

Public Transport in West Yorkshire

TEN YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT



A Personal History by Colin Speakman



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10 Years of Achievement
— a personal history by Colin Speakman

To the men and women of West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, who, for more than the past ten years, have served travellers in West Yorkshire extraordinarily well.

My sincerest thanks, too, to several members of the PTE who have given so freely of their time and expertise to help this book into being. Needless to say, any mistakes and misinterpretations are entirely my own.

Colin Speakman
May 1985

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FOREWORD

Ten years ago, before the PTE was formed, public transport in what is now West Yorkshire was provided by no less than four municipal operators, four National Bus Company subsidiaries, a number of independent operators and British Rail. Public transport was largely unco-ordinated and there was a baffling array of different and often conflicting farescales, concessionary travel schemes and operating practices. Not surprisingly, the bus and rail services at that time were failing to meet all the needs of the travelling public.

In 1974, with the reorganisation of Local Government, the West Yorkshire PTE was established to "ensure the provision of a properly integrated and efficient system of public passenger transport". Today, the benefits of the co-ordinated bus and rail network are clear for all to see. A single unified farescale has been developed along with a county-wide concessionary travel scheme for the elderly and disabled. New ticket systems such as MetroCard, Day Rover and SaverStrip have been introduced, available on all the county's bus and rail services. In addition,

passenger facilities have been improved substantially, services have been revised to meet passenger needs and the organisation has been streamlined in response to ever-increasing financial pressures. As a result of the action taken by management and the invaluable support of the County Council, public transport in West Yorkshire is now a successful system.

Despite these achievements there are now Government plans which could well destroy this vital service to the public. Should the proposed "free for all" happen, many of the benefits gained over the last ten years will be lost. It is therefore particularly timely for this book to be written — a time when public transport is at the crossroads. The Executive is indebted to Colin Speakman for preparing this personal history which records so graphically the developments which have taken place in West Yorkshire over the last decade.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "G. W. Cottham". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of the printed name.

G. W. Cottham
Director General

Bradford Interchange

72

POYNER CHAIRS



Bus Stop

Photo

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Chapter I **H**OW IT ALL BEGAN

West Yorkshire is a county of surprising contrasts.

To the west are the Pennines, that massive ridge of hills so aptly described as the backbone of England, whose desolate moorland contains reservoirs, dry stone walls, scattered farmsteads, steep-sided valleys, still retaining the textile mills and cottages that formed the focal point of many Pennine communities.

Go further north, and the county merges with the softer beauty of the Yorkshire Dales. Wharfedale sweeps into the county by Addingham and Ilkley, forming a belt of rich pastureland and rolling hills.

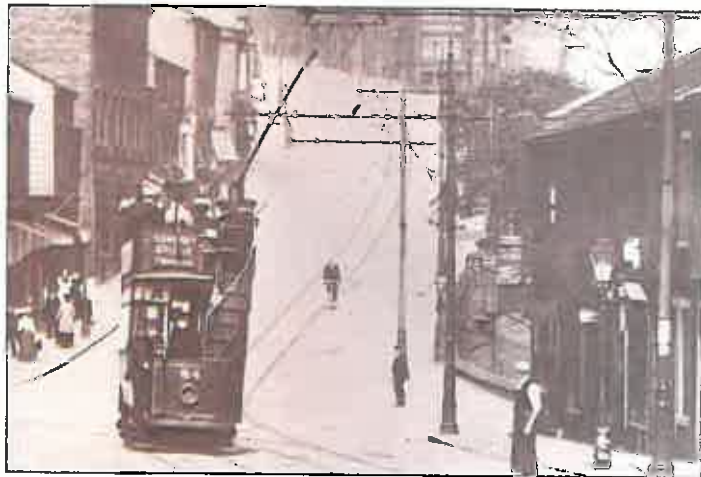
To the east the Pennines decline into the fertile Vale of York, acres of rich cereal-producing farmland. A belt of low hills, formed from a creamy-white rock, Magnesian limestone, contains villages of great interest and beauty.

To the south extends the wild country of the Peak District National Park beyond the Colne and Holme Valleys. Further east, close to the great coal-mining area of West and South Yorkshire, is another stretch of lovely countryside, much of it parkland around Bretton and Nostell, with fine woodlands.

The rivers which flow eastward across West Yorkshire give the county much of its character. But they also provide that other major contrast — large towns and cities in those river valleys, their suburbs stretching up the steep valley sides. The streams and rivers contributed much in the early years of the Industrial Revolution to the growth of industrial Yorkshire. Where navigable, they were the principal means of communication. They also provided power to drive the early mill wheels and water for the canals built in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was these canals and waterways, and later the network of railways, that brought cheap materials in abundance to enable industry to grow and flourish in West Yorkshire — textiles in the west of the county, engineering, clothing and mining in the east.

Development of industry in the early decades of the last century was so fast that the old townships were quickly swamped by new building to house the expanding population seeking work in factory and mill. The county still has a legacy of industrial housing, including some back-to-back terraced houses, which made the inner parts of West Yorkshire towns among the most overcrowded areas in Western Europe. These localities remain densely populated despite the large inter-war and post-war housing estates that make up the suburbs of most modern West Yorkshire cities and towns. But there are, too, miles of leafy suburbs which blend into a quiet rural hinterland.

An important feature of West Yorkshire is that it has no single dominating focal point — no Manchester, Liverpool or Birmingham. To be sure, Leeds, with its half a million population, is a major regional centre, but Wakefield retains important administrative functions, whilst such places as Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Keighley — even the villages of the



Halifax tram at Sowerby Bridge, circa 1900

county — keep their own very strong sense of importance and identity.

The communication system which has evolved to serve West Yorkshire reflects the complex pattern of several significant towns and cities competing for attention and importance. This is shown in the development of the rail network in the middle of the last century.

West Yorkshire was always a major pioneering county. In 1758 Charles Brandling, a coal owner from Middleton near Leeds, built a railway to serve the wharves on the River Aire. Thus the price of his coal was dramatically reduced, thanks to one of the world's first commercially successful railways. A remnant of the line survives to this day. In 1812 Matthew Murray and John

Blenkinsop developed their efficient steam locomotives to haul waggons on this same railway — innovations also adopted by George Stephenson among others. The county's first passenger railway joined Leeds to Selby in 1834 (where there were connecting boats to Hull), using civil engineering techniques that were to be of enormous influence. Leeds became a world-famous centre for the building of locomotives.

By the late 19th century there had grown a largely unplanned spider's web of railways across the county, built by companies competing for the growing market for travel. Until the introduction of the cheap "Parliamentary" train — required by the Railways Act 1844 to be operated at a penny a mile from all stations — the vast majority of people could not afford to travel



Bradford tram, trolleybus and petrol bus, early 1930s



Briggate, Leeds, 1938

anywhere except on a carrier's waggon or on their own two feet. The new railway lines made travel to work or for pleasure both quick and cheap. New suburbs began to grow around railway stations. Old towns took on new life as desirable places to live.

But by the end of the century the tram became a major rival to the railways. On 16 September 1871 the private Leeds Tramway Company began operating horse-drawn trams along a track in the centre of the streets from the City Centre to Headingley. Other routes followed. By 1877 steam trams were introduced. Their compact locomotives, scarcely bigger than the horses they replaced, were dwarfed by the huge passenger trailer cars trundling behind. In 1891 the country's first electric tram service to take its current from overhead wires was operating between Sheepscar and Oakwood. In 1894 Leeds Corporation took over the operation of the tramway, initially on a temporary basis, but soon as a permanent municipal activity.

From a horse-drawn tram service along Manningham Lane in 1882, Bradford developed a network of private horse and steam tramways, later expanded further with electric power under civic ownership. But Huddersfield's steam trams, introduced the year after Bradford's, were Britain's very first municipal public transport operation. It is, perhaps, ironic that it was the original intention that Huddersfield's trams would be privately operated and they only fell into public hands through lack of interest on the part of the private sector. Later systems, some public, some private, were based on Halifax, Wakefield, Keighley, Dewsbury and Castleford.

The Victorians believed in public enterprise. Fine new town halls, public baths and washhouses, splendid new parks and cemeteries and, most important for the needs of growing cities, efficient new public transport systems were provided from the public purse. Men of energy, vision and enterprise knew they were laying the foundations for the future. When the Leeds tramway was extended to the City's newly acquired Roundhay Park, many scoffed at the extravagance. Future generations enjoying what was a pioneering recreational transport scheme had every reason to bless their foresight.

Older people may well remember with affection the last

trams, which did not vanish from West Yorkshire until 1959. They were in fact remarkable movers of crowds, whether at rush hours or from a cricket or football match. Their problem was that, unlike rubber-tyred vehicles, confinement to their tracks meant that they were inflexible and as a result delayed by congestion in narrow city streets. But a fast service was provided where they ran on their own separate reservations.

One reason why tramways did not fulfil their potential in West Yorkshire was the failure to agree on a common system for the region. Nothing could illustrate better the lack of overall planning in the development of tramways than the different gauges (width of tracks) adopted in different towns. To get from Bradford to Huddersfield by tram, you had to travel in no fewer than three different vehicles, each from a different undertaking, each with a different gauge. To try to solve the problem on the Leeds to Bradford route came the ingenious solution of trams that



1926 Leeds tram, circa 1950

J. Sofer



1948 trolleybus climbing out of Huddersfield

R. Brook

could actually change gauge as they travelled through Stanningley at the boundary between the two systems. Needless to say, the mechanism did not prove very reliable, and for most of the period of tram operation you had to alight from the tram at the city boundary and walk a few yards to the next vehicle.

New forms of public transport arrived to supplement the tram and, eventually, to supplant it.

First, the petrol-engined bus appeared, initially feeding into tram routes. Then, on 20 June 1911, synchronised to the minute, a new system opened simultaneously in Leeds and Bradford: the first trolleybuses in Britain. In effect a compromise between a tram and a bus, the trolleybus spread to other towns in the county — Keighley, Huddersfield, Halifax. Fast, economical and pollution-free, the trolleybus was a popular form of public transport. While Leeds abandoned trolleybuses in the inter-war years, Bradford kept its network to become the country's last as well as one of the first operators, large crowds witnessing the final run on 26 March 1972.

By the 1920s the foundation of the public transport system for West Yorkshire had been laid. Besides the cities of Leeds and



50 years of Leeds public transport

Bradford, municipal undertakings ran the trams, trolleybuses and buses in Keighley, Huddersfield, Halifax and Todmorden. Railway companies also developed extensive motor bus interests in the latter three towns and set up joint committees to manage longer-distance services. There were privately-run trams in Wakefield and surrounding towns, while numerous private companies operated buses — still at this time mainly petrol rather than diesel-engined — in the smaller towns and rural areas. Each undertaking had its own distinctive vehicle colours, fare structure, timetables and tickets.

The private operators initially worked in cut-throat competition with each other. Often some entrepreneur would come along, perhaps with an old and unreliable bus, to beat the established operator to the bus queue. Safety and reliability were abandoned in an unholy scramble for passengers. In the long run the customer was the loser.

To end the chaos, the Road Traffic Act 1930 established a system of regulation. Licences were awarded only to operators who could establish standards of reliability and safety. Fares and routes were agreed by regional Traffic Commissioners.

The system brought badly needed stability to public transport. Inevitably the larger companies soon began to dominate. Offering better standards of service, these undertakings, with the resources and acumen to develop markets, and facilities to create a network of services, were quickly able to take over their rivals.

For example, the Wakefield-based West Riding Automobile Company, which started life as a tram operator, expanded its services and absorbed many small independents to become the country's largest private bus operator in the mid-1960s. The name survives today as part of the National Bus Company, the undertaking having voluntarily sold out to the nationalised concern in the late 1960s.

The greater flexibility of the bus made sharp inroads into the finances of West Yorkshire railways, and as early as the 1930s lightly-used branch lines were being closed. If the Second World War provided a pause in this competition for passengers, the immediate post-war period, years of shortages and austerity, paradoxically were good times for public transport, with record numbers on both road and rail. Buses in particular did extremely well — there were queues at almost every bus stop and plenty of money rattling into the conductors' leather bags.

But it was all going to change surprisingly quickly. Since the Second World War the number of cars on Britain's roads has grown dramatically, from less than 2 million in 1946 to the present figure of 16 million. This has, of course, had a major impact on public transport.

As more people began owning and running their own cars, the earnings of train and bus services began to decline. Once-profitable routes suddenly became loss makers, and those already losing money, until then supported by the earnings from profitable routes, fared even worse.

Thus began the familiar vicious spiral of decline. To try and recoup the losses, fares were increased and services reduced in frequency. Faced with a poorer service, even more people decided to buy a car. More cuts and higher fares followed, squeezing a declining market.

But those people that remained simply had to pay more for a



Traffic congestion in Wakefield

worsening service. The fact that they were largely that section of society least able to cope with a poorer service and higher fares did not enter the equation. The vicious spiral continued.

It was in the context of increasing losses on rail services as car ownership increased that Dr. Richard Beeching was made Chairman of British Railways Board and produced his report *The Re-Shaping of British Railways* in 1963. Beeching saw no future for local rail services, either in rural or (outside London) urban areas, and numerous line closures followed in the mid-1960s, with locally elected representatives having little say in the future of the network.

Some lines, such as the Spenn Valley line, linking the wool centres of Cleckheaton and Heckmondwike with Huddersfield and Bradford, lost all passenger services. Others, such as the Leeds — Wetherby line, were closed completely and much of the land disposed of.



The Beeching Axe falls on Cleckheaton Central Station

At the same time as rail services were being cut, there was a growing recognition of the environmental damage caused by cars and the social problems resulting from poorer public transport services. To cope with the avalanche of traffic in urban areas, huge amounts of money have been spent in traffic management, in repairs, in road improvements and by-passes, and even whole new motorways, which have often met with bitter resistance as they ran through densely populated urban areas and precious open space.

But the existing system had serious limitations which inhibited attempts to cope with the situation. Local authorities

could set fares and services on their own operations to achieve a better balance between private and public transport but National Bus Company and British Rail services had their own separate commercial remit. Bus services tended to stop at traditional boundaries, despite changes in patterns of housing and employment. The pattern of people's journeys didn't match up with local authority areas.

So in order to deal with the changes brought about by rising car ownership, a new approach was needed, with consistent policies for all types of transport and covering all public transport services. In West Yorkshire this was about to happen.



THE PTE IS BORN

Chapter 2

On 1 April 1974, West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive came into being.

The creation of the PTE was part of far-reaching changes to local government in England and Wales, with new multi-purpose Metropolitan County Councils replacing the numerous small authorities in the major conurbations. The Local Government Act 1972 recognised the special needs of the great cities by establishing a strong, two-tier system of local government, County and District, with the new Metropolitan Counties given important strategic powers to deal with the many challenging problems of densely populated urban areas. These powers included the planning and provision of passenger transport. The Metropolitan County Councils were given an important new instrument to help them fulfil their new responsibilities — Passenger Transport Executives.

Such authorities were not completely new: the Transport Act 1968 had already created four of what were to become Metropolitan Counties — Merseyside, Tyneside, South East Lancashire/North East Cheshire and the West Midlands. The success of the first PTEs had convinced the Government of the day that such an arrangement had worked extremely well. So the 1972 Act brought West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire into line with their sister authorities. The Passenger Transport Executives — separate statutory bodies — became the bodies responsible for integrating public transport within the guidelines laid down by the County Councils.

In simple terms, the County Council lays down the policy and the Executive carries it out.

Both bodies share an important duty:

“To secure or promote the provision of a properly integrated and efficient system of public passenger transport to meet the needs of [the] area with due regard to the town planning and traffic and parking policies of the local authorities in

[West Yorkshire] and to economy and safety of operation”. (Transport Act 1968, Section 9 (3)).

A part of the PTE’s responsibilities was running the services formerly operated by the municipal authorities. So, on 1 April 1974, the new PTE found itself the owner of about 1,500 buses, some painted blue (Bradford), some green (Leeds), some red and cream (Huddersfield), some green and orange (Halifax), together with around 6,000 staff, several bus stations, garages, offices, bus stops and shelters. It also inherited the deficits that had been accumulated from the previous undertakings.

The responsibilities, and the problems, did not end there. The PTE was responsible for ensuring that the bus services run by all the different operators in the county and the rail services formed part of an integrated network with co-ordinated services, fares, timetables and tickets. So there was now a direct responsibility for those “other” services in the new county. Most of the longer bus routes in the county, covering around 45 per cent of the bus mileage, were operated by entirely separate organisations, the four major subsidiaries of the National Bus Company — West Yorkshire Road Car Company, in the north of the county; West Riding Automobile Company, in the Wakefield area; and Yorkshire Woollen and Yorkshire Traction Bus companies, running in the centre and south of the county. There were also several small independent operators — companies like South Yorkshire Road Transport of Pontefract, Fords of Ackworth, Woods and Longstaffs of Mirfield. Finally, there was British Rail’s heavy loss-making local train network, whose future in 1974 looked far from secure.

The real difference in the situation after 1974 lay in the clear duty of the new PTE to take “due regard” of “town planning and traffic and parking policies” whilst running an efficient business. In other words there was now a formal recognition by central government that planning policies and transport policies were

closely linked. The new arrangements ensured that planning decisions on new road schemes and siting of housing estates, schools and industry took account of public transport implications.

The establishment of the new Metropolitan Counties with their county-wide rather than merely city or district responsibilities, was a major step forward. The boundaries of the new county at least had some overall logic, following and



Independent operator, integrated network



Pedestrianisation in Leeds

including the main catchment areas along the river valleys, which might indeed cross two or more district boundaries into a regional centre. Complexity and contradiction could be replaced by simplicity and unity. Public transport in West Yorkshire was to have a new identity.

Fairly soon the buses of West Yorkshire began to change from the old colour to the now familiar verona green and buttermilk. The little Yorkshire Rose symbol appeared on the side of buses, on bus stops and on bus tickets. Eventually trains and NBC buses also took on the common Metro identity, reflecting the fundamental change of attitude about integrated traffic and transport planning.

The benefits, however, were hard-won during a time of enormous difficulty for the industry. This was a period of runaway inflation, followed by the longest economic depression since the 1930s, a period when car ownership has continued to increase whilst government policies of public expenditure restraint have bitten deeply.

What exactly is the Passenger Transport Executive?

The PTE is an independent statutory body with a Board of Directors which operates as a business. The Board, and through the Board its officers, are responsible for the day to day operation of the Executive. Taking one year with another the Executive has the remit of having to pay its way, though it is able to receive income in the form of financial support for loss-making services and lower fares or grants for capital improvements.

Unlike most businesses, the PTE must operate within the policy guidelines of the County Council, and in particular of the County Council's Public Transport Committee, who lay down that policy.

Within West Yorkshire, the Executive therefore has two major, overlapping functions. First, it is the largest transport operator in the county, having to function in an efficient, business-like manner, but at the same time in ways which meet the policies determined both by central government and the County Council's own elected representatives.

Secondly, it has the job of co-ordinating its own services and those provided by other agencies, bodies whose statutory or



Bus priorities in Bradford

commercial objectives may differ significantly from County Council objectives.

Both are demanding, complex exercises, having to deal with services that provide for the needs of over two million people, in communities that vary in size from a few hundred in rural Calderdale to a city as vast as Leeds with more than half a million inhabitants.

To give an idea of the scale of the operation, the turnover of rail and bus passenger business in the PTE area is now in the order of £130 million per year. Approaching one million passengers are carried on bus services in the county each working day, on a total of 1,700 vehicles. This represents around 300 million passenger journeys a year. Another seven million passengers a year are carried by rail.

This is a complex operation which has to be managed efficiently, and in ways which reflect the changing needs of the community.



Bus-rail integration



MetroBus

*The easy way from here
to there in West Yorkshire*

THE METROBUS STORY

Chapter 3

The name Metro was chosen for West Yorkshire PTE as an attractive prefix to be attached to all those services the PTE was to embrace — MetroBus, MetroCoach, MetroTrain.

Metro isn't only responsible for its own directly operated former municipal services. The County Council, through Metro, has a responsibility for the large National Bus Company subsidiaries that operate extensive networks of services both within West Yorkshire and outside the county boundary.

Effective integration between the NBC companies and those directly operated by the PTE lay in the setting up of a joint Management Company known as Metro-National. Its function was to co-ordinate services in the county in an efficient and economical way. It was an ingenious solution, bringing the NBC network into the pattern of PTE services whilst keeping a separate identity and management framework within the larger Metro-National body.

The Metro-National symbol, the PTE white rose linked with the National Bus Company stylised arrow, therefore became the emblem of this new partnership on both the familiar green PTE buses and the red NBC buses, both now sharing the name MetroBus. The more recent adoption of the common PTE colour scheme for all MetroBus services emphasises the ever-increasing integration of bus services within West Yorkshire.

Although NBC services remain part of their parent company, as far as the customer is concerned they operate as part of the overall MetroBus network, sharing a common timetable, bus stops, ticketing and route numbering systems. Equally important, NBC services also receive through Metro-National financial support for concessionary fares and unremunerative services operated to meet the requirements of the County Council.

At first the PTE's own stage carriage bus services were operated by four districts based on the old municipal undertakings. This has now been changed to two divisions, with

some responsibility transferred to the divisions to ensure responsiveness to local passenger needs, while headquarters at Wakefield retains a co-ordinating role.

Though the overwhelming proportion of Metro's work involves stage carriage bus services, the PTE also owns a fleet of coaches, some operated directly and others operated by Bingley's, the PTE subsidiary based at Kinsley in the south east of the county. An excellent service has been provided and profitable business gained on private hire and charter work, and on various excursions. Bingley's have developed expertise in the package holiday field, operating Continental tours, and it is not unusual to see a PTE coach on the Costa Brava or in the South of France.

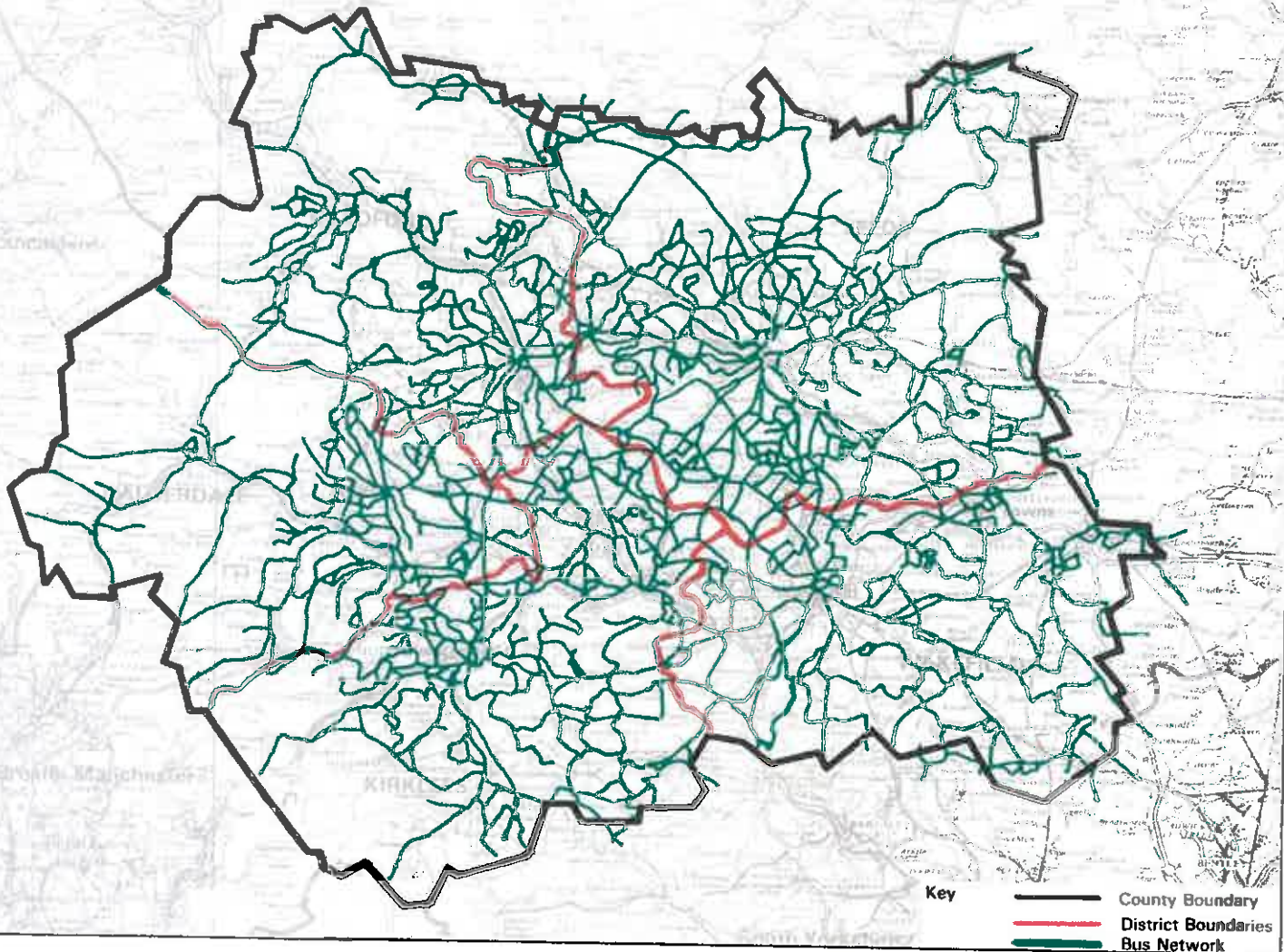
What of the small independent bus companies? West Yorkshire PTE works extremely well in full co-operation with small operators within its midst. In spite of the difficult trading conditions throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, several small operators have survived and flourished within the PTE territory.

Not only do their services appear in PTE timetables, they have common fares and tickets, giving benefit to both sides and particularly to the customer from such mutually advantageous arrangements.

But it is also increasingly recognised that journeys don't start or end on buses. Bus stations and stops matter too. Major schemes were already under way at Huddersfield and Bradford in pre-PTE days. The Bradford Interchange, opened in 1977, was a major new development, started in anticipation of the PTE, incorporating the re-sited former Bradford Exchange station with a large new integrated bus and coach complex. The Interchange set new standards for the passenger in terms of comfort and service. Fully enclosed airport-style departure bays, escalators and clear destination indicators all make changing a simple matter. Passengers enjoy such facilities as travel centres, a cafeteria bar



Metro-National Route Network



and shops. The Interchange makes tangible many of the principles for which Metro was established — an integrated service, convenient and easy to use.

In 1979 the first bus station entirely designed by the PTE opened in Dewsbury and was soon to win the national Bus Station of the Year award. Pontefract Bus Station, a fine, modern structure replacing sub-standard buildings, came into service in 1984. Plans are in hand for large new bus stations at Halifax and in Leeds next to the railway station.

Bus stops are also an important part of a passenger's journey, particularly during the severe Yorkshire winters, when a wait of even a few minutes can prove a long ordeal, especially for the elderly. The PTE has made headway with the provision of bus shelters, the latest type having fold-down seats for passenger comfort. Since 1974, the PTE has erected or replaced more than 1,000 bus shelters.

Such provision is all part of Metro's county-wide concern to raise standards of travel for all passengers.

In 1974 Metro had acquired as motley a collection of buses as could be imagined, with over a hundred different types, both single and double-deck, some of them up to fifteen years old, all

requiring complex spare parts and different maintenance routines. It was a bus enthusiast's paradise, no doubt, but it was also an engineer's nightmare.

Old buses are expensive to maintain. They are uncomfortable and draughty, and, if you are elderly and disabled, old buses, with their high steps, are rather bad news. So it made sense to renew the fleet as quickly as resources could permit. By standardising on just three basic types — two double-deck and one single-deck — the PTE made huge cost savings, reducing spares and engineer training while improving the service to the customer through increased reliability.

Older, life-expired garages such as Saltaire and Horton Bank Top in Bradford have been closed and maintenance work concentrated in modern depots with up to date equipment and machinery. Spare parts are now controlled with the aid of computers from one centralised point serving the entire PTE, saving time and money.

Bus services, however, involve far more than buses, garages and bus stops. Bus services involve people. The bus industry is very labour-intensive, requiring a variety of skills and dedication. But such skills are expensive. To run a bus in an efficient way, the



MetroCoach



Kirkstall Works, Leeds



Bradford Interchange

best use must be made of those skills, and this needs careful planning.

Metro-National has brought in numerous major route co-ordination schemes within West Yorkshire, covering three-quarters of the county, eliminating wasteful duplication and saving well over 200 vehicles and £6 million a year in costs. A thorough process of consultation, including public meetings, has helped to ensure that the network meets passenger demand.

At the same time, around fifty new "Inter-District" links throughout the county have been developed, often joining routes which previously terminated either side of a District boundary, saving time and money. Bus services have often been diverted via new housing estates, at minimal cost or delay. "Protectionist" boarding and alighting restrictions on many routes have been eliminated, making it easier for the passenger simply to catch a bus rather than work out which company ran the service and where it stopped.

Recent innovations on MetroBus include City Centre Circle services in Leeds, a Huddersfield Market Bus, a Shoppers' Service in South Elmsall, and the Ridgerider, a midibus service operating from Woodhouse Ridge, an inner suburb of Leeds, to the main shopping precincts and the city's bus and rail stations.

In remoter corners of the county, when for physical or financial reasons a conventional bus service could not be justified, community minibus schemes financially supported by parish councils have been encouraged, one in Holmfirth, another in Hebden Bridge. The PTE assists the parish councils by providing marketing expertise and erecting bus stops.

Two specially adapted buses designed to accommodate wheelchairs are available for chartering by disabled groups and organisations. This has enabled many people physically unable to use conventional vehicles to enjoy a day out to town and countryside attractions, and reflects an increasing awareness by Metro of the needs of the disabled.

The philosophy of creating a balance between private and public transport has been adopted as a planning principle throughout West Yorkshire. The major towns and cities all give priority to the bus, creating bus lanes on busy roads into and out of city centres where opportunity exists and giving buses priority



A special MetroBus for the disabled



New midibus service in Leeds

A. Jarosz

at certain road junctions, even down one-way streets against the traffic flow. The signs **Buses Only** or **Except Buses** are now a familiar sight in West Yorkshire towns, and reflect the integration of planning and transport within the county since 1974.

One of the biggest changes in bus services under Metro has been the spread of one-person operation. To speed up these buses, new ticket machines have simplified ticket-issuing, whilst a county-wide simplified fare structure has made paying easier. Pre-payment of fares has reduced cash collection on the bus. For the driver's safety, on PTE directly-operated services two-way radios keep drivers in touch with base and emergency services if required. Much still depends on the initiative of the driver, whose job has grown considerably in complexity and responsibility since the days when he (as the driver invariably was) only had to drive the bus.

Over the last ten years MetroBus has had to face undoubtedly the most difficult years for public transport this century, with continuing competition from the private car, changing work and leisure habits, massive inflation, the worst period of economic stagnation and industrial depression for two generations, as well as government expenditure cuts — all factors certain to drive public transport usage down and send the economic performance of any transport operator into a tailspin of decline.

Yet this decline has not only been halted, but has actually been reversed. The number of passengers on public transport has increased in each of the last three years, by seven million last year alone. This has been achieved against a national trend of declining passenger numbers and the disappearance of many rural bus services from other parts of the country.

How this has happened will be told in later chapters.



Private

 **MetroTrain**

THE METROTRAIN STORY

Chapter 4

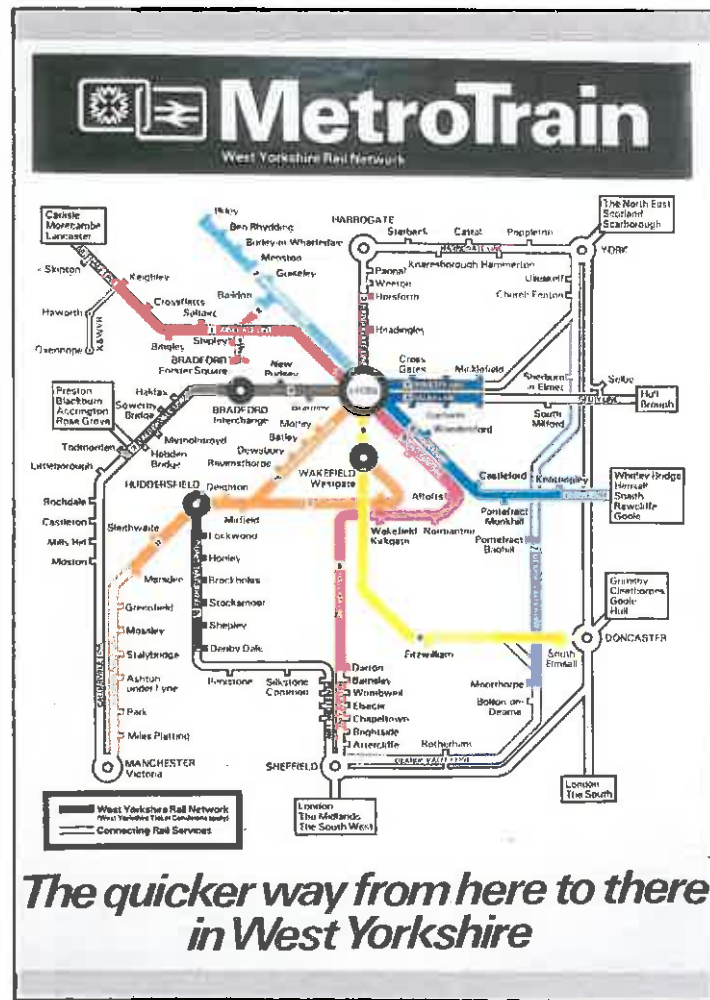
The outcry following the Beeching rail cuts in the mid-1960s had created a climate of opinion which recognised the wider social and economic benefits of retaining a viable rail system. The Transport Act 1968 recognised that where "railway passenger services have a particularly important contribution to make to the provision of a properly integrated and efficient system of public passenger transport" financial support could be given by the new Passenger Transport Executives for the support of rail services. Section 20 of the 1968 Act was therefore a vital step in local involvement in rail service planning and provision in PTE areas.

But first the new County Council had to be satisfied that a network requiring substantial subsidy represented good value for money for the people of West Yorkshire. After all, some of the services were extremely inadequate, with long gaps between trains at certain times of the day and poor patronage throughout. Besides, how could costs and revenues be accurately and fairly shared between Inter-City, freight and local trains? What happened about signalling, track and station costs?

Solutions to these problems required goodwill and shrewd negotiations on both sides, coupled with detailed evaluation, service by service, of current performance and the potential for improvement. The whole process was to culminate on 29 November 1978, when Sir Peter Parker, then British Rail Chairman, attended the formal signing of the Section 20 Agreement for West Yorkshire and from that moment forward the PTE could plan and promote rail services in the county as part of a total transport system.

The improvements started when the PTE assumed financial responsibility for local rail services in 1976.

A major programme of station improvements was launched. In some cases, improved signing or lighting sufficed; in some, new or enlarged car parks were provided and in others complete reconstruction occurred, as at Castleford, while Hebden Bridge





Bradford Interchange

was refurbished in attractive period style. The Ilkley branch, now known as the Wharfedale line, was allowed to celebrate its recent reprieve from closure by having a public address system installed in unstaffed stations and their low-level platforms raised to make boarding and alighting easier. In all, over half the county's stations have now benefited from the improvements programme.

Many of the old diesel railcars operating on the West Yorkshire rail network were also given extensive refurbishment to offer new standards of comfort. Services also improved with

frequencies increased on many lines, including a major upgrading of the Leeds-Bradford shuttle service.

The signing of the Section 20 Agreement meant that for the first time there could be a degree of stability in West Yorkshire's rail system. It would now form part of an integrated transport network. Responsibility had been accepted for all existing local services, with two exceptions — the short section of line through Pontefract and Moorthorpe, which was primarily part of the Sheffield-York line, and the little-used single track



Period refurbishment, Hebden Bridge Station



Opening Metro's third new station

branch out to Clayton West, now closed, on the Huddersfield-Sheffield line.

Within months important improvements began to appear. In May 1979 a new platform on an awkward curve at Shipley Station removed the timewasting reversal of trains that had been required on the Leeds-Keighley route since the Beeching closures in 1965.

The PTE's own specialist staff now played a full part in planning services to meet PTE rather than BR needs, tying the services in with County Council policies and ensuring good connections with Inter-City services into and out of the county. Some of the glaring gaps in the timetable began to be filled and

"even interval" services were introduced, so that trains now generally depart at a similar "clock-face" time each hour, helping travellers to memorise the service rather than constantly resort to timetables.

Co-ordination with bus services could be planned, as with the new White Rose inter-urban express bus service between Bradford and Sheffield, which also links with Inter-City services at Wakefield Westgate Station.

An example of the effectiveness of PTE service planning came in 1982 on the Leeds-Huddersfield-Manchester service, when agreement between British Rail and the two PTEs, Greater



New train, new station — Railbus at Saltaire

Manchester and West Yorkshire, enabled the introduction of a valuable through stopping train service between Leeds and Manchester. Trains which hitherto had terminated at Marsden on the Yorkshire side of the boundary and at Greenfield on the Greater Manchester side now operated right through, providing useful new links between the two counties and making better use of resources.

The programme of station closures during the Beeching years had left West Yorkshire with exceptionally long distances between stations. Some stations had indeed outlived their usefulness, but others were still well used up to the time of closure. There were also cases where changing circumstances — a new housing estate, or an improved rail service — justified a

station where none had previously existed.

With the full support of the County Council, the PTE therefore embarked on a programme of building new stations, playing a major role in their design. The stations were economic to construct yet offered passengers protection from the weather. The first, Fitzwilliam, on the Wakefield-Doncaster line, opened in March 1982, to be followed over the next 18 months by Deighton and Slaithwaite, both near Huddersfield, Crossflatts, near Keighley, and Bramley, on the Leeds-Bradford line.

Opened in 1984 with the help of funds from the EEC, the new Saltaire station, just north of Bradford, presented a particular design challenge. To blend in with the local conservation area, dressed stone was used to evoke the Victorian era, complete with reproduction gas lamps and authentic fencing. The excellence of the result was recognised in an award from the Association of Railway Preservation Societies.

Within a few months these stations were attracting enough passengers to begin repaying their cost, earning welcome additional revenue and, significantly, giving more communities in West Yorkshire access to the local — and national — rail network.

A problem which had concerned both British Rail and the PTE was what to do about the ageing diesel railcars which had served the region for more than two decades. Two prototypes of potential replacements led to the development of the new generation of lightweight rolling stock, the Class 141 Railbus. Fast and economical, capable of providing feeder and linking services and commuter runs, the vehicle represents an intriguing combination of bus and rail technology, its development a result of close co-operation between the PTE, British Rail and British Leyland.

So in the spring of 1984, Britain's first production railbuses appeared on West Yorkshire lines and are now a familiar sight, in Metro green and buttermilk.

But the real change over the past decade is that MetroTrain now forms a part of a co-ordinated network of public transport, rather than being run in isolation from bus services. As we shall see, a vital aspect of integration has been the development of tickets which passengers can use on both buses and trains.

DO IT ALL IN A DAY WITH A DAY ROVER.

DO IT ALL IN A DAY WITH A DAY ROVER.



Day Rover

Anywhere and everywhere in West Yorkshire. By Metrobus and Metrolink—go where you please in a day.



£1
SPECIAL

£2
ADULT

£4
FAMILY

JUST THE TICKET

Chapter 5

Bus fares, income tax and rates have one thing in common. Nobody really likes paying them. But one way or another, through the farebox or through subsidy, transport services have to be paid for. Besides trying to run the services as cheaply as possible, it is the PTE's job, in conjunction with the County Council, to make paying fares as easy as possible. The formation of the County Council and PTE gave new opportunities to standardise and integrate bus and rail fares throughout the county.

A most important step in the direction of integrated fares was taken just six months after the birth of the PTE with the arrival of MetroCard. This useful and attractive ticket gave the holder unlimited bus travel across the county. There could be no more effective way of announcing the integration of bus services in the county, especially as National Bus services and the various independent operators were progressively drawn into the scheme. Later, regular rail passengers using season tickets could buy MetroCard at a greatly reduced price.

For the passenger, the advantage of MetroCard is that you can cross from one end of the county to another, changing buses as many times as you choose, with nothing else to pay, no fumbling for change, throughout its period of validity. Many passengers find they can save money on their regular journey and get the freedom of the county's bus network as well — an inducement to leisure travel. Ideal for the longer-distance commuter, it is now also available in an annual version which local employers can buy in bulk for their staff.

For the operator, MetroCard speeds the bus up and reduces the costs of handling the mountain of small change that passes through the farebox each day.

Another important integrated travel ticket is Day Rover, first introduced in 1979. It allows a day's travel anywhere throughout the county after 9am on Mondays to Fridays and all day at weekends. A key feature is its availability on train as well as bus —

**MORE BUS.
LESS MONEY.
TAKE THE
CARD.**

MetroCard
L.E. COLLINS
SIGNATURE
Liz Collins
MetroCard No
283185

MetroCard prices have been slashed — bringing you more bus journeys for * even less money!

MetroCard monthly DOWN £2.40 to **£22**

MetroCard weekly DOWN 80p to **£6**

£6 a week or £22 a month, you have the freedom to travel anywhere and everywhere within West Yorkshire.

Take MetroCard to work every day, and for just

PICK UP A FREE LEAFLET FROM YOUR LOCAL BUS ENQUIRY OFFICE.

MetroBus

NEW LOW PRICES!

a marked step forward in integrated ticketing. Day Rover's success lies in the possibilities it gives of leisure trips throughout the county.

But there have also been benefits for the majority of people who continued to pay their fare in cash on the bus or train. Eighteen entirely different, contradictory fare scales within West Yorkshire were gradually replaced by a single, simplified fare structure throughout the county. The fares apply on all buses — including independents — and on all trains, including local journeys on Inter-City trains. This has been a major achievement, removing many anomalies and paving the way for a whole new generation of travel tickets valid on bus and train. It has also made excellent business sense in allowing the use of common tickets, ticket machines and publicity.

The elderly and disabled have benefited substantially from the arrival of Metro. Before PTE days arrangements for concessionary travel in West Yorkshire varied enormously. City Councils, such as Leeds, County Boroughs like Dewsbury, Urban Districts, Rural Districts, all had different schemes (if they operated one at all), requiring a multiplicity of passes and tokens and making it impossible for the elderly to travel at a reduced fare beyond their own area. After a year, these were replaced by an easy to manage scheme which applied right across the county, financed by a special payment from the County Council.

All women over 60 and men over 65, together with the mentally handicapped and those with walking difficulties, have a county-wide MetroPermit, enabling them to travel on bus and train at all times at half-fare, whilst the blind travel free. This has proved a tremendous boon to those previously unable to get around without undue financial strain on low incomes. The facility has recently been extended for a period to give free travel on Sundays — a very popular concession — and free travel is to be further extended to all off-peak periods

Children, too, travel at half-fare up to the age of 16, enabling them to enjoy not just reduced travel to school, but all other trips on Metro, a concession extended to the age of 19 whilst they are in full-time education.

But the 1970s were a period of runaway inflation, resulting

from the 1973 oil crisis. As a labour-intensive industry, public transport was particularly vulnerable as costs began to spiral upwards. In 1975 no fewer than three increases in fares, designed to eliminate the backlog of debt that the PTE had inherited, had to be implemented. Trapped between double figure inflation and government policies designed to hold down public expenditure, the PTE increased its fares even faster than inflation over the next four years to try and contain those rising losses.

The result was a large fall in passenger journeys, over 100 million in six years. Many who could, voted with their feet. They walked, cycled, or bought cars — adding to congestion. They bought motor cycles, thereby exposing themselves to considerable accident risk. Or they gave up travelling altogether.

Other unfavourable factors were also at work. After the initial shock of the oil crisis, the costs of fuel and motoring continued to decline in real terms throughout the decade, swinging the balance of cost advantage back towards private transport with each fare increase. Changes in leisure habits — for example the growth of home entertainment, including video viewing — reduced evening travel. Fear of violence on the streets deterred older people from late night travel. But above all, the effects of the



County-wide concessionary fares for the elderly

recession on employment in manufacturing industry began to bite even more deeply into work journeys.

As a result, between 1974 and 1981 the PTE had lost more than 40 per cent of passengers. The new Chairman of the County Council's Public Transport Committee, Wayne Jenkins, expressed the situation graphically:

"In West Yorkshire we suffer from the malaise of the British public transport industry to a spectacular extent. Our fares have been the highest of any urban area; increase has followed increase upon increase; bus stations have been neglected and garage renewal pushed to the back of the queue. It is little wonder that the whole public transport system of the county came close to death in 1980".

The choice for the County Council was a difficult one. Either slash services, itself certain to produce a further period of decline, or increase subsidy.

The decision to raise subsidies proved the turning point. First the County Council froze fares at their November 1980 levels. In the event, apart from some minor adjustments on rail to complete the process of equalising bus and rail fares, the freeze was to last for almost three years. But "freeze" is the wrong word. Many fares actually began to come down.

In July 1981 an experimental off-peak fares scheme came into operation in West Yorkshire, designed to bring travel prices down and fill half-empty buses. As its success became apparent, the scheme was extended bit by bit until the **Off-Peaker** scheme of today emerged. For a modest 30p, or 15p if you are a child or MetroPermit holder, you can travel any distance on a bus on Monday to Friday after 9.30am and before 3pm, and again after 6pm, and all day at weekends. The scheme now applies on MetroTrain as well, although in a modified form, but still a bargain for most users.

It is difficult to over-emphasise the importance of the off-peak fare scheme in West Yorkshire. Nowhere else in the country have off-peak reductions been as large, although it is interesting that other areas have now copied the scheme. In essence, it is highly cost-effective, filling up otherwise empty seats and helping to discourage peak hour travel for those who don't have to travel

at those times — thereby reducing the demand on the most expensive services, those in the morning and evening rush hours.

A detailed study of the effects of off-peak fares in West Yorkshire has demonstrated, using similar techniques to those employed to justify road construction, that the benefits to West Yorkshire people exceed the costs of the scheme to the tune of £6 million per year. By 1984 it was estimated to have increased travel on Metro by as much as 19 million journeys and 90 million passenger miles.

Even these figures, significant as they are, ignore the intangibles — the effect on people's lives. It is now common for people, particularly the unemployed or retired, to plan their day around cheap fare times, coming into town after the morning rush and leaving before the children begin to pour out of school. Town and city centre traders report welcome new business, though trade slackens off noticeably as the 3pm deadline approaches. Evening buses, once nearly empty, carry far more passengers.

But there was still a gap in the pre-paid tickets offered. With the spread of one-person operation, it was becoming more important to speed up boarding and encourage pre-payment, especially at busy times. Of course, the longer-distance commuter could save with MetroCard, but most passengers travel only a mile or two.

The answer was **SaverStrip**, purchased from bus stations, post offices and newsagents before travelling. Offering a discount of two "free" trips for every ten pre-paid on the ticket, the ticket could be cancelled by a machine on the bus. At the same time, cash fares were simplified, all becoming units of 10p. Although some individual fares increased — for the first time in nearly three years — SaverStrip holders could still make a saving on their old fare. The new ticket offered tremendous flexibility. Like the Day Rover, it soon became valid on MetroTrain as well. The ticket is convenient to purchase, with 1,300 sales points spread across the county — including major railway stations, all post offices and many newsagents — a network unmatched in the rest of the country. In addition, a number of vending machines capable of issuing SaverStrip tickets automatically have been placed in busy





Travelling with the new Saverstrip

sites, removing the need to queue.

In this way, Metro is bringing to West Yorkshire the best of British and Continental practices in public transport fares systems. Small wonder that about a third of rush hour journeys are now paid for in advance.

Some other advances were made beyond the county boundary. For West Yorkshire people wishing to visit the countryside of North Yorkshire, Day Rover tickets do not apply. The new Dales Wayfarer ticket gives freedom of travel not only throughout West Yorkshire but also on a wide range of services in and around the Yorkshire Dales National Park to reach such places as Harrogate and Bolton Abbey — a superb network of services for rambling or sightseeing. It also helps to keep isolated rural communities in touch with the cities.

Recognising that even in the off-peak, fare levels could still be a major obstacle for unemployed people in the county, a special reduced fare scheme has been devised, known as JobSeeker. A four-weekly pass enables them to travel at half fare on all bus services. Another recent development is a special SaverStrip ticket known as TranStrip. Off-peak bus passengers can now change buses for a through fare of 40p.

In January 1985 the PTE took a major step forward in integrated fares by widening the popularity of MetroCard. Prices were reduced and its availability was extended to local rail services, so that anyone paying 60p or more for their regular journey to work by bus or train would save by switching to MetroCard — and get all their extra travel free. At the same time, to make it easier to purchase, MetroCard sales points were increased to well over 700 — all bus and manned railway stations and every post office in the county.

The County Council's new fares policy had brought down the cost of travel substantially, whilst county-wide MetroCard, Day Rover and SaverStrip expressed what Metro was about — an integrated system for the network as a whole.



METRO IN THE MARKET PLACE

Chapter 6

In the days when nearly everyone travelled by public transport, there was less need to advertise. Queues at the bus stop or on railway station platforms were the norm. It didn't matter if your timetable was a fading sheet of typed paper on the bus station wall. The departure times probably hadn't changed for years and strangers wouldn't have to wait too long for the next bus.

But things are very different in the motor car age. There is no longer a captive market for public transport, both because of car competition and, equally, the catastrophic decline in the number of work journeys caused by the economic recession. Public transport has to be marketed as effectively as a can of baked beans or a packet of soap powder if it is to carry anything like the number of passengers it should do. New markets have had to be developed — leisure, social trips, shopping trips, building up new purposes for travel.

But the key word is network — an overall, integrated network of MetroBus and MetroTrain services, with county-wide tickets, information, publicity. The first essential is good information.

In May 1976 the first fully comprehensive timetable for West Yorkshire, in five separate volumes, was published and it proved an immediate success, selling 70,000 copies of the first edition. At the same time a start was made to renumber every bus route throughout the county, so that every single service could be identified by a separate number. This avoided much of the confusion of the past. The very size and complexity of the timetable, coupled with changes in bus services, led to use of more local and individual service timetables.

But marketing is more than merely providing accurate and up-to-date information, important though this is. There was a need to re-establish public transport in the imagination of the people of West Yorkshire.



Service information to hand



Getting the message across

In 1981 a major campaign was launched with just such a purpose. A top advertising agency was brought in to spearhead the campaign which was soon to become nationally — let alone locally — known. The theme was Put it on a Bus — “it” being one’s bottom on a bus seat. Vigorous, witty, and down-to-earth, the campaign quickly captured popular imagination, thanks to an effective television and local radio presentation, complete with jingle, supported by newspaper advertisements. It made people in West Yorkshire aware of MetroBus and quickly brought new business.

A similar campaign followed, this time aimed at increasing ridership on MetroTrain. The theme was “It’s Quicker” — foreshortened to Squicka, the name of a cartoon fox character who appeared, in railwayman’s uniform, to extol the virtues of the MetroTrain network. The message was that MetroTrain was a quick and easy way of getting around West Yorkshire.

So successful were these campaigns that the PTE revived the approach in May 1985, this time with the new theme Get On and Go Metro. Again, television and local radio were used to get across the message: that Metro offers a wide range of integrated tickets and services to make travel by public transport — bus and rail — easier. A feature was the production of Metro’s own newspaper, *Network*, given free to passengers, to back up the campaign. At the same time a *Metro Week* was launched with various events — Treasure Hunt, Drive-a-Bus, Open Days — to encourage passengers to “Get On and Go”. This followed the success of an earlier “Week of Action”, with its edition of the passenger newspaper “Network”, the preceding November.

A feature of West Yorkshire’s marketing effort over recent years has been leisure travel. A series of *Great Getaway* leaflets extolled the virtues of ten top attractions in West Yorkshire and explained how to get there by public transport. *Wayfarer Walks in the South Pennines* offered twelve classic walks specially planned for public transport users. A comprehensive guidebook to the whole of the county, entitled *West Yorkshire — Enjoy it the Car-free Way*, incorporated detailed travel information to demonstrate that you didn’t need a car to enjoy a splendid day out.



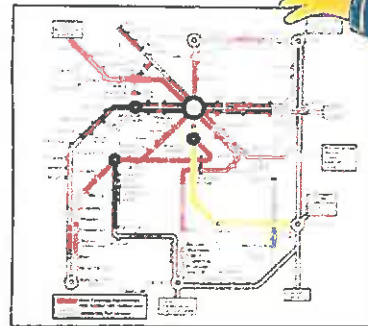
Information across-the-board



Network

“MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR LOCAL RAIL NETWORK FROM KEIGHLEY.”

You can travel locally by MetroTrain quicker, simpler and it can be cheaper. No traffic jams, no parking problems, no hassle. Just comfort and convenience all the way.



IT'S QUICKER AND SIMPLER BY TRAIN.



MetroTrain

WEST YORKSHIRE RAIL NETWORK

The quicker way from here to there in West Yorkshire

“Squicka” by train



"Ker-ching!" — part of the language



One of the most successful campaigns was to market the new SaverStrip ticket. To get across the fairly sophisticated idea of discount pre-payment, the sound of the cardboard ticket in the cancelling machine — **Ker-ching!** — was used with considerable effect. So effective was the promotion, with brightly coloured slogans on all relevant publicity, that in West Yorkshire “Ker-ching!” became a catchword that has entered the language.

When MetroCard was reduced in price, extended to rail and sold from post offices, another promotion was needed to encourage people to switch to MetroCard for the first time. Stressing the convenience of MetroCard, a successful television and newspaper campaign was launched with the message **MetroCard — Flash It!**

It would be true to say that in 1974 buses and trains had a somewhat negative image in West Yorkshire. During the early PTE years, whilst fares were soaring upwards, this negative image remained. But over the last five years there has been a major transformation. Under County Council direction, services have improved and fares in real terms have come down. Along with these improvements the image of public transport has changed to something positive, something people value and regard as their own.

The real proof of the pudding lies in passenger numbers. Given the rise in unemployment, there could be every reason to predict a pattern of continuing decline. In fact the opposite has occurred. Between 1982 and 1984 an increase was recorded of nine million passenger journeys per annum, reversing the trend of two decades.

Only a large organisation like a PTE, with adequate resources to fund county-wide multi-media campaigns, could have achieved that upturn against the trend of decline. Like many such investments, the real benefits are long term, each new success building on the last.

After ten years, the people of West Yorkshire are beginning to enjoy the fruits of that increasing success.

National Museum of Photography

PORTRAIT

CAMERA

RESTORATION

EUROCO

RAILEY

Step aboard

900

BRADFORD
EXPLORE BUS

Discover Bradford's
exciting museums



THE AGE OF LEISURE

Chapter 7

Leisure is for many people the most precious and important part of their lives — time to spend with family or friends, to do things, to go places.

Changes in industry and in society are making a tremendous difference to our lives. Longer holidays and a shorter working week, together with the effects of unemployment and earlier retirement, all combine to increase the amount of leisure time available. Unfortunately, for very many people increased leisure means a lower income.

People are also enjoying a longer and more active retirement. The Granny Revolution is upon us as older people, no longer content to sit in front of the fire, are a substantial and growing market for public transport.

For all these people, cheap off-peak fares and bargain leisure tickets such as Day Rover are a boon, enabling them to enjoy the county's many attractions, adding immeasurably to the quality of their lives.

But public transport operators in West Yorkshire have always been alive to the leisure potential. The buses, trams and trains that took you to work during the week also took you to the football match, the pub, the theatre or cinema, the shops, at weekends. West Yorkshire's glorious countryside was never more than a short bus or tram ride away, and generations of West Yorkshire people have always been able, for the price of a ticket, to get out into the rolling countryside of the Pennines and the Yorkshire Dales.

This activity continued after the creation of the PTE. Services operated include regular bus services to Scarborough and summer weekend services to the Dales as far north as Wensleydale and Swaledale.

Alternative forms of transport can be enjoyed through a series of excursions to link in with Canal Tours along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal or steam trains on the Keighley and Worth Valley

Railway.

A more ambitious enterprise commenced in 1979 when the PTE took over from the Yorkshire Dales National Park responsibility for chartering and marketing Dales Rail services. **Dales Rail** is a series of weekend charter trains operating over the now celebrated scenic Settle and Carlisle line, calling at stations in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Cumbria that had been closed in 1970 but were re-opened on an experimental basis specifically for these trains. A programme of linking bus services and guided walks was provided as a total recreational package, and for the people of West Yorkshire it provided a marvellous opportunity to get out into the wildest and grandest country of the Yorkshire Dales.

The success of Dales Rail led to the development of a much more significant project, soon to be known as **Wayfarer**. This was a three-year experiment which began in 1981 to develop the recreational use of public transport, undertaken by the Countryside Commission in partnership with West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester PTEs.

An early project was to develop the Keighley-Hebden Bridge service to provide a well-publicised link between the Worth Valley Steam Railway and Hebden Bridge Station. A new mid-week summer service was provided, and buses were soon filled to capacity. Encouraged by this success, the PTE started a second **Pennine Wayfarer** service, MetroBus 900, in the summer of 1982 over a scenic route between Huddersfield and Hebden Bridge via Scammonden Dam in the high Pennines. This was followed by a collaboration with the Peak District National Park to promote a new service through the "Summer Wine" country and into the Peak District. Known as **Peak Wayfarer**, this is the highest double-deck operated service in the United Kingdom, crossing Holme Moss between Huddersfield and Glossop with a variety of destinations including Crich Tramway Museum, Buxton and



Dales Rail

Matlock Bath.

In the east of the county, the **Wakefield Countryside Bus** provides a direct link from such towns as Wakefield, Featherstone, Pontefract and Castleford, to local beauty spots. In Leeds, a series of special Countryside and Heritage Tours are run in association with the City Council, to such local attractions as Lotherton Hall and Harewood House, but also further afield — to Castle Howard and the Peak District.

Leisure services are not only to the countryside. For some

years, a Christmas lights service has been operated in Leeds. In 1984, these were operated as 'Santa Specials', with staff in Santa costume and specially painted buses.

Another Metro venture is the **Bradford ExplorerBus**, operated for the first time in 1984. Here the PTE joined forces with Bradford City Council and the National Museum of Photography and Television to provide a specially painted bus to link five superb museums in and around central Bradford. A feature of the new service was on-board taped commentary to



Pennine Wayfarer

welcome passengers on board and inform them about each museum.

Perhaps the most unusual service was **WaterBus** — operating along canals to a regular timetable, calling at Metro-style bus stops. The first, operating between Shipley and Bingley along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, began operation in 1983, whilst new services were developed in 1984 along the Rochdale Canal between Todmorden and Hebden Bridge and between Mirfield and Brighouse on the Calder and Hebble Navigation.

Perhaps the most important achievement of leisure services is that they have stimulated use of the everyday services that remain Metro's prime purpose. Leisure services benefit not only West Yorkshire inhabitants, but also those from other parts of Britain and overseas. Now a major source of new jobs for the region, tourism relies heavily on the county's excellent public transport network of integrated MetroBus and MetroTrain services, tickets and marketing.



Metro WaterBus



INTO THE NEXT DECADE

Chapter 8

Over the last ten years, West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive has achieved much that is worthwhile.

It began life in 1974 by taking responsibility for a fragmented transport system, under-equipped and incapable of adequately meeting the needs of a great metropolitan area.

Its opening years were a time when inflation was escalating costs to an alarming degree; this has been followed by one of the longest and deepest economic recessions this century.

To have made any progress during such difficult economic circumstances is no mean achievement. But there have in fact been many major successes to celebrate.

First and foremost, the many separate, competing and overlapping organisations which prior to 1974 were responsible for public transport provision in West Yorkshire have been moulded into a single, strong, corporate body. Working closely with the County Council, this body can and does work efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of the people of this region.

From the customer's point of view, there have been substantial gains.

Bus and train services are now more reliable. High standards now apply throughout, not, as before 1974, only on parts of the system. New bus and rail stations have been opened, new bus shelters erected, new travel links created. A new, uniform fares structure now applies throughout the county. Of immeasurable value are the new county-wide bus and rail tickets, allowing people to travel across the entire network at low cost. The off-peak fares scheme has been an outstanding success. Services have been comprehensively re-planned to respond to travel needs and a regular procedure of public consultation on service changes established to ensure Metro is accountable to the people it serves. Information services are very much better and a high standard of publicity is attracting new customers. Metro has certainly shown its willingness to experiment with new ideas.

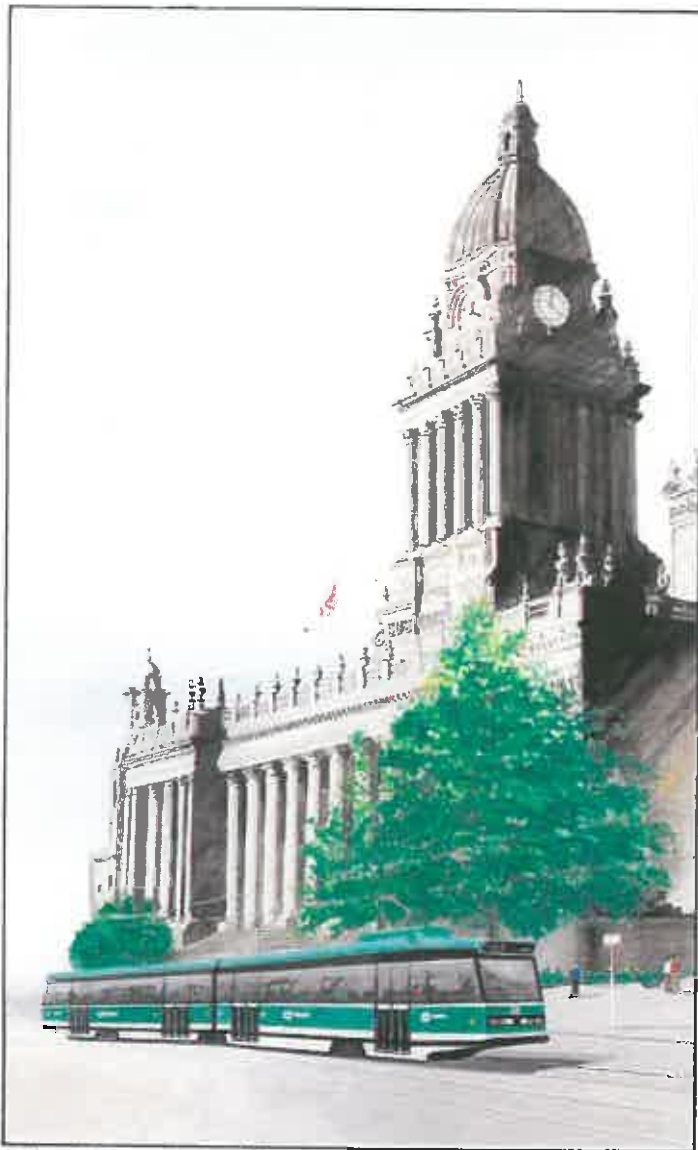
The reversal of the dismal decline in the numbers of people using Metro is a major feat, achieved in the face of the continuing rise in car ownership and unemployment. Many of those persuaded on to public transport by imaginative promotional schemes and attractive fare packages would use the private car — thus adding to daily traffic congestion — or not travel at all if the facilities were withdrawn. Equally, there is a great potential for travel by people of all ages who have yet to learn how convenient public transport is.

The achievements of West Yorkshire PTE in the last ten years show the advantages of an integrated public transport network. Plans are in hand for bringing further benefits to passengers.

Much has still to be done to improve or replace bus station or travel centre provision. For Halifax, plans are at an advanced stage to replace the old and poorly sited bus station with an attractive and comfortable bus and coach station more centrally situated.



Modern trolleybus for West Yorkshire?



Light rail system for Leeds?

Most pressing of all, perhaps, is the situation in Leeds where fragmented bus and coach station facilities, isolated from the railway station, are unworthy of the great city they serve. A major new bus station complex adjoining Leeds rail station is currently being planned.

Given the resources, very much more could be done to bring in new technology to public transport. Electrification of the London-Wakefield-Leeds line will provide a good opportunity to electrify a significant part of the local rail network, and could form the basis of a modern, high-speed system for the whole of West Yorkshire — but investment will be required. The PTE has already proposed to reintroduce trolleybuses in a modernised form onto selected routes in Leeds, where they would be cheaper and pollution-free, offering quieter and quicker travel. As in other areas of Europe, light rail systems and linking bus services could win even more new traffic onto the network, as experience in Tyne and Wear has demonstrated. In Leeds possible routes have already been planned and kept free of building developments that would block them.

The PTE plans to stay in the forefront of the development and use of new vehicles on both road and rail. For MetroBus this means new designs of double and single-deck buses for more comfortable and economic travel. It means the use of small buses and minibuses on both rural and urban routes, as on the new Ridgerider service in central Leeds. For rail there could be further use of the lightweight railbus, whether diesel or electric powered, on many MetroTrain lines.

So the future holds some marvellous possibilities for making travelling more convenient, more comfortable, faster, in an environment free of noise, pollution, congestion.

But all such advances are put at risk by major changes now being proposed by the Government. Even worse, what has already been achieved is in jeopardy.

The Government is proposing abolition of the Metropolitan County Councils including West Yorkshire. The benefits of linking planning and transport policies, with the same authority responsible for public transport as for roads, land use and traffic management, were recognised when the County Council was set



Metro FutureBus?



A shattered network?

up. This integrated approach will now be destroyed if the Local Government Bill is passed. Public transport will be under the control of a joint board of the District Councils. This will make overall policy direction more difficult and if an individual district

actually leaves the joint board then it will be very hard to maintain an integrated system of tickets and services.

On top of all this, with the Government's new Transport Bill public transport faces its greatest upheaval this century. If their

plans go ahead, subsidies in the metropolitan areas will be greatly reduced. Taxis will be able to compete with conventional bus services. Loss-making services will disappear unless specifically subsidised and put out to tender. Most radical of all, the system of bus route licensing which has operated for more than half a century is to be abandoned, returning Britain's bus services to the chaotic free-for-all when rival operators competed on bus routes.

What will this mean to the people of West Yorkshire? In truth nobody really knows. The Government hopes that a free market will mean a cheaper, more responsive public transport service. But West Yorkshire people already enjoy efficient public transport services that respond to their needs. To believe that the mechanism of the market can better meet such needs is to totally ignore all evidence to the contrary. Most independent observers and professionals within the transport industry predict major problems:

- What will happen to the county-wide fares policy when private operators come along to try and cream off revenue?
 - What will be the use of Off-Peaker, MetroCard, Day Rover, SaverStrip when the Metro-National network is broken up and not all operators accept the tickets?
 - Can loss-making services in rural and suburban areas, in the evenings and on Sundays be maintained if subsidies are reduced? Can these services survive if the cross-subsidy they need from profitable services is removed?
 - Will the present cheap and free fares for the elderly and disabled continue on all services if there are numerous new companies not operating the system? Will child half fares remain?
 - How can local rail services survive if competing bus services take away much of their revenue?
 - How can passengers rely on safe bus services if there are new operators without adequate maintenance facilities or a long-term commitment to the business?
 - Will marketing be effective if it does not relate to all services?
 - How will passengers find out comprehensive details of services in their own area, let alone elsewhere in the county?
- These and many other questions show the risks of relying on

free competition to meet public transport needs. Experts who have studied the matter recognise that a free market does not serve the passenger's interest best. A free market means that each operator tries to run his bus just in front of his rivals, so buses bunch together instead of providing an even frequency. A free market often deters operators from co-operating in marketing, timetabling and fares and thus spells the disintegration of the network.

The only evidence in Britain of the effects of the Government's proposals is in a limited number of experiments in rural areas such as Hereford. Public transport needs in these areas, where car ownership is high and problems of city centre congestion are small, are very different from those in large urban areas like West Yorkshire. Even so, a number of difficulties have emerged, such as frequent and confusing changes in services and buses running in a dangerous condition. The results of experiments so far do nothing to reduce the conviction of many experts that grave problems will ensue if the proposals are applied to Britain's great cities.

Everywhere else in Europe, in America, in Australia and even in the Third World public transport systems are integrated. Across the globe the benefits of integration are being recognised. In Britain the process will be reversed. Everyone will lose — regular travellers, commuters, shoppers, tourists, even motorists, as public transport users switch to the private car. This will inevitably add to morning and evening congestion, to accidents, to pollution, to environmental degradation, to the demand for yet more roads.

The achievements of the last ten years in West Yorkshire show the enormous benefits of Passenger Transport Executives in major cities and conurbations. These achievements, and the opportunities that lie ahead, are inevitably threatened by the Government's plans. If the Government's proposals fail, in ways that many people both inside and outside the transport industry believe they will, it is likely that much of what is being swept away will, sooner rather than later, have to be restored. And that could prove a painful and expensive process.

But whatever the future does hold, West Yorkshire Passenger

Transport Executive will continue to work to retain and develop an efficient public transport system, capable of meeting passengers' needs and of serving the varied communities of West Yorkshire in the years to come.



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