

Bank Holiday Disruption

To the Editor

As we face yet another holiday weekend of rail disruption, I thought RM readers might like to see a letter I have written to Passenger Focus on the subject.

We were told by Network Rail when launching the December '08 timetable that with the West Coast Main Line works having been 'completed' passengers could look forward to a seven day railway and that weekend shutdowns would (I quote) 'become a distant memory'. Well not so, it would seem.

Why is it that so far this year there has been a shutdown affecting the Northampton area both at the Easter and May Day Bank Holidays? According to the National Rail website another closure is planned at the end of May.

What major work is still being done on a four track railway that we are told has been virtually renewed? There has been over £8bn of investment, and yet there are still more closures for up to 48 hours and the need for replacement bus services yet again.

Well, maybe the answer is that someone is being somewhat economical with the truth over what works have still yet to be completed. And why are buses still being used? Your own organisation has just advocated that operators make every effort to run alternative trains rather than reach for buses as an easy option.

Perhaps you could obtain a statement from the DfT and/or Network Rail on why these shutdowns are still being imposed, and how many more can we expect when the Bletchley area has still to be remodelled/ resignalled? This, incidentally, was part of the WCRM programme – a project which has been officially completed.

I look forward to receiving your reply at your earliest convenience.

Regards
Geoff Steel
Northampton