



**The Institution of
Railway Operators**

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LEARNING FROM THE WORLD'S BEST

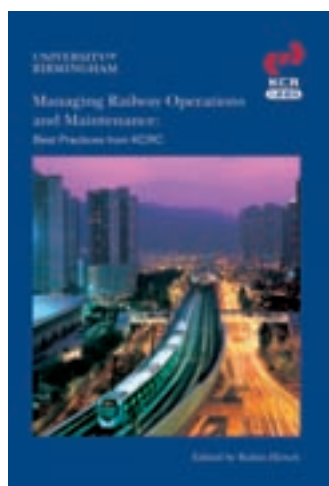
The UK should be comparing itself to high-achieving railways in other countries if it wants to improve its standing, says

Robin Hirsch

What is 'world class' and does the UK's rail industry have a real desire to achieve it?

In east Asia, on the other hand, railways have been seeking out qualified comparisons and best practices across the world since at least the early 1990s, not to pat themselves on the back, but to learn how to improve.

It is not just in infrastructure management that east Asian railways are superior to those in the UK and Europe. In rolling stock reliability, the comparisons are equally stark: despite substantial improvements,



spurred on by Roger Ford's Gold Spanners awards, the best performances for EMUs in UK are still under 50,000 miles per casualty, and that is using a five minute threshold.

Older rolling stock still tends to perform better – teething problems with new trains take far too long to resolve in UK.

On East Rail, KCRC (the body that runs the rail link from Hong Kong to mainland China)

improved performance from 57,000 miles per casualty in 1996 to 150,000 train miles in 2006, using a three-minute threshold. With new rolling stock, the performance is even more impressive. The four-year-old West Rail achieved 'only' 264,000 miles in 2007 using a three-minute threshold, but 482,000 using Network Rail's five-minute threshold.

KCRC's Ma On Shan Rail started operations in December 2004 with 136,000 trains-miles, but within two years the figure was up to 502,000 miles – between three-minute delays!

Of course, all this has an impact on punctuality. Network Rail's target is 90.2 per cent PPM in 2008-9 overall, with 92.0 per cent PPM on Gatwick Express. Since 2002, East Rail's punctuality has never dropped below 99.7 per cent; by 2006, it reached 99.91 per cent using its more rigorous three-minute threshold.

Japan Railways' threshold is

even tighter: if a train is one minute behind schedule, it counts as late. The Shinkansen's average delay is now only 0.3 minutes per train, down from 24 seconds or 0.4 minutes in 1999.

Everywhere in east Asia, continuous improvements are not just a slogan; they are a way of life and a driving force for railways and other service industries.

If we do not learn this, if we are working in the dark, we will be doomed to fall further and further behind their level of excellence. Network Rail will not achieve its aim to be world-class if it does not compare itself with world-class railways.

It does not take magic to achieve such results. They are due to a combination of disciplined effort and consistent root cause analysis, driven by a constant urge never to be satisfied with the status quo, but always to improve and to set higher, ever more ambitious standards. These railways are constantly being

'Top Toc' joins up as corporate member

East Coast Main Line operator National Express East Coast is the latest major train operating company to become a corporate member of the Institution of Railway Operators.

National Express East Coast's membership brings the number of IRO corporate members to 25 railway-related companies and organisations.

Formed last year as a subsidiary of National Express Group, National Express East Coast successfully bid for the East Coast Main Line franchise

formerly operated by GNER. National Express began operating the route linking the English and Scottish capitals, widely regarded as the UK's premier rail route, in December 2007.

Andy Meadows, National Express East Coast HR director, said: 'Our corporate membership of the IRO will bring a raft of benefits to the company. Our employees will have access to the IRO's excellent education programme with opportunities to enrol on the foundation, diploma or degree courses.



Above: A National Express East Coast liveried HST. Above right: Andy Meadows.

'In addition, National Express East Coast will, through our corporate membership, have direct access to the board of an organisation that has become one of the rail industry's most influential professional bodies. In return, we look forward to being able to add our contribution to the IRO's unrivalled reserve of combined operating experience and knowledge.'

Chris Daughton, IRO CEO, said: 'We are delighted to welcome National Express East Coast to corporate membership of the IRO.'

'Having the operator of one of the UK's top rail franchises as a member can only add to the IRO's growing prestige within the rail industry and bring mutual benefit to both the company and the institution.'

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

A number of industry employers have corporate subscriptions to the institution that cover the subscriptions of any of their employees, which are graded as associate or affiliate. The current corporate member companies are:

Network Rail ● Eurostar UK ● First ScotRail ● First Great Western
 ● National Express East Anglia ● Railnews ● Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail)
 ● EWS ● Northern Ireland Railways ● First TransPennine Express
 ● First Capital Connect ● Atoc ● Southern ● London Underground
 ● Docklands Light Railway ● Transport for London ● South West Trains
 ● Stagecoach Supertram ● Arriva Trains Wales ● Parsons Brinckerhoff
 ● Southeastern ● Virgin Trains ● Chiltern Railways ● c2c
 ● Gatwick Express ● RWA Rail ● East Midlands Trains ● Mott MacDonald
 ● Stagecoach Metrolink ● Cross Country Trains ● National Express East Coast

Those with full membership will continue to pay their subscription personally, irrespective of whether they can subsequently claim it back. Please note that, as the IRO's subscriptions are tax-deductible, a receipt will be issued for all payments – whether by cheque, standing order or internet payment.

If your company would like to explore the benefits of corporate membership of the institution, please contact us. We welcome applications from all industry companies, suppliers and associations – please contact Chris Daughton on: 01444 248931 or: admin@railwayoperators.org

benchmarked against the best elsewhere in the world and against other industries.

'You can always learn things from others, even when they are not as good overall as you are,' says Andrew McCusker, operations director of MTR Corporation and one of the driving forces behind the CoMET and Nova worldwide benchmarking groups.

UK railways would do well to emulate such an approach. London Underground has gained substantially from its experience

in benchmarking, but there is scope for a great deal of expansion of this valuable discipline amongst most of the rest of the UK rail industry.

Without a clear view that includes qualified figures for world class performance, how can the UK achieve the improvements that are so long overdue?

Robin Hirsch is the author of Managing Railway Operations and Maintenance: Best Practices from KCRC. Copies of the book are available to IRO at only £20.

IRO RENEWS GCU CONTRACT

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and the IRO are set to continue their association for another three years.

After three successful years, during which the university has provided the academic backing for the IRO degree and diploma courses, as well as the recently-introduced foundation course, the two organisations agreed a new three-year contract to run from April this year.

Chris Daughton, IRO chief

executive, said: 'We are delighted our close association with GCU is to continue.

'We work well together as the last three years, during which we have drawn up and launched the three courses, have clearly demonstrated.'

Vince Mills, senior lecturer at GCU's Scottish Centre for Work Based Learning, will continue to supervise the three IRO courses, as he has done for the past three years.

DIARY OF EVENTS

SCOTTISH AREA

All meetings start at 17:30, with tea, coffee and biscuits available from 17:15. For information on all Scottish Area events please contact Ross Campbell on 0141 242 8620 or email: scottish@railwayoperators.org

NORTH EAST AREA

9 July: Hull Trains – First in Open Access Operation: A Talk by Mark Leving, managing director of Hull Trains on setting up open access operations, current operations, rolling stock and future expansion plans. All are welcome and refreshments will be provided. It takes place at 17:30 for 17:45 at The Studio, Platform 9, York Station. To reserve a place, please contact Chris Prior. For information on all North East Area events please contact Chris Prior on 07801 905204 or email: northeast@railwayoperators.org

NORTH WEST AREA

5 July: North West Area Family Day Out. The intention is to visit the Tallyllyn Railway, mid-Wales – more details will be communicated to all NW members nearer the time. Please contact Tom Cox if you are interested in participating: thomas@rail20.freemove.co.uk
 To contact the North West Area on any matter, please call Clive Evans on 01270 629009 or email us at: northwest@railwayoperators.org

MIDLANDS AREA

15 September: Presentation on Centro's rail strategy at The Mailbox, Birmingham. Time TBA.
6 October: Visit to Central Rivers.
10 November: Presentation on infrastructure investment, The Mailbox, Birmingham. Time TBA.
15 December: Christmas drinks.
12 January 09: Presentation on driver management.
9 March 09: Visit to East Midlands Control Centre. Time TBA.
20 April 09: Visit to Oxley depot.
18 May 09: Presentation on RAIB at East Midland Trains Rail Academy. Dates for the coming year's events are confirmed but events are

provisional. Members will be notified of changes via letter/email. For information on all Midlands Area events, please contact Julia Stanyard on 0121 345 3833 or email: midlands@railwayoperators.org

SOUTH EAST AREA

14 July: Talk on Crossrail by Robbie Burns of Network Rail (further details to follow).
15 September: The Customer Experience – talk by Brian Cooke, chairman of London TravelWatch.
17 November: Masterclass on on-board services: Speakers TBA. All South East Area meetings take place at the Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, opposite Waterloo East Station. Doors open at 18:00 and the talks commence at 18:30. For information on South East Area events please contact: southeast@railwayoperators.org

SOUTH WEST AREA

17 August: This event has been changed to a trip to the Torbay Steam Railway and a river cruise up the Dart. Full details to follow.
15 October: Talk on Royal Train operations
December: Christmas function TBC. For information on all South West Area events, please contact Nick Edwards on 07801 905409 or email: nicolas.edwards@ews-railway.co.uk

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

14 July: Ian Yeowart, managing director of Grand Union will be talking to the Young Professionals about Grand Central's operations, the issues which delayed the launch of services, problems which had to be overcome in the first few days of service and expansion plans. This talk will take place at the Union Jack Club at the usual start time of 16.30 for 17.00. Although places for this talk are not limited, please register at www.iroyoungprofessionals.org.uk to confirm attendance. You are invited to stay for Robbie Burns' talk.