

East Coast Trains plans more services but less food

✘ East Coast seem to have woken up to the possibility of being a viable alternative to the plane, for early morning travellers at least. [The Herald](#) carries the story that The Flying Scotsman will commence on May 22nd with a 5.40am service from Waverley to London – allowing business travellers a real option for their morning meetings. And of course in line with The Reporter's business needs, it offers wifi – free in First Class anyway...

But only the other day, in Westminster, the government was asked to consider an [Early Day motion](#) regarding the withdrawal of restaurant cars from East Coast trains... The motion ran thus...

That this House notes that before rail privatisation British Rail provided 249 trains a day with restaurant cars, all open to first and standard-class passengers; is dismayed that from May 2011, to reduce costs in readiness for re-privatisation, East Coast is to remove its restaurant cars, resulting in the entire rail network offering only four trains a day with a dedicated restaurant car available to both standard and first-class passengers, excluding the Scotland to London sleeper services; further notes that the ability to enjoy a restaurant car meal enhances the passenger experience on long distance journeys and that the removal of the rail restaurants since privatisation demonstrates again that train operators put profit before passenger comfort; and calls on East Coast to reverse the decision to remove restaurant car facilities from its services and for the Government to explore how restaurant cars can be re-introduced on our railways.

So if you are planning to travel on the new early morning service then you had better be prepared and take your own bacon butty with you.

✘ We were delighted to see that one of the signatories to the motion was our Edinburgh South MP, Ian Murray, and we spoke to him about it this morning. Mr Murray explained that this motion was about more than just the fact that it is nicer to travel by train when you can have a meal in the restaurant cars. "This is about our concerns that the closure of the restaurant car will result in job losses. Also, if people use the train they usually do so because it is a more relaxing experience. If you have to resort to the trolley service on the train it is not just as nice. But really we want to see the number of trains from London to Scotland increased. For example, if I stay in the House of Commons to vote on a Thursday night then I have to fly home as there is no train after 6pm. It would be better for my carbon footprint if I could take the train rather than flying, but the only option is the sleeper and I find it difficult to sleep on it!"

Early day motions (EDMs) are formal motions submitted for debate in the House of Commons. However, very few EDMs are actually debated. Instead, they are used for reasons such as publicising the views of individual MPs, drawing attention to specific events or campaigns, and demonstrating the extent of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view. Out of our five Edinburgh MPs, only one has signed no Early Day Motions at all, that is the member for Edinburgh South West, one Alistair Darling MP. Perhaps he doesn't get up early enough.....