

Ipswich to London Service improvements

From the introduction of the summer timetable, there will be 4 trains an hour between Ipswich and London. The Rail Regulator has approved one extra Great Eastern service. Currently there are two Anglia Railways' departures each hour (one calling at Colchester and the other also stops at Chelmsford). The current Great Eastern departure calls at Manningtree, Colchester and Chelmsford and London. From the summer one GE departure will retain this stopping pattern whilst the other will call additionally

at Witham, Shenfield and Stratford.

At present there is an Anglia departure using a hired in WAGN 317; this service will be operated by the new 170 Turbostar and will be extended to Norwich which will have, for the first time, a regular train service every half an hour to London.

There is good news on the timing as this will be close to a train every 15 minutes from Liverpool Street and Ipswich. The Harwich - Manningtree service will no longer be extended to Ipswich.

The RDS welcomes this development which has made possible a range of journeys which have previously required several changes. In particular the opportunity to change at Shenfield for the Southend line and the Great Eastern Metro service for stations to East London is very good news for those who have had to wait at Chelmsford. Stratford will become an increasingly important interchange; when the Jubilee line opens, access destinations, including some south of the Thames, will be greatly enhanced.

Central trains new rolling stock

All Turbostars come as a standard body shell, non-opening windows and four wide doorways per coach - two on each side.

Large cabs and doorways give a seating capacity in the 2-car Central Trains units of 124 and in the 3-car units 204. Liverpool - Birmingham - Stansted Air-port will be the first route to receive the new trains. The new livery features colour-contrasting external doors. All operating buttons are

tactile and there will be Braille instructions.

Seats all seemed very comfortable in the mock-up with "priority seats" which are accessible without bending the knee before sitting and one or two fitted sideways for those of exceptional height or width. The central sections will have luggage stacks. In one vehicle, this section will feature seats at tables for groups and families. Elsewhere there is airline seating.

In each unit there are wheelchair spaces, and a large, fully-accessible toilet with baby changing facilities; anyone in a wheelchair can use toilet and telephone without leaving the area. There is a small toilet in the other end vehicle. Each unit has a cycle rack.

Each air-conditioning module has two power sources, while the fans can work from the battery in a summer emergency.

John Saunders

Station access survey

The national RDS Station Access Survey will be launched in East Anglia at our Branch Meeting in February. The survey is intended to discover whether the perceived needs of the passenger are being met on the stations across the entire network.

It is hoped to have surveys done on a large number of stations in East Anglia and members will be invited to help achieve a full spread from the major stations through to the smaller stations that are the backbone of the branch line network.

The survey endeavours to find out how clearly stations are signposted and the ease (or lack of it) to transfer to and from the local bus services. The availability of certain facilities on stations is also looked at. The basic idea is to assess how user friendly a station is.

Anglia's new trains

Anglia Railways are due to receive the first of their eight 3 car type 170 Turbo-star diesel units at the end of January. After trials and driver training, it is hoped that some of the new trains will enter service in March on the London to Ipswich route replacing the class 317 units hired in from WAGN. All the new units are expected to be in operation by the start of the summer timetable. Apart from the extension of the current Anglia Railways Liverpool Street - Ipswich service to Norwich, the new units will be used for some trains on to Bury St Edmunds, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

The Anglia version of the Turbostar has accommodation for a refreshment point and accommodation for the conductor in the middle coach. There will be accommodation for wheelchair passengers.

New policies

The Branch has been involved in many events relating to the Government's new transport policies. In September we attended a seminar on the A14, and are currently working with other groups to provide a coordinated input into the A14 corridor study.

We were invited to a day workshop on Local Transport Plans (LTP). These are 5 year plans produced by local authorities and must comply with the Government's objectives for the environment, safety and improved accessibility. One of the concerns of local authorities is that many of the guidance documents needed to produce LTP, have not yet been produced and there is little sign of the legislation needed to enable local authorities to charge for non-residential parking. It appears that the Government's Integrated Transport Policy is not that integrated! On a positive note, a key part of the plans is that local public transport users must be consulted.

The Branch has responded to the draft Regional Planning Guidance document issued by the Government Office for the Eastern Region (GOER). We have urged GOER and local authorities to continue to support the East-West rail link, the St Ives line and the upgrading of the Ipswich to Peterborough route.

EVENTS FOR YOU DIARY

Saturday 20th February 1999 - East Anglian Branch AGM. Please see details on opposite page.

Saturday 1st May - RDS National Annual General Meeting

Saturday 19th June - East Anglian Branch meeting in Ipswich - speaker to be announced.

Saturday 26th June - RDS Reopenings conference in Walsall - details in Railwatch.

Saturday 18th Sept - East Anglian Branch meeting in Norwich.

Saturday 27th November - East Anglian Branch meeting in Cambridge.

1999 Branch A G M

The 1999 Annual General Meeting of the East Anglian Branch of the Railway Development Society will take place on Saturday 20 February at Bury St Edmunds Library starting at 2pm.

The meeting will finish around 4.30pm. The Library is located on Sergeants Walk between St Andrews Street and St Johns Street and is a short walk from the station. The Library has a buffet which sells teas and light snacks.

Nominations for Officers and the Committee, duly proposed and seconded, must be sent to the secretary by 13th February. Notices of motion should be signed by the proposer and seconder and submitted to the Secretary by 13th February.

Agenda

1. Chairman's welcome.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Guest speaker: Mark Papworth, Railtrack.
4. Questions.

Branch Annual General Meeting

5. Minutes and matters arising from 1998 AGM
6. Chairman's report
7. Secretary's report
8. Treasurer's report
9. Election of Branch Officers and Committee
 - a) Chairman
 - b) Vice Chairman
 - c) Secretary
 - d) Treasurer
 - e) Sales Officer
 - f) Membership Secretary
 - g) Press Officer
 - h) Minutes Secretary
 - i) Other committee members
10. Appointment of Honorary Auditor
11. Motions
12. Branch President's closing remarks

Discounts

Users of Anglia's Ipswich to Felixstowe Line are to get refunds after services fell below standards.

Anglia Railways has not met its target of 90% of trains running within five minutes of schedule. The rate on the line is 82.4% at present so season-ticket holders will be given discounts.

However it is not known if it is all the fault of Anglia Railways, or whether it is caused by insufficient track capacity, signalling EWS freight trains, rolling stock problems or some combination of these factors.

Norwich station

On Wednesday, 9th December 1998. Railtrack invited 55 guests to Norwich Station to celebrate the restoration of the station frontage and also to remember those who died at the station during the Luftwaffe raid in World War II.

A ten foot zinc spire, specially imported from France, was placed onto the fish scale dome to signify Railtrack's final completion of the works to the roof, part of a £2 million restoration project.

A plaque was also unveiled inside the station to remember all those who died at Norwich Station during the bombing of 1940 and 1941.

Sponsored cycle ride

Clara Zilahi is organising a sponsored cycle ride between Huntingdon and Cambridge to help promote the reopening of the St Ives railway line. The ride will take place on Saturday 5th

June and anyone interested in taking part or willing to sponsor those that do, should contact Clara at 31 Wimbotsham Road, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 9PE.

Sales success

The Branch sales team had a very successful weekend at the Ipswich model railway exhibition in November. Despite a power cut to the hall on Saturday afternoon, over £100 of RDS books and magazines were sold. Many thanks to Chris, Ben, Tony and Nick for their hard work. We have been invited to the 1999 show this November.

Terminal

Norfolk County Council is installing a Public Access Terminal for the public to access the NCC Bus Timetable Database at Norwich Station. It is hoped installation will be by late February 1999.

RDS East Anglia Branch has suggested to the County Council that the Real Time Passenger Information System, being installed on Nos. 19/20 bus routes, is displayed on a screen at Norwich Station. The 19/20 bus routes pass near Norwich Station. The County Council have agreed to look at the suggestion.

Money or not?

For the second year running, the Government has failed to provide funding for a new station at Addenbrooke's Hospital south of Cambridge. The County Council had submitted an application for funding as part of their TPP (transport policies and programme) bid. The Branch is trying to find out the reason for refusal, but it has been suggested that the scheme was not considered fully integrated with other proposals for the Cambridge area.

The Government has however given the go-ahead for a number of road schemes in the area such as the A11 at Attleborough (£27m) and the A120 Stansted-Braintree (£92m).

Freight news

The first freight train for many years departed from Great Yarmouth at the end of November. Twelve wagons loaded with bagged fertiliser were transported to Swindon.

Survey of international links

To those members who returned the survey forms enclosed with the last issue of Rail East, many thanks.

Trevor Garrod has analysed the forms and completed a report which will be published about the same time as you receive this Rail East. If you wish to receive a copy, please send a SAE A4 envelope to Trevor at 15 Clapham Road, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ.

The comments and responses on the form highlighted areas which need to be improved and identified some areas where there was good practice.

The report will be available to the Branch at the Bury St Edmunds meeting but will already have been circulated to interested parties and the media.

Whilst there are ways to improve the access to information at Norwich Airport and Harwich International Port, it is felt that the rapid expansion that is taking place at Stansted merits special attention. RDS is planning to organise a conference in June for a number of organisations with the aim of increasing the use of public transport by both workers and passengers. Further details of this conference will be made available to members when the details have been settled.

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