

# prompt new braking rules

after an accident in 1940.

A similar incident followed on February 25 2010 when a northbound train descending from Slochd towards Inverness failed to slow as quickly as it should have done to a stop, when the driver made a full service brake



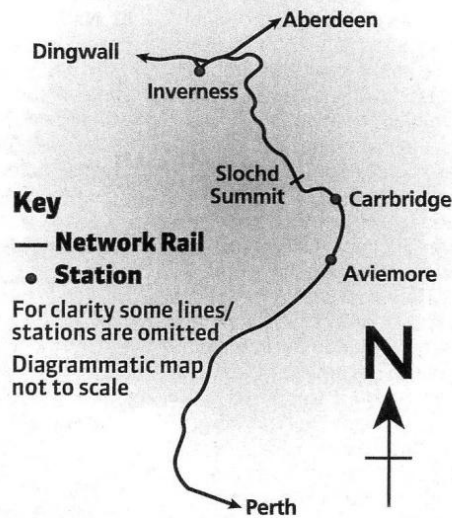
application shortly after passing the summit. This incident led to DB Schenker diverting trains away from the Highland Main Line to other routes with gentler gradients until March 15 2010.

RAIB published its report into Carrbridge on February 24, a month after publishing a report into a Freightliner container train that passed two red signals at Carstairs (RAIL 663). This also recommended changes to rules concerning running brake tests in poor weather (such checks are intended to make sure brakes continue to work).

At Carstairs, the container

wagons had disc brakes. At Carrbridge, they had traditional tread brakes. Both appear to be susceptible to snow and ice build-up.

## Carrbridge derailment



## FGW eyes smooth running with in-cab advice system

First Great Western plans to fit its 119 high-speed trains (HSTs) with kit from TIG in Australia, to provide drivers with in-cab advice on the best speed for keeping to the timetable and for driving efficiently to save fuel.

FGW's owner, First Group, had tested a similar drivers' advice system (DAS) on its Hull Trains Class 180s, before putting it into service last November. In tests with HSTs, FGW found fuel savings of up to 23% on its test routes and it estimates overall savings in fuel of about 11%. (It reckons fuel bills form 25% of its traction and rolling stock costs.)

The company expects to expand the system to its other train operators, and on February 22 it issued a notice in the European Union journal asking for expressions of interest from companies interested in

supplying similar kit across the range of the group's diesel and electric trains. First Group's other train operators are ScotRail and First Capital Connect.

The on-board kit for DAS consists of a GPS antenna, radio link, processor, power supply and driver's display. Loaded into the processor are details of the train's characteristics (power, brake and acceleration rates, rolling resistance), the timetable and the route's gradients and speeds. From this, it will calculate the best speed at which to run to reach the next station on time.

DAS has a shore-base from which revised timetable and speed information can be sent. This base can also receive feedback on the advice given to a driver, and what the driver did with that advice.

First Group Technical Director

John Hawkins told a meeting of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers on February 17 that the system, a slimmed-down version of that fitted to heavy haul freight trains in Australia, has safety benefits, because trains running on time should see fewer red signals.

He said that in one week of tests, westbound trains ran straight into Reading station under clear signals on four days out of five - usually trains are held outside the station waiting for a platform to become clear. On the fifth day, a train in front was late, said Hawkins.

Hawkins added that DAS could be upgraded to provide information on a train's position, to prevent conflicts at junctions and to provide better real-time information for passengers.

Train drivers' union ASLEF was unavailable for comment.

## Wabtec takes over Brush Traction facilities in £19m deal

Wabtec Corporation has purchased Brush Traction Group in a \$31 million (£19m) deal. The deal includes Brush's Loughborough and Kilmarnock facilities, which will complement Wabtec's Doncaster workshops.

Work at the Loughborough

facility includes fitting MTU engines to HST power cars, overhauls and repainting, as well as traction motor, electrical control system, and wheelset repairs. Locomotives including Class 31, 47, 60 and 92s were built there since the late-1950s, along with

the Eurotunnel units.

At Kilmarnock, bought by Brush in 2009 from Hunslet-Barclay, work includes refurbishment of carriages and multiple units, along with crash repairs.

Brush has annual sales of \$55m (£33.7m).

## Chester viaduct strengthened

Rail services between Chester/Ellesmere Port and Rock Ferry returned to normal on February 28, following a week of intensive engineering work.

At Mollington Viaduct, which spans the Shropshire Union Canal between the villages of Mollington and Moston near Chester, track, sleepers and stone foundations were removed to expose the deck of the viaduct.

A concrete 'saddle' was then positioned to strengthen the viaduct, before the entire deck was waterproofed. A new drainage system was installed and the tracks replaced. The strengthening work cost about £800,000.

While the line was closed Network Rail carried out additional work.

A footbridge at Hooton station was removed and replaced by new lifts and a connecting bridge, under the Department for Transport 'Access for All' programme. A footbridge at Capenhurst station was also completely refurbished, and repairs were carried out to Spittal Road Bridge.

During the week replacement bus services ran in place of trains.

## News In Brief

### £5.2m contracts won

Strategic Team Group has won 13 contracts, worth a combined £5.2 million, from Arriva Trains Wales, First Great Western and Merseyrail. The work includes a £2.4m upgrade of Swansea station and a £1.7m contract at Chester station, as well as work on ticket gate installation, cycle shelters and station accessibility.

### New lifts at Haymarket

Two passenger lifts, the first in the station's history, have opened at Edinburgh's Haymarket station, serving Platforms 2, 3 and 4. The work is part of a £1.5 million ScotRail programme that also includes automatic doors for the two waiting rooms and a cycle storage facility.

### Sidings disconnected

The old private sidings at Swains Park are to be disconnected by Network Rail. The sidings are on the freight-only Leicester-Burton Line.