

## A Busy Season at Skegness



*Photo: East Midlands Trains*

This year, Skegness has had the busiest season for over twenty years. The IC125 High Speed Train (HST), with seating for 468, made a double run on Saturdays and was well loaded. On one or two occasions, morning arrivals brought in over 600 passengers, reaching a maximum of 685. All services to the resort have run punctually, apart from the HST which was always late on the morning departure owing to the short turn-around, and the volume of passengers and luggage. Overall, the use of the HST did not solve overcrowding issues (22 trains on Saturday mornings during the 7 week period were overcrowded, compared to 28 last year), as the HST took the place of a regular service train. The HST did at least call at Grantham this year, but this did not eliminate additional bus services (at least 3 each Saturday) from Grantham. It is understood that the HST will not run in this form next year. (CS)

## A Personal View from the Branch Chairman

Recently a customer set me a 'quiz question'. If I leave Lincoln on the 07:30 Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) direct service to London and return the same day what is the lowest walk on weekday fare? I thought that would be simple to calculate, but after an hour studying the options, what I have come up with is anything but simple.

The Anytime Return from Lincoln is £140 but I was sure I could find something cheaper if I split the ticket and changed trains en-route. But where? There is an Off Peak Day Return from Newark Northgate at £56.90 but it is not valid until the 10:19 departure, so that was out. Next to try was Grantham. I could save £4.30 by changing at Newark and Grantham, but as members will be aware, return services from Grantham generally have a long wait at Newark.

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So hardly worth the small saving.

On to Peterborough and the fares soon go down and the options increase rapidly. An Anytime Short Distance Return from Lincoln to Peterborough is £48. A Great Northern only Off Peak Day Return from Peterborough to Kings Cross is only £27.70 making a total of £75.70. This is on a train which arrives at Kings Cross only 42 minutes later than the direct train. The main drawback from this is that the last realistic return train from Kings Cross is 16:40 and there is a 68 minute wait at Peterborough for the Lincoln connection. Not a problem for my customer as his business was concluded by lunchtime and, as he put it, "I can put up with a 68 minute wait if I'm saving £64.30 and it gives me enough time to get a bite to eat in Peterborough".

Apart from a cheaper way to get to London, what can we learn from this? The overriding lesson must be how complicated our fare structure is. My customer is a frequent rail user, understands the fare structure and is used to spending time searching for split ticket reductions. The typical rail user is not – they just want to buy the best value ticket without spending an hour searching for cheaper options.

They do, however, get very annoyed when they consider they have been 'ripped off', as one of my neighbours described her experience recently. She had been charged £23.50 for her day trip to Peterborough. It was only when she was waiting for her return train that a fellow passenger told her she had only paid £15.60. So what had gone wrong? My neighbour had purchased her ticket from the Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) and, amid the myriad of options, she had not noticed the cheaper 'via Spalding' option. As an irregular traveller she would not

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have understood what that meant anyway. If train operators want more passengers to use ticket machines they must be made more user friendly.

The system really should be simpler, but is that possible without passengers being worse off? If we consider the trips mentioned above, any simplification of the Lincoln to Peterborough options is highly unlikely to result in the 'via Spalding' and 'via Newark fares' being equalised at £15.60. Much more likely we would see a return to the situation that used to exist of only the £23.50 fare. From Peterborough to Kings Cross any fare equalisation would see many commuters choosing to use the faster VTEC services which are already plenty full enough in the peaks. Then again the Competition and Markets Authority would take a very dim view of the reduced price competition.

Readers will no doubt by now be wondering where my disjointed ramblings are leading. I think there are two points I'm trying to make. Firstly, many of the split fare bargains are as a result of the regulated fare structure being almost unchanged since privatisation. With fare increases being restricted to Retail Price Index (RPI + x% each year and no radical changes allowed, there are plenty of routes where the fares were in need of restructuring at privatisation, so the anomalies have just got greater year by year.

The second is: be careful what you wish for. We all know the fares structure is highly complicated. There are walk on bargains to be found, but usually only by someone who has the time and experience to find them. However, if the structure is simplified, the choice of fares will reduce, so it is highly unlikely to result in fare reductions and quite probably fares will rise for most passengers.

*David Harby, Branch Chairman*

## Station Adopters

East Midlands Trains held their annual meeting for station adopters in Derby on 23 September. The purpose of these meetings is to say thanks to their adopters and promote the highlights from the past year. The vast amount of voluntary time given by branch committee member Carolyn Sharp was a special highlight.

Carolyn is station adopter for Skegness station where she can be found for many hours every summer Saturday helping out. In addition she is there, along with her dog and station mascot Rupert, during the week ensuring the flower displays remain at a high standard, as well as many other tasks.

In addition to Carolyn at least 4 other branch members are station adopters. (DH)

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## Annual Inflation

Annual inflation pain for rail fares, but some reductions in September by Northern

The Retail Price Index (RPI) figure for July was 1.9% so that will be the fare increase we face next January. Railfuture did issue a press release pointing out the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure, which better reflects consumer price increases, was only 0.6% and that motorists continue to enjoy a freeze on fuel duty.

It is, however, not all doom and gloom as Northern ironed out most Brigg Line fare anomalies in September and restructured fares on the Barton Line; Hull - Scarborough; Hull - York and Hull - Doncaster - Sheffield. Some Off Peak fares were introduced where only Anytime fares were previously available. Members may not also be aware that there are some cheap Advance tickets on the Lincoln - Sheffield route. (DH)

## Revenue Protection

From time to time I receive emails from members asking me to take up instances of fares not being collected. I can understand members frustration as a fare not collected is revenue foregone and, more importantly to us, a journey that will not be recorded in station footfall figures. I'm sure many members can think of stations where the real footfall figures must be much higher than those that are reported each year. Market Rasen, Heckington and Hykeham are my top three.

When a train is packed full then it is impossible for the Conductor to collect fares, but one would hope the exit barriers are manned so fares are collected then. All too often, however, I hear of barriers not being manned. Peterborough, Grantham and Lincoln stations crop up regularly in emails to me.

If members come across instances where fares could have been collected but were not, then I am prepared to take these up with the operator. To do this I need details of the actual service involved, when fares were not collected, an estimate of how many and how full the train was. Please be realistic – I cannot reasonably take up instances such as Hykeham to Lincoln recently where 18 passengers joined at Hykeham for a 10 minute journey. However quick a Conductor was he would not have been able to issue tickets to all 18 in the time available. (DH)

*Editor's note: A few weeks ago, I was asked by a friend if I realised one can travel from Grantham to Nottingham for nothing! Being a fairly frequent rail user, he had travelled to Nottingham having purchased a ticket from Grantham booking office, but was amazed that the barriers at Grantham and Nottingham on outward and return journeys were not in use and, on both journeys there were no ticket checks on the trains. He added that his son often travels with a group of friends for a night out in Nottingham and that they only purchase tickets if approached by the Conductor.*



# Increasing Diversity Among Membership

*This paper was presented at the last branch committee meeting, which prompted a lively discussion about how Railfuture could be promoted: including leaflets, posters and use of social media, to recruit more members. We also looked at focussing the 2017 branch AGM on the new Lincoln transport interchange, with the aim of attracting local people. Another proposal was to hold a meeting event on rural transport and rural isolation that can be advertised with Community Lincs and town and parish councils. This would focus on all forms of public transport. Any offers of help from branch members to circulate flyers and posters will be gratefully accepted.*

What diversity is not:

- 'political correctness'
- tokenism – having a woman, black person, disabled person on the committee to satisfy a demand for diversity
- expecting to recruit numbers of Black or Polish people to the cause

What diversity is:

- giving the organisation a sound base and securer future
- opening up the number of people you can tap into to become involved
- being positive about succession planning
- providing opportunities to hear a wider range of views about travel on our railways

Christian Wolmer has obviously raised the issue of increasing the diversity in the membership of Railfuture. This is clearly because the membership is currently largely white, male and of a certain age. As with magnets, like tends to attract like; white, middle aged men will feel comfortable joining an organisation largely comprised of people like them. It then becomes harder for people who are 'different' to become involved, unless they feel very confident. If Railfuture is to have a future, it needs both to attract a wider range of people to its membership and its credibility depends on its listening to a wider group of rail users. What practical actions can you take to ensure this?

1. Promote Railfuture more widely – poster campaign at railway stations, articles in mainstream media, use of social media. You may only attract middle aged white men this way but it's a start.

2. However, if a woman or a Black person picked up on the existence of Railfuture, they need to be made to feel welcome. I have been made to feel very welcome since joining the committee, so I'm sure this won't be a problem, but showing a new person that you accept them and are prepared to listen to their views will encourage people to come back.

3. Accepting that some people, while interested, may not get fully involved. Saturday afternoons will be hard for people with young families but weekday meetings will be difficult for people in full time work. No time will suit everyone but opportunities can be made for people to have their voices heard about their experiences of rail use. Be realistic about what you can achieve. There is little point in having publicity translated into Polish or Urdu but there is point in making sure that information is made available in the university and in places where migrant workers are employed.

4. Making sure that content of meetings and discussions are relevant to people. I've attended two AGMs with interesting speakers and I'm learning a great deal from attending committee meetings. There are two groups of people it would be good to attract – rail users who are concerned to retain and improve their services and non rail users to convince them of the benefits of rail travel. The latter has to be a long term ambition. It would be more realistic to aim at attracting current rail users. A discussion about the issues that affect them would be useful and could inform a decision about next year's AGM.

*Ann Hindley*

# Friends of the Barton Line

• Northern Rail, TransPennine Express (TPE) and East Midlands Trains (EMT) made commendable attempts at providing for the vast numbers of visitors to Armed Forces Day. On the Barton Line a 2-car Class 153 had been provided for part of the Saturday and Sunday. Road coaches had also been made available to Grimsby Town station for onward travel by train to Cleethorpes. TPE and EMT had laid on strengthened, additional and shuttle train services. On the Brigg Line 4-car Pacer units had been provided which made additional calls at Brigg Line stations on the last return journey. Even so, many inward passengers were still left behind at stations. Unfortunately the situation was aggravated by an extended signal failure at Barnetby. Of note was that some trains had been booked to depart from Grimsby Town's platform 2 for Cleethorpes and that one TPE service

was a 6-car Class 170 (comprising three 2-car units).

• *"The Railway Comes to Barton on Humber; 1844-1914"* by Anthony Berridge is to be launched on 2 November. In A4 soft-back format the book has a 100 pages with 62 black & white illustrations and is available from Anthony (*page 2 for contact details*) at £9 plus postage and packing (approx £3). Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Friends of the Barton Line.

• Vandalism continues to be a problem.

In early August the newly replaced quality shelter at Grimsby Docks station had most of its windows and the public telephone smashed. On 2 September Martin Vickers MP and other local dignitaries visited New Holland station with a view to improving the appearance of the area. (AASB)

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## Werrington Dive-under

Before more East Coast Main Line (ECML) paths can be available, a grade separated junction is needed at Werrington, to avoid the present situation where freight trains from East Anglia have to cross the ECML on the level. Network Rail has previously consulted on the options of a fly-over or dive-under and has decided on a dive-under. Consultation on the plans is currently taking place prior to a Transport and Works Act Order application later this year. Railfuture are responding to the consultation, broadly supporting the plans, but with a caveat that the Network Rail Freight Route

Strategy Consultation:

[www.networkrail.co.uk/freight-network-study-draft-for-consultation.pdf](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/freight-network-study-draft-for-consultation.pdf) proposes the establishment of a Nodal Yard at Peterborough. This appears to conflict with the dive-under plans in that freight would have to cross the ECML nearer to Peterborough to access this yard.

We have also suggested a chord from the Up Slow Line to the dive-under so trains from Grantham to East Anglia can also use the dive-under.

The work is funded from the East Coast Connectivity Fund which was established in 2012. (DH)

## Stamford Signal Box

When the station sidings were removed in the 1980s, the signal box became redundant. Mr Humm who had a railway bookshop in the old signalman's house, which still forms part of the station buildings, had the box moved next to the station. It was repainted and looked quite smart for a while. Now it has become dilapidated and woebegone thanks to weather and trespassers.

Happily a new owner has taken the box on from Mr Humm, who has moved his business into the Town. The new owner plans to restore it outwardly with 'blood and custard' livery, replacement of external stairs (currently a heap of rotten wood) and woodwork renewal where needed. I will watch to see if good intentions are turned into reality. (PH)

## Editor's Mail

I was disappointed to read that there is talk of getting rid of all paper train tickets, with people having to get tickets on their smart phones.

Now, of course, rail companies must move with the times. Indeed this letter is being sent as an e mail. Yet like millions of others I neither want nor have a smart phone. So what would I do if paper tickets were abolished?

It is a worrying fact that the technophiles amongst us seem unwilling to grasp the fact that not everyone is so enthused about modern developments, and there is a risk of people being electronically disadvantaged by such a measure.

Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby

## Request for Barnetby & Brigg Photos

We are considering re-vamping future editions of the Barnetby & Brigg Rail Guide with the use of colour. Can any members help by providing suitable photographs of trains or other locations appropriate to Barnetby and Brigg for inclusion on the front and inside of the guide? Portrait format photographs, suitable for the Third A4 size leaflet, will be ideal. If you can help, photographs can be sent by post, or as jpg files by email to Phil Mason (see page 3).



### BRANCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Branch committee will be meeting on the following dates: 19 November 2016, 28 January, 22 April, 1 July, 16 September and 18 November 2017 at Swithin's Community Centre, Baggholm Road, Lincoln LN2 5AX, commencing at 13:00.

All Branch members are welcome to attend and participate in these meetings. The only restriction being that voting on appropriate issues is limited to elected members of the committee.

# East Coast Disruption... Again

The summer months have seen yet more disruption to Virgin East Coast (VTEC) services due to overhead wire failure. During September services on the East Coast Main Line were disrupted twice in a week by overhead line problems near Retford.

Damage to the overhead is nothing new of course. Back in the days of the Rail Passenger Committees I can remember a

meeting in Peterborough in 2003 (yes, it really was 13 years ago) where Christopher Garnett from GNER was castigating Network Rail for the problems the unreliability of the overhead wires were causing GNER. Promises of improvements were frequent but it seems 13 years later not enough has been done. (DH)

## Shelter for passsengers

At a recent meeting of the Railfuture Passenger Group, one of the subjects discussed was the provision of shelter for passengers. Primarily this was about platform canopies, whether there were any and if so did the trains stop where they would be useful for sheltering whilst waiting to board a train. The point was that the Train Operating Companies (ToCs) would be asked about this during tendering discussions. In many cases the traditional Victorian awnings and overall roofs have been removed or cut back because of maintenance costs and safety concerns when lines are electrified.

Could Lincolnshire Branch members provide some feed-back information about their local stations?

Station: .....

Weather Protection on Platform:    None ☐    Canopy ☐    Overall Roof ☐


If protection is provided, does the normal stopping point of the train shelter passengers waiting to board?    YES/NO

Is there enclosed shelter provided for passengers?    glazed bus shelter type ☐

part of station building ☐

Tick boxes as appropriate ☒ none ☐

Additional comments:  
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.....  
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Please cut-out, photocopy or email details to Hon Secretary, Dr Don Peacock  
(see page 3)



# Lincolnshire Charters

*Compiled by Geoffrey Meanwell*

## **Saturday, 29 October**

Kings Cross, Stevenage, Huntingdon, **Peterborough to York**  
Steam haulage by A4 60009. Outward journey via the Joint Line.  
Promoter: Railway Touring Company

## **Thursday, 1 December**

London Victoria to **Lincoln**  
Hauled by Class 67                      Promoter: Belmond

## **Thursday, 1 December**

Kings Cross, Hertford North, Stevenage, Huntingdon, **Peterborough to Lincoln**  
Steam haulage by 6201              Promoter Steam Dreams

## **Saturday, 2 December**

Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Drem, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnmouth, Morpeth, Newcastle,  
Durham to **Lincoln**  
Hauled by Class 47/57              Promoter Scottish Railway Preservation Society

## **Saturday, 3 December**

Leeds, Wakefield, Doncaster, **Retford, Newark North Gate, Grantham, Peterborough to Canterbury West**  
Hauled by Class 47/57              Promoter: West Coast Railway Company

## **Saturday, 3 December**

Kings Cross, Potters Bar, Stevenage, **Peterborough to Lincoln**  
Steam haulage by 46233              Promoter: Railway Touring Company

## **Saturday, 3 December**

Tysley, Coleshill Parkway, Nuneaton, Leicester, Loughborough to **Lincoln**  
Steam haulage by 4965              Promoter: Vintage Trains

## **Thursday, 8 December**

Norwich, Wymondham, Attleborough, Thetford, Brandon, March, **Peterborough to York**  
Steam haulage to be advised      Promoter: Railway Touring Company

## **Saturday, 10 December**

**Peterborough, Spalding, Sleaford, Metherringham, Lincoln, Saxilby, Gainsborough Lea Road, Doncaster to Edinburgh**  
Hauled by Class 47/57              Promoter: West Coast Railway Company

## **Saturday, 10 December**

Kings Cross, Stevenage, Huntingdon, **Peterborough to York**  
Steam haulage to be advised      Promoter: Railway Touring Company

# Castle Line News

In *Rail Lincs 75*, I mentioned that the initial improved Saturday service from May 2016 still had some gaps at Hykeham. Since the initial timetable was produced, more work has been done to fill most of the gaps. I'm pleased to be able to say that there will be another 5 trains calling at Hykeham from 17 December, although they do come with some increased journey times.

Whilst on the subject of Hykeham, I'm pleased to report that at the time of writing, 4 October, the car park extension is progressing well and looks like it could be completed this month.

Some of the extension is already being used and today there were 26 cars there. The existing car park with 20 spaces has been consistently full since soon after it was opened.

With the loss of many car park spaces in Lincoln since work started on the new Transport Interchange, we have spoken to passengers new to rail going into Lincoln from Hykeham station. When word gets around about how quick and convenient the train is we hope that at least some stay with the train when the Interchange is completed.

The new car park at Swinderby has finally opened. Typical occupancy whenever I have passed has been 6 cars. Previously the only option at Swinderby was to park on the roadside verge of a narrow country lane.

There is, as yet, no occupation of the

Newark Castle station building (except the ticket office) but we are assured it will not remain vacant for much longer.

The upgrade of the section between Lowdham and Newark will be completed before the December timetable change.

This is the culmination of a £48m scheme which sees digital signalling introduced, signal boxes closed and transfer to the East Midlands Regional Operating Centre in Derby. (DH)



*Photos by David Harby showing work on Hykeham car park extension.*

# Celebrating Journeys to Skegness

A steam hauled excursion train from Derby to Skegness and return ran on Sunday, 25 September to celebrate the 125th anniversary of The Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre (DCHC). Hauled by Royal Scot Class 46115 Scots Guardsman, the train recreated the journey made by thousands of Derbyshire children since the charity started in 1891 to provide a week's holiday at the Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre. The outward journey was steam hauled from Derby to Grantham where the train reversed, with diesel haulage on to Skegness and 46115 trailing at the rear. Steam took over for the return journey taking the direct route to Allington West Junction and on to Derby. The Excursion

was operated by West Coast Railways and carried a resplendent headboard: "DCHC Holiday Express".

DCHC is a charity which was established in 1891 to provide Derbyshire children having troubles in their home lives with a holiday in Skegness. At the present time it provides 450 holiday places per season. (PM)

*The DCHC Holiday Express arrives in the goods loop at Grantham, on its outward journey.*



## Sampling Harringworth Viaduct

Now that passenger trains are running over Harringworth Viaduct, I wanted to sample the view. With two friends, I caught the 17:27 from Oakham to Corby, had a quick meal at the Everard Arms (15 mins walk) and returned on the 19:15. I can't say the views from the viaduct were stunning, but on a summer evening you can see miles over the valley with not a house in sight and the Meridian thoughtfully slowed on the return trip to give us more time to savour the scene. I had expected a large number coming back from London would alight at Oakham, but there was only one person beside us. If the service

depends upon attracting passengers from Melton and Oakham it has failed in its objective, but when Market Harborough platform is being straightened, the route could be a useful way round. (PH)



*Photo: East Midlands Trains*

## PRELIMINARY NOTICE – RAILFUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH AGM

The Committee has set the AGM for Saturday 11 March 2017 at Lincoln in St Swithin's Community Centre, Baggholme Road. Further details including the Agenda and Branch Officers' reports will be in the next *Rail Lincs*.

The purpose of this notice is to remind members that the posts of Hon. Chairman, Hon Vice Chairman, Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary are open to all fully paid up members of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture.

In accordance with the Branch procedures, members wishing to stand for these posts are invited to inform the Hon Secretary in writing before 31 December 2016.

Any person wishing to stand should provide the Hon Secretary with a signed written declaration of willingness to stand along with a 100 word manifesto which will be published in the next *Rail Lincs*. The declaration must be supported in writing by another fully paid up member of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture.

No canvassing for votes is permitted other than the manifesto published in *Rail Lincs* and the question and answer session at the AGM.

Similarly fully paid up members of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture wishing to join the Branch Committee should provide a signed declaration of willingness to stand with signed support by another fully paid up member of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture to the Hon Secretary by 31 December 2016. No manifesto is required for Committee membership.

If there is only one candidate for each of the four executive posts then there will be no election and the meeting will be asked to ratify the selection. In this case the manifestos will not be published.

*Dr Don Peacock Hon Secretary.*

### Dates for your diaries.

In addition to our branch AGM on 11 March 2017, there will be three Railfuture national events close to our Branch area during 2017. Our national AGM is in Peterborough on 20 May; our Summer Conference in Leeds on 17 June and our Autumn Conference at Leicester on 4 November.



**Follow the Branch on Twitter**  
**@RailfutureLincs**

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*Refer to pages 2 & 3 for contact details of branch officers mentioned in Rail Lincs.*