

Could this be Nottingham's biggest ever fares increase?

A press release by the local group Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport

22 April 2008

Rail passengers travelling from Nottingham and Beeston from 19th May on CrossCountry services could see a massive increase in fares.

The press release from CrossCountry is headed, 'CHEAPER ADVANCE FARES AND SIMPLER TICKETS FOR CROSSCOUNTRY CUSTOMERS'. However, the simpler tickets appear to be too complicated for CrossCountry, as the new fares released into the public domain are wrong!¹ It wasn't until today after discussions between CrossCountry and Nottingham Better Transport that CrossCountry admitted to a 'glitch' somewhere in their computer systems.

However, even without 'glitches', by tinkering with the hours that walk-up tickets are valid some passengers who travel during the newly defined peak hours will be subjected to massive price increases.

For example:

A day return from Nottingham to Birmingham, departing Nottingham 09:00 and returning from Birmingham at 16:19:

Price today:	£11.90 for Cheap Day Return.
Price from 19 th May:	£23.00 for Standard Open Return ²

That is a price increase of 93.28%!

Or:

A day return from Beeston to Cardiff, departing Beeston 09:06 and returning from Cardiff 16:45:

Price today:	£53.70 for Saver Return
Price from 19 th May:	£69.80 for Standard Open Return ³

That is a price increase of 29.98%!

¹ CrossCountry press release at http://www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk/SiteImages/Assets/3/Cheaper_advance_fares&simpler_tickets_for%20CrossCountry_customers-170408.pdf

² Until CrossCountry corrects its 'glitches' we have used the *current* Standard Open Return fare. The fare from 19th May could be around 3% higher, making the percentage increase shown nearer 100%.

³ See note 2 on previous page. Again, we have had to use *current* fare until CrossCountry sorts out its 'glitches'.

For those able to book in advance and be restricted to specified trains there are bargains available, so long as they haven't all been sold. For example the off peak, advance booking Nottingham – Birmingham return from 19th May could be as little as £8.00.

The price increases result in CrossCountry moving the a.m. Cheap Day Return (CDR) times from 09:00 to 09:30, so it is passengers who travel at or just after 09:00 that pay more. Then in the afternoon there are new restrictions from 15:30 to 18:15, which didn't exist previously, where passengers get hit by the huge fare increases.

The new afternoon restriction will surprise many passengers when they find a CDR from Nottingham to Derby for example will no longer be sold for the 15:34 train, which is hardly 'rush hour'. Instead of £4.60 at this time of day, the ticket will cost £5.50 – a 13.04% increase.

Remember, this is not achieved by increasing actual fares, but by manipulating the hours cheaper walk up and buy tickets are valid.

Nottinghamshire Better Transport is unsurprised by these new fares. David Thornhill, Chair of Nottingham Better Transport explains,

“When the Government awarded the new rail franchises last year the financial package agreed with Arriva, the new franchise operator, was very challenging and it was obvious passengers would be squeezed until it hurts.”

David adds, “It is depressing how Government has so little commitment to tackling Climate Change. Transport continues to be the fastest growing source of Climate Change pollution and we must switch from the car to public transport whenever possible. But with fare increases around 100% exactly the opposite will happen.”

For more information

David Thornhill
Chair, Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport
0115 9334714

notts.bettertransport@ntlworld.com

http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/nottinghamshire_local_group