

ELSTREE AND BOREHAMWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

TRANSPORT FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting held in the Council Chamber, Elstree Way Borehamwood on Thursday 31st October 2013 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr C Butchins (Chairman in the Chair)
Cllr E Butler (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Mrs S Parnell (Substitution)
Cllr S Rubner

In attendance:

Cllr L Reeve (Hertfordshire County Council)
J Cartledge (London TravelWatch)
L Heyman (First Capital Connect)
S Simmonds (Sullivan Buses)
L Stack (Resident)
N Clark (Resident)
D Barton (Resident)
S Alford (Resident)
D Mooring (Resident)
C Mooring (Resident)
P Mirams (Resident)
P J Stonie (Resident)
A Samuelson (Resident)
J Siversten (Resident)
A De Swarte (Resident)
P Elsen (Shenley Resident)
H Jones (Town Clerk)

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr G Franklin (Other Business), Cllr S Dobin (Other Business) (Cllr Mrs S Parnell substituted), A Scott Norman (Resident), A Dismore (London Assembly Member), I Blackmore (Transport for London), J Brown (Pensioners' Rights), Mr C and Mrs M Blake (Residents), PC Chalkley and PCSO Messetter (Hertsmere Constabulary) and County Cllr A Plancey (Hertfordshire County Council).

12. DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were none.

13. TRANSPORT FORUM MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 11 July 2013 were approved and duly signed as a true record by the Chairman.

14. BUS SERVICE UPDATE

L Stack (Resident) presented a list of questions and observations concerning Sullivan's buses which were received with thanks by S Simmonds on behalf of that company. It was acknowledged that a formal written response to each of the issues raised would be made to the Chairman by Sullivan's for inclusion in a forthcoming agenda and/or distribution to Transport Forum Members. L Stack was thanked for his helpful observations which were understood as provided in an attempt to assist and improve the service.

Turning to more general comments, S Simmonds reported that no significant changes were planned to the Sullivan's timetable. A slight adjustment (5 minutes) was to be made to the 107 bus to allow better coordination with the evening train timetables at Elstree and Borehamwood Railway Station.

J Cartledge (London TravelWatch) provided a further update in relation to route 107 following communication with D Tancock (Infrastructure Manager – Hertfordshire County Council). It was reported that he had met with TfL and County representatives at the station to discuss the stop allocation issue at the station interchange. A 107 driver was asked to pull up at stop B and deploy the ramp, which he did with no difficulty (see photograph at **APPENDIX A**). Further checks were to be undertaken, but it was hoped that the problem could now be resolved, and the 107 restored to this stop.

15. STIRLING CORNER (BY MORRISONS)

The Forum received a tabled report from the Chairman, outlining the update from N Hardy (Head of Capital Development - Roads Directorate TfL) received in lieu of attendance at the meeting, as follows:

"A trial has been undertaken to assess the full time (24 hour) operation of the part time signals (15:30 and 18:30 Monday to Friday) at the junction of the A1 Barnet Way with the A411 Barnet Lane Stirling Corner.

Local traffic modelling (the A1 Corridor VISSIM model) was used to assess any possible impacts of the signal timing changes on the A1 and surrounding local area in the AM peak.

The results of the modelling showed that full time signal timings in the AM peak would not have significant impact.

This assessment allowed TfL to move forward with on street trials. It must be noted that the model was not specially built for this purpose and was indicative. The signal junction equipment was then assessed by TfL Traffic Infrastructure for suitability and was switched to full time operation on the 28th May 2013.

This trial is nearing its end and a report will be issued to all stakeholders when it is complete and the results analysed.

Feasibility work is also in progress to bring forward a proposal to reduce the speed limit on the A1 Barnet By Pass (of which Stirling Corner forms a part) from 70mph to 50mph."

Commenting on the current situation, a resident of Elstree Park stated that, in his opinion, the 50mph speed limit was vital and that the return to use of the lights had brought about a vast improvement. Cllr E Butler also commented that the lights made the job of driving a local community bus far better. However, the entry onto the roundabout coming from the Morrisons store direction remained difficult and was potentially dangerous. These views were echoed by all present. Other residents of Elstree Park reported anecdotal incidents of crashes at Stirling Corner, with the most serious one occurring on 24 October 2013.

Cllr S Rubner expressed the opinion that the 50mph speed limit should extend from the M25 to Apex Corner in order to reduce the risk of further accidents.

In summarising the views expressed about the lights, the Chairman recognised that it was important to ascertain from TfL what the intentions were in connection with the lights at the end of the six month trial period. The overwhelming attitude of the Transport Forum was that these should remain on and that position would be made most forcefully to TfL.

In addition, the Chairman had in his possession a petition from 93 residents of Elstree Park (the site with the entrance and exit close to the roundabout opposite Morrisons) stating that ***"Since the traffic lights at Stirling Corner have been on full time it has been more safe to access our entrance/exit which is on a very dangerous corner coming off the A1."***

[Post Meeting Note: It is understood that a consultation will take place in January 2014 concerning speed limit reductions on approaches to the roundabout from the A1 and will include the proposal to extend the 50 mph limit to a point between Stirling Corner and the Rowley Lane flyover.

In addition, the Forum has received an update from Andrew Dismore AM in respect of Stirling Corner:

“What is the outcome of the 24/7 traffic light operation experiment at Stirling Corner?”

Written response from the Mayor

The trial at Stirling Corner has been undertaken to assess possible safety and performance benefits of using full-time instead of part-time signals.

Initial results have shown that the full-time signalisation has addressed the original request from Barnet councillors and local residents to improve the east/west access to the roundabout. However, further analysis is needed to fully measure the benefits at this location.

The initial six-month trial was extended to take account of seasonal variation and to facilitate the collection of more data. TfL teams are meeting on a regular basis to review the trial and any future long term design options for Stirling Corner.

Will you now look to see what can be done to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians at Stirling Corner?

Written response from the Mayor

The trial of the 24/7 operation of the traffic signals at this location is under way. As part of reviewing the impact of this trial, TfL will give consideration to any further improvements that could be made.”]

16. 20mph SPEED LIMITS – HERTS COUNTY COUNCIL SCRUTINY

County Cllr L Reeve provided a detailed outline for Forum Members of the consultation exercise (scheduled to close on 22 November 2013) concerning 20mph speed limits in Hertfordshire as part of the proposed speed management strategy

The new strategy had been proposed following a review carried out in partnership with Herts Police and, if approved, it would make it easier for 20mph zones to be created in residential areas, where appropriate, and if the idea was supported by the local community. It would also permit zonal speed limits, usually for 40mph, in rural areas where speeds were already in line with such a limit to be introduced.

Forum Members were encouraged to submit individual responses on the consultation. It was noted that the issue was scheduled for consideration by the County Council Cabinet in February/March 2014. The cost element of the exercise would be of special concern against the background of savings required to be made by that authority (£375 million over the forthcoming four years).

17. RAILWAY PLATFORMS

Members received a highly informative presentation from J Cartledge (London TravelWatch) entitled “Who’s minding the gap?” (slides attached at **APPENDIX B**).

The presentation highlighted the risks associated with (and control measures utilised in mitigating) excessive gaps between platform edges and trains, drawing on data held by Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch, the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) and the Department for Transport.

The report was received with thanks by all Forum Members.

18. THAMESLINK / FIRST CAPITAL CONNECT

L Heyman (First Capital Connect) provided a comprehensive update, including news concerning:

Requirements for the new Thameslink franchise

- An option for enhanced Sunday train times (four rather than two per hour);
- New eight and twelve car trains (with no more four car trains from 2018); and
- Air conditioned trains with better acceleration and braking.

Car Park

- Increased patrols for safety;
- 44 CCTV cameras; and
- Reduced accident (and bicycle theft) figures.

Footbridge

- A three month delay (with scheduled completion in May 2014) due to unforeseen ground water and former bridge footings (including some issues with fibre optic cables);
- Measures to tackle noise nuisance for neighbouring properties; and
- Measures to deal with restricted access to neighbouring properties.

L Heyman also noted that platforms 1 and 2 had been extended to allow them to be served by 12-car trains, but there were no current plans to extend platforms 3 and 4 at the Railway Station as very few trains now used them. Responding to a query raised, he also indicated that it was the intention for the new trains to be equipped with a facility for announcing stops in an audible fashion.

19. OPEN SESSION

In view of the two hour time limit designated for the meeting, the Chairman advised that the Open Session of the meeting would be deferred until the next meeting. Alternatively, Forum Members were welcome to discuss issues privately after the close of the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised of two issues raised by J Brown (Pensioners' Rights), who had sent apologies for absence for the meeting and asked for them to be forwarded to Hertfordshire County Council and Sullivan's Buses respectively:

- the bus stop in Aycliffe Road (opposite the post office) was damaged insofar as the solar panelled roof leaked; and
- on the 306 service the "stop" bell was not working.

20. CLOSURE AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 27 February 2014 at 7.00 pm, Hertsmere Civic Offices.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Date:..... CHAIRMAN.....

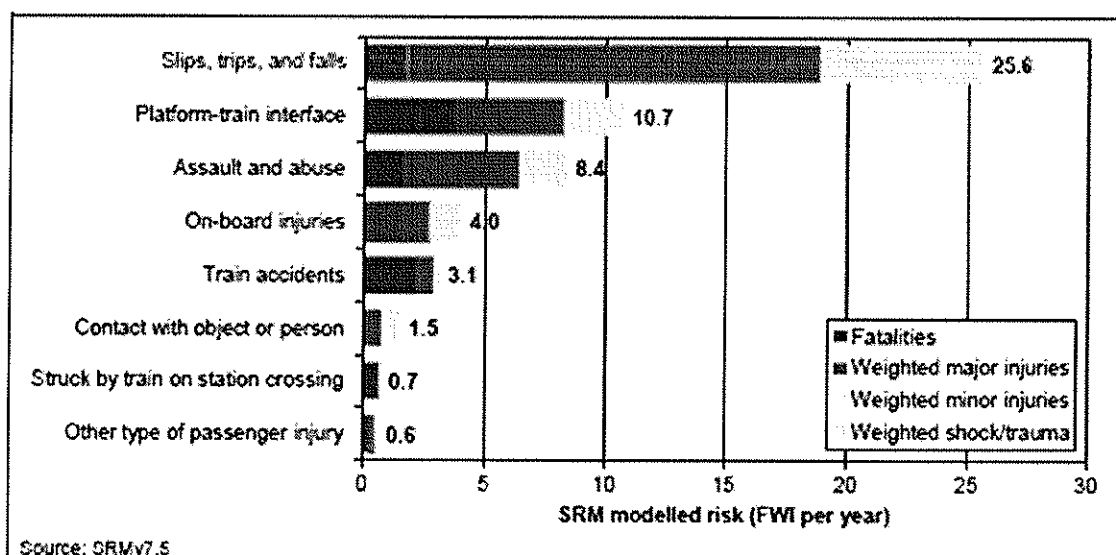
APPENDIX A



RISK AT THE PLATFORM-TRAIN INTERFACE

Note by John Cartledge, Safety Policy Adviser, Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch, for Elstree & Borehamwood Town Council Transport & Road Safety Forum 31.10.13

1. Why is this issue of concern to the passenger watchdog bodies? One reason is that according to RSSB (formerly the Rail Safety & Standards Board)'s safety risk model it is the second largest source of risk to passengers on the national rail system, and the largest single source of fatal risk, equating to 10.7 fatalities and weighted injuries per year.



2. Another is that it is clear from our mailbag that it is a source of real concern to many rail users. A typical recent letter read "At Clapham Junction the height gap between the platform and the trains on platform 15 is a health and safety issue. Towards the eastern end of the platform I have seen elderly people unable to disembark because the gap was unmanageable." These photos show the platform and the gap concerned, including the curvature of the track which is a major contributory factor.



3. A third reason is that it has attracted adverse media coverage for the industry. For example, on 22.12.11 in an impassioned article in The Guardian Joanna Moorhead, writing on behalf of her husband, daughters and daughters' schoolfriends, all of whom were daily users of platform 15 at Clapham Junction and had witnessed incidents in which people had fallen into this gap, challenged Network Rail to explain why it is allowed to remain. She concluded

"Does Network Rail care about these dangers? According to the platform staff ... the problem is that the platforms weren't built for modern trains, and improving them to reduce the gap would cost too much. I wonder whether that's what they'll be saying when the day comes when a child falls on to the

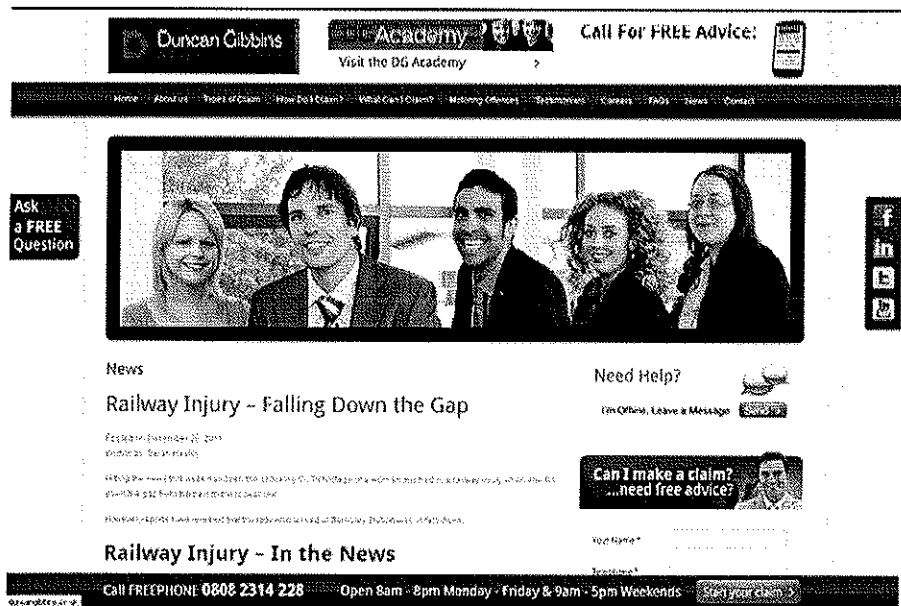
spending to keep our children safe.

"So listen up, Network Rail. Those are my daughters and their friends who are falling on to your tracks. If I'm angry now, I'll be incandescent on the day that accident happens. And it will. That's what station staff told me ... because higher passenger numbers (which you have) mean more platform crowding and more accidents."

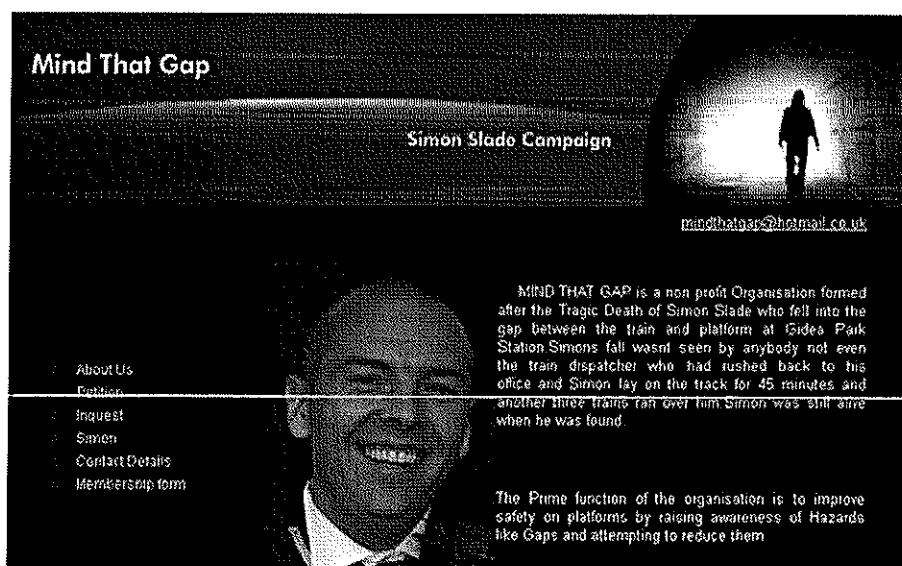
[See <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/dec/22/mind-the-gap-drunk-fall-under-train>]

The article attracted 374 on-line comments. But sadly, Network Rail (which owns virtually all of the stations on the main line network) did not respond to her challenge, even when its press office was directly invited to do so. So the industry's case went by default.

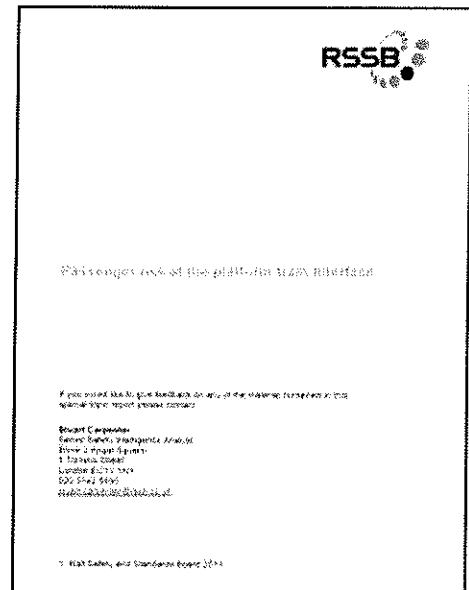
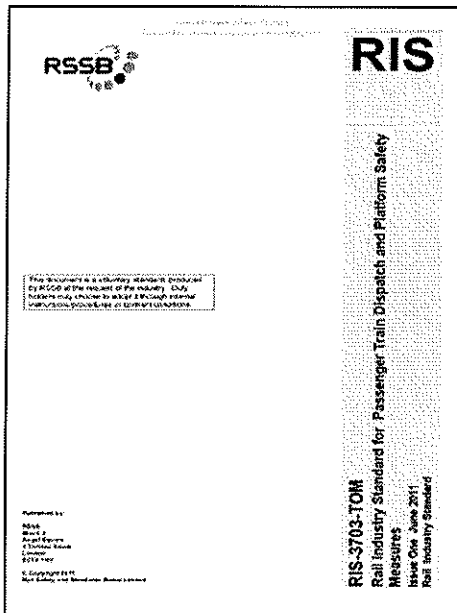
4. The issue highlighted in the article was, however, seized upon by at least one firm of personal injury lawyers, who clearly spotted in it a commercial opportunity and set up a website inviting victims to seek their professional aid ...



5. Another website, entitled *Mind That Gap*, has been set up as part of a campaign by the parents of a young man who was killed when he fell from the platform at Gidea Park in 2007 while seeing off a friend and was only found after four trains had passed over him. At the inquest into his death, the coroner severely criticised the failure of the platform supervisor to monitor the platform as trains departed, and the circumstances of this accident have been the subject of a Parliamentary debate.



6. It would be wrong, of course, to imply that the rail industry has been indifferent to the problem. In a report on *Passenger risk at the platform-train interface*, RSSB has analysed its dimensions in detail, setting out where and when incidents have occurred, the types of train and passenger most likely to be involved, the relative performance of different train operators, etc.



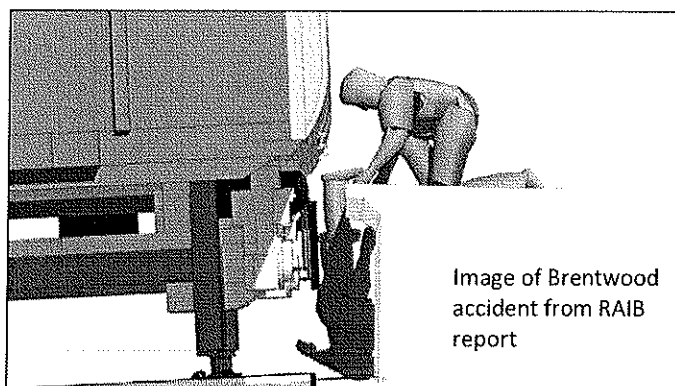
7. RSSB has also published a Rail Industry Standard covering *Passenger Train Dispatch and Platform Safety Measures*, which contains detailed guidance on signs, announcements, markings and other risk mitigating actions. It is, however, solely concerned with managing the problem, rather than with its physical reduction or elimination.

8. A recent addition to the RED series of staff training videos produced by RSSB and the Operations Focus Group (OFG) is devoted to the danger of dragging incidents. In the video, the sleeve of a girl who is seeing off her friend becomes trapped between the sliding doors when they close. She is dragged for some distance by the train before slipping out of her coat and into the gap. The purpose of the video is to alert staff responsible for train dispatch to the possible consequences of closing doors without taking sufficient note of the actions of passengers, and to the need to remain vigilant as trains start to move.

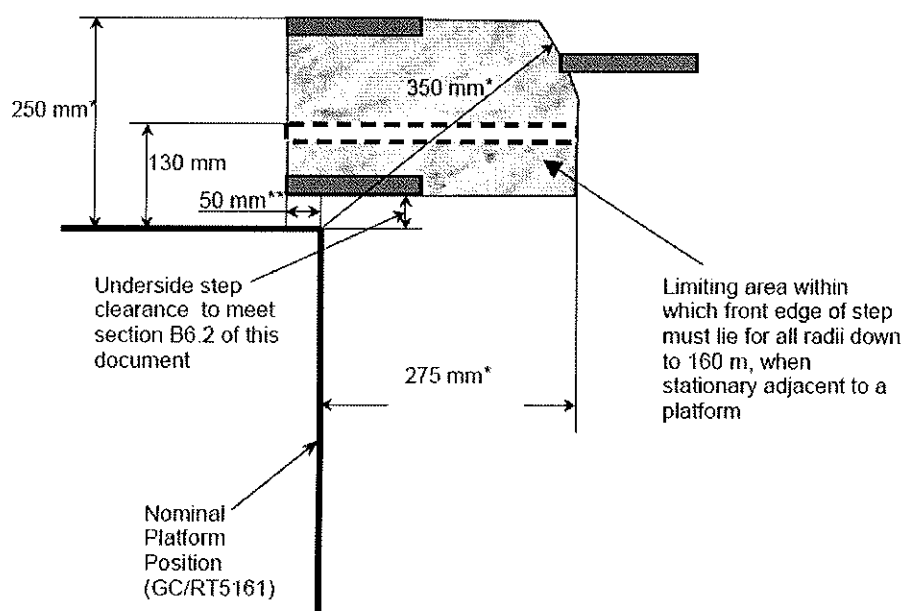


9. Each year RSSB publishes a report entitled *Learning from operational experience*, in which safety-related incidents which have occurred on the network (and, indeed, around the world) during the past year are reviewed in order to identify any learning points emerging from these which may be of general application. The 2012 report in this series included an account of an accident at Brentwood in which a passenger slipped off the platform edge while alighting from a driver-only train and fell head-first into the gap. Her predicament was invisible to the driver because of a misplaced platform monitor. The gap is accentuated at this site by the canting (tilting) of the track and train away from the platform edge which occurs where platforms are sited on convex curves. Fortunately another

passenger was able to come to her aid and was able to alert the driver before the train departed. The report records various recommendations arising from the subsequent RAIB investigation relating (e.g.) to monitors and driver training, but goes on to suggest that “stepping distances should be checked to ensure that they are within safe limits.”



10. This recommendation presupposes that such limits exist, and invites the question as to what they are. The answer is found in *Railway Group Standard (RGS) 2149* which sets out target maximum vertical, horizontal and diagonal distances between train door footsteps and platform edges.

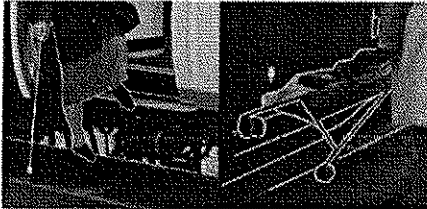


The target is that (diagonally) the gap should not exceed 350 mm, i.e. about 14 inches - which is still quite wide enough for most people to slide into. It should be remembered that this standard applies only to new (or wholly reconstructed) platforms, and that it relates only to the gap between the platform and a footstep, not the rest of the train bodyside. The latter is governed by a different standard which is concerned with specifying a minimum rather than a maximum gap in order to limit the risk of contact between a moving train and trackside infrastructure.

11. RSSB has commissioned research to ascertain how far short of the standard the existing stock of platforms falls. Its report *T866* recorded that in October 2011, of the 5671 platforms on the network, only 384 (i.e. a meagre 6.8%) were fully compliant in both the vertical and the horizontal planes.

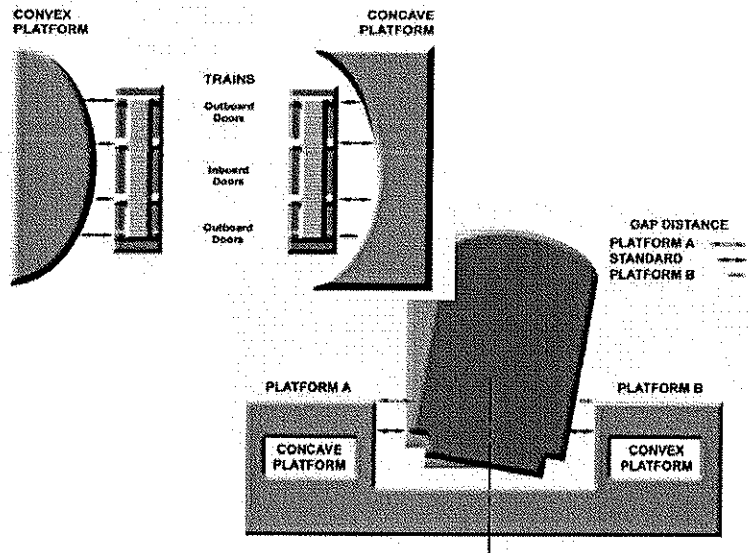
		Average platform height (mm) ARL			Total
		< RGS limit	Within RGS	> RGS limit	
Average platform offset (mm)	< RGS limit	320	239	496	1,108
	Within RGS	264	384	627	1,185
	> RGS limit	986	981	1,411	3,378
	Total	1,573	1,664	2,434	5,671

Department for Transport: Significant Steps:- Research

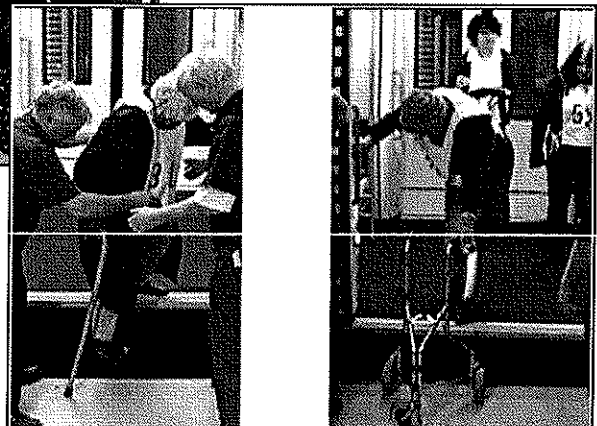
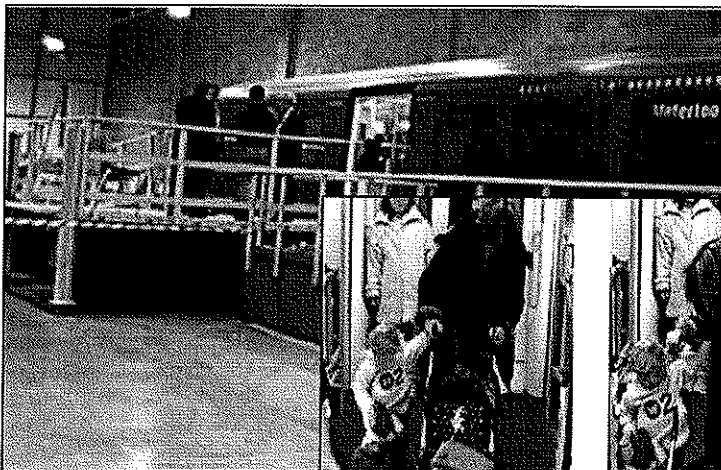


October 2004
ATKINS

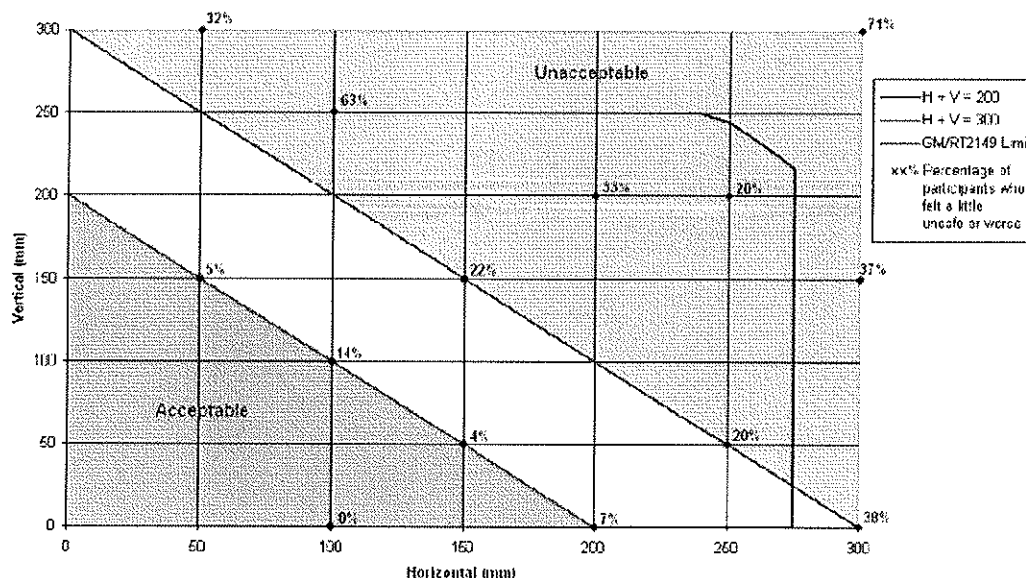
12. Train-platform gaps are as much an accessibility issue as one of safety, and this facet of the problem was investigated in a report for the Department for Transport (DfT) published under the title *Significant Steps*. The report contains diagrams illustrating how these gaps are accentuated by curved platforms (coupled with doors at the ends or mid-points of carriages) and by the effect of canted track on curves.



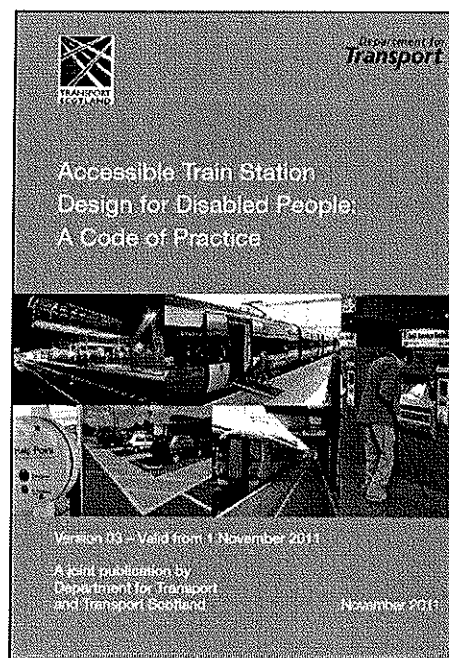
13. The extent of the challenge presented by these gaps to passengers with disabilities was investigated by stabling a train alongside a moveable platform rig which could be adjusted to vary both the height and the width of the distance from its edge to that of the train footstep. Different settings were then tested with people whose mobility was restricted by a variety of different factors.



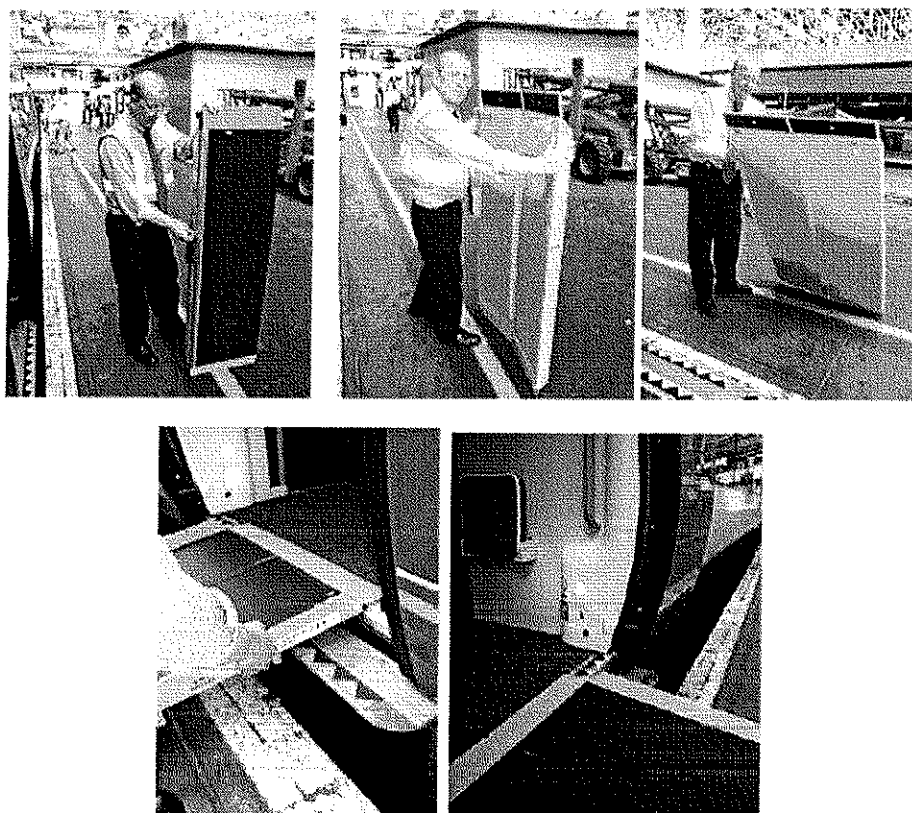
14. The research showed that in order for the gap to be easily and safely traversed by 90% of the subjects tested, the combined vertical and horizontal measurements should not exceed 200 mm - i.e. that the gap should lie in area shaded green on this chart. It would be unacceptable to 90% of them if the combined dimensions exceeded 300 mm, i.e. if this total lies in the area shaded red. The brown line represents the dimensions permitted by the Railway Group Standard, with which - even though this is largely within the red zone - fewer than 7% of platforms now comply.



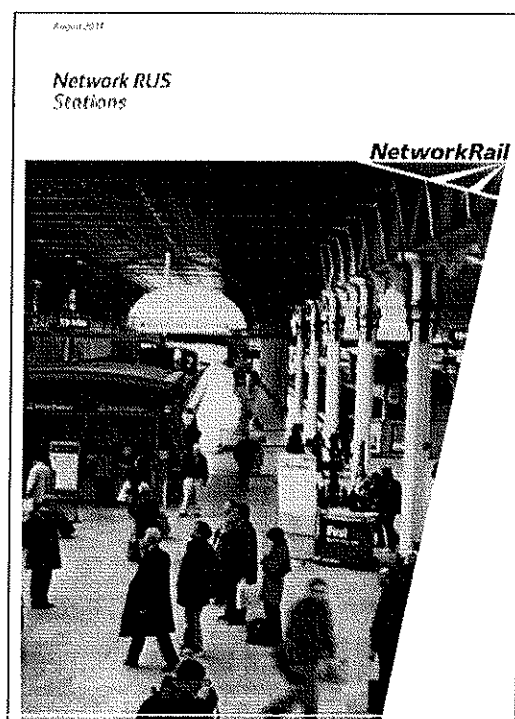
15. The chart demonstrates dramatically how far short of full accessibility the rail network currently falls in this respect. The DfT and Transport Scotland have published a code of practice on *Accessible Train [and] Station Design for Disabled People*, which contains abundant good advice on such matters as car parks, signage, announcements, step-free routes to platforms, toilets, ticket counters, etc. But worryingly it has nothing substantive to say on the subject of platform-train gaps. Instead, it simply cites the dimensions permitted by the European Rail Agency's *Persons with Reduced Mobility Technical Specification for Interoperability* (PRM TSI), asserting that "this section [of the Code] contains no national standards." In fact, the latest version of this TSI contains a British "special case" permitting use of the Railway Group Standard in lieu of the TSI values. But as the DfT's own research has shown, this RGS falls far short of the standard required to achieve a fully-accessible railway. It is disappointing that a document which is otherwise devoted to showing how barriers to accessibility can be overcome on the rail system has nothing useful to say on this critical element of the problem.



16. It appears that for the foreseeable future the British and Scottish governments are content for rail passengers who cannot easily traverse excessive train-platform gaps to have to continue to rely upon portable ramps. These are time-consuming to deploy and remove, and require advance notice of journeys to be given. Surely something better is needed in the 21st century?



17. It would be wrong to imply that Network Rail (NR) is unaware of or wholly indifferent to the problem of these gaps. For example, its *Network RUS Stations* contains one paragraph on the matter :



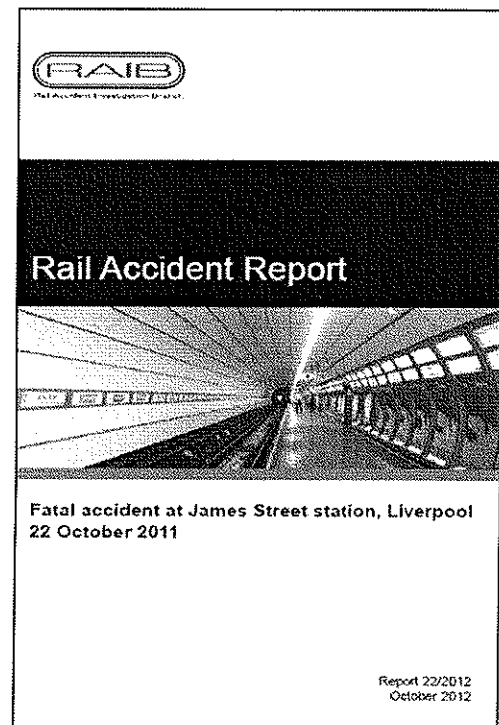
4.6.2 The speed of boarding and alighting can also be affected by significant stepping distances between rolling stock and platform. Large steps both vertically and horizontally are likely to slow passenger flows boarding and alighting. The provision of a reduced stepping distance from train to platform has the potential to improve the speed of passengers boarding and alighting, quite apart from the clear benefits to those with reduced mobility or carrying luggage.

It is interesting that in Network Rail's eyes, the problem is seen primarily as one of performance, and only secondarily as one of accessibility, while the safety dimension is not acknowledged at all. And, equally worryingly, while the problem of stepping distances is acknowledged in the body of the text, the case studies of actual stations (including Clapham Junction) which are attached as appendices contain no specific proposals for action to address it.



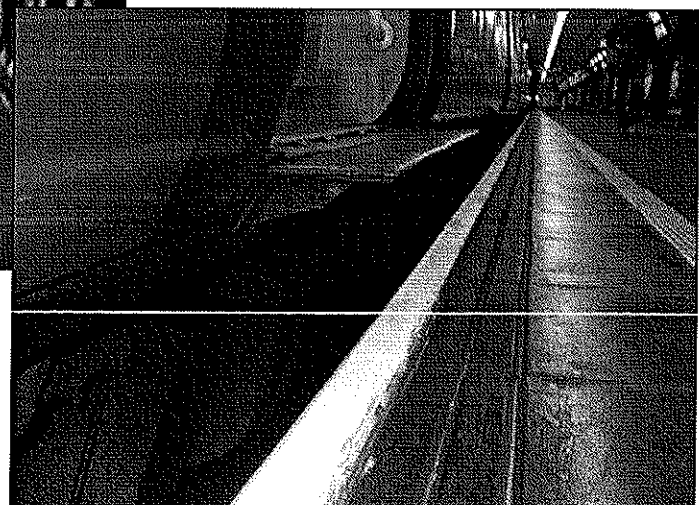
18. Appendix E to NR's *Network RUS Alternative Solutions* features the Harrington Hump, a structure installed in 2008 at a station in Cumbria to reduce the vertical gap between platform and train. It only serves one carriage, and does not reduce the horizontal interval, but it is nevertheless a welcome innovation. Although NR was awarded £5 million by DfT in 2011 to develop the concept at a further 100 platforms, to date only three more such humps have appeared—suggesting no great sense of urgency in its approach.

19. The whole issue of the risks associated with train-platform gaps came under the media spotlight as a result of a fatal accident at James Street station on the Merseyrail network in October 2011. A teenager alighted from the train but remained on the platform after the other passengers had left, and was leaning on the train in conversation with friends who were still on board. The guard gave the signal to the driver to depart (by means of a buzzer), in the expectation that she would step away before the train started to move. In the event, for whatever reason, she did not do so, and fell to her death through the gap between the train bodyside and the platform edge. The departure sequence was recorded by platform CCTV, the images from which were used by the prosecution as evidence in the subsequent trial of the guard, who was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

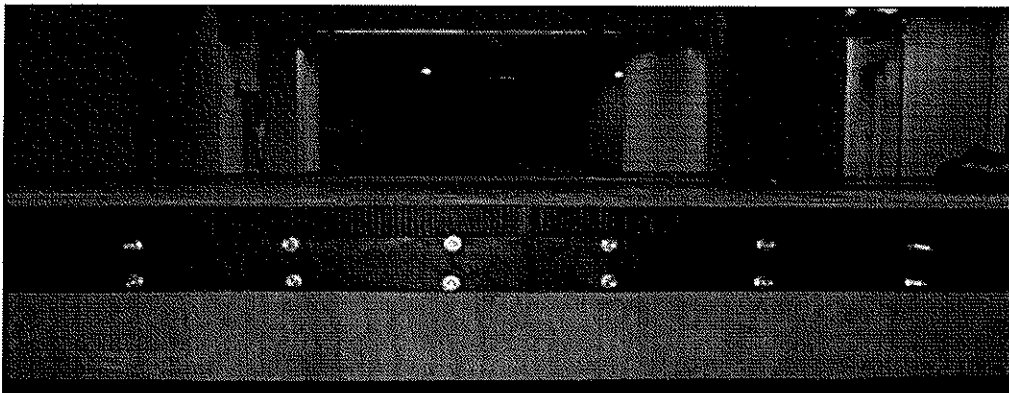


CCTV image

The gap at James Street



20. In its report on the James Street accident, the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) recommended that "Merseyrail, in consultation with ... Network Rail and other relevant industry bodies, should evaluate equipment and methods that reduce the likelihood of a person falling through the platform edge gap. Platform edge gap fillers and vehicle body side panels should be included in the evaluation, the outcome of which should be a plan to implement measures when appropriate to do so, for example when trains or the infrastructure are changed, improved or replaced."
21. At an industry workshop on platform safety convened by ORR and RSSB in March 2013, it was agreed that as these issues are generic to the network, and not specific to the Merseyrail network, it would be more appropriate for the evaluation process called for by RAIB to be conducted on a whole-industry basis. RSSB is therefore taking the process forward.
22. Gap fillers, referred to in the recommendation, are in use on a number of rail networks and come in a variety of forms. One type consists of a strip of polymer "comb" bolted to and projecting from the platform edge, which deforms harmlessly if it comes into contact with the body of a train. Another type consists of retractable metal shelves which extend from below the platform surface when a train is stationary alongside. Devices of this type are in use at sharply curved platforms on both the Paris Metro and the New York Subway.



23. In an ideal world, all platforms might be fitted with something akin to the platform edge screen and doors found on the Underground's Jubilee line, which are opened only when a train is stationary behind them. But this is an expensive solution, not necessary adaptable to surface platforms, and one which requires both straight platform edges and all trains to be of a consistent formation with carriage doors spaced to align with those in the screen. And it is still possible for there to be a gap between train and platform.



24. The Tyne and Wear Metro (right) is an example of a relatively modern rail network in which the trains and platforms have been built to match, resulting in only a minuscule gap between them. But this concept has a much longer pedigree. The image below is from the James Street report and shows a train at Birkenhead North station. The photograph was taken 50 years ago - but is of a train that was already 50 years old at the time. So, given what railways were already achieving before the First World War, it is doubly disappointing that at the recently constructed (and largely straight) platforms at



Blackfriars station in London, the gap is still quite large enough to allow an unwary passenger to slip into it. These platforms are brand new, the route is not used by freight trains, and no passenger trains pass through at high speed (indeed, all stop there) - so the usual arguments advanced for the presence of excessive gaps do not apply. It is deeply disappointing that a golden opportunity for Network Rail to showcase its commitment to addressing the issue has been so conspicuously missed.

