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### **NATIONAL RAIL-USERS CONFERENCE 2007, Ely, Maltings, 3 November**

East Anglian Branch is host this year and has arranged a truly not-to-be-missed event. Among the speakers will be **Bob Breakwell**, Non-Executive Director of First Great Western, and one of the shrewdest railwaymen around; **Dave Wetzel**, Transport for London's Vice-Chair and great advocate of valuing public transport initiatives through taxing land values enhanced by such projects, and **Christian Wolmar** a great speaker who needs no introduction and will also be signing copies of his new book. **Guy Dangerfield** of Passenger Focus has also agreed to join us with an end-of-conference summing up.

These plus brief presentations from various highly active user-groups around England will complete the day. Keeping everything rigorously on schedule will be Chairman, Nick Dibben. In short, a really worthwhile event. Don't miss it!

Tickets are £10 for Railfuture members and £12.50 for non-members. A buffet lunch is available for £9.50 or you can use the various pubs and cafes around the Maltings. Booking, please, to Peter Wakefield, 7 Hollymount, Cambridge CB1 1QD. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope and make cheques payable to Railfuture. We look forward to seeing you at the Conference. (ND) Better still, use the form on the other side of the enclosed flyer for the Norwich meeting.

### **A summer of decisions**

This summer has seen a host of announcements from the Department of Transport, writes Nick Dibben (ND), that will have a significant impact on our region's railways over the next 7-10 years. The winners of three rail franchises that serve East Anglia have been chosen and the Government has issued its high level output statement (HLOS) that sets out a strategy for the coming years. These announcements contain many things that Railfuture have campaigned for, plus a few surprises and, as we have come to expect, some omissions and work left to do.

Do let us have your views on these matters and the Branch will take them up with the new operators and with the Government via Railfuture's specialist committees. (ND)

### **More trains and station upgrades on the East Coast**

National Express have been awarded the franchise to run services on the East Coast

Main Line between London, Leeds and Edinburgh. The franchise will start in December this year and will run until March 2015. Over its course National Express will be paying a premium of £1.4bn to the Government. The franchise was re-let this summer after the current holder, GNER (and its owner), ran into financial difficulties.

It is committed to run 25 extra trains a day from 2010 with the introduction of a fifth departure each hour from Kings Cross. These additional trains will run alternately to York and, for the first time in many years, Lincoln. This will add daily around 14,000 seats to the busy southern end of the East Coast route. Rolling stock for these new services is likely to be Mark 3a+Cl.90 to York, with HST's on a modified diagram to include trips to Lincoln.

Over £7m will be spent on upgrading stations, including extra parking and facilities at Peterborough. The environment has not been forgotten, with a commitment to improve energy efficiency at depots and stations. There will also be a "Carbon Club" travel incentive scheme to encourage passengers to make greater use of public transport.

The Branch has welcomed the additional trains and the seating capacity it will bring, although we will highlight to the new operator the need to maintain stops at Peterborough for other long distance services. We hope Network Rail will cope efficiently with this promised increase and not prejudice freight over the route.

Train operator web-site: [www.youeastcoast.co.uk](http://www.youeastcoast.co.uk)

### **More trains to Stansted Airport**

The existing Central Trains franchise is being split up and the Stansted Airport to Birmingham service will be part of the new Cross Country franchise recently awarded to Arriva. The Stansted Airport route is a relatively small part of the network of services, centred around Birmingham, that serve many parts of the country.

By 2009, three extra services westbound from Stansted and four eastbound to Stansted are planned, primarily weekday evenings. The Class 170 diesel units used on the service will be refurbished and rearranged to create more seats and luggage space. First Class seating will also be introduced. They have also promised to work with 'one' and Stansted Express to improve operations at the airport station.

Although the management team has yet to be announced, Andy Cooper, former MD of Anglia Railways, was leader of the successful bid, and may be making a return to the railways of the area. (ND)

Train operator web-site: [www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk](http://www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk)

### **Branch responds to Stansted Airport Strategy**

The Branch has responded to consultation documents setting out transport strategies for Stansted Airport. We have welcomed plans to provide 4 track sections on the route from London and a second track into the airport itself. We have also noted that additional train services from the airport towards Cambridge are needed and, in the

longer term, restoring the link eastwards to Braintree should be considered. We also urged BAA to include space to enable rail to deliver construction materials to the site as part of any development.

## **Stagecoach win East Midlands Franchise**

The existing Central Trains Norwich to Liverpool service will become part of the East Midlands Franchise when Stagecoach take over in November. The franchise also includes the existing Midland Main Line route from St Pancras and other Central trains services around Derby and Nottingham. Additional capacity is promised on the Norwich trains.

One of the key priorities for the new franchise will be to resolve the issue of Sunday working by staff. Services to Norwich have been cancelled on several Sundays due to a shortage of staff. The most recently reported example was 12 August.(ND) Your editor rang up Stagecoach about this and other matters and was told they were already in deep negotiation to remove this wholly unacceptable state of affairs.

And just in case you are affected: the current Central 06.17 train from Cambridge to Norwich and the 22.10hrs from Norwich in the evening will default to 'one'. Quite how they will manage this remains to be seen. as they have no crew conversant with diesel multiple units based at Cambridge. The result may be overnight business for a Cambridge hotel! And as we go to press it has been announced that 34 year old Tim Shoveller, ex Virgin Trains Business Development Director, is to be the Managing Director of the new company. We wish him well in this challenging job See [www.eastmidlandstrains.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandstrains.co.uk) on the internet.

## **Rail news**

**Elsenham** – A new footbridge has been provided at the station. Two girls were killed at the station in December 2006 whilst crossing the line to catch a train.

**Huntingdon** – Ticket barriers have been installed at the station. This has resulted in a greater staff presence at the station as staff are needed at the barriers to assist passengers. The new bus turning circle has also been completed which has reduced the congestion at the station caused by cars parked in the wrong place and buses trying to turn around.

**March** – Freight operator First GBRf plans to open a diesel maintenance depot using former sidings to the east of the station.

**Safety** – A study by the Rail Safety and Standards Board has concluded that making rail passengers wear seat belts would lead to an increase in injuries and fatalities in the event of an accident.

**Trains** – 'one' Railway is seeking companies to refurbish some of their trains. The £10m project could see work done on the Class 321 units used on outer suburban routes from Liverpool Street.

## **ELY DERAILMENT**

This much publicised accident, just to the east of Ely, has caused very expensive disruption, especially to freight. The diversionary route via Newmarket doesn't help too much because it is largely single track with very long signaled sections. On top of this, 'one' has had to truncate the Liverpool St-Peterborough service at Bury St Edmunds and run a bus service from there to Ely feeding into a single coach diesel unit. Why? Well one reason is that the crews are not trained for the Cambridge-Ely leg. And this in an ostensibly integrated company.

If 'one' crews at Cambridge *were* involved, earlier and later trains to and from Norwich and Ipswich become an option, and emergencies like Ely coped with in much more customer-friendly fashion. Why, even an hourly all-stations Stansted to Peterborough service might be feasible, alternating with Arriva Cross-Country (currently Central Trains) and the 'one' Liverpool St-Ipswich-Peterborough services. It's certainly needed. The good news is that the replacement bridge at Ely will be installed *with* double track.

### **Network Rail Report on Capacity Expansion:**

This report into increasing capacity on overcrowded commuter routes has concluded that, whilst altering the system to accommodate a double-decker train design is impracticable, accommodating 16-coach trains is more hopeful. For example; extending platforms between Ipswich and Liverpool Street would cost around £1 billion and increase capacity by a third. However, to ensure the full length of the train was used, some stations might require an extra entrance and footbridge. The report suggests that best value might result from 14 rather than 16 coach formations. In short, work is very much in progress.

### **East Suffolk Travellers Association (ESTA)**

Trevor Garrod (TG) reports that ESTA's autumn meeting will be on Saturday October 6th starting at 2.15 pm in the Church Hall, next to the Parish Church in the centre of Melton - no more than ten minutes' walk from the railway station. The Wilford Bridge pub, in the opposite direction from the station, does good meals.

The meeting will hear reports and discuss a range of local public transport issues and the guest speaker will be Mr Clive Morris, Rural Services manager of 'one'. On the following day, Sunday October 7th, ESTA will have a stall at the Ipswich Transport Museum as part of the museums annual "Come and Ride on our Buses" day. The museum contains a large and interesting range of exhibits on transport, including rail, in and around Ipswich during the past 150 years. On October 7th, a special bus service will link the rail station to the museum.

On Thursdays and Saturdays from mid July to early September, ESTA helped sponsor an open-top bus between Woodbridge and Melton station, tourist attractions in the town and the National Trust site at Sutton Hoo. We were pleased to be associated with this first attempt to link Sutton Hoo directly to the rail network to provide an alternative to visitors coming by car. (TG)

### **Our Chairmen, Peter Wakefield (PW) speaks as he finds: Horse Racing Capital.... ?**

The Newmarket Branch has been under increasing strain all Summer, so no apologies about returning to the subject so soon. It is good to see how the infrastructure, even in its present pared down state, with valiant efforts by the railwaymen and women, can cope with the extra activity.

Since the inception of the hourly service, there has been a steady rise in passenger numbers throughout the day, throughout the length of the line between Cambridge and Ipswich. As stated in the last issue, Newmarket Race Days are a particular 'problem' as the regular interval service has attracted many extra long distance users travelling from London. The class 153 units are quickly overwhelmed and we have asked 'one' to try to ensure 156 units are on all services, as the 2 cars can just about cope. But, as we all know, 'one' do not have enough stock to cover the busiest Saturdays as larger numbers of people head to the coast, to the shops etc.

There is an added problem at Newmarket: as many more locals are using the trains on wet and windy Saturdays, the norm this summer, the meagre shelters prove very inadequate indeed when combined with hordes of returning race goers! Besides poor shelter, there is a distinct lack of signage at Newmarket station explaining to new users how to get to the race course, the town, where the courtesy buses leave from, and so on. What we have done, along with MARPA, is to write to Suffolk County Council suggesting they review the amenities on offer and support 'one' in their quest for additional resources. So far the response is that 'maybe' coaches could be provided from Cambridge direct to the Course... which is hardly likely to do the economy of Newmarket town centre much good and means that, if so directed, the well heeled punters will just get their Mercedes out and drive all the way!

The Newmarket Line has shown its worth by keeping freight moving ( but only just.Ed) to and from Suffolk and Essex as a result of the closure of the direct line through Soham. On occasion it has been noted that the signallers have been able to get two freights an hour over the line, as well as the passenger train. We have asked that Network Rail use the time needed to replace the broken bridge, over the River Ouse at Ely, do as much work as possible on the planned upgrade of the single line from Soham to Ely so no further blockade is needed. It was, however, good to see the competent and pleasant way Network Rail's spokespersons dealt with the accident in the media. PW

### **Kite Flying to the Capital...?**

Travelling several times recently to and from Liverpool Street from Cambridge it seems to me that the peak hour services should be speeded up; a tall order I know, given the complicated pattern of services over the route. Surely the city types from Cambridge and Audley End should be given precedence over international jet- setters to and from Stansted Airport, that at least one peak train an hour from/to Cambridge should be timed at less than one hour for the journey to attract back those who find the present service tedious and uncomfortable and take to the M11. Stops at Whittlesford, Audley End, maybe Stortford and then Liverpool Street and eventually via Stratford. In the peak the Airport trains should be doing more stops to enable the bread winners a faster and more attractive service... a real City Flyer! PW

### **Busway woes Capital .... ?**

No question about it, Cambridge is about to become the bus-way capital of the UK,

sad to say. As I write, rumour has it that the railway around Cambridge is to be shut for 51 hours **every weekend** in September and October! I say "rumour" as by early September, nobody has seen fit to tell the public that the construction of the guideway, through the erstwhile Coalfields Goods Yard and under Hills Road Bridge, requires rerouting of cables (no signalling?) and moving overhead line equipment. We can only hope that Network Rail is loading the full costs of this onto the busway project, a project that we were told would be cheaper than a rail reopening. Why have those promoting this disastrous scheme had to lie to get what they want?( PW)

### **Fenland Capital ...?**

Those of you who live in the west of the region will have followed the populist flurry inspired by the local evening newspaper over road space congestion charging for Cambridge city. One official suggested to an 'irate' employer that to escape the charge he might like to relocate to Wisbech. Now there's a thought... how about the congestion charge proceeds being used to link the ailing Fenland capital to the overheated County capital with a railway? We might then get a true silicon fen. PW

### **Thameslink to and through the Capital .... ?**

**What great news that the government has sanctioned the release of funding for the Thameslink project... and it's a lot of money, yours and mine, £5 billion. We look forward to a state of the art railway, that we could only dream of until now, emerging from the paper work and for all those noughts. Thank you, government, even though we have to wait seven more years to have our bit completed as 'stage 2'.. PW**

### **Around the capital.....?**

Oh dear...but we always want more. Some people, including the Branch, had hoped the HLOS would mention the East West Rail Link. It didn't so we continue to hold the bowl out. You could vent your frustration by signing the online petition at the Prime Minister's website at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/East-West-rail/> and get your friends to do so too. I feel a lot better. PW

### **Ever heavier lorries.... ?**

The road haulage lobby, of the more unenlightened sort, has been trying to persuade governments across Europe to 'trial' even bigger lorries .. longer, can you believe, and heavier: up to a 60 tonnes maximum. It's the stuff of nightmares and needless to say would take away much of the advantage the European rail freight industry has gradually built up up so successfully over the last few years. You can do your lobbying bit too by signing another petition whilst you're doing the previous one at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Ban60tonlorries/> (PW)

### **EWS JOINS RAILION**

News in July that EWS was to become part of Railion(Germany's state owned railfreight company) was one of the biggest rail stories this year. Running freight trains through the Channel Tunnel has always seemed common sense, but the market has had little success because of excessive 'Tunnel transit fees. Happily these are likely to fall appreciably quite soon. Firms like Potters at Ely, already receiving a small amount of freight daily via the tunnel, stand to benefit greatly from Railion's determination to grow substantially this market

And the portents are good: Railion carried 89.5 *billion tonne kms* of freight in 2006, a 9.5% increase; EWS carried a mere 100 million tonnes (source; Int. Rail Journal). That's the difference between a trans-Europe operation and a parochial one. Railion boss, Helmut Medhorn, wants Railion in the private sector as soon as possible, fighting for every tonne of long-distance business. EWS, already operating a subsidiary French rail freight company, will help fulfill this aspiration. And if successful the effect upon the many fast growing open-access railfreight operators across Europe will be immensely encouraging. The only impediment remaining is French railways laissez-faire attitude to customer service. But even here the light of change is definitely beginning to glow: the French along with Railion and EWS are working on mutually beneficial strategy. What with this and Freightliner hauling freight in Poland, we are in exciting times, 60 tonne lorries notwithstanding!

### **Branch Meeting Report from Ipswich**

The major part of our June Branch meeting in Ipswich was taken up with discussing our response to Network Rail's draft Greater Anglia Route Utilisation Strategy. In our comments the Branch:

- Supported proposals to run additional services on Great Eastern Main Line
- Supported an hourly service between Ipswich and Lowestoft and to Peterborough.
- Supported extra track capacity on the West Anglia Route
- Support for new high capacity trains between London and Norwich
- Supported extra capacity and gauge enhancements for freight trains

**In addition to the proposals put forward by Network Rail, we urged consideration of a four track section on the Great Eastern Route between Chelmsford and Colchester, faster junction speeds to improve journey times and improve connections, increased double track section on the Kings Lynn Line and more spare trains to cope with special events.**

**If you let us have your views on any of the foregoing matters the Branch will take them up with the new operators and, where necessary, with the Government via Railfuture's specialist committees. (ND)**

### **NEXT BRANCH MEETING IS IN NORWICH on 29 September**

We've been most fortunate to garner the services of Andre Goodrum as Guest Speaker. Andrew is the Manager of 'one' Mainline Service and he'll be updating us on the prospects for the Norwich via Ipswich to London route. This all starts at 14.15hrs in the Meeting Room of Chapel Fields Methodist Chapel, which is a new venue for us. Just get a No.25 bus outside Thorpe Station and alight at St Stephen's Street bus stop. Walk forwards a short distance to the underpass entrance and once in it take the right hand direction into Chapel Field Road. The Chapel, currently sporting scaffolding is just in front of you with access via a short detour to Wessex Street. So as Andrew is forfeiting part of his weekend to join us, it would be wonderful if **you** could be there and help create a sizeable audience.

Later in the meeting, there will be opportunity for updates on the many recent Government announcements most of which greatly affect East Anglia. **By the way, this will be the last Branch Meeting for 2007 as the usual Cambridge gathering is giving way to the Rail User Groups Conference in Ely.**

## **RAILFUTURE NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON**

Do you fancy representing Railfuture nationally, whether in print or in person? Although our current Spokesperson, Peter Lawrence, who feels it is time for a younger person to take over, candidly admits to not remembering when he began this job, he certainly knows what it requires. For a start, an answerphone (preferably a mobile) and a working email address! Accessibility is crucial. Concise, accurate, bright writing style would be a great plus, as it has to retain the gaze of jaded media folk. And you certainly do not have to be a male!

Either way, write to our Chairman, Mike Crowhurst, who is *not* on email, at 33 Station Court, Aberford Road, Garforth, Leeds LS25 2QQ. Or, far quicker, give him a call on 0113 286 4844. RAILFUTURE needs your expertise. Peter, by the way, fully intends to continue as our East Anglian Branch Spokesperson. Allelulia!!

***And here's where to write with all that news and comment, adverse or otherwise: Editor, Chris Burton, 79 Tenison Road, Cambridge, CB1 2DG | [cfb79ten@googlemail.com](mailto:cfb79ten@googlemail.com) 01223 352327. or Nick Dibben, see details below. We'd both love to hear from you, especially you eastern East Anglians! Deadline for next issue 12 November 2007***