

# RAIL EAST



The Newsletter of the East Anglian Branch of the Railway Development Society

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## 100th Edition and still going strong

When Tony, our current Rail East editor, said can you write a forward to the 100th edition, it made me stop and think awhile. What was the railway scene way back in 1972? Could I even find a copy of the first edition? Yes I have!

In the Railway Invigoration Society East Anglian Newsletter No. 1 February 1972, the headline reads "At the meeting in Norwich on Saturday February 12th, it was decided to enlarge the old East Suffolk and East Norfolk branch of the Society, into an East Anglian branch. The new branch will cover all members in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. This is the first of what we envisage as a quarterly newsletter".

The new branch was formed against the background of recent closures of the Kings Lynn - Hunstanton, Dereham - Wymondham Lowestoft - Yarmouth and Cambridge - St Ives lines. There had also been threats to withdraw services on the Sudbury - Marks Tey, Norwich - Ely, and Norwich - Sheringham routes.

Included was a report on the Norwich meeting. Mr J W Barfield, national vice-

chairman of the RIS, spoke on the situation of East Anglia's railways, practically all of which were grant aided only for 2 year periods.

The meeting discussed individual railway developments:

**Freight** on the Felixstowe line was prospering.

**Needham Market** station had been re-opened (6.12.71).

Was there scope for other closed stations on still operating passenger lines to be re-opened?

Many **rural bus services** were being curtailed.

**Hunstanton**, with no more trains, was now choked with cars at busy periods. Mr J A Dennis suggested re-laying a length of track in from Heacham.

There was a need for **vigilance** with regard to the future of East Anglia's link with the Midlands via Peterborough. More through trains were also desirable here, as the present number of changes inconvenienced and discouraged passengers.

The Light Railway Transport League's scheme for a **rapid transit system** in Norwich was worth consideration. (PRL comments that this was the 1967 plan,

a very sensible scheme but dismissed by Norfolk County Council as were all rail ideas. At that time Norfolk County Council had no interest in public transport and only wished to build roads.)

Mr F I S (Ian) Carter was elected as provisional Chairman and Mr T J Garrod as Secretary of the branch.

The branch put out a press statement which received wide local coverage: "Principal aims of the branch are to secure the retention of all grant-aided lines in the area, by pressing for government grants for not less than five years at a time, and to encourage full financial participation by Local Authorities ... to enable British Rail to plan ahead for a realistic and attractive rail service, and to encourage greater utilisation of such lines for freight traffic."

**Times have changed!** In this issue, our 100th, there is news of new trains, better and more frequent services and a new station expected to be opened. We look to the East-West link being completed.

*Peter Lawrence*  
Branch Chairman

## Central Trains

With the summer timetable, Central Trains introduced 5 new hourly train services, one of them "Rail Direct Link" from Stansted Airport. Branch Chairman Peter Lawrence represented RDS at a special preview train for councillors, journalists, the travel trade and user groups on 15th May. The pristine class 158 carried a special headboard. The airport station is part of the main terminal buildings with escalators, lifts and ramps leading up to the award winning concourse with its natural light, range of shops, eighty check-in desks and choice of catering. Twenty scheduled airlines fly to fifty destinations, one third of the passengers arrive by public transport and the British Airports Authority sees the new hourly

services to Cambridge, Ely, March, Peterborough and Birmingham, together with the new WAGN stopping trains from the Lea Valley and Harlow, as vital to its expansion. The new service will be promoted largely through the airport and travel trade and offers include "four for the price of one", designed to make the train fare no more than the cost of parking a car.

RDS members wish Central Trains every success with these new services, which include later evening trains each way between Cambridge and Peterborough as well as more summer Saturday trains to Cambridge and Norfolk towns. The Airport services will be worked by the first thirteen Class 170 Turbostars.

## Timetable improvements

The summer 1998 timetable starting on 24th May sees additional services on many routes. WAGN now run three trains per hour to the Stansted airport from London.

On Sundays, there are new early morning WAGN trains between Peterborough and London. The Anglia through train to Sheringham now also runs on Sundays, and there is an extra morning service between Ipswich and Peterborough. Great Eastern have increased services on Sundays, there are three trains per hour from London to Colchester of which two continue to Ipswich.

The Branch has issued a press release welcoming these additional services.

## EVENTS

**Saturday 11th July: Branch meeting in Ipswich** at the Novotel, Greyfriars Road starting at 2pm. The guest speaker will be Peter Meades from Anglia Railways.

**Saturday 19th September: Branch meeting** at the Assembly Rooms Norwich, 2pm.

**Saturday 26th September: National Rail Users Conference** in London. Details in the next Railwatch.

**Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th November: Ipswich model railway exhibition**

### Volunteers wanted...

to man a joint RDS/ESTA stall at the East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville:-

27th & 28th June: Bygones & Fire Engines;

11th & 12th July: Buses; 1st & 2nd August: Classic Vehicles

12th & 13th August: Trolleybuses

Please ring Nick Dibben on 01480 495101

## Help!

The Branch is conducting a survey of tourist information leaflets in the region to see how much rail travel information is included. A similar survey carried out a few years ago found that public transport information was very poor. Shirley Dex has agreed to co-ordinate the survey, and members are asked to send examples of leaflets to her at 71 Queensway, Trumpington Road, Cambridge CB2 2AY by the end of September.

## New trains 1

Anglia Railways have placed an order for eight three-car DMUs for use on the London-Norwich route and through services to the coast. The trains will enter service in June 1999, a year earlier than the franchise commitment. The order announced at the end of March ended much speculation as to what rolling stock would be built. The original intention was for electric units, however the diesel units, being able to operate over the branch lines as well, will prove more flexible in use. The units are being leased through Porterbrook Leasing under a no train-no pay deal. Anglia have the option to order another 12

units at a later date.

The new 100mph air-conditioned trains are similar to those already ordered for the Midland Main Line, however the interiors will be very different with a buffet counter and a senior conductor's office in the centre of the train.

The additional units will enable Anglia to operate an half hourly service between London and Norwich and beyond.

Anglia's first refurbished "Inter City" train was presented to the press and interested parties at Norwich in June. The launch was followed by a run to Ipswich and London and return.

## New trains 2

A few days after the Anglia announcement, Central Trains confirmed their order for thirteen two-car diesel units. As mentioned in Rail East 99, these trains are due to operate the Liverpool to Stansted Airport route when they enter service in 1999. These trains will be class 170 Turbostars and will bring significant improvements for passengers on Central Trains longer distance routes. As part of the deal, Central Trains will release some of its older sprinter units to Silverlink (also part of National Express Group) for use on the Bedford to Bletchley and North London Line routes.

## Railtrack's plans

Railtrack have issued their annual Network Management Statement which details their investment plans for the next ten years. Railtrack are waiting for the Government's Transport White Paper, so the document is very much "the story so far" and other schemes are likely to be added. The document contains a number of network maps and tables which set out the current state of the railway system on matters such as line speeds, freight loading gauge and disabled access to stations.

The report identifies po-

tential bottlenecks in the system. There are 3 in our region: The East Coast Main Line, the West Anglia Route to Broxbourne and the Great Eastern Main line to Gidea Park.

Included in Railtrack's proposals are resignalling the East Coast Main Line,

West Anglia, Peterborough to Norwich lines, and Clacton, Felixstowe and Sheringham Branches; loading gauge enhancements to the West Anglia route and Felixstowe - Peterborough - West Coast main line; ongoing programme of station refurbishment.

### Bus connections

The following telephone numbers may be useful:

Lincolnshire Bus Information 01522 553135  
Cambridgeshire Bus Information 01223 717740  
Suffolk Bus Information 0645 583358  
Norfolk Bus Information (freecall) 0500 626116

## WAGN trains

West Anglia Great Northern Railway have refurbished the first of 24 Class 317 units for use on the West Anglia route between Cambridge and Liverpool St. The new look trains have new 2+2 seating to match the newer Class 365 units, however all the seating is at tables with no airline style seating. All the first class seats are at one end and are very spacious.

## Anglia railways

Anglia Railways have completed the refurbishment of their Sprinter units including the provision of additional cycle space. To mark the occasion, Anglia ran a special train throughout the region showing the improved units to the press.

Andy Cooper has left Anglia Railways to join Great Western Trains. Tim Clarke takes over as Managing Director of Anglia. Tim is 41 and lives in Felixstowe.

## Freight news

The first grain traffic for 10 years is a weekly train from Eccles Road near Thetford to Elgin in Scotland. Other traffic includes short term flows of pipes to Peterborough and sugar beet pellets from Ely. Some of the pipe trains continued down the preserved Nene Valley Railway to Wansford. The Mid-Norfolk Line at Wymondham, is likely to receive trains of military vehicles to various army training camps.

Railtrack has announced that it might reopen the March to Spalding line which closed in 1982. Because of lack of capacity, Railtrack is looking for alternative routes to the East Coast Main line. A trip to the line showed that the track bed is still generally intact but many of the station yards are used by local industry. The Prison at March and a new house at Spalding are on the route. The announcement should discourage local authorities from allowing further building on the line.

## St Ives line

The new Branch Sub-Committee on the reopening campaign has been very busy trying to find out why so little has happened since the then Transport Minister, Roger Freeman, saying publicly "that the reopening made sense". Meetings have been held with Cambridgeshire county councillors, the Government Office of the Eastern Region and Railtrack. To help the campaign, the Branch, with the help of industry experts, has produced its own costings for the reopening. Four options, ranging from a simple single track line to one with sections of double track have been evaluated, with engineering costs of between £8.5m and £11.7m. These figures have been discussed with Railtrack and include their comments about the type of signalling equipment.

It appears that many people are not aware of the ability to provide cross-city services which the reopening and electrification of the line would bring. Therefore the Branch is producing a new leaflet, part funded from the proceeds of the RDS National Draw, to emphasise the point.

On a positive note, it looks likely that the new station to serve Addenbrooke's Hospital will get the go ahead later this year.

### BRANCH OFFICERS

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