

From the Editor

As I compile this edition of *Rail Lincs*, I am confronted with an endless flow of negative news about the future of our railways, not only from the railway press but from the media in general. There are concerns about the current political turmoil and its effect on the rail industry – will Great British Railways ever be created, what will happen to the East–West Rail Link?

To take a more positive stance, you will find within these pages a few snippets of good news which may appear to be minor issues compared to the overall railway ‘picture’, but nevertheless, are worth highlighting.

This edition of *Rail Lincs* is another joint publication with Railfuture East Midlands Branch following the favourable response to *Rail Lincs* 90 in June 2021. The two branches have a common link as

East Midlands Railway (EMR) Regional services serving Lincolnshire commence journeys in the East Midlands.

Although it is a slow process, EMR are starting to receive cascaded rolling stock which should have been received two years ago.

In the north of Lincolnshire, it is good to report that services on the Barton Line have returned to a high level of reliability after a long period of appalling disruption towards the end of last year.

The venue for the Lincolnshire Branch Committee meeting in September used the ‘Old Waiting Room’ at Sleaford station. The station has been fully

restored and painted in green and cream LNER heritage colours and the former waiting room on the island platform converted into a splendid community facility with meeting space and kitchen.

Phil Mason, Editor



Interior of the Old Waiting Room at Sleaford station

INSIDE: Reinstating the Peaks & Dales Line and a Focus on Freight



Timetable changes from December

We have the usual December timetable change from 11 December. The major change is that TransPennine Express (TPE) services will be Cleethorpes to Liverpool Lime Street instead of to Manchester Piccadilly. They are also due to return to an hourly service.

Northern are replacing the Doncaster to Scunthorpe bus service with a 2 hourly all stations rail service. Unlike the previous Covid emergency service which did not provide a commuter train to Doncaster there is now an arrival in Doncaster at 08:27. There is an extra Sheffield to Gainsborough Central service both morning and evening peak to give 08:16 and 09:16 ex Gainsborough Central and 16:54 and 17:54 ex Sheffield. Not only does this give a marginally better service at Gainsborough Central it also provides an extra commuter train each way between Retford and Sheffield which should relieve some of the overcrowding to/from Worksop on the Lincoln service. We are assured that the 3 Saturdays only Brigg Line services are restored.

In response to complaints about the student service to Sleaford arriving too late for school start, East Midlands Railway (EMR) have managed to bring the 08:22 departure from Lincoln forward to 08:10. This is still not ideal as the Sleaford arrival at 08:39 is still too late as far as school is concerned, but EMR say to move it any earlier 2 freight paths will have to be changed. This has been facilitated by moving the 07:42 Newark Northgate to Lincoln forward to an 07:30 departure. Hykeham and Collingham gain stops in the 14:38 Grimsby to Leicester, and Hykeham now has a stop in the 18:35 Lincoln to Leicester. The 06:17/07:12/08:13 & 15:15/16:15/17:13 ex Matlock have been extended from Derby to Nottingham with corresponding return services from

Nottingham.

06:42 Sheffield to Norwich which has previously been advertised as separate trains each side of Nottingham will now be advertised as Sheffield to Norwich following representations from Peterborough-Ely-Norwich Rail User Group (PENRUG).

Nothing to report from LNER except to say that the ECML timetable recast has been delayed to at least December 2023, with some industry sources saying they would not be surprised to see that date slipping later.

No changes to Midland Main Line and Corby services.

David Harby

East Midlands rail an uncertain future?

I am writing these comments in early October whilst the rail network is undergoing considerable industrial strife with, according to comments made by the union leaders, little prospect of an early resolution.

In the later stages of the holiday season, East Midlands Railway (EMR) and Northern were seeing passenger numbers close to pre Covid levels, but whilst this is a welcome improvement we must remember that many of these extra passengers are paying off peak fares, therefore revenue recovery is still well behind passenger number recovery.

As you will see below, this leaves us in a difficult situation when we are asking for service improvements.

HM Treasury is reluctant to authorise any more expenditure until revenue recovers further and that is before the inevitable extra costs of wage settlements.

At the same time, all the uncertainties surrounding service reliability whilst there is industrial action is going to deter ▶

passengers from using rail rather than encourage them to return. This is also not helped by some atrocious reliability on TransPennine Express (TPE) with day before cancellations and bus replacements being the rule rather than the exception.

We are told by TPE that the poor service is due to staff illness, but I cannot help recalling that cancellations on the Barton Branch were a frequent occurrence when TPE were providing the train crew.

Elsewhere in this edition, you will find a December timetable change update.

Northern are close to their franchise commitment but an hourly Doncaster to Scunthorpe service and most of the Sheffield to Gainsborough Central services are still missing. We are told by Northern that they are under DfT instruction to base future timetables on their December 2021 offering, but that does not stop us working with other stakeholders to lobby for the full franchise timetable.

On EMR the December changes still leave us a long way below what we were promised when the EMR franchise started. As well as gaps in the regional timetable we are also missing the promised hourly Lincoln to Doncaster, hourly Lincoln to Grimsby and many of the Lincoln to Newark Northgate.

Unlike the other operators the substandard service is not a Covid legacy. As readers will recall EMR attempted to introduce an enhanced regional timetable in May 2021 but this quickly proved unworkable and within a month it was replaced by a substantially reduced emergency timetable. Some of the failures were due to staff shortages but the prime reasons were a lack of adequate rolling stock and a severely congested maintenance depot at Nottingham Eastcroft. *(Currently receiving a major upgrade to increase capacity Ed.)*

EMR are now starting to receive the rolling stock they should have had nearly 2 years ago. Three x Class 170 units have been received from Southern, though currently EMR have to release one x Class 156 to Northern for every Class 170 they receive. This transfer is not strictly like for like in that the Class 170s EMR have received are 3-car but the '156' released are only 2-car. EMR say they will try to deploy these 3-car units on their busiest local routes.

EMR seem confident that by May 2023 they will have released all the '156s' to Northern and have received enough extra class '170s' to reinstate all of the May 2021 timetable. Reinstatement of the May 2021 timetable is, however, not a foregone conclusion as DfT, who control EMR spending, have not yet agreed to authorise the extra costs involved. Stakeholders are pressing DfT to agree the enhanced timetable and pointing out to DfT that even when we have the May 2021 timetable, it is well short of the franchise commitment.

To put this dilemma into context prior to Covid, the regional network was only responsible for 20% of EMR revenue and of this 20% Liverpool to Norwich accounted for three quarters of that. The whole of the remaining regional network only accounts for something like 5% of EMR revenue so clearly the revenue from extra services will not cover costs.

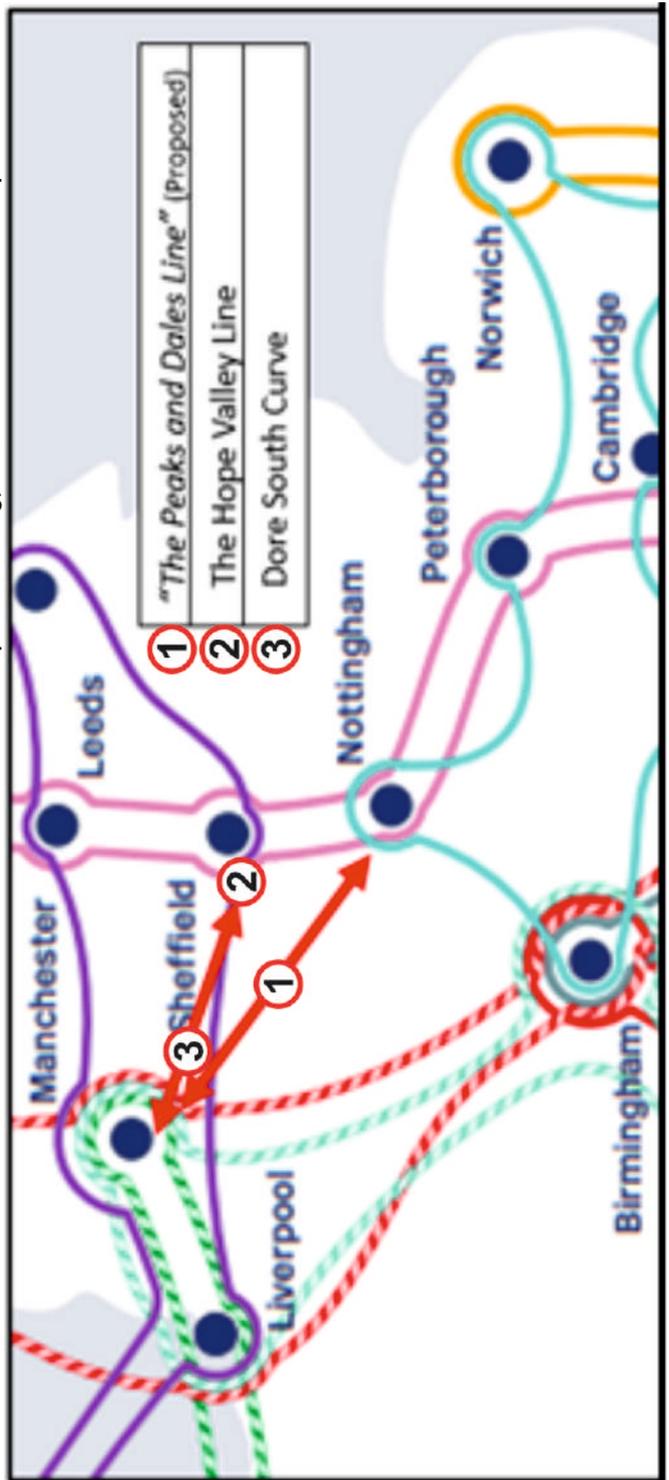
At the time of writing we have a financial crisis and Treasury ministers telling us that spending will have to be reduced, so the prospects for our local services are not looking good. Very disappointing after the hard lobbying work stakeholders put in before the franchise award and the optimism we felt not much more than three years ago when the franchise was awarded.

David Harby

**Peaks and Dales
Railway
Connecting
East of England,
North Lincolnshire
and East Midlands
to the
North-West**

MEMRAP

Manchester and
East Midlands
Rail Action
Partnership



The Peaks and Dales Line

and its relevance for Lincolnshire Connectivity

The campaign to reinstate the Peaks and Dales line comprises 13 miles of reinstated track plus 23 miles of upgrade to existing freight and passenger lines. This section of the former Midland Mainline route between Ambergate Junction in the south and Buxton / Chinley in the north, closed in 1968. Reinstating and upgrading the 36 miles of track would allow the return of a direct Derby – Manchester service.

“Levelling up” is a much-overused expression, but the need for it is nowhere more needed than for the fragile east-west rail connectivity across the Pennines provided by the Hope Valley line. This arose due to a lack of vision that saw nationally strategic and lesser rail routes bundled together and closed in the 1960s, including the Woodhead and Peak Line routes. This left the crossing of both the north and south Pennine routes as slow, congested bottlenecks. Northern Powerhouse Rail rightly focused on options for relief of the sub-standard north Pennine link for the premier Manchester – Leeds link. However, the south Pennines was neglected and an increasingly congested Hope Valley line was almost completely ignored in the Integrated Rail Plan – on which Lincolnshire depends for access to Manchester.

Congestion is aggravated by varied mixed speed traffic, including aggregates loads to and from the Peak Forest quarries. The south bound loads prevent passenger services via Dore South curve (see map opposite). The current palliative Hope Valley upgrade will alleviate problems at Bamford (freight passing loop) and Dore (track and platforms to be doubled), but beyond improved resilience and fewer delays will not significantly increase capacity.

Thus, benefits from a Peaks and Dales line reinstatement for the Sheffield – Manchester Hope Valley operations, currently operated by TransPennine Express (TPE), East Midlands Railway (EMR) and Northern could be considerable. Effectively the two routes would operate jointly as a 4-track strategic crossing of the south Pennines. Most aggregates traffic would be re-routed, moving directly south over Peaks and Dales from the Peak Forest, opening up a lower mileage and emissions route via Matlock, valuable for the quarry operators. This would in turn reduce the range and volume of conflicted speed traffic on the Hope Valley line, leading to improved resilience, reliability and potentially capacity for travellers between north Lincolnshire, Sheffield, Nottingham and Manchester.

Whilst the above strategic and economic benefits are widely acknowledged, the much-loved multi-user Monsal Trail today uses the trackbed for 8.5 miles of the route and remains a stumbling block to progress. Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership (MEMRAP) is therefore working its way towards an integrated rail plus trail solution that carefully relocates the trail and delivers regionally significant benefits for a minimum of 9 million people living in the Midlands and the North.

For further information and to find out how you can help the campaign, please visit the website at:
<https://www.peaksanddalesrailway.com/>

Stephen Chaytow
CEO MEMRAP

Restoring Your Railway

local update

In the June 2021 issue of *Rail Lincs* we listed the local East Midlands restoration schemes where bids had been made to the DfT's Restoring Your Railway Fund. All RYR have now had a response from DfT ranging from unsuccessful to funding to develop detailed proposals.

The Matlock to Buxton scheme is covered by a separate article in this edition of *Rail Lincs*. For the rest, the current situation is as follows:

Maid Marian Line

No funding from RYR but could still progress as part East Midlands Development Corporation proposals to develop a strategy to take advantage of the HS2 extension to East Midlands Parkway and the Toton area regeneration proposals.

South Humber Rail Link

A Strategic Outline Business Case has been submitted to DfT. A response is due "by the end of the year" although your cynical branch chair wonders which year DfT are talking about.

Ivanhoe Line

This scheme now has funding to develop detailed proposals.

Barrow Hill Line

Another scheme which has funding to develop detailed proposals including stations at Staveley, Whittington, Eckersley and Killamarsh (at one time the village of Killamarsh had 3 stations – Killamarsh West, Killamarsh Central and Uppertorpe and Killamarsh!).

Firsby to Louth and Mablethorpe

No specific RYR funding, but Network Rail have been asked to assess this proposal as part of their study of the opportunities to improve rail connectivity in Lincolnshire. It may or may not be a

coincidence that there are proposals to use the former Theddlethorpe gas terminal just north of Mablethorpe for disposal of nuclear waste and good transport links will be needed if this goes ahead.

Welland Valley Rail

No funding from RYR.

Lichfield to Burton upon Trent/Derby

No funding from RYR.

Reconnecting South Nottinghamshire

No funding from RYR.

Cosby to Lutterworth

No funding from RYR.

David Harby

Travel Centres are Essential

Although the railway strikes may seem to be the height of unreasonableness, it is important to consider what type of railway we now have. Private companies have lost money running our railways so they are no longer interested. The government is investing huge sums of money in what is an essential service and are leaving the system to be run by the managers. This is therefore not a nationalised railway. It is understandable why managers are looking for ways to make the railways more efficient within an existing budget but they also need to consider ways to maximise their customer base and who they are running the railways for. If we consider businesses elsewhere such as supermarkets or clothes stores there is a choice. Supermarkets and chain stores have moved to self service. If customers want personal service, they can shop elsewhere. With railways, the customer does not have a choice.

Public transport, and railways in particular, are more in line with essential services such as schools, hospitals, ►

◀ police, prisons, and defence. If these are not safe and well staffed they become inefficient. There is currently a serious issue of safety for women.

The current trend is to make the customer more efficient by increased technology such as smartphones and internet access. Many people do not have smartphones. For some people the internet is something they can only access through a public library. For those with internet access there may be a need to negotiate more than one railway company in order to book a ticket. For those with rail cards this is an additional obstacle. All journeys may not be on the system.

When Railfuture Director, Neil Middleton visited Birmingham International Station he was impressed by the use of Ticket Vending Machines. It sounds as if most passengers were regular rail travellers who would have no problems using the technology, but most people are not regular rail travellers. There was no mention of any consultation with passengers so we cannot gauge from this any loss of information from the lack of a travel centre. A large station with many knowledgeable staff is the exception rather than the rule. It is surely illogical to judge our railway system only by its minority core rail travellers rather than its potential ones. A core service which cuts off its outer parts sounds very much like Beeching Mark 2.

Lincoln Travel Centre now has a notice on its entrance doors which states: "From 29 October this will be a Penalty Fares Station. This will mean you must buy a ticket before you

travel otherwise you may have to pay a Penalty Fee (at least £20)". Until recently, potential passengers were able to walk on to the station with or without a ticket so barriers will have to be maintained to avoid this happening. The implication at Birmingham is that tickets are being sold on the station so it is difficult to see how two or three staff transferred from a travel centre to the station concourse would be sufficient. I recently bought a Super Off-Peak Return from Lincoln to Bromley South which would not have been available from a ticket machine as barriers do not recognise this journey. Lincoln Travel Centre and the station ticket office are only open part of the day which is off-putting to potential passengers who arrive and leave without being able to book travel and buy tickets. I expect that staff hours have been reduced. There are railway staff at the barriers but they have to leave their locations in order to deal with potential customers. Many stations in rural areas will have no staff to advise passengers how to use any available ticket machine so tickets will need to be sold on trains more than is the case at present. An on line only ticket sales process is surely pie in the sky.

*Tom Rookes
Lincolnshire Branch member*



Friends of the Barton Line

• Since publication of the June *Rail Lincs*, the Barton Line service was badly impacted between 20-26 June and in the middle of July. Partly due to industrial action and hot weather. On Sunday 17 July unit 156907 failed after working the 11:10 service from Barton and all following services were cancelled until the afternoon of Wednesday. The extended delay was due to lack of suitable replacement units. By September, the Barton service had returned to a high level of reliability thanks to the efforts of East Midlands Railway (EMR). However, some issues were out of their control, such as when Barton units were blocked in by TransPennine Express (TPE) units at Cleethorpes and could not start until TPE drivers became available to release them. The problem is being raised with TPE and also with EMR to see if Barton



156413 approaching Barton station
Photo: Tim Mickleburgh



Cleethorpes station
Photo: Tim Mickleburgh

Line units could be stabled overnight at Lincoln. For the longer-term Network Rail will be approached to see if platforms 5 & 6 at Cleethorpes could be restored for passenger use to allow for greater flexibility in the stabling of trains.

• The official unveiling of the renovated Thornton Abbey Running-in boards was to take place on 3 October. And on 14 October a ceremony to mark the reopening of rebuilt Barrow Haven station. The Barrow Haven station nameboard, retrieved prior to the rebuilding, has been delivered to the Group's archivist for storage.

Anthony Berridge



Editor's Mail



Shocking Brigg Line service but a future for the Barton Line

It is shocking that the Brigg line can simply have its already meagre service withdrawn and no buses to take their place. However, it is wrong to say that the service "has not been seen since the start of Covid" (*Rail Lincs 93*) as dad and I travelled on the line last year.

As you say though, the news is better so far as the Barton line is concerned, with us enjoying a trouble-free journey there earlier this year. Clearly the £1.3 million investment at Barrow Haven shows that the route has a future, but I do wish they'd make Barton station itself more of an attractive proposition for travellers. Currently it really is the end of the line in more ways than one.

Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby

Internet images of the Barton Line

railpast an occasional nostalgic look at our local railways

Marsh Junction Signal Box

photo: Tim mickleburgh

Marsh Junction Signal Box opened in 1907 and controlled access to Grimsby Docks and Grimsby & District Light Railway, it can be seen from the new road going over the railway from near the Leisure Centre on Cromwell Road. It is the next box from Great Coates station going towards Grimsby Town, and used to serve the goods traffic in the West Marsh area of Grimsby.



Freight Focus



Whilst we have been concerned about cuts to passenger services during Covid, freight services through the East Midlands have been steadily increasing so we thought it was time to take a look at the current position.

The tables below show freight services that operated between 17 and 21 October. These are not all of the non passenger services as some Network Rail infrastructure services such as track machines are not included. To save space services to/from general areas have been grouped together rather than detail every individual container and aggregate terminal and for ease of identification, for those not familiar with every mile of the railway, the name of a nearby town has sometimes been used.

There are also quite a few freight trains not included as they do not pass through either Lincoln (Table A) or Leicester (Table B), such as the majority of containers to East Midlands Gateway and quite a few aggregates trains that bypass Leicester by going via Corby. Even without these there were an average of 43.4 per day through Lincoln with Leicester not far behind at 32.6 with 199 to/from Felixstowe alone.

With the target of carbon reduction by a modal shift to rail, these numbers are good to see, but we will leave you with a question. Many of our key routes are near capacity so how do we use what little capacity is left? More freight trains or campaign for more passenger services?

David Harby

Table A

Lincoln 17 th - 21 st October inclusive		
Flow (both directions)	No	Load
South and West Yorkshire - Felixstowe	110	Containers
South and West Yorkshire – Thames ports	28	Containers
East Midlands Gateway - Felixstowe	5	Containers
Biggleswade - Selby	1	Aggregates/building materials
Doncaster - March	11	Aggregates/building materials
Peak Forest Quarries -Boston	1	Aggregates/building materials
East London - Selby	4	Aggregates/building materials
Southampton - Scunthorpe	1	Aggregates/building materials
Immingham – Ratcliffe Power Station	19	Coal
Kings Lynn – South Yorkshire & Goole	13	Sand
Immingham refineries - Jarrow	1	Petroleum products
Immingham refineries – West Midlands	21	Petroleum products
East London - Scunthorpe	2	Household waste
Average trains per day = 43.4		

Table B**Leicester 17th - 21st October inclusive**

Flow (both directions)	No	Load
Felixstowe – West Midlands	54	Containers
Felixstowe - Crewe/Liverpool/Manchester	26	Containers
Felixstowe – East Midlands Gateway	4	Containers
Coalville area – London and beyond via MML	5	Aggregates/building materials
Coalville area – South Yorkshire	7	Aggregates/building materials
Coalville area - Toton	3	Aggregates/building materials
Coalville area - March	1	Aggregates/building materials
Peak Forest Quarries - Bletchley	3	Aggregates/building materials
P F Quarries – Kettering and beyond to London	7	Aggregates/building materials
Peak Forest Quarries – West Midlands	9	Aggregates/building materials
Mountsorrel - Crewe	3	Aggregates/building materials
Mountsorrel - Southampton	4	Aggregates/building materials
Mountsorrel – West Midlands	7	Aggregates/building materials
Mountsorrel – Luton/Bedford area	5	Aggregates/building materials
Mountsorrel - Northampton	1	Aggregates/building materials
Theale (Berkshire) - Hope	4	Aggregates/building materials
West Midlands - Wellingborough	1	Aggregates/building materials
Toton – Luton/Bedford area	1	Aggregates/building materials
Hereford – Luton/Bedford area	2	Aggregates/building materials
Crewe - Toton	1	Aggregates/building materials
Kings Lynn - Cheshire	4	Sand
Grain Oil (Kent) – Sinfin (Derby)	1	Petroleum products
South Wales - Corby	8	Steel
Ketton – London via Kettering	1	Cement
Toton – Dollands Moor	1	Automobiles Import/Export
Average trains per day = 32.6		



Photographs by Graham Lightfoot,
Lincoln Railway Society

RAILFUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH AGM

Hopefully, the 2023 AGM will be held in March 2023, Further details will be notified later. 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, 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 2022.

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 2022. 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



The island platform at Sleaford from platform 1 and view east from the island platform

LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH

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Vice-Chair: Phil Mason – philmasonlnera4@gmail.com

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Please let the Editor, Phil Mason, 10 Cottesmore Close, Grantham NG31 9JL, philmasonlnera4@gmail.com have copy by 28 January.

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