



## Quarterly Update

*Informing our rail community*

### MESSAGE FROM CHAIR, PAUL ROBINSON:



I am sure you will join me in welcoming Karen Jackson to the Rail Forum Midlands (RFM) team. Many of you will know Karen from her many years at Porterbrook; she brings with her a wealth of knowledge of the industry and

we are delighted she has decided to join us.

With summer rapidly turning to autumn, 2020 is flying by. This month sees the Emergency Measures Agreements that are currently supporting the TOCs come to an end and we are all waiting to see what will replace them. What is clear is the challenge facing our industry to regain passenger confidence and encourage greater use of public transport to get people travelling again. We need a return to greater numbers of fare paying passengers to help ensure the ongoing investment we all want to see in our important industry.

Since our last quarterly update at the end of May, your RFM team has continued to do everything they can to support you during these challenging times. From regular contact with government to raise issues on your behalf to providing over 40 online events covering multiple topics since April.

We are now looking forward to bringing you our Annual Conference. Despite our best laid plans to offer this as a 'live' event the current situation with increased Covid numbers has meant we have taken the hard decision to move this online. We hope that this means many more of you can join us for this key event in our calendar. The conference will now be spread over two days to avoid 'screen fatigue' and the team are planning to bring you a varied conference programme including plenty of networking opportunities. Looking further forward we envisage a mix of live and online events to bring maximum value to our members and we will shortly be publicising the schedule for the first half of 2021.

### More New Members!

I am also delighted to announce two additional Patrons for the 2020/21 membership year; ISS Labour who have been a member for a number of years together with MTMS who are new to RFM. We are proud to work with you and grateful for your support which helps us to provide additional services to the wider RFM community.

Finally I would like to formally welcome our new members. [AMRC](#), [Aquarius Rail](#), [Clemtech \(Silver\)](#), [Engineering Consultancy Services](#), [Frequentis \(Gold\)](#), [Greenbank Terotech \(Silver\)](#), [Harting \(Silver\)](#), [HKA Global \(Silver\)](#), [Jaltek Systems](#), [Kaman UK](#), [Mainline Safety](#), [MTMS \(Patron\)](#), [Nubold Group](#), [Rail Business Daily](#), [RDS Global](#), [Salamander Fabrications](#) and [Vivarail](#).

**Welcome Karen**

I am delighted to join the RFM at an unusual but exciting time as we start to plan the delivery of an annual programme of events, both online and face to face as well as keeping members up to date with industry news and developments. I would particularly welcome good news stories from members and any feedback on the way we communicate. You may have noticed the increased presence on social media channels [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Please feel free to follow and share any messages.



As part of your membership Rail Business Daily are offering Members a range of discounts for RBD services. including one free news story every 12 months. This is a great opportunity so don't miss out. More information is available in the membership benefits document on our [website](#).



**Getting Back to the Office**

The RFM team have been working from home since the middle of March. We are liaising with the University of Derby, our landlords, regarding the reopening of Lonsdale House and we are hoping for a gradual return from October. In the meantime you can continue to get hold of us via email and mobile and we are now starting to get out and about to once again meet members.

With children back at school Cat has now reverted to her usual Tuesday – Thursday working regime and Karen's normal working days are Monday – Thursday.

**Shared Apprenticeships**

Following an email to East Midlands based companies to gauge the level of interest in an initial discussion on the above a meeting is being scheduled for October. We will then look to see what level of interest there is in the West of the region. For members further afield if you are interested in some form of shared apprenticeship approach please contact Elaine and she will help to pull interested parties together.

**Reports from RFMs Delivery Groups**

Reporting into our Board are our four Delivery Groups (DGs) each chaired by a Board Director, supported by 2-3 other Directors and other volunteer members. Our delivery groups provide additional tactical support to the RFM team to allow us to do more for our members.

**Business Growth DG  
(Chair: Nicola Phillips, Siemens)**

The group met mid September to review the output of the workshop held back in the winter and to consider what had changed since then in terms of potential priorities.

Three areas of focus were agreed that will now be developed into an operational plan for 2021; this will be shared with members shortly.

**Events, Communications & Networking DG  
(Chair: Donna Bickley, Inside Out Group)**

The RFM team have delivered over 40 online events since April and plans are now well advanced for the Annual Conference. Going forward we are planning a significant number of events for 2021. An initial schedule will be published very soon. It is clear that members like the shorter online events for certain things and we are therefore planning a broad mix of online and live events going forward.

**People, Skills & Diversity DG  
(Chair: Laura Cawdell, TÜV Rheinland)**

The group also met mid September and discussed the work undertaken by RFM to develop a Midlands Region Education Engagement Strategy. This will now form the basis for developing our 2021 action plan including iRail. We will also be updating our Volunteering Guide for the new academic year and to reflect changes in engagement opportunities.

**Political & Stakeholder Engagement DG  
(Chair: Rupert Brennan Brown, Porterbrook)**

Close liaison with government officials continues both on Covid19 and more on issues associated with the end of the UK's transition period with the EU. It is clear that the amount of government effort in this area has stepped up and we will respond to consultations, seek feedback from members and also ensure you are kept up to date as appropriate.

## Important visit by Leading UK Rail Freight Businesses

WH Davis are the last UK owned rail freight wagon manufacturer in the UK. It has a proud history stretching back over 112 years of designing and manufacturing rail wagons of all types for the UK market from its facilities at Langwith Junction, near Mansfield.

One of its current major projects is the design and manufacture of 84 Triple deck ECOFret 2 Intermodal wagons for Europe's largest wagon leasing business VTG Rail (UK). The ECOFret2 is a development of the original ECOFret but incorporates the ability to maximise loads by being able to take 2 x 20' containers or 1 x 40' container on all 3 wagon decks. This ensures the customer can fully utilise the available load space within the train length. The redesign of the original wagon was carried out by WH Davis's in house design team and included a complete FEA analysis of the new structures.



In mid-August, WH Davis welcomed our customers, Rob Brooks, Head of Rail UK, and Colin Denham MD, both from VTG Rail UK and their customer, John Smith, MD of GB Rail Freight, to see the production line and inspect completed decks of the ECOFret2 project. A full tour of the production line was given by Stewart Greenwood, MD of WH Davis, and all are seen next to a completed deck, along with the new ECOFret2 logo. The visit was a success and all were pleased with the progress and product being produced by WH Davis.

## HARTING Celebrates 75 Years

Congratulations to HARTING for achieving a fantastic 75 year milestone

For 75 years now, the HARTING Technology Group has been driving technological change and providing decisive impetus for the future. The vision formulated in 1996 by the owner family "We want to shape the future with technologies for people" remains the guiding star of their entrepreneurial activities. September 1 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding day of the family company. The manufacturer of everyday products such as waffle irons and irons has evolved into a worldwide leading supplier of industrial connection technology for the three lifelines of data, signal and power, a global player fielding innovative products and solutions focusing on Industry 4.0 and digitization.

HARTING Ltd is skilled in the fields of electrical, electronic and optical connection, transmission and networking, as well as in manufacturing mechatronics and software creation. The group uses these skills to develop customised solutions and services such as interconnectivity of products for energy and data transmission applications, mechanical engineering, rail technology, wind energy plants, factory automation, broadcast and surveillance technologies.

HARTING also produces cable assemblies, box builds, kit assemblies, modified products and the assembly of individual or complete systems.



Philip Harting, Margrit Harting, Maresa Harting-Hertz and Dietmar Harting, the second and third generation, manage the HARTING Technology Group (from left to right).



## GOLD/SILVER MEMBER FEATURE

If you're a Gold or Silver Rail Forum Midlands member, you can share your news with our vast network of businesses by sending your stories to [elaineclark@midlandsrail.co.uk](mailto:elaineclark@midlandsrail.co.uk) to be featured in the next Quarterly Update.

## RFM EVENTS REVIEW

Since the Spring Update in May we have hosted 19 more online events with the aim of keeping members up to date on key issues and opportunities. These have included updates from Network Rail, HS2, East Midlands Railway and West Midlands Trains. We have also hosted sessions on maintaining a longer term perspective with Eversholt Rail and provided a Welsh update from Transport for Wales. Our Covid19 sessions have also continued with events covering changes to furlough, access to funding and changing skills requirements. Our Vice Chair Michelle Craven Faulkner has also hosted two sessions providing support on legal and contract issues and we have held three RFM Connect networking events.

**RFM AGM:** On 24<sup>th</sup> June we held our AGM online with some 60 members joining the session. Delegates heard about the changes to our Board as well as a general RFM update.

## Rail Sector Deal Midlands Pilots Progress

### SME Lightweighting Challenge

The SME Collaborative Lightweight Challenge got off to a great start with over 130 people registering for the online launch event held at the end of July.

Following the launch four targeted sessions were held to look at specific aspects of the vehicle and provide time for SMEs to introduce themselves to each other and start to identify potential partners that they may wish to work with. These events focused on: interiors, exteriors, traction and bogies and electrical/electronic equipment. The sessions gave companies the opportunity to discuss these areas and come up with novel and innovative ideas to take to a Dragons Den pitch in front

of key clients including Bombardier, Hitachi, Porterbrook and Siemens.

The challenge has received interest from all areas of industry including mainstream automotive and aerospace companies who are able to bring innovative and proven solutions to the rail sector. Initial ideas submitted cover all areas of the rail vehicle from bogies, under-frame equipment, interiors and electrical/electronic components.

The first round of applications closed on the 28th August but there is still time for further Lightweighting ideas to be submitted with applications for round 2 closing on 16th October.

The challenge of Lightweighting rail vehicles will become an increasingly important subject over the coming months and years to help reduce energy requirements and we intend to continue our support of the SME rail supply chain to drive their ideas forward.

Further information on the Lightweighting challenge can be found on our website or by contacting [Robert@midlandsrail.co.uk](mailto:Robert@midlandsrail.co.uk).



### Schools Engagement Strategy

Over the Spring and Summer we have been developing a schools engagement strategy for the Midlands as part of our second Rail Sector Deal pilot. This has been produced in collaboration with some key employers who are very active in this arena. The finalised strategy which is actually more of a collaborative framework will shortly be submitted to the Rail Supply Group and we will then publicise it widely and work with our members to help implement it. This framework will totally complement our existing work bringing together a number of different individual initiatives from across the industry.

**RVE—Meet the Buyer**

We are delighted to be delivering our third Meet the Buyer at RVE with Modern Railways. This year we welcome 18 buyers across the rolling stock industry from asset management companies, OEMs, operators and light rail as well as well know international companies from Switzerland and France. We also had a huge response from both members and non-members – perhaps unsurprisingly given the impact Covid19 has had on traditional business development activity and have been pleased to see 55% of registrations coming from our membership.

This year, in addition to moving to an online two stage process from our previous paper submissions, we have provided a range of member-only enhancements. These included an online briefing session held in August providing guidance for the Application stage, issuing Supplier Guidance, additional reminders to help you meet the deadlines, application form review (to avoid any typos!) and your logo displayed to help buyers build their recognition of your company.

A massive thank you to all our members that completed the Meet the Buyer process. Now that Application stage has closed, the baton returns to the RFM team who will be compiling Buyer Brochures for issue and, following Buyer selections next month, scheduling itineraries for both Buyers and Suppliers.

Key dates for your diaries:

24 September – Buyers receive their bespoke brochures

29 October – Buyer and Supplier Itineraries issued

5 November – Show date – make sure you have registered as a visitor to the show!

The vast majority of major industry events have been postponed with a number now rescheduled – dates for many of which are on our [website](#).

**Forthcoming RFM Events**

**Porterbrook Supplier Engagement – Online (22 September)**

Due to Covid19 restrictions Porterbrook were unable to host their annual supplier conference this year. RFM is delighted to be working with them to bring you this short online update. This will be a very well attended event and you can book your place [here](#)

**Claims, Disputes and Resolutions – Online (7 October)**

Hear from Geldards and HKA Global about how to resolve disputes amicably to maintain relationships and avoid expensive litigation. With opportunity to bring real issues to the experts for guidance – book [here](#)

**RFM Annual Conference (15&16 October)**

Our Annual Conference will now be held online. More details will be available shortly but we hope many more of you will be able to join us. Please register [here](#) if you would like a place.

**Circular Economy: Sustainability in Rail – Online (17 November)**

This half day event will explore different aspects of the circular economy with speakers from several key clients and service providers. Book [here](#).

**Rail Forum Christmas Luncheon (11 December)**

Bookings are now open for our very popular members' Xmas lunch. We really hope to be able to bring you a 'live' event even though places will be limited. Please [book](#) early to avoid disappointment.

