



THE ROUTE: Showing the parts that are already open and the sections which need rebuilding

Dales link could be re-born

The magnificent former Midland main line through the Derbyshire Dales could be reopened, providing a new route from the Midlands to Manchester.

A campaign has recently been launched aimed at restoring a 13-mile missing link which would allow trains to run through from Derby to England's north west.

Ironically the route saw extra use shortly before it was closed, when traffic was deliberately diverted to it during the 1960s from the West Coast main line, when the WCML was disrupted by electrification work.

The high speed Midland Pullman diesel train provided a premium service for six years from London to Manchester but the through route was lost when the Matlock to Buxton section was closed by the Labour government in 1968.

Stephen Chaytow recently joined Railfuture and is now the prime mover behind this campaign, working closely with its founder from Matlock, Robin Greenwood. Stephen now reports on progress:

For the first time since the failed feasibility study of 2004, there is a serious proposal to renew the most direct rail link between Manchester and the East Midlands, by rebuilding the missing Matlock to Chinley /



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12.03 pm	St. Pancras	6.10 pm		2.10 pm	London Road	2.33 pm

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SWANSONG: Premium service just before closure of the route

Buxton section, closed more than 50 years ago. Last year, the heritage operator, Peak Rail, tendered for a feasibility study to assess a freight-led private reinstatement.

The impetus for this is the increasing passenger numbers on the Manchester-Sheffield Hope Valley route and consequent pressure on Transport for the North to add new services to a busy line.

The Buxton-based quarry operators see their business operations suffering. With their

stone trains leaving Peak Forest from a standing start, it takes four miles of climbing through Edale to reach an adequate line speed, conflicting with passenger paths and holding up the services behind them.

Currently, this is the only route available to take limestone and aggregates out by train.

With the heritage Peak Rail operation as the leading stakeholder and lobbying behind a veil of non-disclosure agreements, little detail has yet reached the public domain.

It is thought that Peak Rail's preference for a private reopening means that they would stand a better chance of implementing their own community rail proposals, rather than risk being swept aside by Network Rail in a full public opening.

However, this assertion is challenged by many within Railfuture who cite the North York Moors Railway operation on Network Rail track between Grosmont and Whitby.

Peak Rail has supported the inauguration of MEMRAP (the Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership) to start a public debate on a topic already attracting much interest.

The Peak National Park Authority is however concerned at the potential threat to its now well-established Monsal Trail (for cyclists and walkers) along much of the route.

Amid these complications, Railfuture East Midlands branch members are now supporting the efforts of MEMRAP to roll out a debate and campaign presence in the Dales area.

A meeting of MEMRAP was held in February at Robin Greenwood's home in Matlock.

Anyone requiring further details should contact either Ian Clark or Stephen Chaytow from Railfuture East Midlands or email: schaytow@gmail.com