

# RAIL EAST



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

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## Freightliner goes for growth

A steadily growing business, was the theme of a very positive and upbeat talk given by Dennis Keegan, Freightliner's Commercial Manager at Felixstowe at our Ipswich meeting in June. The Freightliner concept, transporting containers on dedicated trains, dates from the 1960s. At one time there were terminals in most parts of the country. There were losses of £70m each year.

This has all changed following the successful management buy out. New and refurbished locomotives and many more wagons had been ordered and record numbers of containers are being carried. Today, 95% of traffic is deep sea containers carried from ports such as Felixstowe to various inland terminals. Freightliner acts as a contractor to other transport companies and therefore does not usually deal with customers directly. Improvements in reliability and reduced costs are the reasons more containers are being sent by rail. Although rail has clear environmental benefits to society, these do not appear on company balance sheets so are not considered by customers.

Rail traffic from Felixstowe has grown by 50% in the last 5 years with around 280,000 containers carried each year. There are currently 14 trains each way from the port every day and this is expected to increase by 16-17% by the end of the year.

The recent upgrading of the Felixstowe line by Railtrack had helped smooth the running of trains, but a single track branch is not ideal. Increased track capacity and loading gauge enhancements are essential for future growth. Currently most trains run via the North London Line before heading up the West Coast Main Line. The former is close to capacity and long term freight capacity on the latter is also unclear. The alternative cross-country route via Peterborough to Nuneaton has limited clearance through several tunnels. There is increasing use of 9'6" high containers which cannot easily be carried on existing wagons and routes.

In the future, Freightliner is interested in Piggyback traffic (lorries on wagons), but this requires Railtrack enlarge the loading gauge on many key routes. Recently Freightliner has developed a car carrying container which has the potential to carry small numbers of imported cars to remote locations. Domestic traffic is seen as having limited potential as very few companies have rail sidings, and the need for two road-to-rail transfers makes rail uncompetitive against road.

The first of Freightliner's new locomotives have now arrived.

## A14 Multi modal study

The Government's multi modal study into the Cambridge - Huntingdon section of the A14 is due to start later this year once consultants have been appointed. The Government Office for the Eastern Region has asked the regional environmental group STEER (RDS is a member) to nominate a person to be on the steering committee. John Radcliff has been chosen. The Branch has attended a number of meetings with other local environmental groups to establish common ground for our input into the study.

The Branch has produced a follow up document to the "FastTrack" leaflet we issued last year to highlight the need to re-open the Cambridge - St Ives - Huntingdon line as a more sustainable alternative to adding lanes to the A14. The 20 page report emphasises the regional transport benefits created by the rail link, something that cannot be achieved by a guided busway. We also note that existing routes such as Ipswich to Peterborough can play a part in reducing traffic on the A14.

Funding for the report has come from proceeds to last year's RDS National Draw.

It is expected that there will be other multi-modal studies.

## The Snippets Column

"Snippets Correspondent" wishes to know when the **Wymondham to Fornsett** line was closed. It is believed passenger services were withdrawn at the outbreak of the 1939-45 war and freight services may have continued until after the war. Does anyone know the level of passenger service provided before passenger services were withdrawn? How many daily journeys and was it just a shuttle service between Wymondham to Fornsett? This rail route is of course protected by Norfolk County Council for possible future rail use.

**Anglia Railways** are included in the 1999 list of Charter Mark Winners. This is the third time Anglia have received this award. The award is given for excellence in public service.

**Are you connected to email?** The East Anglia Branch have introduced a new service for those connected to email in order to improve communicat-

ions within the Branch. As interesting news of issues in East Anglia comes in, snippets will be passed on from time to time via email but we also need you to submit news to us as well of important happenings in your area. Exchanging information quickly is important and also if you are seeking information, enquiries can also be passed on to fellow members. Perhaps you may think the 05.35 train ex Norwich to Great Yarmouth should stop at Berney Arms or you may consider the East Anglia Branch Committee should be campaigning for a new station in the Long Stratton area. Let's hear from you! Make your email system work for you!

If you wish to receive **RDS EAB Rail News Snippets** email [peter.lawrence@paston.co.uk](mailto:peter.lawrence@paston.co.uk) quote your membership number and renewal date and you will be added to the circulation list. This service is in addition to Rail East which will continue to be mailed out.

## Car costs

Does anyone keep a record of how much a mile it costs to run a family car? Would a figure of 28 pence a mile be reasonable? Has anyone totted up the annual cost of petrol, insurance, tyres, repairs, MOT, road tax? Perhaps even the cost of a regular car wash and pumping up the tyres etc. Based on 28 pence per mile (p.p.m) we get some interesting comparisons.

### **Norwich to London and return 230 miles**

Car journey at 28 p.p.m would cost £64.40 plus parking charges. By rail, using an open return ticket the price would be £60.00 (26 p.p.m) or a London Day Out ticket £18.00 (7.8p.p.m) including Travel by public transport in central London.

### **Norwich to Nottingham single journey 134 miles**

One way journey by car £37.52 (28 p.p.m)

Central trains single rail ticket £27.00 (23 p.p.m)

### **Norwich to Ipswich and return 92.5 miles.**

Cost of car journey £25.9 (28 p.p.m)

Anglia Plus One day Ticket £8.00 (8.6 p.p.m)

Should we be singing the praises of cheap offers of rail travel? How do we get the message across?

Can anyone supply mileage car costs allowances given by local authorities, universities or large companies in East Anglia? The information would be very useful for the Branch campaigning. Please contact Peter Lawrence, Branch Chairman.

### EVENTS FOR YOU DIARY

**Saturday 18th September - East Anglian Branch meeting:** Assembly House, Theatre Street, Norwich at 2pm. Guest speaker Mike Young, Freight officer for Norfolk County Council.

**Wednesday 22nd September - Conference: "Stansted a hub for public transport"**. Details from Tony Albert.

**Saturday 22nd September - "Delivering better rail services"** RDS Rail Users Conference. Bookings from Trevor Garod, 15 Clapham Road, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ (£8 + £7 for buffet lunch)

**Saturday 7th November - Fen Line Users Association Annual General Meeting.**

**Saturday 27th November - East Anglian Branch meeting in Cambridge.** Guest speaker from WAGN.

## Rails to Haverhill?

The Cambridge to Sudbury Rail Renewal Association has issued a feasibility study report on the possible re-opening of the rail link between the two centres. The group had raised over £3000 to commission consultants to carry out the work. The report concludes that there are no major engineering obstacles to be overcome although some local diversions from the original route would be required as part of the track bed has been built on.

The report indicated that the total scheme would cost around £49m and could be built in stages, with the Cambridge to Haverhill section being first. Haverhill is set for continued housing development and is one of the largest towns in the region without rail access.

For details of the Cambridge to Sudbury Rail Renewal Association please write to Reverend Malcolm Hill, 11 Meadow View Road, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 7NU enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope.

## Passengers increase

Figures issued by the Franchise Director show that the number of passengers on our railways grew by 5.4% in the year to March 1999.

Details for the train operators in the region are as follows :

Anglia Railways	6.8m	+13.5%
Central Trains	34.5m	+6.5%
Great Eastern	54.4m	+5.4%
GNER	13.9m	+1.5%
WAGN	55.7m	+5.5%

The limited growth in GNER passengers reflects the fact that many of their trains are full. GNER are still waiting to hear if their franchise is to be extended, some two years after it was first proposed, and is considering using the idle "Regional Eurostar" sets as a way to increase capacity.

In the Rail League of Complaints table, out of 25 places, WAGN came 10th, Anglia Railways 15th, Great Eastern 17th, Central Trains 10th and GNER 23rd. Both Great Eastern and Anglia Railways had a reduction of the number of complaints whereas, nationally, there was an increase.

## Transport plans

Local authorities have submitted their draft Local Transport Plans to the Government. Members are asked to check their local press and libraries for details of the plans and send in their own personal comments.

## RDS cycle ride

16 RDS members took part in the sponsored cycle ride from Cambridge to St Ives to highlight the need to reopen the line. The ride was widely covered in the local press following a photo call which took place at the former Histon Station where the group were met by RDS Chairman Steve Wilkinson and several local councillors. The money raised from the ride will go to the reopening campaign as well other RDS causes and several charities. Well done to all those involved!

## Web site guide

The Bittern Line (Norwich-Sheringham) has become the first National Railway Branch line to have it's own dedicated Web site: <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/transport/public/bittern.htm>

Railtrack's timetable address is as follows:-

<http://www.railtrack.co.uk/travel/timetable/index>

The new timetable is of course available on - Railplanner - but you have to pay for it - web address - <http://www.railplanner.com>

Great Eastern's web site is at <http://www.ger.co.uk>

Anglia Railways is at <http://www.angliarailways.co.uk>

GNER can be found at <http://www.gner.co.uk>

Freight is represented by EWS at <http://www.ews-railway.co.uk>

## RDS raffle

**Don't forget** - your RDS raffle tickets, the deadline is 22 September

## Snippets two

Peter Lawrence would like to thank every one who has tried to locate old photographs of **Felmingham Station (M&GN)** and the Station Master's House. Two very useful photographs have been discovered but of course if any one does come across any old photographs please let him know.

I understand that finalists have now been chosen for the **Best Station of 1999** but is anyone aware of any stations in East Anglia listed for possible awards?

Pressure is growing from the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) to reduce **speed limits** on all "C" and unclassified roads from 60 mph to 40mph. Will this encourage more people to use public transport?

On the other hand, in a recent survey by the insurance company "Peoples Choice" 44% of motorists wanted speed limits to be increased, with 6% wanting it set at over 100 mph.

Proposals to run a through

**train service from Norwich to Cambridge** have taken another step forward by the appointment of John French of Transport Regeneration. Anglia Railways have asked Mr French to look into funding for the scheme. It is likely funding could come from the Rail Passenger Partnership set up by the Government. Central Trains do not appear to be interested in the route and are expected to concentrate on services to the Midlands and the North.

**More Bittern Line News.** Figures for the first quarter of 1999 show a 28.32% increase in passengers over the same period in 1998 and figures for the second period 1999 show a 20.34% increase in passengers.

Do you have any **current "Snippets" of news** to pass on to other EAB members or perhaps you may be seeking information on a rail topic. Are there any rail issues you wish the Branch Committee to deal with? If so Email :-

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## Manningtree problems

Two problems that are not resolved are ticketing problems between Anglia and Great Eastern. Fear of not having the right ticket is a disincentive to using rail, and, although few people have had problems with this, news of this sort spreads like wildfire. Also the lack of staffing in the late evening at Manningtree.

This latter problem in particular affects the last three trains on the Harwich branch, because there is no one to direct passengers changing trains and no one is there to make announcements. Passengers have been left behind waiting on the bay platform (No.1) while the branch train has left from platform 3, having come up from Colchester.

The latest timetable booklet describes Manningtree as fully accessible to disabled passengers, when platform 3 (the platform from London) but the normal access uses steps and subway. The alternative route is to use the barrow ramps at the platform ends; these have no warning lights, and trains are permitted to pass through the station at high speeds. It would be dangerous to use this crossing without the supervision of rail staff. Otherwise, we seem to be lucky, having two of the better operators, and relatively good rail services. *MRUA*

### Rail East

Material for the next edition of should reach, Tony Albert by 11th October 1999.