

# RAIL EAST

The Newsletter of the East Anglian Branch of Rail Future

*railfuture*

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## We object! St Ives busway inquiry

A big thank you to all the members have contributed to the fund to help fight the busway. Around £500 has been raised. By the time you read this, the Branch will have submitted its proofs of evidence for the public inquiry. As mentioned in the last Rail East, we are working with other organisations including St Ives Town Council, CPRE, St Ives Civic Society, Hartford Conservation Group and the St Ives Town Centre Management Initiative. We have em-

ployed the services of Alan James, a Transport Consultant to help us put our case together and to represent us at the inquiry. Mr James has considerable experience of such inquiries including the Leigh Guided Bus scheme near Manchester.

At the inquiry we will challenge the figures put forward by the County Council to support the busway and will argue that they have not fully considered the alternatives. Ideas such as the community

railway concept being proposed by CAST.IRON have been ignored as have the benefits of using rail to deliver materials to the new town at Northstowe and simple upgrades of existing bus services. We will also argue that proposed development in the region requires regional transport improvements rather than the purely local guided bus scheme.

The inquiry will open in St Ives on 28th September 2004 before moving to Cambridge.

## Rail reorganisation - Government proposals

The Government has proposed further changes to the organisational structure of the railways in its White Paper, "The Future of Rail", which was published in July. The changes, if implemented, will be the third major shake up of the railways in the last 15 years. The Strategic Rail Authority, created only a few years ago will be abolished and the Government will take the responsibility for rail strategy. This will include the overall size of the rail network, performance levels, fu-

ture investment priorities and the overall budget. Once the Government has established the budget and what it would like the railways to deliver, the Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) will assess if these outputs can be achieved within the budget. If ORR decides there is not enough money, the Government will either have to increase spending (unlikely) or reduce the scope of the railway's output. The ORR will also take over safety from the Health and Safety Executive.

The other main change is the increase in the powers of Network Rail. It will now have more control over the timetable and be responsible for overall performance. This has lead to fears that Network Rail will want to see service cuts, especially late in the evening, to allow it more time to maintain the track. The Rail Passenger's Council (RPC) may also change, the regional RPCs may disappear and all authority given to the central RPC. This has not been final-

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### Proposals (continued from first page)

ised and would be counter to the Government's objective of more devolved control illustrated by its intention to give more rail responsibility to the regional assemblies and passenger transport executives.

Although the Government notes in the White Paper the importance of the railways and the growth in traffic in recent years, its priorities are cost control and performance rather than expanding the network and increasing traffic. The Government has indicated some of the measures to control costs. These include support for the idea of Community Rail Schemes and the end

of the penalty regime. What is not clear, is what money might be available to improve performance by increasing the capacity of the network. Recent developments such as the new platform at Swindon and the work to construct a new chord at Grantham onto the Skegness line show what can be achieved quickly and at minimum cost. The proposed station at Chesterton near Cambridge would produce similar improvements as well as attracting new passengers. However there is no indication in the White Paper as to where the money to progress the scheme might come from.

### RUGs and CRPs

Some of the local **Rail Users Groups**.

Fen Line Users Association

[www.flua.org.uk](http://www.flua.org.uk)

Manningtree Rail Users Association

[www.mrua.org](http://www.mrua.org)

East Norfolk Travellers Association

[www.enta.org.uk/comm2.htm](http://www.enta.org.uk/comm2.htm)

East Suffolk Travellers Association

[www.eastsuffolktravellers.co.uk](http://www.eastsuffolktravellers.co.uk)

East Suffolk Travellers Association (Felixstowe)

Peterborough-Norwich Rail Users'

The local **Community Rail Partnerships** on the Internet are:

Bittern Line (Norwich to the Cromer and

Sheringham)[www.bitternline.com/](http://www.bitternline.com/)

Wherry Lines (Norwich to Great Yarmouth and

Lowestoft)[www.wherrylines.org.uk/](http://www.wherrylines.org.uk/)

...and those without a web site are:

Mayflower Line (Manningtree to Harwich)

Colchester to Clacton and Walton-on-the-Naze

The Gainsborough Line (Marks Tey to Sudbury)

### News in brief

**The rail bridge at Ely** has been struck 124 times in the last 10 years by lorries. Cambridgeshire County Council has recently added new automatic warning signs to high sided vehicles in an attempt to avoid future crashes.

A new coffee kiosk at **Huntingdon station** has obscured the information screens. The Branch has written to WAGN asking the screen be moved and the lighting to be reviewed to ensure the kiosk does not create dark recesses on the platform.

**Freightliner** has reported an 11% increase in intermodal traffic between April and June 2004. The increase is all new traffic to rail. The company now handles around 12,500 containers each week.

**Road accident figures**, according to the latest Government figures, show that the number of people killed on the roads in 2003 was 3508. Compare this with the railways where there were no passenger fatalities in the year April 2003 to March 2004.

In response to a question in Parliament about **transport costs**, Transport Minister Tony McNulty confirmed that since 1974, motoring costs had fallen by 5% but that rail fares had risen by 80% and bus fares by 70%.

RPC reports that passenger complaints have declined by 30% to 4773 in 2003/4 compared with 6616 in the previous year.

## Ipswich meeting - 'one' report

Peter Meades, from the recently created 'one' franchise, was the guest speaker at our Branch Ipswich meeting in June. Peter explained that by merging the existing Anglia, Great Eastern and part of WAGN, the new Greater Anglia franchise represented around 10% of total UK trains with over 100m journeys per year. Around 45% of these journeys were commuter with the remainder being split between leisure and business trips. The new operator serves 170 stations and will have 3,100 staff.

Major timetable changes are planned in December 2004. These include an hourly service on the Cambridge to Ipswich line; the regular through services from London Liverpool Street to both Lowestoft and

Peterborough via Bury St Edmunds which will use Class 170 units providing better quality of rolling stock. Services on the GE main line will be revised, there will be 6 trains per hour between London and Colchester but the number to Ipswich will be reduced from 4 to 3 trains each hour. At the time of the meeting, the final timetable had not yet been agreed by Network Rail.

On the main line to Norwich, the newer Class 90 electric locomotives should arrive by September along with sets of the newer and refurbished coaches.

Following the presentation, there was some lively debate on various issues including the name "one", the arrangements for the Ipswich tunnel closure and the prospects for an hourly service on the Ipswich-Lowestoft line.

## ESTA news

The East Suffolk Travellers Association (ESTA) have produced "Walks along the Coast", a booklet describing a series of walks between the stations on the line between Ipswich and Lowestoft. The walks vary in length from 1.5 miles to 10 miles and each walk described includes a map, directions and key landmarks along the way. The Branch has helped fund the book along with ESTA and the Ramblers Association.

ESTA have also launched their own web-site: [www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk](http://www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk) and details of the walks can be found on [www.eastsuffolklinewalks.co.uk](http://www.eastsuffolklinewalks.co.uk).

ESTA are also stepping up their campaign to provide an extra passing loop along the line which will enable an hourly service north of Saxmundham.

## Dates for your diary

**Saturday 18th September at 2 pm: Branch meeting** in Norwich at the Assembly House. 150th anniversary celebrations of the opening of the Halesworth, Beccles & Haddiscoe Railway

**Thursday 4th November 7.30pm: Lecture** by John Brodribb at Beccles Public Hall,

**Friday 19th November Lecture** by John Brodribb at St Marys Hall, Steeple End, Halesworth

**Saturday November 20th: ESTA Public Meeting** at Beccles on the present and future of the East Suffolk Line Speaker: Clive Morris

**Saturday 27th November: Fen Line Users and Norwich-Peterborough Rail Users meetings** at the Maltings in Ely.

**Saturday 4th December at 1400: Branch meeting** in Cambridge at the Little St Mary Church Hall. The speaker will be Lord Berkeley of the Rail Group.

**Saturday 6th November 2004: Railfuture rail users conference** Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham

**Saturday 7th May 2005: Saturday Railfuture Annual General Meeting** at the Bull Hotel, Peterborough.

## Branch meetings

Our next Branch meeting will be in Norwich on Saturday, 18th September, at the Assembly House, Theatre Street starting at 14.00. We had invited Chris Austin from the SRA but unfortunately he is unable to attend. We think it would be useful to give members (and a few invited guests) an opportunity to put their ideas to the meeting as a 5 minute presentation. Please contact Nick Dibben if you would like to talk your idea(s). We are looking for quick and simple low cost schemes that will benefit rail passengers or encourage rail freight.

Our Cambridge meeting will take place on Saturday, 4th December, at Little St Mary Church Hall, Trumpington Street, Cambridge starting at 14.00. Lord Berkeley, Chairman of the Railfreight Group will speak to us on the work of the Railfreight Group and the future prospects for rail freight in this country.

## Crossrail

Developers have submitted plans to mid Suffolk District Council for a large leisure complex which will include a big indoor ski slope, housing and a railway station on the site of the derelict Blue Circle Cement works at Great Blakenham. The leisure complex, dubbed Snoasis, is expected to draw a million visitors a year. There will also be a hotel. About 500 houses are planned.

At present the plans are out for consultation. The A14 road which passes close to the site is already very busy with the lorries going to Felixstowe. The Ipswich to Bury St Edmunds railway is set to become the principal route for intermodal traffic from the Haven Ports and the Thames Estuary avoiding the North London line.

### For sale

#### Walks along the Coast

At our Norwich meeting we hope to have copies of this book on sale at a price of £1.50

## Bramley line news

The Bramley line runs from March, where there is a connection to the National Rail Network at the newly established Whitemoor Yard, to Wisbech. The line was closed to passengers in 1968 but remained open as a freight line until more recently. The track is still in place although the original terminus at Wisbech has been lost.

The Wisbech & March Bramley Line is a 'not for profit' group of local businesses, organisations and the public and is currently seeking charitable status. It is the intention of the group to reinstate the line for passengers and freight. A meeting with Network Rail was held in July to explore the possibility of leasing or buying the line. Network Rail are undertaking an internal review to establish whether there are any departments within the company that might be considering using the line.

More information is available on the group's web site

## Ipswich blockade

At the last update the work on the Ipswich Tunnel is on schedule. The temporary arrangements are working well. There have been suggestions that the temporary car park should be retained to relieve the pressure on the existing Manningtree car parks until a way of expanding these can be devised.

### BRANCH OFFICERS

**Chairman:** Vacant

**Vice Chairman:** Ivan Ivanovitch

3 Elm Drive, Offord Cluny, ST NEOTS PE18 9RN

**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

**Membership Secretary:** Clara Zilahi

31 Wimsotsham Road, DOWNHAM MARKET, Norfolk, PE38 9PE

**Snippets compiler:** Jerry Alderson

E-mail: jerry.alderon@virgin.net

**Editor of Rail East:** Tony Albert

Hunterswood, Ipswich Road, Holbrook, IPSWICH IP9 2QT

E-mail: tone\_al9@hotmail.com