

ABOUT JOHN NELSON

Since leaving **British Rail in 1997 at the age of 49** to set up his own businesses John has been a **management consultant in the transport sector**. As **Chairman of First Class Partnerships Limited**, he specialises in the development of business strategy and managing change. He works both in the UK and abroad in providing advice to rail and non-rail companies and to foreign administrations.

He was for eight years until 2006 a **Non Executive Director of Laing Rail, the owners of Chiltern Railways**, the first company to be re-awarded its franchise, and from 2003 to 2006 was also a **Non Executive Director of South East Trains Holdings**, set up by the SRA to operate the first franchise to be terminated. He is a shareholding **Director of Hull Trains**, a Company established in 1999 to exploit "open access" opportunities for express trains to London and of **WSMR**, set up in 2006 to do the same for Wrexham, Shropshire and the Black Country. He is also a **Director of Renaissance Trains**, a promotional vehicle for new rail ventures.

He believes himself to be an objective commentator on industry performance and contributes regularly to "*Transit*", a respected UK journal for transport professionals. Amongst other things, he successfully launched a major publication, "*Britain's Privatised Passenger Railway – A Practical Assessment*" which sold round the world.

John has worked in Britain's railways for 40 years and held several very senior posts. He pursued a career in general management with an emphasis on business operations and commercial activities in the London commuter belt, on Inter-City services and in the conurbations of Northern England.

He worked mainly in the passenger sector until 1983, amongst other things planning with the **West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executives** the expansion of their rail networks that took place in the 1980's. Following a year as personal assistant to Robert Reid (probably the greatest railwayman since the War), John was then appointed to run the **Red Star Parcels business** and in a period of 3 years tripled the turnover from an inherited £20m in a very competitive market place, whilst also substantially improving the group's profitability.

In 1987 he became **General Manager of BR's Eastern Region**, which then represented about a quarter of the national rail network. His 5-year spell at York saw the modernisation of the East Coast Main Line between London and Scotland including the launch of Britain's fastest trains. He was also a leading figure in the drive for more commercially led railway management structures.

In 1991 John was appointed **Managing Director, Network South East**, (London's commuter railways), BR's largest business. He led a change programme that brought about a continuously improving performance of the railways' punctuality and reliability throughout his tenure, launched the Passenger's Charter, and delivered £200m to the bottom line over a period of less than two years from a combination of overhead reduction and revenue generation despite a severe local recession at the time. From 1994 in the run up to privatisation John was also given the unique responsibility of creating 13 new Train Companies and developing them for privatisation. He chaired each of these until the task was completed in 1997.

John was also for five years until 2002 the part time Non Executive **Chairman of a NHS Trust** based in Yorkshire. John has an Honours degree in Economics that he took at the **University of Manchester** in 1968. He was **President of the Railway Study Association** in 1995/1996.