

Open-access Red Arrows 'fly' in Spain

Spain has embraced open-access competition on its high speed lines with the launch at the end of 2022 of new operator Iryo's Red Arrow trains.

The first commercial services started between Madrid and Barcelona, and Iryo took a party of guests along the Madrid-Valencia corridor in November, with one of its 20 new Frecciarossa ETR 1000 trains making its debut in Spain.

The Iryo consortium, made up of Air Nostrum, Trenitalia and Globalvia, has a licence to operate for the next 10 years and its Red Arrow trains will also serve Seville, Malaga and Alicante.

Iryo will operate 30% of the high speed trains on these corridors, and will compete with national rail company Renfe and also with the Spanish branch of SNCF, Ouigo España.

Its main stakeholder Trenitalia operates similar trains in Italy which are licensed to operate in France, Spain and Italy.

Services to Valencia began in December, with Sevilla and Malaga starting in March and Alicante in June.

ALLRAIL, the alliance of rail's new operators, wants competition between different operators on all high-speed rail routes in Europe.

Its secretary general Nick Brooks travelled on Iryo's inaugural service.

He said: "It is great to see how commercially driven open-access services – such as Iryo – are making long-distance rail more attractive and winning travellers away from less sustainable transport modes, namely airlines and cars."

The Frecciarossa train is built by Hitachi-Bombardier, and promoted as having a Spanish heart and Italian style, the highest level of comfort in Spain, as well as the "highest quality" wifi.



railaction

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Standstill future for train operator?



The government is expected to grant a new contract to Arriva in October to carry on operating the CrossCountry rail network. Arriva's subsidiary XC Trains Ltd has been running CrossCountry for the past 15 years.

The franchise extension will allow it to run for another four years, with the possibility of increasing it to eight. There are no plans to improve the quality or quantity of services. A value for money review could theoretically lead to further cuts. The 2007 franchise was originally expected to end in 2016 but has been

Hot topics

Hot topics for Railfuture at the moment are:

- 1 The future of ticket retailing
 - 2 Fares reform
 - 3 The March fares rise
- Please consult the website and provide input to your Railfuture branch.

The Railfuture board is currently considering:

- 1 The structure of the industry
- 2 Areas to focus on for operational improvement
- 3 How to reduce fares complexity

What's on

Many rail-related events are listed on Railfuture's website:

railfuture.org.uk/events

Railfuture conference

The next Railfuture conference will be in Leeds on Thursday 30 March 2023

You can book your place at: railfuture.org.uk/conferences

extended with contracts awarded by the Department for Transport. The existing contract began in October 2020.

CrossCountry operates long-distance services, such as Plymouth to Edinburgh, but provides many crucial inter-city links at Leeds, Birmingham, Reading, Doncaster, Newcastle upon Tyne, Coventry, Bristol, Manchester, Nottingham, Gloucester, Leicester, Glasgow and Cardiff, as well as Stansted airport.

There were high hopes in 2007 when the franchise was awarded. The then managing director Andy Cooper welcomed staff from Virgin CrossCountry and Central Trains and promised a fresh vision, more and better trains, high quality service on board, environmentally friendly ways of working and encouraging modal shift to rail. CrossCountry does not manage any stations.

The German national rail operator Deutsche Bahn bought Arriva, which is based in Sunderland, in 2010 for £1.6 billion. DB tried to sell Arriva in 2019 but abandoned the idea after "bids were too low". There have been reports that DB is attempting to revive the sale.

Railfuture is preparing a submission to the Department for Transport on CrossCountry after consulting Railfuture branches.



Left: One of the inadequate bike storage cubby holes on a CrossCountry train serving Stoke-on-Trent in 2022. This was deemed adequate for two bikes. Only two pre-booked bikes were allowed on the train

Railfuture member of the year 2023

Do you know an individual Railfuture member who has contributed to the success of the organisation? Perhaps they have raised the profile of Railfuture in their local area? Or they may volunteer helping run their local branch. Whoever they are, if you think they deserve recognition, we would like to hear about them. Railfuture welcomes nominations for the Member of the Year 2023 award. The award will be presented at the Railfuture AGM in July 2023.

Please send up to 500 words explaining why they deserve to be recognised.

Any Railfuture individual members can be nominated.

This award is separate from the Rail User Group Awards.

The deadline for nominations to be received is 21 May 2023.

For further details or to submit a nomination please email membership director Wendy Thorne at wendy.thorne@railfuture.org.uk



Julie Boston 1934-2022

Farewell to rail champion Julie

Bristol-based rail campaigners have lost their inspirational activist Julie Boston who died in October.

Friends of the Severn Beach Line was formed in 1995 to protest against line closure threats.

FoSBR's first action was to invite residents to Avonmouth station with buggies and bicycles to show that buses were not a suitable substitute for trains.

Julie picked up the campaign reins with a view to not only saving but improving the train service.

She became a familiar face at Bristol City Council meetings, then later West Of England Combined Authority, making a vocal case for local rail.

In 2007, following pressure from FoSBR and others, Bristol City Council agreed to fund extra services on the Severn Beach line for an initial three years.

Passenger numbers immediately rose by 60%, and double-digit growth continued until Covid.

In 2020, despite the Covid restrictions, Julie and friends managed to celebrate FoSBR's 25th anniversary by organising small group outings by train – the "FoSBR Sixes". In 2021, a long-held ambition was achieved when the Severn Beach Line

Railfuture Lottery

Railfuture Lottery profits go towards the Fighting Fund which supports the campaigns our members are working on.

For a small sum of £12 per year for 12 entries, you can take part and win one of six prizes every month.

Multiple entries are possible and taking part is easy – contact

lottery@railfuture.org.uk

and decide how many entries you want every month and how you would like to pay: via online banking, Paypal or cheque.

With 72 winners every year and increased prizes in the December draw, give it a try – who knows, you could easily be a winner!

Railfuture press releases

Railfuture press releases can be read in full at

railfuture.org.uk/Press-releases

A review of other Railfuture appearances in print and broadcast media can be seen at

Railfuture in the news
www.railfuture.org.uk/Railfuture-in-the-news

moved on to a largely half-hourly timetable, Monday to Saturday as far as Avonmouth, hourly to Severn Beach.

Julie was very pleased with the direct service from Severn Beach line stations to Weston-super-Mare.

With her indomitable enthusiasm, she encouraged many groups to make the trip with her.

Her interests were not confined to trains. She also campaigned for public footpaths, public libraries, public toilets and buses.

Ideally an event or action or walk would encompass several of these campaign strands, and involve a creative element such as poetry, banners, fancy dress or music.

Many FoSBR members were inspired to get involved by Julie's indomitable enthusiasm, through both campaign disappointments and successes.

FoSBR would not exist today without her cajoling and charm.

FoSBR's Carol Durrant said: "Julie was an amazing campaigner who never gave up. Her tenacity not only gave us courage when we wondered if anything would change but also inspired and brought results.

"Her energy levels always amazed me and left me feeling tired! The Severn Beach trains and indeed all Bristol services must be her legacy."

Former FoSBR Chair Bernard Lane said: "Julie inspired many people to act. I would not have got involved if it was not for her and her encouragement.

"Her determination saved local lines and services and led to the start of half-hourly local services."

Current FoSBR chair Rob Dixon said: "Farewell Julie! We will miss your stubbornness, energy and imaginative campaigning spirit.

"FoSBR, now known as Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways, will continue to campaign for rail at the core of an integrated transport network for Bristol, Bath and the West of England."

Come to Leeds with Railfuture

It is still possible to book your place for Railfuture's annual national conference in Leeds on Thursday 30 March.

The Railfuture special day starts at 0915 and ends at 1630.

The conference will focus on how campaigners can fight for a bigger, better railway at a time when money is tight.

The aim is to find ways of showing how the railway can contribute to decarbonisation and levelling up by attracting passengers and freight to use the railway.

How can investment be targeted if the railway is no longer able to rely on commuters who travel to work each day?

Sessions at the conference include the value of new railway lines and stations, making trains more family friendly, how the railway is working for passengers, engaging young people, increasing freight traffic, encouraging more women to

Join our winning team of volunteers

Railfuture is winning the argument for more investment in rail but we need more active campaigning members to ensure it continues to have influence within the railway industry.

Our members are an essential part of the organisation. We need more of them!

We will shortly be setting up a working party to look at ways we can attract more members. Ideally we will start with a physical meeting and any follow up meetings that are needed may be online. If you have ideas and would like to be part of this small team we would like to hear from you. For further details, please email membership director Wendy Thorne at

wendy.thorne@railfuture.org.uk

work in rail, and making the railway more accessible and inclusive for all. The price for members is £50, with a reduced price of £35 for students. It includes lunch and refreshments. To learn more and to book, please visit www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

This conference had to be postponed from September 2022 because a rail strike was called for the day of the conference.

The conference will go ahead this time regardless of any industrial action on the railway. The Railfuture website will be updated with other travel information in due course.

Speakers

(Subject to change)

- ▶ Nick Flynn and Abby Taylor, Family Friendly Trains (talking about the campaign to make trains more family friendly)
- ▶ Stewart Palmer, vice-president and director, Railfuture (talking about Railfuture's view on whether the railway is working for passengers). Stewart was previously managing director of South West Trains
- ▶ Karen Bennett, community rail education development officer, Community Rail Lancashire (talking about how young people can be engaged in the railways)
- ▶ Phil Smart, assistant policy manager, Rail Freight Group (talking about rail's role in the future movement of freight). Phil is also a councillor at Ipswich Borough Council with a strong knowledge of transport matters
- ▶ Anna-jane Hunter, partner, Winder Phillips Associates, Women in Rail (talking about how Women in Rail see the future roles of women in the railways)
- ▶ Dr Manuel Ojeda Cabral, senior research fellow in transport economics and appraisal, University of Leeds (talking about the value of new railway lines and stations)
- ▶ Alison Smith, head of accessibility and inclusion, Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT) our Keynote Listener and updating us on GBRTT
- ▶ Conference chair: Brian Barnsley, deputy chief executive of Community Rail Network and head of support and development, Community Rail Network

Venue: St George's Centre, Leeds LS1 3DL

This modern, attractive venue is 10 minutes walk from Leeds station and the air-conditioned room is designed to hold large conferences.

Enquiries about the conference: Please email

conferences@railfuture.org.uk

Railfuture website

The Railfuture website is a mine of information for members. You can gain access to the members area at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/Members+area

From there you can view or download the 11-page members handbook.

By using the Google search box on the Railfuture website you can discover many other nuggets of information which might help in your own rail campaigning.

Bargain book offer

Railfuture's book, **Britain's Growing Railway**, gives details of the 400 stations and over 950km of new routes which opened to passengers between 1960 and 2017.

The original published price was £9.95, but it is now available at the reduced price of £5 including postage.

You can order your copy at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/shop/books.php?id=bgr1

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