, when I left; but then you'd have the free travel you'd get 10 free tickets to use in Europe.

Well, there were guards, but then the young people – women and men – were coming in to drive the new lightweight trains. I used to talk to the old guys – 'Aye up, duck!' – the ones from Derbyshire, who'd been on the steam engines, and they used to tell me about their lives and how they used to travel: they'd start at the back of the train and they'd move up to the front, shovelling coal; so many years doing that, and then they'd become firemen. They used to tell me how they used to spend the night sometimes in London if they were on the last turn. They used to tell me how, when they came into Liverpool Street, they'd have a pint and then go back. All that stuff's changed, of course. I remember taking to drivers about suicides, and stuff like that. There were far more suicides that I was aware of, on the Underground; but, with the railway, very often they didn't know they'd hit somebody, because they'd be going

so fast. With the Underground, they usually saw the person, so it was more traumatic for them. I did know train drivers on Liverpool Street who were really messed up by suicides. One guy insisted he wasn't, but about 6 months later he left. One guy, I remember, he was really cut up; but they give you time off, you have a psychologist.

Liverpool Street; it's even busier now. Of course, Stansted came into being when I was there. Sometimes I was on the Stansted platform. Then I'd have lively conversations with Irish people: "She's going home! I won't see her for..." "Don't worry." I remember this train coming in from Stansted and there was this Irish bloke fast asleep on the train. I said, "Excuse me, I think you're in Liverpool Street." "Am I in Stansted?" "No, you've been to Stansted and come back." He'd missed his flight, but they'd have a craic the night before they went, so they'd be half-drunk when they came in the morning to catch the train. It only happened to me once, but it did happen from time to time. Oh, we had a few passengers with Guide Dogs; one or two accidents – one passenger had his varicose vein burst or something.

I wasn't on the platform because we'd divided. I was in WAGN. The others went to 'East Coast'. I don't know what they called them, I've forgotten. You could choose more or less where you wanted to work – whether you wanted to go with 'them' or 'them'. I decided to go with WAGN because the guys I liked and was working with were on that side. For some reason they thought they were the elite, on the right hand side.

[When cleaning the trains] you always worked in twos, so the woman I was working with, she knew I was on the train. There was one very funny young guy who used to make me laugh. Sometimes when he worked with me I used to laugh so much it was ridiculous. We used to have some good laughs on the railway. There was another guy who came called Fergus – an Irish guy – and he was obviously just very, very funny. He used to make me laugh, even across platforms. I'd be in hysterics sometimes. The camaraderie was good. I was very matey with a lot of train drivers; all ages. We used to have interesting conversations. Most of the drivers were in ASLEF, and they voted against privatisation; and they all voted for John Prescott because they all thought he'd re-nationalise. I remember that.

Well, we had trousers or skirts to wear, and I did occasionally wear a skirt, but I did feel more comfortable in trousers. I remember WAGN had a Christmas party once in Hamilton Hall. It's part of the hotel; every station had a hotel. It was in the room there. I remember my Station Foreman saying, "She's got legs! Nice legs!" They didn't try it on with me too much. I also remember being told by my supervisor (ex-foreman) to address passengers as 'Sir' and 'Madam' and refer to them as customers not passengers. I refused. I said they were my equals and I showed them respect. by talking to them and answering questions patiently and helping them along the platform if asked.

CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL FOR OLDER PEOPLE

PETER RAYNER OUTLINES THE CASE

This article explores the similarities between the concessionary travel (Bus Pass) for older persons and the senior railcard and considers any advantages that might accrue from an amalgamation of the two documents as both these cards merely prove age and identification.

From the outset I should make it clear there is no hidden agenda within this article, it is not a first step to get the Bus Pass available on national rail. The proposal is motivated solely because I believe the train companies value the revenue generated by the million holders of the Senior Railcard and as there are 11 Million Bus Pass

holders in England to which can be added the Scottish and Welsh users which offers the potential of a very large and profitable client base.

I feel strongly after a lifetime in the rail industry that unless local rail opportunities are increased the Bus Pass will become "Beeching by the Back Door". With regard to the Bus Pass, I have dealt with a succession of Government Ministers since the Transport Act 2000 when the half price bus fare scheme was first introduced. I was in fact one of the two Advisers to the Transport Select Committee at the time. Ever since the government introduced the concessionary travel scheme, through the changes in 2002, 2006 and finally in 2008 there have been differing amounts of negative publicity, but overall the move has been of value to pensioners and we would strongly suggest, to society itself. Indeed some

areas have reported that the Concessionary Travel has generated additional non-concessionary revenue.

I have had some discussions at the Department for Transport and with the Minister to see if it were possible to conduct some research into patterns of travel behaviour and what might encourage, or indeed discourage, usage of the Railcard. That apart I believe the point has been reached where the commercial advantages to the Rail Industry are such that if the present eleven million holders of a Bus Pass could use it to buy reduced rail fares the increased income would make up for the loss of revenue on the 1 Million Senior Railcards presently sold.

It is not our intention that should the Bus Pass double for the Senior Railcard to request that what concessions are offered across the nation by different train companies should

be standardised. The card is to purely replicate the Senior Citizens' Railcard and to be valid for whatever concessions and constraints are laid down by the individual train companies.

There are of course administrative and perhaps other difficulties and from my own experience I recognise those difficulties exist but still I believe that if there is the political will to make this happen the advantages to Rail Companies will be considerable and ongoing. This pragmatic approach to help unravel the problems should not be seen as a dilution of NPC's objective.

It is for consideration therefore that: some Local Authorities offer the senior railcard as an alternative to the Bus Pass; some Local authorities offer the senior Railcard in addition to the Bus Pass; some Local authorities offer a discounted price for a senior railcard as well as the Bus Pass;

some Local authorities who have definable boundaries, PTE's offer free off peak rail in with the Bus Pass entitlement.

The advantages of the Train Companies accepting the Bus Pass as the Senior Citizens' Rail Card need further in-depth consideration. Set against the payment of the Rail Card there would be appreciable savings in administration, printing, financial allocation and other costs as in effect the government would carry the costs through the bus pass issuing procedures that exist nationwide. Furthermore the large costs generated with advertising in magazines and promotional literature would also be considerably lessened. Add to that the potential of revenue generated by the millions of Bus Pass holders and the increased profit that will likely accrue there from together with the taking up of off peak availability.

Grayling rescues Virgin on East Coast Line

BY PETE WILKS

Tied by an expensive contract to the East Coast line, Virgin Rail was saved at the last minute from an approaching juggernaut of £3b debt by Tory Transport Minister Chris Grayling.

But hero and heroine are alleged to have a scandalous relationship which is to be investigated by the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee. The affair has already caused the resignation, in protest, of Andrew Adonis, the Chairman of the Government's National Infrastructure Commission, and there have been calls for the Minister to resign.

It is alleged that taxpayers and passengers have been fleeced to protect Virgin Rail from the cost of its own folly, and Grayling from the consequences of his ideological blindness. Once again, a scandalous privatisation deal has left the public purse to bear the risk and the private corporations to pocket the profits. The bailout has its origins in the deal of 2015 in which Grayling awarded the franchise to a consortium of Virgin Rail and Stagecoach, whilst preventing a nationalised train operating company from bidding to continue its successful operation of the East Coast Line. A succession of private companies had failed to run the route profitably in the past, so a nationalised Directly Operated

Rail had been put in place. It proved to be much more successful and popular than its private sector rivals. However, Grayling's ideological belief in the superiority of private enterprise, plus a bid of £3.3b to be paid into the Treasury from Virgin Rail saw the franchise awarded to the consortium.

This bid proved to be wildly optimistic. It assumed a forecast of revenue growth which overestimated the likely increase in passenger numbers. It also banked on public investment to upgrade the track. Neither risk turned good for Virgin Trains, so forecast profits turned to losses. However, some private companies are like the banks, 'too big to fail'. Grayling stepped in and terminated Virgins contractual obligations to the Treasury, leaving taxpayers to bear the loss of £2b in promised revenue. Rather than make

Virgin pay its debts from its very lucrative profits on its West Coast franchise, the debt has been written off at public expense. Cue increases in fares to passengers and further cuts to rail infrastructure investment.

So who will run trains on the unprofitable East Coast Line? Graylings preferred solution is to ask Virgin Trains to run it as a public service on a 'not for profit' basis. Can sharks be asked to forgo meat? Well maybe, if future fat contracts can be offered. Should Virgin refuse the offer, then Grayling is said to be thinking about renationalising the line. This prospect must be deeply humiliating to the Tory Minister, who was ideologically opposed to nationalised train operations because they were 'public and bad' whereas Virgin was 'private and good'. It is time that Grayling faced the mess he has created and resigned.



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Why not become a NOR4NOR supporter? Or get your union branch or organisation to affiliate.

We are doing a 2018 passenger survey so please go to our website www.NOR4NOR.org.

Come to our NOR4NOR Rail Summit in autumn 2018 to carry through a debate on public ownership with topics including: building a network in East Anglia; planning for public ownership; how to fight for integrated rail and bus services.

NOR4NOR has received generous financial support from the following: Norwich & District Trades Union Council, Norwich RMT branch; Bring Back British Rail, GMB N24, Norfolk Unite Retired branch and the TSSA.



Useful contacts:

- Bring Back British Rail: bringbackbritishrail.org/franchises
- Action for Rail (rail union campaign): <http://campaign.actionforrail.org>
- Railfuture: www.railfuture.org.uk
- Campaign Against Tube Privatisation (CATP): janpollock@btinternet.com
- Norwich & District Trades Union Council: www.norwichanddistricttradesunioncouncil.org

- Over & Under: an oral history of rail, tube and bus workers in London and the South-East Region. Contact rima@britainatworklondon.com to be interviewed or go to www.britainatworklondon.com
- We Own It: info@weownit.org.uk
- RMT: info@rmt.org.uk
- TSSA: enquiries@tssa.org.uk
- ASLEF: info@aslef.org.uk
- Unite: www.unite-theunion.org

Timeline for Railway Nationalisation

- 1843** William Galt's 'Railway Reform' examines foreign railways and says they are 'far in advance' of Britain. He notes that these railways are either state-owned or operating under state-controlled tariffs.
- 1844** Railways Act: W. E. Gladstone recommends that railways be bought by the government but this is strongly resisted by the 'railway interest' in parliament and the Act omits any reference to ownership. The Times is delighted.
- 1865-74** continuous debate about 'state purchase' of the railways. Edwin Chadwick becomes a firm support of state ownership. In 1868, Raphael Brandon publishes 'Railways and the Public' calling for a National Railway Association. In 1873, the Earl of Derby says that public support has swung in favour of for nationalisation and in 1865 J.S. Mill says railways would be better worked by renting from the state. German railways are a mix of public and private ownership with Prussia having nationalised major railways. Hungary's railways are brought under state control between 1868 and 1890.
- 1880s** socialist organisations like the SDF, the Fabian Society and the ILP are all committed to nationalisation. On the left, 'Principles of Social Democracy' (1879) calls for a co-operative running of industry, the Labour Emancipation League calls for a collective ownership and 'Modern Socialism' calls for state ownership. The idea becomes Labour party policy by the 1920s (Labour & the New Social Order) and is carried out in 1948.
- 1892** Royal Commission on Labour hears the case for public ownership and Tom Mann says: 'I know from mixing up with workmen largely that a very much larger proportion of them now are favourable to the State control of the railways than was the case five years ago.'
- 1896** TUC commits to rail nationalisation.
- 1900** 2/3 of Russian railways in the hands of the state
- 1905** Italian railways fully nationalised
- 1906** General Election & threat of rail strike in 1907: state ownership is big news and Lloyd George says he is impressed with the 'great and growing discontent with the whole railway system.' Conciliation Boards are set up.
- 1908** Railways Nationalisation Society set up. The Anti-Socialist Union of GB supports 'Railway Nationalisation and its Supporters', a pamphlet attacking nationalisation. ASRS supports nationalisation.
- 1911** Will Thorne presents a TUC bill for nationalisation in the H of C. The RCA proposes a National Railways Board made up of representatives of 1/3 users of the railways, 1/3 elected reps of railworkers and 1/3 MPs.
- 1917/18** nationalisation of Russian railways
- 1919** state control of railways is widely seen as inevitable following WW1 but they are handed back to private control. RCA and ASLEF propose railways be handed to Ministry of Transport. DRG formed in Germany in 1924 and nationalised in 1937.
- 1933** London Passenger Transport Board formed. It is a public corporation and is run as a business with no workers on the Board. Morrison writes 'Transport and Socialisation' (1933).
- 1936-38** full nationalisation of French and Dutch national railways. Spain's broad gauge railways nationalised in 1941.
- 1948** railway nationalisation is part of Labour's programme of public ownership. India's railways nationalised in 1951.