

# Railway Study Forum Dinner 2023

**L**ast month, CILT hosted this year's Railway Study Forum (RSF) dinner at the famous Kai Oval Cricket Ground in London. Gianluca Spataro reports for *Focus*.

Over 200 professionals within the industry attended with RSF Committee member Neil Micklethwaite starting the night off with a welcome speech before introducing Chief Executive and Board member Andrew Haines from Network Rail to discuss updates and the important role of the industry.

This year has been tough, yet our railway keeps going, with challenges arguable increasing but at the same time optimism continues to grow. Rail takes people to work, education, to see family and friends, holidays, reduces loneliness, connects people and drives growth. The railway, like many other industries, is still under pressure and the transformation into a more modern, flexible, customer centric service has to be delivered and rapidly.

It is also important we acknowledge former CILT RSF President, Charley Wallace, who we sadly lost in 2023 after her brave battle against dreadful illness. We lost our President, but the industry lost a champion of public transport and railways. Andrew also paid tribute to Charley during his speech at the forum.

Andrew Haines



Alice Vincent



Guests were then served dinner before being introduced to other keynote speakers, Alice Vincent from Great British Railway and Megan Holman from Network Rail, who both also spoke to *Focus* this month. They took the stage speaking about the start of their career in the industry as well as highlighting key facts and messages to provoke thought and innovation across the room for industry professionals to pocket and take back with them.

Alice mentioned only about 9% within the industry are under the age of 30, she presented a very inspirational speech which captivated the room. Many professionals listening will hopefully act on this going forward and become a catalyst for change in the future to help increase that percentage. Megan's speech was equally as inspirational as she touched on some of Alice's points but as a strong advocate for rail freight Megan highlighted the importance of freight and its key role to the economy and the environment.

We are also delighted to have Managing Director of West Coast Partnership Development, Shamit Weinberger Gaiger, as our new CILT Railway Study Forum President.

Megan Holman



Shamit said: "Absolutely honoured to be the next president of the Railway Study Forum of the CILT (UK).

"I am looking forward to working with my colleagues to set up an exciting programme of lectures and activities next year. Our theme for next year will be 'future of rail to the background of uncertainty' watch the space and join the debate."

The CILT Railway Study Forum remains an exciting group that can help the development of our railway network. The window remains wide open for us to transform and take advantage of the opportunity that public transport and rail can provide. ✖

Shamit Weinberger Gaiger

