

# RAIL EAST



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

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## Railtrack makes awards...

The inaugural Railtrack Station of the Year awards have been announced recently. This contest, open to all Railtrack network's 2,500 stations, focused on facilities and services for passengers.

The Railway Development Society wishes to congratulate the staff at the following stations in East Anglia for their achievements.

**Colchester station** has won a special prize for excellence in adversity. This station won the national award after staff managed to cut vandalism.

**Lowestoft station** has been named the best in East Anglia. It was said to be clean and comfortable with friendly staff.

The Eastern Daily Press had the headline "Tiny station with a big welcome". **Worstead station** near North Walsham on the Bittern Line beat off competition from hundreds of other small stations to be named the most passenger friendly, unstaffed station in Britain. Worstead station is noted for its very colourful flowers and has a Waiting Room which is clean and painted.

## Meeting with Railtrack

In September, representatives from the East Anglian, London and Home Counties and Ray King of RDS met representatives of Railtrack. During a very constructive and useful meeting, several topics were raised. The rough riding of trains at certain locations on the Liverpool Street - Norwich line are due to underlying drainage problems which has resulted in "wet spot" being formed. The rectification of most of

these will be tackled by putting in better drainage.

The problems with the overhead line have been caused, in part, by faults on pantographs but effective ways of checking the alignments of the contact wire and pantographs are being researched.

Work to eliminate all jointed track is planned. "Black spot" junctions (e.g. Manningtree) are being identified and the cause of failures analysed. It is

## Cambridge meeting

The next Branch meeting will be on Saturday, 28th November at the Little St Mary Church Hall, Trumpington Street, Cambridge starting at 2pm. Nick Dibben (who has recently returned from Canada) will give a talk "The right kind of snow". The meeting will also discuss possible changes to the way the RDS is run. RDS needs to ensure that its resources are being used in the most effective way, in particular the allocation of funds between paid staff, branches and specialist committees.

intended to increase the line speed to shorten London to Norwich journey times.

At a cost of £40m - £50m it will be possible to raise the speeds and permitted weights on the Gospel Oak to Barking line, thus reducing the need for freight trains to cross all the tacks at Stratford; there is no case for electrification.

Railtrack stated that the new Lower Thames crossing at Woolwich might be guided bus and rail.

## Sunday blues

The Branch has written to both Railtrack and WAGN about Sunday services on the London to Peterborough route. For the start of 1999 early morning services will be replaced by buses, extending journeys by one hour. The Branch is asking why such disruption is required as Railtrack had closed the line on Sunday mornings for many years. A full Sunday service was only re-introduced this year. We have suggested to WAGN that they run an additional fast service to London on a Sunday morning, this will give an earlier arrival in London and will avoid the overcrowding that will occur on the first train of the day. When we raised the matter at the RUCC meeting, our concerns appeared on the ITV regional news.

## Please note..

The RDS National Executive passed a resolution in September reminding members that they had no right to trespass on private property in connection with any work for the Society.

## Mid Suffolk Travellers Meeting

Peter Lawrence, our Branch Chairman, was guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting of the Mid Suffolk Travellers Association (MISTA). In his talk he welcomed the new Class 170 Diesel Units to be introduced by Anglia Railways mainly on the Norwich to London route from the Summer 1999 timetable. He did not forecast any major improvements to services through Bury St Edmunds.

He said that it was shocking that there was still no through passenger train from Peterborough to reach Ipswich earlier than 11.57 each Monday to Saturday; There should be an hourly service on this route throughout the day.

Once again pressure is growing to expand the A14 but the option of improving rail services is ignored. Peter urged MISTA to press Suffolk Rail and Cambridgeshire Rail Policy Groups in cooperation with Anglia Railways to seek ways of enhancing rail services along the parallel rail routes.

## Freight news

Trial loads of coal for the sugar factory at Cantly have been delivered to Ipswich and Norwich for final delivery by road. This traffic follows on from the sugar stone mentioned in the last Rail East.

The Doncaster to Harwich Enterprise train (for wagon load traffic) has been diverted to run via London enabling 9 foot containers to be carried. The move stresses the importance of upgrading the Ipswich to Peterborough route to take the higher loads. New low floor wagons and pocket wagons are expected to be delivered soon which will allow 9'6" containers to be carried.

The oil sidings at Barnwell near Cambridge are being upgraded to cope with increased deliveries.

There is the prospect of moving clinker by rail to the Ketton cement works. Castle cement often have to move clinker ( a key ingredient of cement) from other sites to Ketton. This amounts to 70,000 tonnes a year and some of this could transfer to rail.

On October 2nd, the first full freight train was loaded at Aberdeen for onward delivery to Lowestoft. Fifty five containers were moved on behalf of Recovery Systems. It is hoped this initial train load will form a regular rail freight movement between these points.

### EVENTS

**Saturday 28th November: Branch Meeting in Cambridge**  
**20th February 1999 Branch Annual General Meeting, Bury St Edmunds**

## East Anglia and the world

Our region has two international airports and an international seaport for passengers, linking it directly to destinations in Europe and beyond. How good are the rail links to these? Could they be improved?

Before too long, we should have direct connections at Stratford International and Kings Cross into Eurostar giving another access to Europe. But this is unlikely to put Stansted Airport, Norwich Airport and Harwich International Port out of business. In any case, it is important to see how rail can increase its share of the traffic to and from them in the immediate future.

### Stansted Airport

There are good rail services to the Airport from both the Cambridge and London. Anglia Railways have introduced a coach link from Colchester station. How well used is the coach link? It is well advertised by Anglia Railways, ignored by Great Eastern and not all travel agents seem to be aware of it. Clearly more could be done, at little or no cost, to make it better known. The two minibuses that operate the service are comfortable and pick up conveniently from Norwich trains on the up side at Colchester. For down trains, a trek up and down stairs is necessary. At Stansted

Airport, transfer is very easy. Passengers from the bus walk over a bridge into the terminal above the airport's railway station. There is also the potential to market the service as part of a through train and bus link between, for example, Colchester and Cambridge or Ipswich and Bishops Stortford or Harlow.

For example, it is possible to buy a through ticket from, Lowestoft to Stansted Airport, using the bus link but this is not valid for a train journey between the two stations via Norwich and Ely which costs more. Flights can be delayed, and flexible routing would attract more customers. From Norwich it would be even more attractive for Stansted passengers to have flexibility.

In the long term, RDS would like to see a rail link from Braintree to Stansted Airport, and a new curve at Witham.

### Norwich Airport

This smaller airport is unlikely to have a direct rail link unless it grows far more than envisaged. But it is convenient for Norfolk and parts of Suffolk. How convenient are its bus links with Norwich railway station? Will these be improved once the Riverside project is completed?

**Harwich International**  
This port has been a good

example of integrated transport ever since the Great Eastern Railway created it, as Parkeston Quay, more than 100 years ago. The boat trains to and from Liverpool Street are good; but for most parts of East Anglia at least one change of train is necessary. Anglia Railways have introduced through trains from Cambridge to connect with both sailings to the Hook of Holland (but only in the morning to Cambridge for arriving passengers). The crossing time has been almost halved, and so a day time journey from East Anglia to most parts of the Netherlands is now feasible.

On the boat you can buy a train ticket to any Dutch station. However you have to buy British rail tickets at Harwich. The boat timetable makes it possible for Dutch people to take a day trip to our region and some of my fellow passengers were using the HSS for that purpose. Why not offer a travel package from any Dutch station to any station in East Anglia?

### Survey

The East Anglian Branch would like to produce a report on these international links and how they can be improved and exploited in the short and medium term. It will be particularly useful to have members' views. Please see the enclosed questionnaire.

## Norwich meeting

The speaker at our Norwich meeting in September was Jonathan Padmore who is the Travelwise coordinator for Norfolk County Council. Travelwise is a national campaign by local authorities to encourage people to consider the environmental impact of their travel decisions. The problems include congestion, pollution, noise, health (lack of exercise) and safety. Making people aware of these problems and promoting the alternatives, including rail travel, are the basis of the various leaflets and newsletters produced by the local authorities.

In response to questions, Mr Padmore encouraged the RDS to keep up its campaigning, saying that there were people, including some councillors, who were not convinced about the benefits of public transport. He also accepted that some council planning decisions were counter to the aims of Travelwise.

## Central Trains & User Groups

The autumn "In Touch" brochure for Central Trains customers emphasises the fact that "your views matter.....did you know that there are a number of Rail User Groups with whom we have regular and constructive dialogue? We rely on these Groups to raise local concerns and to help us promote our services - not only to their members but also to local people. One such group is Peterborough Norwich Rail Users whose secretary John Saunders says, "we have good relations with Central Trains and can act as ears, eyes and voice to ensure they are aware of local needs".

"Rail User Groups can give you a say in the way your local services operate, so why not use them to help us to develop future plans?" Interested passengers are invited to contact Customer Relations."

Elsewhere, "In Touch" points out that train cleaning must improve as "what you, and ourselves, regarded as clean just a few

years ago is now no longer acceptable". More hoses to replenish toilet tanks during station stops, modification of Class 158 toilets to reduce sabotage and employment of mobile cleaners as trains pass through the Birmingham and Nottingham areas, are promised. Central Trains now employs dedicated train cleaners at Norwich and Stansted Airport through the day, complimenting the work carried out overnight at the new Cambridge Coldhams Lane depot.

## "The long green train..."

It's long, green and narrow, makes a funny noise and shuttles from time to time between Norwich and either Lowestoft or Yarmouth.

It's the Hastings Diesel Electric Multiple Unit - a preserved 4-coach train (sometimes 5 coaches!) which Anglia Railways have hired until next May. It has provided extra capacity on these routes and will also be available for some charter work. The East Suffolk Travellers' Association, for example, is considering chartering it for a Christmas special. Watch local news media for details.

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