

# RAIL EAST

The Newsletter of the East Anglian Branch of RailFuture

Number 113

August 2001

Price 40p

## Mind the Gaps - CHUMMS report issued

RailFuture and other environmental groups are crying foul after the issue of the report into the A14 multi-modal study between Cambridge and Huntingdon (CHUMMS). The main concerns are over the lack of consultation, serious omissions and lack of detail in the report. Although the basic outline of the report was covered in a newsletter that was sent to all households in the area at the end of July, there was very little detail especially on proposed busway scheme. The full report was not published until the end of August, just one week before the deadline for comments. Even then there were still major gaps in the information.

For example, the report does not mention improvements to local bus services or the role that regional rail services such as Peterborough - Cambridge - Stansted can play in providing an alternative to the A14. When the study looked at the rail reopening of the St Ives route, rather than linking the line into existing train services south of Cambridge, it proposed a new branch line to Trumpington. This is simply stupid, and therefore the benefits of linking the St Ives line to the wider rail network have been missed.

There have been two significant developments on guided

busways recently. Firstly the new system in Nancy, France that opened briefly in February is still out of operation, as the guidance system does not work properly. Secondly, Edinburgh has just cancelled its busway system. Improvements to the local bus network have achieved many of the benefits of the busway at much reduced cost, and no guided busway operator is willing to compete with the buses. A similar situation could occur in Cambridge. Although the report does not mention journey times, developers backing the busway give a journey time from St Ives to Cambridge of 45 minutes; this is 10 minutes longer than existing buses! There are many other issues that need to be resolved. For example the higher costs of running the busway compared with normal buses, serious doubts about the ability to build a busway along side the railway between Chesterton and Cambridge Station and any restrictions that the Health and Safety Executive may add to, say operations at level crossings. Add this together and there is a massive risk that the busway will not be able to deliver. Strangely, none of these items are included in the report.

The study report will be discussed by Regional Plan-

ning Body (RPB) of the Eastern England Local Government Conference (EELGC) in October. The RPB will then make recommendations to the Government. As happened over the Hastings study the Minister could overrule the RPB.

The Branch has written to the EELGC, asking for the consultation period to be extended and noted that RailFuture, the Rail Passenger Council and rail freight operators have not been invited to take part in the EELGC workshops to review the proposals. In our comments on the report we have urged the Regional Planning Body not to agree to the busway until it has fully reviewed the concerns noted above.

Many thanks to all those who have written to the local press about CHUMMS. Although the official comments deadline is now past, it is still worth writing to Alan Moore, EELGC, Flempton House, Flempton, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 6EG by the end of September. Once the Regional Planning Body has made its views known, letters should be sent to your MP and the Minister Stephen Byers at the Department of Transport.

We expect there will be a number of developments in the autumn.

### **A47 study announced**

The next multi-modal study in the region will cover the route between Peterborough and Norwich which includes the A47 and parallel railway line. The rail route to Kings Lynn will also form part of the study. Consultants are expected to be appointed soon.

Meanwhile it has recently been suggested in a newspaper that if the A47 Acle Straight is dualled, consideration should be given to using the rail track as a base for the second carriageway. It is claimed that this would mean minimal disruption to the ecological environment, the loss of the minimum amount of land, and a rail line which is "unnecessary as there is an alternative rail link from Norwich to Yarmouth,

### **A12 Multi-modal study**

In contrast to the CHUMMS (A14) study, the London to Ipswich multi-modal study (LOIS) will put forward a range of improvements to the rail system when the project goes to public consultation later this year. They will also avoid the confusing mix and match options put forward for the A14. The Branch, along with other environmental groups met the study consultants to talk about rail improvements in July and many of our suggestions will be taken forward to the next stage of the scheme. Possible improvements include:

- \* Extra tracks on sections the main line to Colchester. (The Branch suggested that the land to allow the entire route to be 4 tracks should be defined and protected.)

- \* Railfreight improvements from Harwich and Felixstowe.
- \* Increased cross-London services.
- \* An eastwards link from Stansted.
- \* New stations at key locations.
- \* Improved local services on branches lines.
- \* Improved station facilities, access and bus links.

This is a useful list, which unlike the A14 study addresses both local and longer distance traffic as well as rail freight. We were also pleased to hear the consultants say that they would ignore any negative comments from Railtrack and train operators about particular schemes being too difficult.

### **Seeking solutions**

On the Great Eastern Mainline, Anglia, Great Eastern and Railtrack designated the week of 22nd July as a performance week. Extra managers were on duty looking at causes of delays.

A very swift substitution was made for a failed Anglia train at Liverpool Street.

### **Access for disabled**

Access for wheelchairs, pushchairs and cyclists is now available to/from the east-bound platform at March. A car pick up/drop off point for wheelchair users has also been created at the adjacent BRAZA Club car park.

### **People Mover scheme for King's Lynn?**

More than 100 people attended an open meeting on Thursday 31st May to hear more about a light tramway system which is being put forward, the transport link with a park and ride site earmarked for south of the A47 at Saddlebow under South Lynn's £20 million Nar Ouse Regeneration scheme.

The idea was suggested by Roger Turff and Sheridan Payne, of South Lynn.

Afterwards, Mr Turff said he was delighted with the response and encouraged by comments from Mr Parry that Lynn would be an ideal location. Each tram, which holds from 20 to 30 people, costs £250,000. The tram uses electrically-powered vehicles, which do not need overhead wires or electrified rails.

Mark Miles, from Norfolk County Council's planning and transportation department, said the council was carrying out a survey to determine the suitability of a park-and-ride for Lynn. The results are expected later this summer.

## The Rail Passenger Council for Eastern England

The Rail Passenger Council for Eastern England met on Tuesday 24 July at Queens College Cambridge (in a building which Nick Dibben helped to design!). It was attended by members of the rail industry, councillors, rail pressure groups (including RailFuture) but few members of the public. In the morning session, the following Train Operating Companies gave presentations:

\* **WAGN** - Current time keeping on outer suburban routes is grim (West Anglia route - 76%, Great Northern Route - 85%). There are problems with many speed restrictions. WAGN have 50 drivers short with 25 sick!. 75 new drivers are being trained, the first batch will have completed their training in September. WAGN are also looking at part time drivers, who would work limited hours, to help fill requirements for the peak periods.

Items raised with WAGN include poor visibility of display screens at Cambridge, and the need to promote bus/rail projects.

\* **Central Trains** - Major concern on trespass and vandals. This applies not just to the West Midlands but also to places like Boston where trains were being attacked. All the class 158s are now fitted with TPWS, fitting to class 150 to start in September.

Items raised with Central - Poor timekeeping to Stansted where only 77% trains arrive within 10 minutes, 90% in 40 minutes, 6% over an hour late. CT would like to replace the long distance train fleet with something similar to Virgin's cross-country fleet but all depends on franchise replacement.

\* **c2c** - 44 of 46 new trains now available for service. Failure rate improved from every 300 miles!!! to every 9000 miles. The target is every 60000 miles. Problems with RMT union who have broken their agreements on driver only operation.

Also there was a presentation by **Railtrack**

There are currently 15 gauge corner cracking sites and 40 other temporary speed restrictions in the EA zone. Railtrack and contractors are short staffed. There is a £2.2m budget to clear trackside rubbish, several teams have been set up to do each route. Over 6 tonnes of junk is being removed each day. West Anglia resignalling is on target - Seven Sisters route should be completed by November 2001, Lea Valley route June 2002, up to Bishops Stortford by November 2003.

## East West disappointment

Following the disappointing rejection by the SRA of the East-West line, Nick Dibben contacted Chris Haywood of the consortium which has been developing the proposals. Although Consortium was disappointed with SRA decision, they think the reaction has raised the profile of the route within SRA and Government so it could be better in the long run. The SRA accept that they have not handled the matter well and it should get a big mention in the SRA strategy document out later this year.

It was SRA who wanted the scheme split into phases and minimum phase 1 service of Oxford to Bletchley. They now accept that a Bristol-Bedford plus Aylesbury-Northampton initial service would add little to the cost but add greatly to the revenue. SRA accept the importance of the whole scheme but that RPP funding may not be the best way forward. They also note that Cambridge - Norwich service funding was given on the basis of being part of East - West. SRA/Railtrack will build in provision for East - West in WCML and ECML track and signal upgrades. This will make the scheme much easier to build.

The Consortium are still looking at options for Cambridge-Bedford section whilst the St Ives route has not been ruled out; they will make this point to CHUMMS saying "no" to guided bus. Light rail could perhaps share this route at a later date.

---

## RDS - Rail and Downpour Society

This change of names was suggested following a rather soggy morning with the Branch display stand at the Histon Feast.

The poor weather kept the punters away and few were tempted to consider buying our collection of second-hand books and CDs. Nick says thanks to all who turned up, with special thanks to Chris Milnes and family who brought some plants for the RDS to sell.

The RDS are always looking for similar events to attend. Providing the cost of the stand is not too high, they are a useful way to put our views across and hopefully make some money. For future outside events, does anyone have one of those open-sided canopies that they sell in DIY shops that we might be able to borrow? Suggestions for other events to Nick Dibben.

## Dates for your diary

**Saturday 29th September - Branch meeting in Ipswich** at the Ipswich Public Library (note new venue) starting at 2pm. A speaker has been invited from the SRA. (The public library is 15 minutes walk from the station -some Anglia tickets can be used on a bus to the town centre - or, coming out of the station, go straight ahead over the river and railway, under or round a roundabout following Princes Street; turning right, enter the pedestrianised Tavern Street to the traffic lights; turn left at the Great White Horse Hotel; the Library is on the right hand side about 50 yards further on.

**Saturday 6th October - National Railusers Conference**, London. Details from John Lee (RF Administrative Officer)

**Tuesday 16th October - ESTA meeting** - St Andrews Hall, Felixstowe starting 19.30. Speaker from Anglia Railways.

**Saturday 17th November - Branch meeting in Cambridge** at 14.00

**Saturday 24th November - FLUA AGM** in Ely.

**Saturday 27th April 2002 - National RailFuture AGM** in Cardiff.

### BRANCH OFFICERS

**Chairman: Peter Wakefield**

7 Hollymount St Matthew's Street, CAMBRIDGE  
CB1 1QD

**Secretary: Nick Dibben**

24 Bure Close, ST IVES, Cambs PE17 4FR  
Tel: 01480 495101

**Treasurer: Lewis Buckingham**

25 Drury Road, COLCHESTER CO2 7UY

**Sales: Chris Milne**

25 Thetford Way, South Wootton, KINGS LYNN PE30  
3TG

**Press Officer: Ken Burton**

23 Abbeygate, THETFORD Norfolk

**Editor of Rail East: Tony Albert**

Hunterswood, Ipswich Road, Holbrook, IPSWICH IP9  
2QT

Email: rail.arabati@btinternet.com

Gerry Alderson has been producing "Snippets", an electronic newsletter available to members. The news comes from a variety of sources. The little bits of "gen" that members are able to feed to Gerry are often included in the newsletter some of which is included in Rail East for those who do not have access to the Internet. Email Gerry at [jerry.alderson@convergys.com](mailto:jerry.alderson@convergys.com)

---

*Material for the next edition of Rail East should reach Nick Dibben by 17th October.*