

raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

Issue 174 • June 2017

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CAMBRIDGE NORTH STATION — OPEN AT LAST



After a 30-year campaign

Inside this celebration edition of RAIL EAST...

Cambridge North...

- The biggest investment in Cambridge's railway for many decades
- What it means for passengers now and in the future
- Cross Country lacking in ambition
- The further investment needed in the East Anglian railway

New trains for East Anglia

- An in-depth review of Greater Anglia's new fleet from 2019 — Railfuture wants the best possible passenger experience
- Better service needed on branch lines

Capacity pinch-points

- Ely North Junction
- Trowse swing-bridge in Norwich

The front cover photo was taken on Monday 22 May 2017, the first ever daily commute at **Cambridge North**, and shows passengers squeezing onto the 17:15 to Norwich, which left with many standing. Yes, Cambridge North is no longer a pious dream but a working reality, and with plenty of staff too. Certainly more services need to stop, and they will, after planned major timetable and infrastructure changes enable this. Refreshment facilities are currently absent — a major shortcoming — but a Costa Coffee will open in July and negotiations for the large retail outlet are reaching resolution, so it *will* happen, sooon!

Railfuture East Anglia committee Member, **Alan Mayes**, now delves in some detail about the new services for Cambridge North.

The new station is operated by Greater Anglia (GA). Four GA trains an hour will call (Cambridge to Norwich and all stops Cambridge North to Liverpool Street) and four Great Northern (GN) trains (Ely-Cambridge North-Cambridge-King's Cross and all stops Cambridge North to King's Cross), with some additional peak-time trains.

The GA Cambridge to Norwich and all stops Cambridge North to Liverpool Street services will also call at Cambridge North on Sundays, but, unfortunately, GN trains **will not**. Therefore Sunday passengers from King's Cross will have to change at Cambridge (for the moment).

The stopping trains enable people who work in the Science and Business Park areas of north Cambridge to commute to work by train from local stations south of Cambridge. This GN timetable will change in 2018, when Thameslink services arrive, and even more radically for GA in 2019.

All travellers without a direct service to Cambridge North will have to change trains at either Cambridge or Ely. Ten days before opening, GA held an enquiry desk on the Science Park, and fielded over 150 "highly enthusiastic" enquiries, largely from road-based commuters. Many will be further pleased in 2019 when Norwich to Cambridge services are extended to Stansted Airport from Cambridge North.

The hourly Cross Country train from Birmingham New Street and Peterborough to Cambridge and Stansted Airport, however, will not initially call at Cambridge North (see Paul Hollinghurst's piece).

Until Ely North junction is upgraded to enable half-hourly trans to King's Lynn (with non-stop King's Cross to Cambridge then calling at all stations to King's Lynn), the Monday to Saturday train timetable will be one train an hour King's Cross to Ely and one train an hour King's Cross to King's Lynn.

The plan is that by 2019 both will be eight-car trains, which will call at Cambridge North to provide the service between Cambridge North and the Fen Line stations. However, to deliver this the platforms at Waterbeach and Littleport need to be extended so an eight-car train can stop at those stations without the rear carriages blocking the adjacent road level crossing. (*As we go to press Network Rail tells us*



Passengers from the 18:26 ex-Liverpool Street clamber off Platform 2 on 22 May.



Platforms 3 (bay, left) ,2 (down, right) and 1 (up, far right) at Cambridge North with one of the shelters

that this is going ahead but they have no completion date as yet.) This will enable eight-car trains to stop at all stations to King's Lynn as selective door opening may be used at both of Watlington's platforms and Littleport's up platform, while all the other stations have platforms long enough for eight-car trains.

Initially the Ely-King's Cross train will run with eight cars but the King's Lynn to King's Cross train will run with four cars between King's Lynn and Cambridge and join and separate carriages at Cambridge. The train from King's Lynn will have to call at Waterbeach as the eight-car train from Ely cannot and timetabling constraints prevent the train from King's Lynn calling at both Waterbeach and Cambridge North so Ely will initially be the only Fen Line station with a regular direct service to Cambridge North.

There will be some early morning peak-time trains from all Fen Line stations to Cambridge North, including the two early Greater Anglia trains from King's Lynn to Liverpool Street, but otherwise until the platforms are extended at Waterbeach and Littleport passengers from the Fen Line stations apart from Ely will have to change at Ely or Cambridge to travel to and from Cambridge North. (Alan Mayes)

Cross Country (XC) not joining the Cambridge North Party

With Cambridge North open, Paul Hollinghurst reports that Cross Country are the only operator with trains passing through the station not choosing to stop there, thus all Peterborough to March stations will be denied a direct service.

Railfuture has a number of aspirations for the Cross Country service from Birmingham to Stansted to make it much more relevant for journeys in East Anglia. This corridor is seen as important by the new elected Mayor of Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, James Palmer, expressing this in his acceptance speech "Improving the infrastructure in Cambridge, linking the great city of Peterborough to Cambridge and bringing Fenland to the fold are all absolutely vital if we are to be a success."

Our objectives include:

- Services stopping at Cambridge North
- Evening departures later than 21:01 (currently a couple of hours earlier than the King's Lynn, Norwich and Ipswich lines)
- A Sunday morning service

The table below shows the dramatic contrast between Cross Country's service and others departing from the north end of Cambridge station. We approached Cross Country to find out why we were hearing nothing about future improvements to

	Serves Cambridge North	Last weekday departure from Cambridge	First direct Sunday arrival in Cambridge	First direct Sunday departure from Cambridge
Peterborough - March	No plans	21:01	14:08	11:00
King's Lynn	From 2018	00:10	08:15	09:06
Norwich	Yes	22:55	08:45	08:50
Ipswich	n/a	22:44	08:57	09:12

how this service serves East Anglia.

It seems that Cross Country believes there isn't a business case for serving Cambridge North, and even if there was they are concerned about overcrowding. This seems a strange juxtaposition of concerns; to fear overcrowding would indicate a business case as at this stage of the franchise it is unlikely extra rolling stock would be added, so more passengers would mean more revenue at no extra cost.



A (possibly overcrowded) Cross-Country service passing Cambridge North station at speed, without stopping

The overcrowding will happen anyway as passengers take their service to Ely or Cambridge and change onto other operators' services, but ironically Cross Country will lose some of the revenue they would have received through serving Cambridge North directly.

We will continue to push for this, with both the current operator (Arriva) and also with the Department for Transport for inclusion in the next franchise due to start in October 2019.

For the evening service it was claimed, by the operator, that the Cambridge to Peterborough line is closed overnight, thus rendering vital servicing of train sets at Cambridge impossible. This is true, but only for one week in six, so a replacement bus would be required in those weeks. However, all major routes operate with similar constraints. Again, we will be pressing for change.

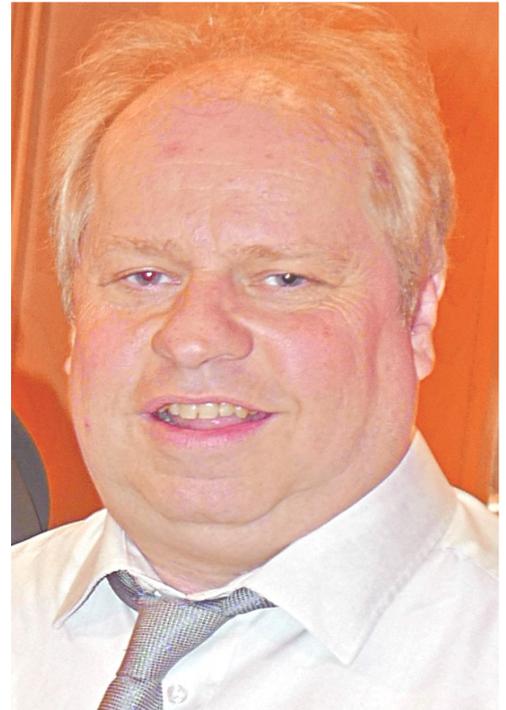
(Paul Hollinghurst)

Railfuture East Anglia has a New Chairman

Those of you who attended the Bury St Edmunds AGM in February 2017 will know that our most diligent Chairman for many years has stepped down. In his place we most warmly welcome Nick Dibben, a familiar figure, who writes: "It is a great honour to become chairman of the East Anglia Branch at this important time for our regional railway network. Before explaining some of the tasks ahead, I must thank my predecessor, Peter Wakefield, for the immense work he has done in this role promoting both railway development and the status of Railfuture."

"Over the next few years, our local railway network is going to see major changes, with new rolling stock and services on many routes. The completion of the Thameslink and Crossrail projects will make it easier to cross London, we can also expect progress on East-West Rail and, hopefully, the re-opening of the line to Wisbech. Although it is easy to get excited about these big projects, it is essential that Railfuture doesn't ignore the little things that can make a train journey easier; can I get a ticket, will I get wet waiting for my train and can I find my way around the station?"

"Railfuture East Anglia has conducted several station audits on these issues and makes recommendations to train operators and local authorities on simple improvements. We hope to do more this year. Therefore, the Branch would welcome any suggestions you might have for just such simple improvements that could be made at your local station, and hopefully elsewhere." (Nick Dibben)



New Rolling Stock for East Anglia

The management of Greater Anglia is justly proud of its great achievement of obtaining a completely new fleet of trains for the region. It is now well into the task of working with the chosen train builders to make sure the specification of the train interiors and train performance matches that required for the service to be provided. To that end, some of the management team is meeting groups such as Railfuture East Anglia presenting progress to date and listening to our views. **Peter Wakefield** attended one such presentation on Friday 28 April 2017 and writes this report of that meeting. As you will see, it also touched upon various other areas of concern. Note also that all our commentary is based on photographs, diagrams and explanation from the presentation. We are promised a look at a mock-up of train interiors in due course...but artist impressions etc should always be approached with at least a little caution. And GA seek your opinion on these new trains as can be seen at:

<https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/form/transforming-your-railway-with-new-trains>

The Intercity, Stansted Express and regional bi-mode trains are being built by Swiss firm Stadler and go by the acronym FLIRT, which Wikipedia explains thus: "Fast Light Innovative Regional Train (German: Flinker Leichter Innovativer Regional Triebzug)."

They are composed of 12 cars (articulated in pairs) for the Intercity/Stansted electric units and 3 or 4 cars for the regional services. This latter group of trains is



Artist's impression of Stadler Intercity train for Norwich to London

very innovative as they will be electrically powered under the wires and when not, have diesel engines in a separate small walk-through car inserted with the passenger cars....so no under-coach diesels vibrating away as now. Every train on the network will thus have increased capacity...no more single cars...and will be faster and much quieter. Only the Intercity trains will have first class and catering facilities. (I very much hope

that the electric mode will be used even where only short sections of overhead wire exist, for the relevant route out of Norwich, Ipswich and Cambridge. Rail must use every opportunity to cut out its diesel emissions.)

The seating in all the Stadler trains looks well designed and comfortable with good legroom. It is good to note that the seat chosen, by Fisa, came out top in a Northern TOC passenger competition for comfort (Northern didn't use them!). Both the Intercity and bi-mode trains have a slope up from the entry door vestibule into the large airy-looking saloons, all fitted out with 2+2 seating.



Intercity and Regional Standard Class proposed interiors

By any other name...toilets

At the meeting concern was expressed about the number of toilets in the 12-car trains...only five. By comparison, the current Intercity fleet operating has one toilet per car. It was felt by several attendees that a reduction to only five toilets for longer trains carrying more passengers is too few and there could be real difficulties for users on crowded trains. We were told that the Controlled Emission Toilet (CET) tanks will be emptied daily to make sure they do not become full in traffic and are thus locked out of use. But we all know that on occasion that will be the case and the number of toilets is just too few for that eventuality.

...and on Bi-mode

We are concerned about the availability of toilets on the bi-mode units too. Especially those that will work the long journey time between Lowestoft and London

and on the Peterborough, Bury St. Edmunds to London services. Though probably off-peak for their runs south of Colchester to London, these trains have relatively limited seating capacity and will often be crowded. (This latter journey possibility was flagged up as an aside at the meeting by Mike Kean, the Deputy MD of GA; this the first time we had met him.)

CET Emptying



Artist's impression of 2+3 seated interiors of Aventra/Class 720 units

CET tank-emptying pads will be provided at Crown Point, Brantham (Manningtree), Ilford, Clacton and presumably Orient Way and Cambridge. All this fleet and the Bombardier fleet (see below) will be provided with CET, ending many years of the unsavoury practice of flushing onto the tracks, which Network Rail insists must be ended urgently.

Aventra...class 720...too many seats?

A second fleet of trains is being built for the more-intensive services in towards London from Cambridge, Ipswich and Clacton. This will be built in five-car and 10-car variations...by Bombardier at Derby, called Aventra by the maker but more prosaically class 720 by the railway. Each coach will be 23 metres long so 10 cars equate to just about 12 20-metre cars. All seating will be 2+3, no first class. Again we have some disquiet about toilet provision, to lesser degree about the density of seating and the seat type. Many people prefer to stand rather than be jammed in the centre seat of three. And standing is awkward in the narrow aisles 2+3 seating produces. Obviously it's difficult to discern the comfort of seats from a photograph but they surely will be more comfortable than those currently provided in a class 317 unit with 2+3 seating. However, the seat type chosen is the ubiquitous Fainsadesign, which gets few plaudits for comfort. Many experts feel that the seat chosen for the Renatus 321 project, the Quantum seat, is superior in comfort. It will be a shame if these new trains are going to be with us for the next 40 years using a less comfortable product and in the same way the 317 units, referred to above, provide countless journeys we are glad are over. Moreover, I wonder if the density of seating is just too much...a compromise could be to have a couple of the five coaches less dense with 2+2 seating for a pleasant ambience to the train off-peak and more room for standees in the peak.

Aventra First class abolished...but maybe not quite?

Other operators have phased out first class (either throughout their fleet or on most of their services) as carrying the maximum number of passengers has been the priority because of sustained growth in passenger numbers. It is the intention of GA to do likewise on the Aventra fleet (in fact, on all of its services except for the Stadler trains on the London-Norwich route).

However, Railfuture believes it is likely that users from Audley End and other locations on the West Anglia line will be dismayed at going from the quality first class offer on their Class 379 trains to a rather uninspiring 2+3 standard seat on a new Bombardier Aventura unit.

One or two train operators who ostensibly have democratised their trains, do offer something a little plusher for those willing to pay extra. There was a suggestion at the meeting that GA may well contemplate mitigating the shock of the new order in a similar way.

Rapid Acceleration

We were told that the Bombardier class 720 trains have very impressive acceleration, which is good as we understand the third Norwich to London service will be a 720 unit that will have to match the equally rapid Intercity performance. It seems that much of the timing improvements promised will come from this attribute rather than (initial) infrastructure improvements. A completely new timetable will be put in place in 2019, consultation for which must have taken place by mid-2019.

Boarding and alighting

All the new fleets will be introduced within the next two years and where Selective Door Opening (SDO) is not possible/appropriate, there will have to be a lot of platform lengthening (GA are funding extensions at 20 stations). In the discussion about this, Mike Kean emphasised that platform 4 at Cambridge will be lengthened to 12 cars (although no date was given). Railfuture argues that lengthening platforms at stations such as Waterbeach is equally urgent in the queue as otherwise the five-car 720 trains will be another type of train unable to stop there! However, these are Great Northern stations with only a few GA trains calling each day so that project will be managed separately, by the DfT, with its priority being to run eight-car trains at King's Lynn. Design work has been approved for there and Littleport. The industry does like to leave things to the last minute!

All Mod Cons

Every new train will have high-quality Wi-Fi. A lot of money is being spent to ensure this, including more lineside masts. These will also be available for the phone network users who live around them. Device charging points (both three-pin and USB) will be available at all seats. Tables of varying sizes are provided to enable those who wish to work, or consume refreshments, to do so conveniently.

Concluding opinion...

In spite of the caveats mentioned above, these new air-conditioned fleets overall will be a massive improvement on the existing fleets. They will cope with demand for the medium future, bring us new standards in reliability, enhanced speed/acceleration, innovation and generally, comfort...though the seating and layout of the Aventura unit is not ideal. But, exciting times! (Peter Wakefield)

For a change of topic let us move to Essex and the Tendring area in particular, an area in deep need of prosperity; thereby in need of better, faster rail connections, especially with London.

Martin Cooper reports on the next page...

Developing the local service

The Clacton and Walton branch remains one of the most lightly used, double-track section of electrified line. The area is going to see a large expansion of housing developments at each of the main villages along the route. It is critical that the railway offers the new families moving into the area a real choice in travel to work and shopping if the road congestion and associated air pollution in Clacton and Colchester are not to be made significantly worse.

Railfuture asked for the introduction of a half-hourly metro service on the branch as part of the recent franchising competition. The issue remains to be addressed and will become more critical towards the end of the franchise.

This is likely to show up the infrastructure problems as well, such as a single island platform at Thorpe le Soken junction and a single platform at Colchester Town. One of the potential issues of the new franchise new train / timetable service changes is that new bi-mode trains that are intended to run from Sudbury to Colchester/ Colchester Town are likely to cause Colchester/Colchester Town service/platform movement conflicts. This route has much more to offer in the twenty-first century. (Martin Cooper)

Steam engine Tornado 150 to celebrate the opening of Walton on Naze station and completion of Tendring Hundred Railway

The highlight will be the arrival of the Tornado steam locomotive (recently garnering much publicity by reaching 100mph on a test run) on a special from Liverpool Street at Walton-on-Naze.

The train will spend the rest of the day shuttling between Colchester Town and Walton.



For details see:

<https://www.a1steam.com/2017/05/11/walton-naze-150th-railway-celebration/>

Paying the price for Ely delay

The call for additional capacity at Ely has been a regular feature in 'Rail East' but we make no apologies for returning to this topic as the full implications of summer 2016's 'pause' are now taking their toll on the Anglia Franchise.

Franchise bids submitted in December 2015 were all subject to certification by Network Rail that the timetable proposals were workable, but by the time winning bidder had been awarded the franchise the 'Hendy Review' had delayed both the Soham to Ely doubling and additional capacity at Ely North Junction beyond 2019.

The winning bid contained a commitment to increase the Ipswich to Peterborough to hourly (currently alternate hour) but Network Rail have now declared this to be unworkable owing to a lack of capacity at Ely. Greater Anglia, who have ordered

the rolling stock for this service, will now be out of pocket unless a solution can be found. Their MD, Jamie Burles, has written to local authorities and stakeholders (including Railfuture) asking for support in lobbying the treasury, the Department of Transport, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and Network Rail to make this junction, and the one at Haughley on the Great Eastern mainline, an urgent priority.

Capacity at Ely North Junction, doubling of Soham to Ely and the provision of a rail station at Soham will all need to be delivered in a single 'possession'.

The mounting pressure at Ely has stirred the region's two 'Local Enterprise Partnerships' into unprecedented action. Both are contributing £4m towards developing the business case for a package of works at Ely – believed to be the first time the 'New Anglia LEP' has used its budget to support a rail scheme! The East Anglian economy depends on connectivity between the major settlements of Ipswich, Norwich and Cambridge as well as freight traffic to the nation's largest container port at Felixstowe.

Containers heading for Felixstowe cross the fragile single track just south of Ely at Stuntney, en route from Yorkshire, in March 2017.



Immediate demands on this junction will be three freight trains per hour, two passenger services to King's Lynn and hourly services from Ipswich to Peterborough, Norwich to Stansted Airport, Cambridge to Wisbech, Norwich to Liverpool, Stansted Airport to Birmingham and a second Norwich to Cambridge service, which should eventually continue to Oxford/Bristol when East-West services begin.

Freight Study

Meanwhile, Network Rail have published their National Freight Study backing even more works at Ely. Railfuture and local authorities in the region submitted responses to the draft study, which highlights the Felixstowe-to-Birmingham route as its highest priority. Among measures listed are:

- Further works at Ely (either an 'avoiding line' or grade separation at Dock and North junctions)
- Line speed and signalling headway improvements through Bury St. Edmunds
- Either four-tracking between Haughley and Ipswich or grade separation at Haughley
- Further doubling of the Felixstowe branch (beyond that already planned for 2019)
- Electrification of the route, beginning with the Felixstowe branch.

These are all projects that Railfuture have been campaigning for and will continue to make the case for rail investment that will unlock the potential of our region.

But the going looks like getting rather tough for rail user groups such as ours, if the messages coming from government and nationalised Network Rail alike have any significance. Money is going to be a lot tighter, and proceeds of recent asset sales by Network Rail have gone directly to the Treasury to help pay off its £42bn debt, rather than towards new schemes. So our campaigning will probably have to ratchet up in the months and years to come. Editor's comment.

Trowse Swing Bridge, Norwich, is another of the region's operating 'pinch points'

Trains on the two main routes into Norwich, whether from London, Cambridge or Peterborough, all have to pass over the single-line Trowse Swing Bridge on the approach to Norwich Station. Railfuture East Anglia committee member Ian Couzens writes "It is certainly a bottleneck, and it is hard to think of rail access into any other UK major city being restricted in quite this way."

This situation dates back to only 1986 when the old two-track swing bridge was replaced during the electrification works, and substituted by a single-line bridge as an economy measure. At the time, with only an hourly service on both the London and Ely lines this may have seemed reasonable enough. Yet, in little more than a decade the London service was increased to half hourly, and then in 2002 the new Norwich-to-Cambridge service was also added. Now there are plans to add a third train per hour to London within the new Abellio franchise. The bridge is already acting near to capacity and delays there are sometimes evident.

Network Rail accept the bridge should be replaced and estimate that up to £75 million would be needed to do the job. They would like this work to be carried out in financial Control Period 6, which runs from 2019 to 2024.

It might be questioned as to why the swing bridge shouldn't be replaced with a fixed bridge, given that no commercial shipping has used the Port of Norwich since the 1970s. However, a fixed bridge would mean that larger craft would no longer be able to reach central Norwich, at Foundry Bridge opposite Norwich Station.

Construction of two new swing footbridges in recent years between Trowse and the city centre suggests the city doesn't want this loss of access to happen. Although in practice, busy rail schedules mean that the opening times of the



A London-to-Norwich service heads onto the single track approaching Trowse Swing Bridge, which is rarely opened and could, potentially, be replaced by a double-track fixed bridge to remote this bottleneck.

bridge, advertised by the Broads Authority, rarely occur, and are at night.

The delivery of 'Norwich in 90' needs a range of infrastructure improvements on the Great Eastern main line and a new double-track bridge at Trowse is an important piece in the jigsaw. It is also needed to permit additional trains on the Cambridge route, and not least, hopefully, East West trains through to Oxford. Ian Couzens writes "A cost saving measure from the 1980s cannot be allowed to restrict Norwich's demand for increased access by rail, which would in turn have a negative impact on the city's economic growth. So the government should back Network Rail with the commitment and resources to deliver this project over the next control period." (Ian Couzens)

Why Not Adopt? Trevor Garrod Takes on Buckenham Station

Can't afford your own station, why not adopt?

Railfuture member Trevor Garrod explains his involvement as a station adopter. "One of the tasks of a station adopter is to help keep the station attractive and user-friendly, especially when it is unstaffed. Another is to do a regular audit of the facilities. I recently accepted the invitation to become station adopter at Buckenham (see photos above from Trevor Garrod and Norfolk Wildlife Trust), in addition to helping the adopter at Lowestoft station."

"Buckenham station, in the Yare valley on the Norwich-Yarmouth/Lowestoft line, was de-staffed in the late 1960s. It serves a parish of some 50 inhabitants and once also served scattered communities on the south side of the river via a foot ferry, which closed, probably, in the 1950s. The roads are narrow, there are no buses and currently the station is only served at weekends.



I made my first visit on a grey January Sunday, to check the facilities. This involved catching a train from Lowestoft, returning on one to Yarmouth but completing the journey by bus.

Today's use of Buckenham station can really only be for leisure purposes. It serves two RSPB nature reserves - Buckenham Marshes next to the station and Strumpshaw Fen 20 minutes' walk away. In 90 minutes I saw over 20 people, mostly equipped with tripods and binoculars, walking on to the marches, where there is a wildlife watchpoint and hide. They had nearly all parked in the RSPB car park, next to the station, on a site once occupied by a goods siding. A signpost by the station gives walking times, including along the riverbank to the sizeable village of Cantley; while it is also a 10-minute walk to Buckenham's redundant mediaeval church, which is of considerable historic and architectural interest. The steam museum at Strumpshaw is also within walking or cycling distance.

According to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), some 134 passengers used Buckenham station in 2016, making it the second least used in East Anglia. I saw one passenger alight and head for the marches with his binoculars.

With two help points and three information posters the station is well provided for; these include timetable and engineering work details, three maps and the phone number of a local taxi operator. One improvement that I have suggested to the train operator is a sign (like the one at Brampton on the East Suffolk Line) informing people that trains only stop at Buckenham on request. Another is provision of a litter bin.

One of the wooden platform gates is starting to rot. Both platforms have seating but only one has a proper shelter. The station is neat and functional and the 1840s station house is occupied. Buckenham was never one of our busier stations, but it now serves a leisure purpose that could be exploited more.

To take a simple example, the Churches Conservation Trust guide for Norfolk includes Buckenham church but does not mention that you can get there by train. The website www.visitchurches.org.uk, however, does mention the station.

The Community Rail Partnership's Bittern & Wherry Lines Guide is very handy for this and other parts of East Norfolk, with plenty of phone numbers and websites to help you plan your visit. (Trevor Garrod)

A light rail system for Cambridge?

Our guest speaker at the Railfuture East Anglia AGM in February 2017 was Dr Colin Harris, Director of Environmental Research & Assessment, who has been developing the concept for a light-rail system for Cambridge. Dr Harris felt that the proposed growth in Cambridge, potentially doubling the population, would result in great pressure on the local environment and quality of life. He was concerned about the impact of proposals for hundreds more buses per hour in the centre of Cambridge. He considered that a light-rail system was part of the solution that would provide a step change in public transport and one that could adapt to meet the future needs of the city. The city of Lausanne was a city of similar size that had a light-rail (LR) system including a section in a tunnel. Like here in Cambridge, the bike is the only effective competition. He showed several LR route propositions on a map. Apparently 30% of the population lives within six minutes of the city centre, with 75% of journeys not of a commuting nature.

Phase 1 of the proposed system, known as the Isaac Newton Line, would connect new development in north-west Cambridge at Girton via an underground section in the city centre to the railway station and out to Trumpington and Granta Park in the south. The cost of the 22km route would be around £900m. Further extensions would connect other parts of the city and the system has the potential to extend out to Haverhill and Cambourne.



Visit the Cambridge Connect website (see next page) to view a larger version of this network map.

Dr Harris has looked at funding options and likely running costs, but felt that the Cambridge City Deal needed to fund a proper study. Railfuture supports the light-rail concept and continues to work with Dr Harris. Political parties are broadly in agreement with these proposals and central government 'sympathetic'. All in all it was a very stimulating presentation.

More information is at: <http://www.cambridge-connect.uk/>. (Nick Dibben)

Do you follow Railfuture East Anglia's Twitter account?

If not, then you are missing a lot of news, information and photos.

For example, we have tweeted more information about Cambridge North station over the past 18 months than anyone else and that includes the railway companies!

As a result of this, and much more, we have more followers than any of Railfuture's other 13 branches. And don't forget @WisbechRail as well.

Go to twitter.com and enter @RailfutureEA in the text box.

A list of all Railfuture Twitter accounts can be found at www.railfuture.org.uk/branches/?twitter

Time to express appreciative thanks to all contributors to this edition. Text and illustrations (please!) for Edition 175 to me, please, by Tuesday 29 August 2017. Meanwhile, enjoy the summer, whatever it may bring. Chris Burton, editor.

Unless otherwise stated, photographs were taken by the Editor.
Formatting (and page 15 photos) by Jerry Alderson.

Join Railfuture in **IPSWICH** at St Mary at Stoke Church Hall, Stoke Street, IP2 8BX on **Saturday 24 June 2017 from 14:00**.

Our guest speaker will be Allison Cosgrove, chair of Railfuture Scotland, who will explain how Scotland succeeded in reopening the Borders Railway — the longest reopened line in British railway history — surely lessons to be learned for the East West Rail scheme relinking Cambridge and Oxford.

On **30 September 2017**, also from 14:00, Chris Starkie of the New East Anglia LEP will be our guest speaker in **NORWICH**.

Railfuture's 2017 National **Summer Conference** will be at the Carriageworks Theatre, The Electric Press, 3 Millennium Square, LEEDS LS2 3AD
on **Saturday 17 June 2017**, 10.45-17.00.

This will be followed by the autumn conference in Leicester on Saturday 4 November 2017.

More info (and book online) at www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

Final thoughts about Cambridge North station...

Railfuture is delighted that Jamie Burles, the Greater Anglia Managing Director, was able to speak to members (along with Govia Thameslink Railway's Phil Hutchinson) at our national AGM in Peterborough on Saturday 20 May — the day before the £50m Cambridge North station opened. He was kept busy for 14 hours on the Monday, being interviewed there by the media (television, radio and newspapers) who, he told us, saw it as a bigger news story than when Abellio won their nine-year franchise in October.



Jamie Burles (left) talks to a radio reporter



Many parts of Cambridge can be reached from the new station without a car.

The public, and that includes Railfuture members, are very excited by the chance to access the railway without navigating the tortuously-slow traffic on Cambridge's roads, thanks partly to new pedestrian and cycle routes.

We issued a press release welcoming the station and will be supporting Greater Anglia by conducting a station audit, like those we carried out at Whittlesford Parkway and Newmarket for example, later in the year to find out what could be improved. Top of our list for scrutiny will be the ticket-buying facilities. GA has shown the initiative by allowing retail staff to go to help

customers to use the modern ticket vending machines (pictured right) rather than being confined to a ticket office, which is something to be welcomed, but we have made GA management aware that passengers must be able to buy a wide-range of tickets, which is currently not possible. GA are aware of various issues with the TVMs, and brought in Great Northern staff with portable machines to help out. Of course, not everything is the responsibility of the railway and Mr Burles criticised the lack of proper road signs for the station, remarking that its opening was hardly a secret.



The so-called 'airline-style waiting rooms' have power sockets (both 13A and USB, photo right) at work benches (though no stools are provided with them) so that passengers can be productive. However, no sofas, unlike GA stations such as Ely.



A considerable part of the cost of the station arises from the need to fit around the Chesterton freight sidings. Two freight loops next to the station building cut off the platforms so that passengers are required to use the footbridge (thankfully well protected from the elements — unlike the platforms) and the stairs or lifts to board and alight all trains. Railfuture hopes that the lifts are more reliable than the new ones installed at Manningtree in 2016 (pictured in Rail East 172), and we have asked management to have plans in place to assist passengers, such as wheelchair users, if a failure does occur. As all trains are dispatched by GA's platform staff there will not be a shortage of people to help.

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MEETING DATES AND VENUES

SATURDAY 24 JUNE 2017

St Mary at Stoke Church
Hall, Stoke Street
IPSWICH IP2 8BX

SATURDAY 30 SEPT 2017

Friends Meeting House
Upper Goat Lane
NORWICH NR2 1EW

SATURDAY 2 DEC 2017

Tamburlaine Hotel
27-29 Station Road
CAMBRIDGE CB1 2FB

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