

Friends of Dore and Totley Station – FoDaTS

Happy New Year - January 2017 Newsletter



2016 – a year of delays, standstill, frustration & foundations being built?

Why the snowplough? It's seasonal, but typifies what happens on railways. We need to plough on!

On 1st December 2010 Sheffield was hit by heavy snow, but the lines were kept clear down the Hope valley. On the Midland mainline trains were severely delayed due to snow getting in places it shouldn't further south, but normal service was resumed in a couple of days. Amazingly, Cross-Country trains weren't subject to delays because the worst snow didn't fall on their routes. Hope Valley trains were cancelled for a week, despite the plough passing up and down the line at will. Apparently there was a danger of large icicles in the long tunnels crashing through a drivers' cab window and causing injury – or something else. Nothing is straightforward when operating trains.

What went wrong in 2016? One or two things

Northern! At the end of 2015 everything was on hold as the old Northern franchise wound down and the new Arriva teams prepared to take over in April. They had, and still have, great plans for improvements. Unfortunately it's one thing to write grand plans on paper, it's another to put them into practice.

In the immediate changeover period many posts were held by interim managers who had been appointed as shadows by Arriva and were not expecting to take long term positions. Several long standing old Northern employees took the opportunity to retire (including our designated station manager) and it has taken until now for all posts to be redefined, filled and roles reallocated. We were only advised of our new station manager on Monday this week. It's going to be a few more weeks/months before things settle down.

They've allowed themselves 44 months to get things properly moving, so we need patience.

Network Rail! At the end of 2015 we were getting ready for the public inquiry into the Hope Valley Capacity Scheme. It took 3 weeks, ending on 25th May. We can't blame Network Rail for this, but the inspector's full report only got to the Department for Transport on the 15th November. Their planned date to start work on the scheme was May 2017. It seems unlikely they can get boots on the ground by that date. At present we can't know more and must anticipate a start date delayed by 6-12 months. Network Rail have major delays on numerous other projects, including massive cost over runs, so they have no incentive to hurry.

Department for Transport! The DfT advise that they have to give full consideration to the inspector's report and that should take no more than 6 months. They have other projects to consider first. We are aware that there are a number of objections from the Hope Valley end. Most

should be relatively easily accommodated. However, one objector in particular placed as many obstacles as he could in the way of a loop at Bamford, Grindleford, or anywhere else in the Hope Valley. We can only hope the inspector has found ways to satisfy them all to the DfT's satisfaction. Inevitably there are likely to be some adjustments to what finally gets approved for the whole scheme and that will need to be taken into account by Network Rail before starting work.

Sheffield City Council, SYPTE and the Sheffield City Region! Where do we begin? SYPTE own D&T station car park which is leased to Northern. Sheffield City Council are the planning authority and had responsibility for transport policy, but that's now passing over to the Sheffield City Region. As with Northern there are massive personnel changes and policy decisions being made. Cuts in funding. Changed procedures and responsibilities. Political upheavals. Is the region going to get a mayor? Will Chesterfield and Dronfield be part of it? Anything could happen. Who will be responsible for what, and where's the money coming from? Watch this space.

ACoRP - the Association of Community Rail Partnerships. FoDaTS is a member of this body that co-ordinates station and line interest groups like ourselves. Part of the Northern franchise agreement is that they have to be more engaged with the local communities and much cash will be channelled through them. We've attended several meetings. However, they are having to expand their organisation very substantially, and like Northern are still settling down with a more than doubled team, bringing new roles and responsibilities.

Northern rolling stock. Hopes of receiving new trains for our line are limited to refurbished trains with free wi-fi, improved doors and toilets, and better customer display screens. Pacers go before 2020. However it's possible the refurbished stock may be delayed as cascading of electric trains to other areas is suffering as a knock on effect of the delayed Great Western electrification scheme!

Northern timetable improvements. It had been hoped to improve some of the services with extra trains once the cascaded stock was received and refurbished, hopefully in December this year. In our case it seems unlikely Northern will be able to improve our service significantly before the Hope Valley scheme is completed, so this may be academic. Summer 2018 might be possible.

Car parking. Put bluntly, nobody has any money to add to the current provision.

But now for some positives from FoDaTS, and Northern

FoDaTS membership has been slowly creeping up, be it by adding email addresses or on Facebook. Amongst our numbers we have a very wide variety of skills and experiences and welcome more. We have former senior railway professionals with experience of timetabling, signalling and all types of train operations. A recent new member has a firm that designs and builds railway station shelters and kiosks in other UK areas. We know of at least two, and possibly three, people who would be interested in operating some sort of kiosk on the station at morning rush hours.

Member Jeremy Dench has completed a survey of **car park occupancy** which confirms our view that it's totally inadequate, being full every weekday. It's hard to prove how many cars parked nearby are related to the station, so that needs more work. Over a 5 week period the maximum number of disabled spaces used was 3 – out of 7 available spaces. We are taking this up with Northern. This provision is laid down by law, so getting dispensation to get it reduced even to 5 places may be difficult. Removing the 7 large places to make 10 standard spaces makes sense to us, but that seems to be another legal requirement! Cycle provision is currently adequate, but it's winter and we need to look at that again in spring.

Member Glynn Waite is closely monitoring train punctuality. Oddly, many trains at D&T run a few minutes early as well as those that run late!

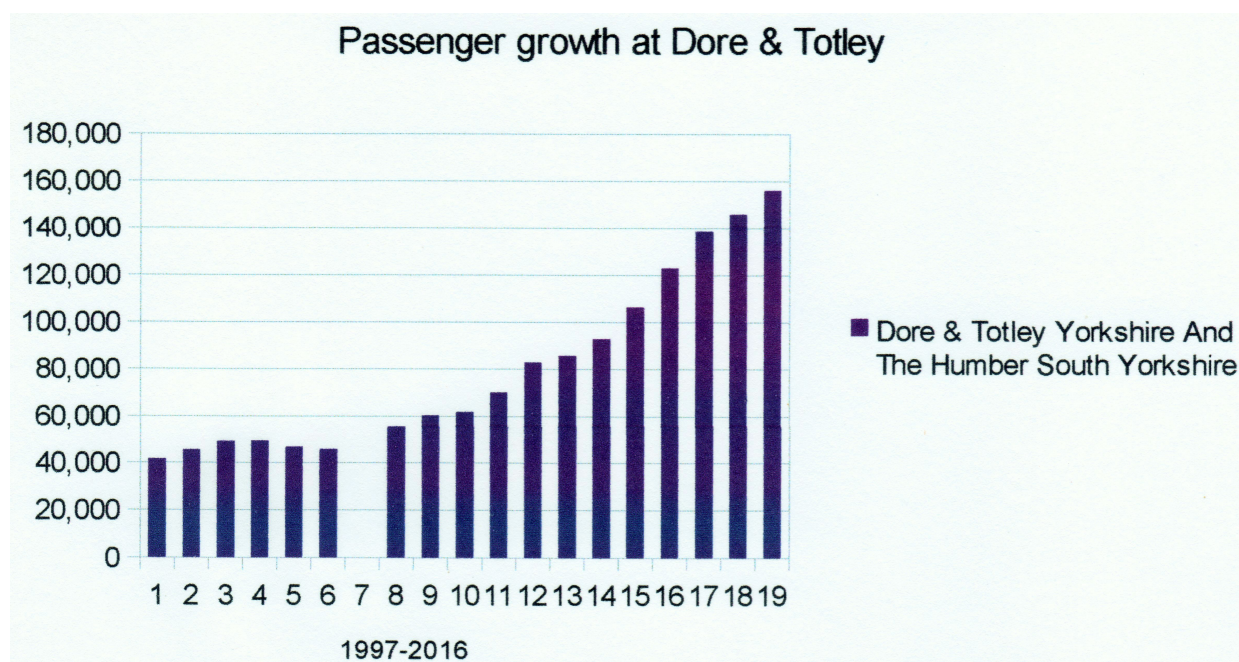
The ticket machine, TVM, is OK when it works. That isn't often enough. Northern are aware, and may be going to replace it. In the meantime if it fails please call 0800 600 2020, option 3 and tell them. It seems that's the only way they can sometimes be aware. When reporting please get a reference number, it should start NFM. If possible let everyone know by adding it to our Facebook page, or send us an email so someone else can pass the word.

Manning the station. There are no plans for having anyone there all day, or under cover, but the two men on the platform from about 7-10 am are collecting a lot more revenue than previously! As a lot of our case for better station facilities is dependent on the passenger numbers using the station this should be helpful. Unfortunately it won't have full effect until the 2017-18 figures are released as this only started 3 months into the 2016-17 period.

Manning the trains. I'm sure we're all aware of the industrial dispute on Southern trains regarding Driver Operated Operation (DOO). As part of their franchise agreement Northern are expected to move in a similar direction. The unions are balloting as I write! Northern's position is stated as follows; "There will be a gradual introduction of Driver Controlled Operation (DCO) on parts of the Northern franchise, with the driver being responsible for all safety aspects of the train, including operating the train doors. This will free up the second member of staff on board to focus on customer service – including by helping those with mobility impairments or other disabilities – selling and checking tickets and providing a sense of security. Trains will only operate without a second member of staff on board where it can be demonstrated that passengers will still be able to purchase a ticket at the station or on-board the train, that they will still have access to appropriate information about the service and that they will feel no less safe and secure."

As far as we can tell, assuming this comes into operation on our line conductors will still be aboard but the driver should be able to get the doors open a bit quicker. Closing them seems to be more debateable! It has the potential to marginally improve punctuality. On safety, our trains of no more than 4 carriages aren't the same as the very busy 12 coach trains on Southern, with their incredibly busy platforms. There are still serious issues for curving and dark platforms.

Passenger numbers. Annual passenger statistics for 2015/16 show Dore & Totley up from 2014/15 145,956 to 155,854, an increase of 6.78%. That's above the national average. We think the numbers are too low due to being estimated from ticket sales. The last 19 year's growth is here.



Northern Rail engagement

We've been engaging with the new Northern franchise team. We've attended a presentation in Manchester and heard many good things are to come. There are lots of roles we're having to get

our heads around. Alison Bell is our Stakeholder Manager, East Region. Carolyn Watson is Community & Sustainability Director. John O'Grady is also a Stakeholder Manager, East Region, job sharing with Alison. Alan Hope is now Station Manager, South Yorkshire. Richard Isaacs is Regional Community and Sustainability Manager. Paul Barnfield is the Regional Director East Region. We believe Jackie Lawson is still responsible for the fabric and surrounds of the station, day to day maintenance sub-contracted to Carillion

If you're confused it's understandable, but there are great plans. Exactly how all these people fit in to those plans we're still trying to confirm. However, Richard came down to see us before Christmas, within 6 weeks of starting his job. He has about 170 stations to cover. He's returning with Paul Barnfield later this month when we, and the Friends of Dronfield Station, will be trying to put a very strong case for our station/s.

They've set aside £38 million for station improvements over the franchise period and we believe some of that should be spent at Dore & Totley. We're looking into them funding plans for a canopy on the existing station, possibly to be provided separately from the main station redevelopment. We think the Station Improvement Fund should also be able to provide 3 planters to go on the platform.

A lot of paper work is now needed to get us fully up and running. We need to be safety checked. We have to work in pairs on the station so one can be look out, and we must wear hi-viz jackets. This is necessary to meet Northern's insurance conditions for Health and Safety management and to confirm we are allowed to do whatever we're doing. Little things are important. We can't use a hosepipe – people might trip, or water could be squirted onto live electrical equipment and kill us. Our new station manager has to agree whatever we plan to do. That means we have to put in detailed online plans – but the forms required only have tiny boxes for the information!

Hopefully it won't be very much longer before all these irksome formalities are completed and we can make some real visible progress. So far all we've managed is a poster on the station. In the meantime our Secretary Nick Barnes is keeping a list of anyone prepared to help with gardening and other duties.

Step forward Andrew Walker, Project Officer High Peak & Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership

I first met Andrew at a meeting of the Hope Valley Rail Users Group (I attend their meetings to keep in touch). Dore & Totley is very fortunate in being under the wing of this organisation and it is they who have provided us a start up grant of £250. We have no other funds and don't charge any subscription. Andrew is helping us with our attempts to bring improvements to the station and his organisation, as well as ACoRP, will be of help to channel any appropriate funds our way.

Friends of Dronfield Station, FoDS. Both Deputy Chairman Ken Wheat and I try to attend their meetings and they have been most helpful in providing guidance during this formative period for FoDaTS. They're doing a tremendous job and we have a very long way to go to catch them.

Website and Facebook. When attending the FoDS meeting earlier this week I was pleased to find we are currently ahead of them in these two areas, see below for our details.

Rail North. Once we get sorted out with Northern we'll be pressing them next to see what they may be able to do to encourage TPE to stop a few more of their trains to fill some of the 2 hour gaps in our current service, before the improvements at the station are completed.

Concluding

The next few years will see major changes at Dore & Totley. We intend to supply meaningful input, ensuring that the needs of users and local residents are as well satisfied as possible. Please lend

your support, and ask any other like minded people to join.

We normally hold committee meetings on the second Tuesday of January. March. May, July, September, and November, the next on 10th January at 7.30 at Totley Library. If you'd like to come along please contact our Secretary, Nick Barnes, or myself. You'd certainly be welcome to observe, and maybe get more involved in due course.

We hope to have an open meeting in February at the library after we've seen Paul Barnfield and digested all the formalities Northern may require.

You can contact us by sending an email to; [Secretary, FoDaTS](#)

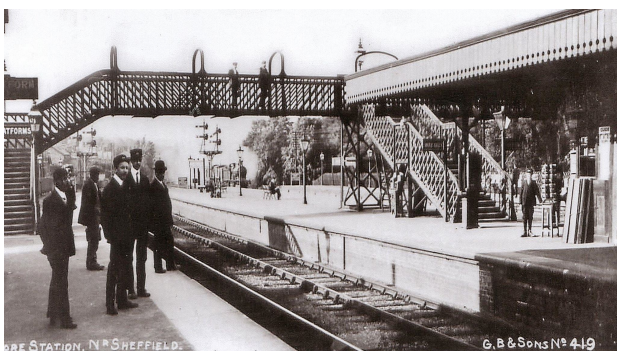
You can also find and message us on Facebook - just go to; [FoDaTS Facebook](#)

Look in from time to time to see the latest news - and make constructive comment, please!

See our excellent website set up by Derek Gillibrand; [FoDaTS website](#)

Chris Morgan, [Chairman FoDaTS](#)

Deputy Chairman; Ken Wheat, Secretary; Nick Barnes, Treasurer; John de Bartolome Committee; Dawn Biram, Ian Cox, David Crosby, Derek Gillibrand, Joe Otten



A real railway station, early 1920s, had become this derelict shell by 1979.



Memory says there may have been a fire and by 1983 we got this. But by 1985 it had all gone!

What can we have by 2020?