



*The Railway Forum*

## ***Press Release***

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13 January 2004

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For immediate use

# ***'THE PERMANENT WAY NOT A TRUE REFLECTION OF BRITAIN'S RAILWAYS' SAYS FORUM***

Sir David Hare's *The Permanent Way* has its official first night at the National Theatre today.

The Railway Forum believes the play does not present a true reflection of the crucial challenges facing Britain's railways today.

The play instead chooses to concentrate on the early stages of privatisation. Little recognition is given to the fact that, in the intervening years, there has been a massive rise in railway usage. Over a billion passenger journeys were made in 2003: the highest figure for over 40 years. This has inevitably placed considerable strains on the industry as the original privatisation model (that did not predict this sort of growth) has had to be significantly modified.

More worryingly much of the play insinuates that privatisation has put safety at risk. This is simply untrue. The railways' safety record was good at privatisation and has continued

to improve – a fact that Sir David Hare has patently failed to portray. Safety continues to remain a high priority for the industry.

'David Hare has written a polemic attacking privatisation', says Adrian Lyons, Director General of The Railway Forum. 'What he has not produced is a fair and objective view of a railway industry that has continuously improved its safety record whilst facing massive challenges, particularly to meet rapidly increasing demand and develop a more robust industry model.'

-Ends-

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The Railway Forum is an industry-wide body sponsored by the majority of the train operating companies including Eurostar, as well as Network Rail, all three major rolling stock leasing companies, the Passenger Transport Executives, London Underground, most of the infrastructure maintenance companies and many manufacturing and other businesses serving the UK rail industry. In all we have some 70 members. Our key role is to act as a think tank, information exchange and point of contact for those committed to and interested in our industry.
2. The Rail Safety and Standards Board's (RSSB) Quarterly and Annual Safety Performance Reports detailing key railway safety indicators and the industry's performance against agreed objectives are available at [www.rssb.co.uk](http://www.rssb.co.uk).
3. Over a billion passenger journeys were made on Britain's railways in 2003. The related Association of Train Companies (ATOC) press release can be found at [www.atoc.org/communications/fs\\_coms.htm](http://www.atoc.org/communications/fs_coms.htm).
4. Although The Railway Forum's press releases are usually sent to Transport editors, arts and theatre critics may also wish to see this release.

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