

IRO Midlands News

West Midlands Rail Devolution—Update

In Issue 1 we reported that Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin, had rejected a call for devolution of West Midlands services. Steven Fisher, Centro's Rail Partnership Manager, kindly provided this update for the IRO.

Proposals for rail devolution in the West Midlands are being developed by a partnership of 14 metropolitan, shire and unitary authorities, together with Centro—collectively known as West Midlands Rail (WMR). WMR has been developing these proposals over many months, including regular dialogue with DfT, London Midland and other industry partners. It is currently anticipated that WMR will submit a formal proposal to the Secretary of State in the late summer.

The Government is fundamentally supportive of devolution, though it favours an incremental approach to achieving this rather than a West Midlands body having full control from day 1.


Proposals for devolution must provide value for money in the long term, including the costs of splitting the London Midland franchise—which the Department for Transport is willing to consider—through efficiencies and passenger benefits, and a reducing subsidy.

DfT requires that the first of any new devolved contracts will be a “net cost contract”, with revenue risk being held by the operator and there must be clear evidence that risks for Government, West Midlands Rail and partner authorities are effectively managed.

You can read more about West Midlands Rail on their website [here](#).

Wirksworth rejoins the network

Wirksworth station, which closed nearly 70 years ago in June 1947, is to rejoin the national rail network—virtually, at least. Travellers will soon be able to plan journeys to Wirksworth, on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, from any mainline station in the UK through the National Rail Enquiries Journey Planner tool.

Tom Tait, Commercial Director for the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway said *“I am delighted that Wirksworth is now a destination on the national rail network in its own right and I am most grateful to our colleagues at East Midlands Trains who have supported this innovation. With the ability to purchase through tickets... Wirksworth will now enjoy a comprehensive public transport service.”* 



350240 at Birmingham New Street
© Worley-d at en.wikipedia

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Your views count!



If you have comments or suggestions about this newsletter, or would like

to submit a story, picture or suggestion, please get in touch—we'd love to hear from you!

Email your thoughts to:
m.chairman@railwayoperators.co.uk



Dates for your diary

June 14 2014

Our Summer Family Day will be held on Saturday June 14th when we take a trip to the Gloucester Warwickshire Railway. As well as the opportunity to ride on the line, we have visits to the signal box, carriage works and loco depot lined-up too. *Places limited. Contact Julia Stanyard for more information.*

2014-15 Season

Dates, which are all confirmed, are as below. Venues and locations are still to be confirmed and details of particular events will be available from next month.

- ◆ 8 September, Birmingham
- ◆ 6 October, Derby
- ◆ 3 November, Milton Keynes
- ◆ 11 December (Christmas Social Evening)
- ◆ 12 January, Birmingham
- ◆ 9 February, Derby
- ◆ 9 March, Milton Keynes
- ◆ 13 April, Birmingham
- ◆ 11 May, Derby
- ◆ 8 June, Milton Keynes
- ◆ 15 June (Summer Family Day)

Contact Rachel Heath for more information.

“Reconfigurable workstations... is a fundamental requirement for the ROCs and their traffic management control systems of the future.”

Around the Midlands

London Midland and Centro have installed a ticket issuing machine on the Birmingham University campus at Edgbaston. Over 3000 tickets have been sold since March (May 29). [🌐](#)

Carillion, whose headquarters are at Wolverhampton, has been selected as one of Network Rail’s three preferred track renewal partners in a contract worth £100m during CP5 (May 12). [🌐](#)

Chiltern Railways has opened a new 707-space multi-storey car park at Banbury as part of a £10m station transformation funded by the DfT (May 30). [🌐](#)

Network Rail is investigating plans for trains to run directly from Oxfordshire to Heathrow Airport via Oxford and Bicester Town, as part of the business case for an enhanced role for the East-West rail route (May 29). [🌐](#)

DeltaRail visit: IECC and quite a lot besides

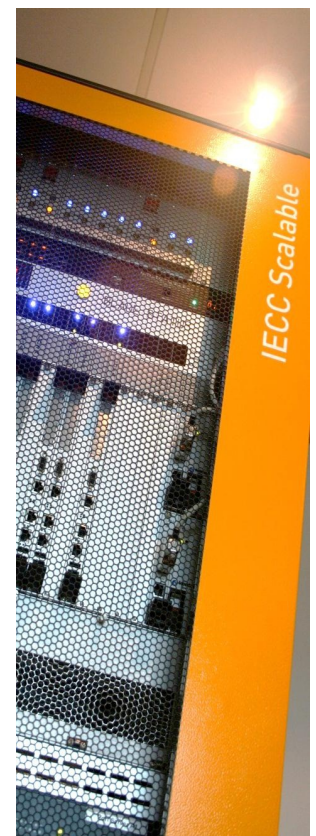
DeltaRail

The May event for IRO Midlands took the form of a site visit to DeltaRail’s offices in Derby where attendees were treated to an in-depth look at the latest developments from the company including its “IECC Scalable” system.

IECC – or Integrated Electronic Control Centre, to give it the full title – has been part of the fabric of the modern railway since the 1980s. A joint proposal by British Rail Research and the Department for Transport in 1983 suggested the replacement of hardwired entrance-exit (“NX”) signaller panels with banks of high-resolution VDU monitors, supported by a tracker ball, function buttons and a keyboard. Development and innovation over the following six years culminated in the first IECC being commissioned at Liverpool Street in March 1989. This included a sophisticated automatic route setting capability or ARS.

IECCs based on the 1980s architecture were subsequently commissioned at Yoker (1), Edinburgh (3), Tyneside (2), York (3), Sandhills (1), Marylebone (1), Liverpool Street (4), Upminster (3), Ashford (2), Slough (2), Didcot (2) and Swindon (1). The two instances at Slough were later absorbed into Didcot.

The use of software-based intelligent control for a signalling application and train control in the 1980s was regarded as a bold step. The outcomes enabled by the development of IECC by BR Research are still informing the way the railway operates today, and to some extent intends to operate in the future. ⇨



↳ The visit was led by Adam Perry, DeltaRail’s Sales and Marketing Director and supported by a number of Adam’s colleagues. The main topic for the evening was what is known as IECC Scalable. This is a contemporary re-engineering of the classic 1980s IECC using modern hardware and software capabilities. In simple terms, what previously would have required five or six full-height computer cabinets can now be accommodated in just one such cabinet. This clearly offers benefits such as reduced space requirement, power consumption, and environmental control such as air conditioning and so on. But the real benefits come from what the technology offers in functional terms.



Some IRO Midlands visitors learning about the reconfigurable workstation concept (IRO Midlands: M.Ward)

For example, the use of IP communications between the interlocking and the control system itself make it possible to remotely re-control interlocking equipment without the need for dedicated point-to-point telecoms links; this is known as RIF. This RIF capability has allowed the interlockings formerly controlled by Cowlairs PSB to be recontrolled from Edinburgh Signalling Centre. In reality, Cowlairs could be recontrolled from any scalable IECC anywhere in the country!

Under scalable, functions within the IECC such as ARS, RIF, Timetable Processor (TTP) and so on are housed on a single blade within the overall processor. These blades talk to each other using modern IT protocols and this makes the whole product ‘plug and play’ - what is referred to as a Service-Oriented Architecture in IT-speak. It also ensures that the functions can be interfaced to other systems, such as real-time train graphing, incident management and so on. Furthermore, the “other systems” don’t even have to be DeltaRail products.

Other features include re-configurable workstations, where the operator can select whatever part of the control area he or she needs to concentrate on, allowing for specific intervention or focus. The functionality also allows areas of control to be moved around between workstations, so enabling the operator to concentrate on managing a particular scenario and allowing a colleague to temporarily look after the rest of the patch. This is a fundamental requirement for the ROCs and their traffic management control systems of the future.

Our visit included a look at other recent developments in CCF (the graphical representation of trains in real-time), real-time graphing, stock and crew tools and even the use of Twitter feeds as a source of measuring customer satisfaction in real-time. DeltaRail, and their IECC Scalable product, are not part of the emerging traffic management landscape in the UK. Nevertheless, what was demonstrated on this visit showed that the spirit of BR Research is very much alive and shaping opinions in the rail industry of today, and enabled those present to develop their awareness and understanding of that landscape.

IRO Midlands would like to thank Adam Perry and the DeltaRail team for hosting the event and all those who attended . Audience: 17.

Further reading:

1. *Hands-on with DeltaRail’s TMS solution (Modern Railways, Issue 787, April 2014)*
2. *Message broker technology for flexible signalling control (IRSE Aspect Conference 2012)*
3. *From RIF to ROC (the Rail Engineer, Issue 113, March 2014)*
4. *Introducing IECC Scalable (the Rail Engineer, Issue 92, June 2012)*

Simon Whitehorn in 60 seconds

Simon Whitehorn is Head of National Operating Strategy at Network Rail.



When and why did you join the railway? I joined the railway in 1984 on the LMR and worked in Rail House at Crewe. I joined as a result of my father putting in a good word for me!

What was your first job? My first job, as Clerical Officer Grade 1, was in the Diagramming Section and I worked as a Distribution Clerk initially.

What do you think of the IRO? I think the IRO is a great organisation and it has worked very hard over the years to drive a sense of pride and belonging for railway operations people, and has done a lot to de-mystify railway operations.

Proudest moment? I have a few in what is now nearly 30 years, but one of the highlights has to be leading the team that developed the timetables that came about as a result of the West Coast Modernisation Programme.

Next big thing? I’m now leading a team which is driving the development and implementation of new technology like ERTMS, and shaping the future operational vision for the UK railway.

And finally, cat or dog? Dog!

What we do

The IRO Midlands area promotes railway operations, and the role of operators, as fundamental to the success of the railway.

Our objective is to connect members with experience and learning opportunities that broaden their understanding of railways, grow solid cross-industry and inter-disciplinary awareness, develop their knowledge and enhance their skills.

We aim to achieve this through a friendly and informal network which promotes

- ✓ mentoring and support for personalised learning and professional development
- ✓ a yearly programme of events exploring contemporary themes in the rail industry
- ✓ visits to front-line rail-industry facilities and
- ✓ advancement of the IRO education programme delivered by Glasgow Caledonian University.

The UK rail industry is a complex place. Our vision is for confident, well-aware operators to be at the forefront of the industry today and in the future.

Meet the team

Secretary	Julia Stanyard MIRO. <i>Customer Manager, Network Rail.</i> m.secretary@railwayoperators.co.uk
Treasurer	Doug McLellan MIRO. <i>Operations Standards Specialist, London Midland.</i> m.treasurer@railwayoperators.co.uk
Events Programme Manager	Rachel Heath AIRO. <i>Business and Planning Manager, High Output, Network Rail.</i> m.events@railwayoperators.co.uk
Visits Coordinator	<i>Vacant</i>
Communications	<i>Vacant</i>
Cross-industry liaison	<i>Vacant</i>
Mentoring & PDP	Colin Robey MIRO. <i>Head of Operations Rail and Rapid Transit, Centro.</i>
Committee advisors	Peter Bowes MIRO. <i>Safety and Environment Director, Virgin Trains.</i> Martin Ward MIRO. <i>Driver Manager, East Midlands Trains.</i>
Chair	Mike Christelow MIRO. <i>Technical specialist, Traffic Management, Network Rail.</i> m.chairman@railwayoperators.co.uk



Reading this and not a member...?

If you'd like to join IRO Midlands or would like further information about the benefits of joining, contact any of the team shown above or go to www.railwayoperators.co.uk and click on Membership.

And if you are a member...

Member services

Introduce a friend to the IRO so they can benefit too...

They will thank you for opening doors to new opportunities and experience

 The Institution of Railway Operators