

Moving

After many years (21), and with a heavy heart, we have recently relinquished our offices at Crystal Palace station. There were several reasons for this, including:

- in the post-Covid world, having a fixed office space has become less important;
- a reduced requirement to keep paper records has reduced the need for storage space;
- a couple of staff members have moved away from the area;
- there has been an unsatisfactory security situation around the station which neither station operator ARL nor the British Transport Police have been able to resolve;
- despite our having our own solar panels, the energy costs of heating a Victorian building during the Winter are not small;
- with their enormous budgetary deficit, current main leaseholders Transport for London have not managed to keep the structure of the building in a state which is acceptable to us;
- our lease period was coming to an end anyway.

However, these problems pale into insignificance given the wider problems in the railway (when are we going to be able to get on with delivering the post-Covid railway in Britain, with an appropriate budget?) and (inter)national economic and political conditions.

Despite all this, the Company is still very much in business. Ongoing regular streams of work include assessing revenues at risk for Great Western Railway, South Western Railway and Heathrow Express, and undertaking Service Quality audits for half a dozen different TOCs. Those are

complemented by continuing advice to a range of passenger and freight companies, and others, such as Norske Tog (the Norwegian state rolling stock leasing company). Recent one-off projects have included supporting Cadenza Consulting in their assembly of a Strategic Outline Business Case for re-opening the railway between Oxford and Carterton via Witney (see picture below), and providing background information to support EMR with their station development projects. More on these projects is set out overleaf.

In the meanwhile, we are continuing to work on-line, and look forward to hearing from you by e-mail for the vast majority of the time. The registered address should only be used for official documentation e.g. hard copies of contracts.



The old station site at Witney may or may not provide potential for a new one: it is now in an industrial estate, and the route to it complicated by the need to cross the A40 bypass – twice. An alternative site may be more cost-effective, if enabling fewer other socio-economic benefits.

The Railway Consultancy Ltd

Managing Director: Dr Nigel G Harris.

Senior Consultants: Richard Talbot and Andy Wakeford.

Senior Associates: Chris Phillimore and Nigel Williams.

Consultant: Jide Ehizele

e-mail: info@railwayconsultancy.com **Website:** www.railwayconsultancy.com

Local Area Studies

Most train companies know a lot about their passengers, mainly from ticket sales data and from surveys they may carry out. However, the rail industry typically knows rather less about non-passengers or those that use the station facilities but not necessarily for train journeys.

East Midlands Railway's Infrastructure & Property Development team worked with The Railway Consultancy to lead on gathering data and engaging with residents and businesses for six locations on their network: Derby, Sheffield, Nottingham, Beeston and Kettering.

The research conducted reviewed three areas:

- (iii) market research (conducted by our colleague Mary-Anne Berendt) to gain local resident and business feedback.
- (i) an analysis of bus services to identify any interchange gaps ; and
- (ii) an analysis of local plans, to understand other developments planned in the vicinity of stations.

This research provided an opportunity for key stakeholders to input into any future improvements to their local station provisions, capture non railway user's feedback and gather supporting data. The findings could be used if any future opportunities arose to develop the station's infrastructure and provisions to improve the overall customer experience.



The footbridge at Beeston attracted considerable criticism from local stakeholders

CWORC, Oxfordshire CC

After several years of local lobbying, which resulted in the submission of an application to the Restoring Your Railway fund, Oxfordshire County Council invited tenders for the professional analysis of the potential for re-opening a railway from Oxford to Carterton via Witney.

The successful team was led by Julian Sindall of Cadenza Consulting, and included support from the Railway Consultancy Ltd, primarily in the tasks of demand forecasting, operational planning, and construction of an economic case.

Following discussions with stakeholders such as the Department for Transport, Network Rail and First Great Western, it appeared that there were relatively-few service options, once Oxfordshire CC had set out its requirements for a half-hourly non-diesel service. However, we did note that combining the Carterton service with the proposed Cowley branch would lead to a more cost-effective outcome for the latter.

The work involved for the demand forecasting was more involved. We constructed a demand forecasting model using our GCOST™ spreadsheet model. This covered around 20 local zones and 20 more distant ones, between which we examined the generalised cost (trip difficulty) by car, bus and train. The calculations from this were applied to a base trip matrix derived from Census data and more recent information about specific developments (new housing in Witney and Carterton, plus city-centre developments in Oxford).

Perhaps the most interesting finding was that car journey times into Oxford from the West are expected to increase by *half an hour* over the next ten years. This provides for considerable potential for public transport, but the bus priority measures currently being put in place appear to be necessary but insufficient in the long-term: they have neither the capacity nor journey time benefits of the proposed rail service.

The tricky part of the economic appraisal is that there is no 'do-nothing' case: Oxford will lose its economic vitality, and individuals their job prospects if the city's transport does indeed deteriorate as expected without the railway. The County Council is therefore now deciding what steps to take next.

More STPs

Having successfully completed 148 Station Travel Plans for SWR in 2022, RCL completed STPs for the remaining 38 SWR-managed stations in early 2023. These included passenger surveys, site access audits and analysis of rail industry data, and led to the production of a series of potential actions that can improve access to these stations by all modes, focusing particularly on sustainability. As the 38 stations were amongst the smaller and lightly used stations, attention was often primarily on how to make access for pedestrians and cyclists easier.

We think that SWR and RCL have now produced more Station Travel Plans than any other operator, demonstrating SWR's commitment to working with stakeholders to maximise the environmental advantages of rail.



Millbrook (left), Holton Heath (upper) and Mottisfont Dunbridge (lower) all have access issues for pedestrians – but in utterly different environments

Consultancy Contacts

The Railway Consultancy provides services across areas such as demand forecasting, operational planning, strategy and business development; for more details see our website www.railwayconsultancy.com.

Nigel G Harris

If you want to contact specific members of staff, please use the e-mail convention:
firstname.secondname@railwayconsultancy.com

Individual staff may provide their mobile phone numbers for ongoing contact; given his lecturing commitments, Dr Harris would like this to be used for texts only please.

Publications

Still available from www.anharris.co.uk: “Designing and Maintaining the Urban Railway” and “An Introduction to Railway Operational Planning”. An up-dated version of “Wheel: Rail Interface” is (still!) in preparation.

