

## TARKA LINE NEWS

By the time this article appears work should have been completed on the installation of the raised section of platform (known as a Harrington Hump) at Coplestone Railway Station. This will greatly assist people with reduced mobility as well as those with buggies to board and leave trains by reducing the height between the platform and the train. Similar facilities are also being installed at Crediton and Newton St Cyres. The Tarka Rail Association has been lobbying for a number of years to have these much needed facilities installed and we are delighted that the low platforms at these stations will enable more people to use the trains.

The awful weather in December and January fortunately did not have too great an impact on the Tarka Line and the train service was fairly reliable throughout. This was in part as a result of some preventative work by Network Rail around the Exeter area and particularly at Cowley Bridge.

The shortage of sufficient carriages for peak hour trains continues to be a problem simply because there are no spare diesel trains anywhere in the country. In fairness to First Great Western they have tried as far as possible to match capacity with demand, but with demand growing nearly everywhere, it is not possible to meet all demands. Nevertheless, the Tarka Rail Association keeps lobbying and whilst the afternoon situation is intractable, we are keeping up the pressure to try and provide more seats on the first train of the day to Exeter and remain hopeful that something may be possible in the not too distant future.

For the longer term, it seems that by 2017 following electrification of the Thames Valley services out of Paddington, more suitable diesel trains will migrate to the west country and we, with our colleagues in other rail user groups, will be seeking to ensure that sufficient additional trains come to Exeter Depot to enable everyone to have a seat on all local Devon services.

Don't forget that you can still buy books of ten single journey tickets (called Carnets) from the Coplestone Nisa Shop for a very reasonable £24 (equal to

£2.40 per journey). These can be used for trips to Exeter or Barnstaple by any train to or from Morchard Road or Coplestone Stations and can be used by friends or family provided the book is taken on the train and shown to the Conductor.

Another great fare deal is Group Save. With spring arriving and birds migrating, a trip down the line towards Exmouth for lunch and a walk is very enjoyable and three or four people can travel together for the price of two.

John Phillips  
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