

PETER KAY

INTRODUCTION TO MYSELF REMARKS made 23.10.18 at start of case

I am dealing with this inquiry for WTC because of my position as the Council's Public Transport Representative (which is an ECC-related position, concerned principally with bus issues but also with local rail issues). Also because I am the most knowledgeable person on railway matters at large, amongst the Council's direct associates.

For many years I have been a railway historical author, at one time dealing principally with signalling matters, in the course of which I came to know and worked directly with many BR signal engineers. After the balkanisation of the railway in 1994 there was a loss of availability of historical signalling records, which I was able to help fulfil by publishing a database of currently-operational signal boxes and their equipment, which was in fact the first overall national list that the railway had ever had, and which was subsequently put on the NR website (without permission!). I have also specialised in civil engineering aspects of line history, in the course of which I researched a detailed history of the South Devon sea wall, which has since been 'quarried' by numerous NR consultants.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ATTITUDES TO FOOT CROSSING SAFETY  
comments made to inquiry 23.10.2018.

In the 1960s and 1970s BR took little active interest in foot crossing safety, and was also happy to leave them as before on lines where the speed was upped to 90/100mph. Again they happily removed station footbridges 'to reduce costs' and made people walk across the tracks instead. As late as my last period of working at a station, in the late 1980s, they were still refusing the requests of our platform staff for white lights to be provided at the barrow crossing, which had poor sighting of trains, this despite the fact that it was by this date mainly used by guests at the nearby railway convalescent home in poor health or in wheelchairs. As far as management was concerned it was 'perfectly safe'.

However from the 1990s on things started moving fairly quickly into the new age of extremist health & safety mania. The white lights that were eventually provided around 1990 were within a few years themselves deemed to be inadequate for safety purposes and use of the crossing was prohibited! 'Rules' are now invented to give a reason for widespread removal of crossings without regard to public convenience or common sense. The real reason for this, of course, is 'covering our backs', to avoid getting sued for any accident *on NR land*.

However in the fifty years in which I have been observing all this, the views of the *public* have remained the same. They objected to BR taking the station footbridges away, and they object now to the removal of those crossing which are useful and non-problematic, along with all the ones that are unnecessary because of no significant use, and those on high speed lines which should have been dealt with long since.

The 'professionals' show wild variation, the public remains sane and sensible. What do 'professional qualifications' bring? For detailed design work they are obviously essential. But on policy matters they mean that one is forced to go along with the current fad dogma of employers.

*This text cannot represent the exact words that I used as that was based on hastily-written notes which no doubt got altered in the reading out.*