

raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

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Cambridge South station plans revealed



Network Rail second public consultation shows what the station could be like, but will government's flawed forecasting result in a poorer passenger experience?

Inside this edition of RAIL EAST...

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- Role of Network Rail's sponsor
- Passenger Information Systems
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- Cambridge Access consultations
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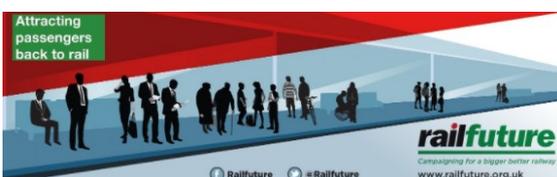
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Train operators have a duty to passengers – sometimes it's not always 'visible'



Did you miss Railfuture's "Attracting Passengers Back to Rail" Webinar on 3 October 2020? If so, you can view a recording, presentations and read the results of the poll and Q&A.

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

WHEN TIME STANDS STILL...

BY NICK DIBBEN, CHAIR, EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

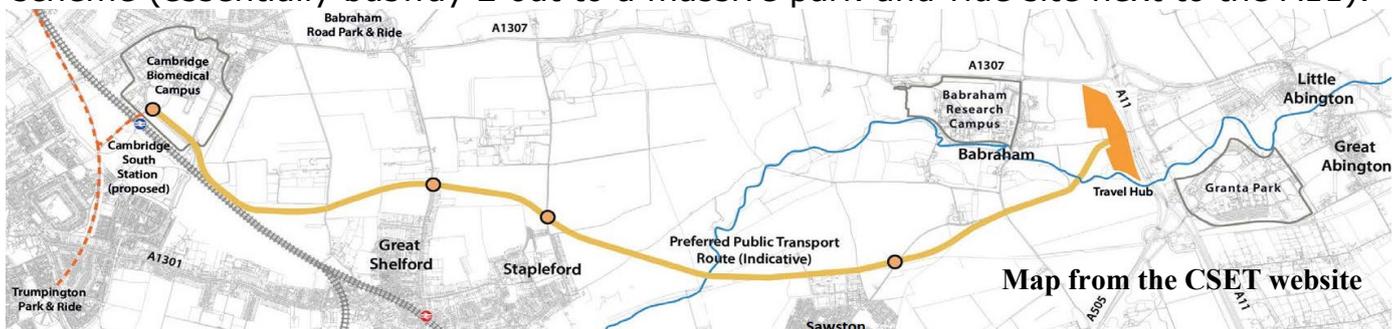


These words are being written just as England has returned to a second national lockdown to try to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not at all clear if four weeks (5 November to 2 December 2020) will be enough or if further time will be required to identify the impact and what to do next. As a region, East Anglia has been less badly affected by COVID-19 than some other areas, which is why some of our local MPs voted against the new measures. For the railways, it means a reduction in passengers at a time when people were starting to return to using the train. There was no reason given in various government briefings on the risk caused by using public transport – on which it is believed that less than 1% of infections occur – and this is urgently required. A suitable study has been announced, but why has it taken so long?

Greater Anglia and GTR are continuing to provide regular services on all routes and this is to be welcomed as they are needed for essential workers. The same cannot be said for our regional services to Birmingham, Nottingham and beyond. These services are at the end of the train operators' routes and staffing issues have resulted in large gaps within the service, making it then difficult to use by essential workers. The situation has not been helped by yet another extension to the Cross Country franchise that operates the Birmingham to Stansted service. The franchise was originally due to end in 2016 but has been delayed owing to problems with the Government's franchise process and we have had a series of extensions with very little benefit for passengers. There is good news in that there should be some extra Cambridge to Peterborough services starting in December 2020, but it looks like we will have to wait to see major improvements such as new rolling stock, station improvements and faster services. On this route time is indeed standing still.

Despite the lockdown, Railfuture East Anglia has been busy. We have produced a report on a possible new station at Long Stratton south of Norwich and responded to consultations on the new Cambridge South Station. A key point in our response to the new station is the predicted number of users. As Peter Wakefield points out below, there is risk that the new station will be totally inadequate. Building in this capacity from the start has minimal cost, whereas trying to add it in later once the station is open will be very expensive and disruptive for passengers. It is a false economy and simply bonkers! The rules need to change.

We have also been commenting on the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) scheme (essentially busway 2 out to a massive park-and-ride site next to the A11).



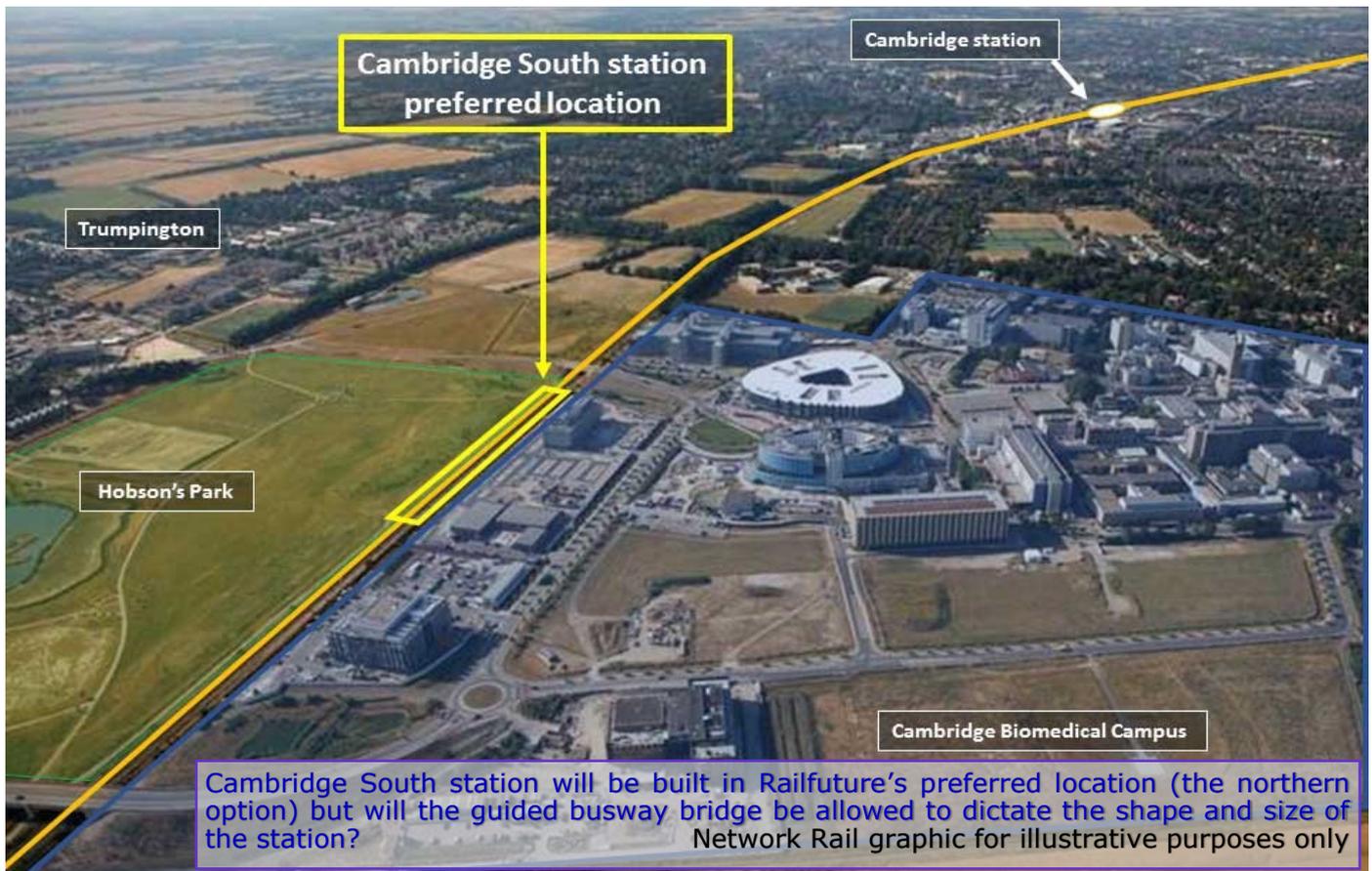
Again, please see the item below (p.13). Whilst investing in public transport is great, it does appear that the lessons of the original Cambridge busway have not been learnt. The Railfuture view is that we want a rail link all the way to Haverhill along with better local buses, which gives the best combination of catering for both local and longer distance users. We are putting together a "Reversing Beeching" Bid to be submitted shortly – for more on this, please see p.8 below.

As stated on the back page of this issue, we have had to cancel our Cambridge meeting in December, but we will hold the East Anglia branch AGM in 2021.

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

Immediately before the opening of the second public consultation on plans to build a new station at the Cambridge Biomedical site (Cambridge South), Railfuture East Anglia was invited to an hour-long explanation/presentation of the plans by the Network Rail Cambridge South project managers, via online TEAMS. This was very comprehensive and helpful for which we are grateful and which we generally welcome, but with some significant concerns.

Site confirmed



The site of the station entrance was confirmed as being the northern option presented as Option 1 in the first consultation, held in early 2020. This is next to the busway overbridge. This is close to the hospitals and numerous research facilities. This is Railfuture's preferred siting. However, the site is quite cramped.

A. Details of passenger facilities to be provided

These have not been finalised, so were not discussed. But we were assured that Railfuture would be informally consulted as planning progressed.

The station user facilities will be based on annual footfall of 1.5m. This pessimistic figure, which nobody outside government seems to consider credible, is derived from a formula devised by the Treasury in its "Green Book" and used by the DfT.

Railfuture response:

We are alarmed at this estimate as a basis for developing the user facilities. We say that footfall will be very much larger, given the following key factors: (a) the nature of the site's significant regional hinterland for the five specialist hospitals, (b) the large general hospital, (c) the dispersed nature of the very large workforce travelling to them and to the huge range of adjacent research institutes and (d) eventual train services that will give the station unparalleled connectivity over a huge region of eastern and southern England. As well as the large nearby sixth form college, there are considerable residential areas on either side of the station

easily accessible by foot and cycling. The station's footfall will rapidly climb to be within the annual range of 5m - 9m users.

The area for the two planned station entrances, one on either side of the station and linked by the station footbridge and lifts, will not be adequate. The station facilities must be future proofed for rising numbers of users so there should be a single large concourse over the tracks with high quality fittings suitable for all sections of the community that will use it. An entrance should be onto a widened busway bridge to facilitate interchange with the CAM system as well on either side as currently planned. Crossing the Francis Crick Avenue will be a problem for the many users of the station so we hope that a high-level covered walkway from the concourse to an entrance on 'the Circle' will be reconsidered. We are pleased that lifts will be duplicated and a changing places toilet will be provided.

We welcome that all station platforms will have canopies over their entire length.

B. The Operational side of the station

There will be four platforms. To minimise additional land take, these will be arranged with an island platform in the centre with outer platforms on either side, initially on loops. They will be linked by a footbridge and lifts at each end.

Associated with the redesigned track layout, the whole area will be re-signalled to provide more train capacity. The junction of the Liverpool Street and King's Cross Lines ("Shepreth Branch Junction"), just to the south of the station, will be re-designed to raise the speed limit on and off the King's Cross line from 30 to 50 miles per hour. This will no doubt help mitigate the extra time the new station stop has on overall timings. At the Cambridge station end of the railway, the current upside head-shunt under Hills Road bridge will be extended and joined onto the up mainline to enable parallel moves into/out of platforms 7 and 8.

Railfuture response:

We recognise that land take is an issue to be considered but from the users point of view, two island platforms are more helpful, as the eastern side platform faces would be used by all southbound trains and the western side platform faces by all northbound trains. Last minute changes to the timetable would entail just a crossing of the platform rather than the envisaged scramble up and down staircases. We think that this should be reconsidered.

It is not Network Rail's fault that the planning of one project seemingly is not allowed to take cognisance of other known plans on the horizon. We know that when East West Rail arrives on the scene in 7 or 8 years' time, the track will be quadrupled over the entire length between Shepreth Branch Junction and Cambridge Station. As we know that there will be land take for the new station, its new lines and then later a little more land take for the final track layout, surely the time consuming and no doubt financially wasteful effort to obtain the powers to quadruple the tracks and do the necessary engineering under possessions should be done all in one go rather than having to do it in two disruptive sessions?

C. Public access to the station

The layout of the road access on the west side of the new station, and the footpaths/cycle paths on the west side across Hobson Park, indicate that care is being taken not to encourage access to the station by car users. It appears that care is being taken to provide good quality walking and cycling access.

Railfuture response:

We welcome that care. It is to be assumed the management of the Biomedical Campus will undertake additional measures to ensure that is so.

The number of spaces for cycle storage may need to be enlarged as time goes on but we recognise that most users will be those travelling from elsewhere to work or visit the Campus and can walk to all areas in a relatively short time.

SPONSORING THE CAMBRIDGE SOUTH STATION PROJECT BY LEWIS WINGFIELD OF NETWORK RAIL

I sponsor the Cambridge South project. Sponsorship isn't a role found widely outside infrastructure projects but put simply my job is to manage interfaces with the rest of industry, navigate necessary governance and make sure that the project delivers what funders specify. I work very closely with the project manager and the rest of the project team to make key decisions about the project and to work out how to implement them. It's a challenging role as I need to know enough about all aspects of the project and its interfaces to steer everything in the right direction.



I took over sponsorship of Cambridge South at a very early stage in the formal development process, and it has been rewarding to help drive this forward alongside my project team. The station is on a remarkably busy part of the network with services which use the East Coast Main Line and the West Anglia Main Line, so it is critical that we take account of services using both of these routes. This in itself is a complex task as we can't expect services with such intricate timetables to restructure everything around Cambridge South, rather the project needs to provide infrastructure that strikes the right balance between capability and value for money whilst delivering a robust train service. In addition, the project lies on the part of the West Anglia Main Line that East West Rail (EWR) Central Section would run along were that programme to be delivered. It's therefore imperative that Cambridge South takes account of the future needs of EWR given that EWR could be delivered only a few years after Cambridge South. Once again this is a question of balance, in this case between delivering what can be justified through our consents, and not precluding future options for EWR. We have a good working relationship to the Central Section team (who, like the rest of EWR, sit outside of Network Rail).

There are two key factors that differentiate Cambridge South from some similar projects. One of these is the vigorous support for accelerated delivery. Rail project development is complex, and we need to make sure we are investing money wisely but stakeholders understandably would like to see the benefits of a station as quickly as possible. It is rewarding to be involved in a project which benefits from such strong support, and Cambridge South's inclusion in Project SPEED is helping us to explore even more options to meet aspired timescales.

The second key difference for Cambridge South is its funding situation. In general, DfT-funded rail enhancements are funded in stages via the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP). RNEP has key decision points at which the business case for a project is re-assessed which informs a decision as to whether it should be progressed further. Cambridge South is an RNEP project although it has also benefitted from funding contributions from AstraZeneca, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership for development work to date. In the March 2020 budget, the Chancellor announced that Cambridge South would be delivered subject to gaining the necessary consents. This is still contingent on the business case remaining solid but is a rare occurrence given the general approach of RNEP outlined above.

If you read this prior to 29 November 2020 then there is still time to take part in our second round of consultation at <https://cambridgesouthconsultation.com/>.

Following this consultation we will take account of feedback to refine designs and hope to submit our Transport and Works Act Order application (which will give us the permissions we need to build and operate the infrastructure) in summer 2021. During the TWAO process we expect there to be further opportunity for stakeholders to have their views heard and welcome any support RAIL EAST readers can provide.

Lewis Wingfield is Senior Development Manager, Network Rail, Anglia Route.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EAST OF THE REGION BY PHIL SMART

Work on next phase of Ipswich station's rebuild gets under way

The next upgrade of Ipswich Railway Station is now under way – and should be completed by summer 2021. The rebuild of the station started in 2016 when the main entrance hall and waiting room were redeveloped with new shops and ticket machines at the same time as the entrance to the station was transformed.

This phase of work sees office and staff accommodation redeveloped, a new ticket hall created and a new shop will be built to increase what is on offer to passengers. It is rumoured that the Co-Op has expressed an interest as it already has a store within the concourse at Norwich (and had once planned a store at Cambridge North as well). New modern toilets are also included as part of this refurbishment.

New signalling on the Clacton line

The railway between Thorpe-le-Soken and Clacton-on-Sea is being upgraded with new computer-based signals replacing the mechanical levers used to change signals and points. The new system will be controlled from a powered signal box at Colchester replacing the old manual box at Clacton.

1891 GER signal box at Clacton in 2015



Digital signalling. All done by hand!



This completes a resignalling project that ran out of money in 2009! During the 23-day works from Saturday 20 February to Sunday 14 March, alterations will also be made to the layout of the track and the overhead lines.

(Story edited from Rail Business Daily by the author who also provided the photos.)

Sizewell C Evidence

In RAIL EAST 184 (December 2019) we expressed our disappointment that the 'Rail led' strategy for bringing materials to the construction site for the Sizewell C nuclear power station had been all but abandoned in favour of road transport. Railfuture has written to the planning inspector to register our objection and will have the opportunity of presenting our case in 2021.

We are not opposing the project but are requesting that better use be made of the railway during construction and the funding by EDF energy of a study into improving speed and frequency of passenger services to provide a lasting legacy of community benefit to the residents of East Suffolk.

New Ipswich maintenance depot takes shape

In RAIL EAST 183 (September 2019) we described the relocation of the traction maintenance depot at Ipswich from its site next to platform 4 to an area near the 'upper yard' (off Ranelagh Road). We are pleased to report good progress on its construction



which will include a wagon repair shop and which should be completed in 2021. This move opens up the possibility of constructing additional platforms at Ipswich station which could serve the new East West Rail trains by the end of the decade.

"RESTORING YOUR RAILWAY" – EAST ANGLIAN SCHEMES

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

The government Restoring Your Railway (RYR) initiative involves the establishment of a fund for communities to bid for up to £50k to secure the services of a consultant to establish a feasibility study and business case for a new station or line.

Dereham and Hunstanton

The first rounds of the bidding process saw two submissions for the restoration of passenger services. Upgrading the Mid-Norfolk Railway's **Wymondham-Dereham** line and running regular services, supported by George Freeman MP (and the MNR) was not successful. There was also a submission to restore the **King's Lynn-Hunstanton** railway, supported by James Wild MP.

Sawston and Harston

A second round of bidding for the same fund is expected to open at the end of November 2020. Two station opening bids are under preparation for this round by the Parish Councils at **Sawston** and **Harston**, both in South Cambridgeshire and very actively supported by the local MP, Anthony Browne. The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority has agreed to pay the match funding of up to £14k. The Parish Councils have agreed to pay any extra.

Haverhill-Granta Park-Linton-Sawston to Shelford and Cambridge

Railfuture East Anglia is preparing a bid to the fund to restore the railway from **Haverhill (Suffolk) to Shelford and Cambridge**, with stations at **Haverhill, Granta Park and Sawston**.

There has been a long running campaign to restore this railway with several thousand signatures gathered to do just that in and around Haverhill. There has been a recent high-level study into the restoring the railway which had a neutral BCR so we want more studies to complete the work to establish a more detailed and accurate feasibility and business case. Railfuture's bid is supported by local MP Matt Hancock. When completed, the bid document will be on the Railfuture website so everybody can see the rationale behind it (see Railfuture tweet, right).



Railfuture EAnglia @RailfutureEA · 2h

Reinstating the Haverhill-Cambridge Railway IS the way forward. The massive rural carpark alongside the A11 will undermine a shift to rail into Cambridge stns from the Bishops Stortford; Bury /Newmarket; Norwich /Thetford directions :all these railways undermined. Silo planning?



Smarter Cambridge Transport @SmarterCam · Oct 20

Better still, would be to reinstate @RailHaverhill railway all the way to a major town, rather than a bus-only road to a car park in the Green Belt: smartertransport.uk/response-to-ca...

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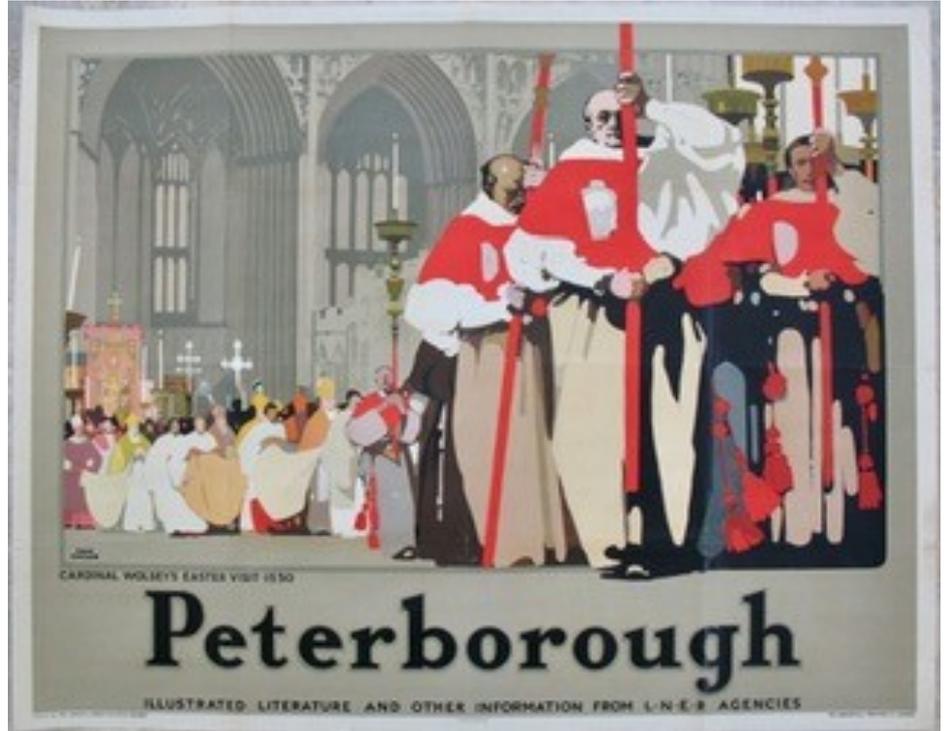
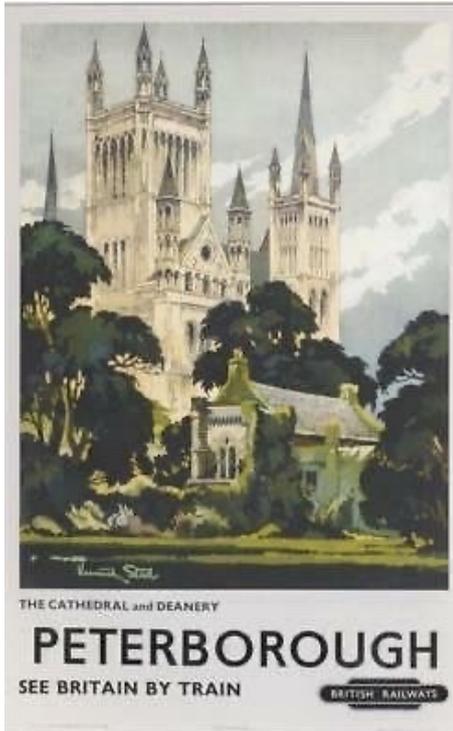
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CAMBRIDGE FREIGHT TERMINAL

In RAIL EAST 187 concern was expressed at the perceived lack of interest in local plans for the Cambridge railfreight terminal. On closer inspection of various documents (extract below is from *North East Cambridge Draft Area Action Plan, policy 26, p.241*), it is reassuring to find this statement about the existing facility at Chesterton Sidings: "The Cambridge North East Aggregates Railheads at North East Cambridge is of strategic importance to Greater Cambridge's economy providing an important source of building materials for the wider area. The adopted Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (2011) and Site Specific Proposals Plan (2012) designates a safeguarding area for the aggregates yard at Chesterton Sidings. It is proposed that this site is continued to be safeguarded in the emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2020). A large number of businesses use the facility for importing aggregate via the railway, to then be used in construction and road maintenance across the wider Cambridge area. Given the aggregates facility connection to the railhead, there is potential to minimise the movement of construction materials and waste by road."

FOCUS ON PETERBOROUGH BY PETER WAKEFIELD



Peterborough is one of the largest cities in East Anglia with one of the fastest growing economies in the UK. This economic growth is being created by a fast-growing population now at about 205,000, up by 30% between 2000 and 2020. According to a recent report by business strategists McKinsey, the economy of this Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority-based city is expected to grow by 40% between 2020 and 2025, to £8.7 billion GDP. It has a recently established university and a diverse economy of five relatively high performing business sectors – engineering and manufacturing, agricultural technology, digital and creative, energy and environmental and financial services. It is a major regional centre for the retail and leisure industries.

As might be expected, this growth is supported by a good transport network. Peterborough is at the intersection of several important railways and roads. The site of the city, lying in the River Nene Valley some 21 miles upstream of Wisbech, is built around one of its first bridging points, as to the east the river spread out to inundate the Fens before the drainage works of the last four centuries. The North-South M11/A14/A1 (Great North Road)/A15 and the more recent East-West A47 roads cross here.

In the 19th century, the railway network followed suit with the development of what is now the East Coast Main Line (ECML) as well as routes into Lincolnshire, East Anglia, the East Midlands and West Midlands and southwest up the Nene Valley to Wellingborough, Northampton and directly west towards Rugby. The rail connectivity of the city was superb, making Peterborough quite literally the major gateway to East Anglia from the north and Midlands.

In 2020 the railway gives reasonable interurban connectivity but poor connectivity in the city's own travel to work area.

Though the road network has continually improved over the last 60 years, the railway network's connectivity has declined. To the south, the ECML has dramatically improved with frequent services to London (125km) in as little as 40 minutes but there are no communities served in the first 27km along it until Huntingdon. To the north services are fast and frequent but again, there is no local

connectivity as no community is served between Peterborough and Grantham (49km) or northeast to Spalding (25km). Stamford (18km) is served by rail every hour but nowhere in between or beyond to Oakham (34km). To the east all fen settlements along the Nene to its mouth at Sutton Bridge and across it to King's Lynn via Wisbech have lost their railway and stations. The surviving route east by way of Whittlesey, March (25km), Ely thence to Cambridge or Norwich or Ipswich has developed but with patchy intermediate connectivity. Sadly, all settlements up the Nene Valley towards Wellingborough and across to Peterborough's former County Town of Northampton are now non-existent. Uniquely, of all the five largest East Anglian towns, Peterborough has by far the worst local rail connectivity in spite of the five important railways that still radiate from it. Apart from Whittlesey, there is no settlement served by a station on any railway radiating out of Peterborough within 18km of the city. Currently, even the approximately 18,000 residents of Whittlesey are served only every two hours.

The even bigger current problem

So, in this new age, when climate change is a very pressing problem that even at this 11th hour needs a much more serious approach, affecting as it does every living creature on the planet, an urgent plan to decarbonise can be set in motion by re-establishing better rail connectivity, better frequencies on all routes, some additional stations, even new lines to make the railway at Peterborough more accessible for many more people.

Better last mile?

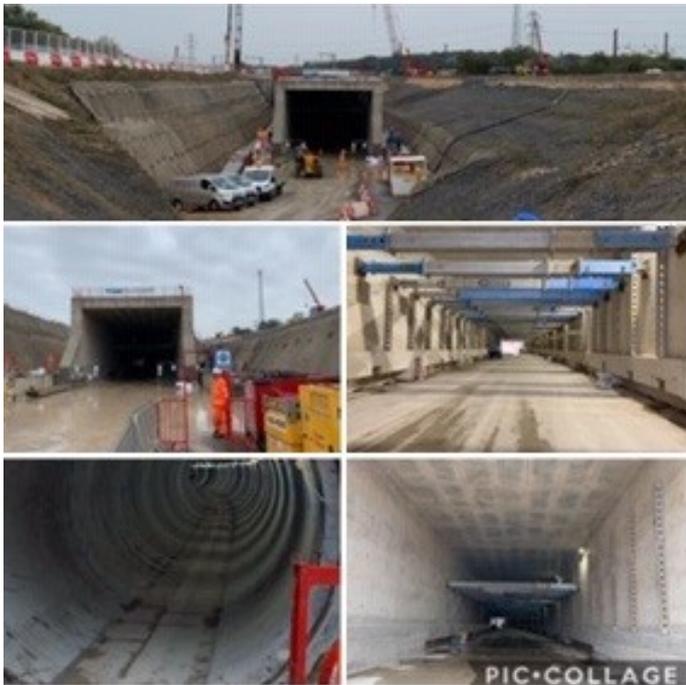
Peterborough's rapid expansion has left its station marooned from the city centre by a dual carriageway expressway and the industrial and commercial areas are dispersed in low density blocks some way from the station. The bus station is not visible from the station as it is tucked away on the opposite side of the expressway. Very poor planning. A Metro last mile network, centred on the railway station, must be developed to link it to the many dispersed suburbs.

New stations?

The city has developed far to the west and south of the railway station. Long journeys are necessary to access the station, often in the opposite direction to eventual travel. The new station long considered for the southern suburbs must be progressed as should that proposed for the new town at Alconbury. Other sites will no doubt be suitable to intercept road traffic trying to access the city. See the important initiative at Manea as a template, below.

Rail freight and Werrington Junction Dive-under

Since the early days of the railway, freight traffic has been an especially important part of the Peterborough railway scene and huge freight marshalling yards dominated the city for many years alongside the March line in east Peterborough and New England and Wisbech Sidings on either side of the ECML to the north. Much of the huge areas of land those yards occupied is now covered by industrial units and there is little evidence of the previous activity. There are still heavy flows of freight on all the lines that converge on the city, but instead of marshalling as in the old days, they continue through to many destinations all over the UK. Whilst passing through Peterborough there are many capacity-eating conflicting moves between the various freight flows and the long-distance passenger trains. For example, the ever-increasing numbers of freight trains from East Anglia to the north of England that need to access the Spalding line at Werrington Junction must cross the ECML on the flat to do so. As RAIL EAST has reported in previous issues, there is a huge investment taking place at Werrington to untangle these conflicts in the shape of a £200 million dive-under. That this is a massive and fast progressing engineering project is demonstrated by the photo montage from LNER shown on the next page.



New Lines?

A good start in this process could be the development of a new, short link as proposed by Owen O'Neill in the article below. This would re-establish rail connectivity to Peterborough's traditional sphere of influence across Northamptonshire and could eventually be stage one of linking the two greatest urban centres in the Nene Valley once more....Peterborough-Northampton.

The suggestion that any service that the new link would support should start at Wisbech is one that reflects the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority aspiration for a fast Wisbech-Peterborough rail service. The Nene Valley Express – "March-Whittlesey -Peterborough-Stamford-Seaton-Corby-Kettering-Wellingborough (-Bedford)"?

More on the need to improve the connectivity of Peterborough and more widely into East Anglia can be read at Railfuture's Response to England's Economic Heartland Consultation: <https://railfuture.org.uk/display2479>

And as a footnote to these thoughts on Peterborough, more positive news for Fenland travellers; in the last issue we highlighted the good news that planning for the restoration of the railway from Wisbech was gathering pace, now further good news is that the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, Fenland District Council and the Hereward Community Rail Partnership are making the railway through the Fens more accessible as at **Manea Station** a 112-space park-and-ride facility has obtained planning permission and is funded. This, together with the report that Cross Country Trains is to start a "temporary" additional service from Cambridge to Fenland stations, is real progress. "Temporary", as it is assumed this service will be extended to Wisbech when the necessary works are completed there and at March. Importantly, in the meantime, this new service will be building up traffic ready for incorporating into "Wisbech-Cambridge".

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO BY RAIL TO KETTERING / CORBY (& NOT VIA LONDON)?

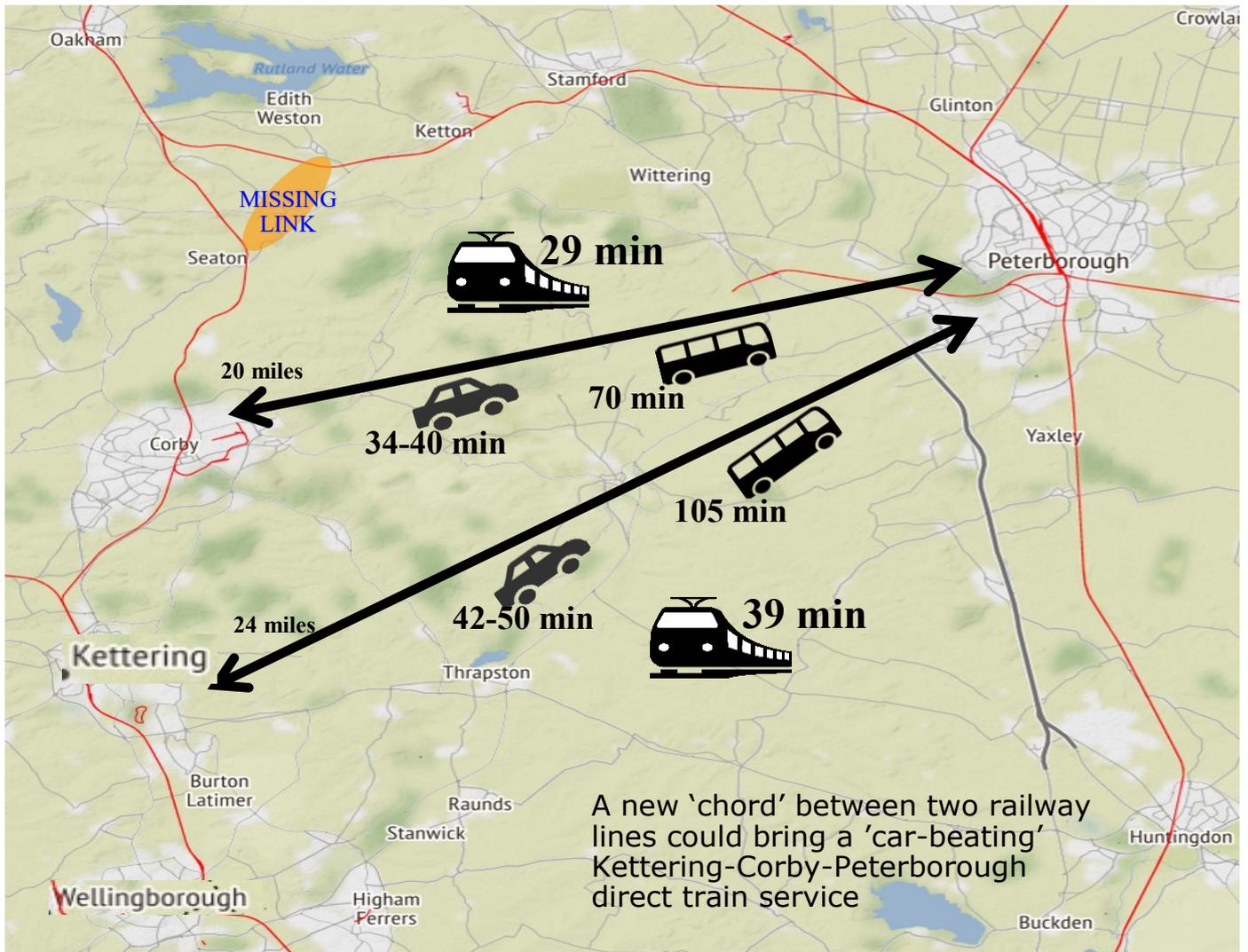
BY OWEN O'NEILL

Kettering and Corby are next door neighbours to Peterborough, but the public transport between them is awful, so there's no surprise that this is an extremely car dependent part of the world. And if you want to go from Corby to Stamford on public transport? Bus all the way to Peterborough – then bus all the way back to Stamford. It turns a short journey into an entire day trip, which for a tourist destination like Stamford puts off the casual visitor.

What makes this situation even more crazy is that rail almost but not quite has the infrastructure in place, while heading north from Corby you just can't 'turn right' at Manton junction. Reversing in the tunnel at Manton has been suggested in the past, but clearly that is not operationally practical now that Felixstowe-to-Nuneaton (F2N) freight traffic has made this route a nationally important freight corridor.

We want to fix this with a "missing link" 'chord' between Seaton and Luffenham (see map on the next page) loosely along part of the route of the former Rugby and Stamford Railway: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugby_and_Stamford_Railway.

This is preferred over a chord right at Manton junction since the journey time is approximately six minutes faster – and the car is our competition!



The current service from Stamford to Peterborough is a disappointing once an hour – but with an hourly service from us at close to clock-face spacing at Stamford and it becomes a much more respectable 2tph.

Who are we?

The Welland Valley Rail Partnership (WVRP) is named from the River Welland, which flows through Market Harborough, past Corby, through Stamford and on to Peterborough before making its way to the sea via Spalding, and was used for transport since Roman times. As our railway passes many of the same places as the river, we've taken our name from it.

Where to next?

Terminating a service at Peterborough is not the best spot to sit and hog a platform, and there are more communities to serve! Peter Risebrow, well known to Railfuture East Anglia members, bent our ear and made a very compelling case for heading to Wisbech via March, which will make the best of the investment that looks close to happening to reconnect the 34,000 residents of Wisbech back to the rail network, who unsurprisingly are keen to head directly to the major centre next door to them, in addition to Cambridge.

People have asked us – what about extending further to Wellingborough / Bedford / Ely? Answer to all those is pragmatism, trying to head further down a main line or into an already congested area is likely to make it even harder for us to find a space for our service, we feel it's just the 'right size' to offer real benefit as it stands – without becoming dependant on so many other projects and interests that it's impossible to get off the ground.

Oh Mr Beeching

And it's a 'reverse Beeching' too. We have black and white photos and everything so it must be Beeching...which makes it a good political spot to hit – and the 'Restoring your railway' process is a lightweight way to get a project in front of the DfT that would otherwise take years of local council persuasion just to get to the point of an initial study. So that's the project in a nutshell – big populations benefiting from a small extra bit of infrastructure.

Please head over to our website and fill in our survey, every response helps add to our case. See <https://wvr.org.uk/>.

...and we'd love more people to get involved, we're a small team so more hands are always welcome!

Owen O'Neill is Chief Technical Officer of WVRP.

CAMBRIDGE ACCESS STUDY CONSULTATIONS

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

There are several "Cambridge Access Studies" currently being undertaken by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP). Railfuture East Anglia has responded to all. Most of the subsequent transport proposals coming out of the studies have been broadly complementary to the development of the railway network. For example, the Cambridge Eastern Access study has taken forward suggestions for the doubling of the Cambridge to Newmarket railway, together with plans for new stations at Cambridge East and Six Mile Bottom and is welcomed.

The Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) study, however, has proposed the building of a "bus road" (image from website below) from the Cambridge Biomedical Campus to a site near Granta Park research facilities next to the A11 trunk road. There, a park-and-ride facility will cater for over 2000 vehicles. This carpark is huge, in open country and is linked to Cambridge over nationally important landscapes.



Other than that, Railfuture is alarmed by this proposal and will object to it. This bus road will actually encourage an increase in car movements at the expense of train services running into Cambridge from both the south via Bishops Stortford as well as from the east — Newmarket, Thetford and Norwich — again abstracting passengers

from the train services on those lines running into Cambridge. This is poor policy that undermines investments being made elsewhere in the region.

A restored railway from Haverhill, as well as serving that town's large and growing population, together with a park-and-ride at Haverhill station to intercept traffic coming up the Stour and Colne Valleys, is a much better proposal than the GCP's. As noted, Railfuture will object. Please do so too, if you can, by 14 December 2020.

See: <https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/cset-eia>.

MAKING THE PIS—PASSENGER INFORMATION SYSTEMS

BY JERRY ALDERSON

In the first two decades of this century there has been considerable investment across the rail network, not least at stations, where real-time train information is now common. If you had stood on an unstaffed East Anglian station platform back in 2000 there might have been a public address system, if you were lucky, and a permit to travel or ticket machine. Revenue was more important than assistance. CCTV and help points were a few years away, and so too were customer information system (CIS) screens. In those days before smartphones passengers had little idea when – even whether – their train would arrive.

However, once on board, there may have been a ‘first-generation’ basic orange-on-black dot-matrix passenger information screen (PIS) with scrolling text to confirm that you were on the right train. The train’s destination and station stops were all that could be hoped for. The Class 365 trains, from the mid-1990s in the WAGN days, were one of the first of the region’s trains to provide this, but you still needed to recognise your station because sometimes it got out of sync, apparently affected by wheel slip and the train miscalculating how far it had travelled.

These basic screens were provided on all new trains – Class 170 Turbostars from the late 1990s and even the Great Northern Class 387 Electrostars introduced as late as 2015 – and were retrofitted on most older ones. Since 1 January 2020, when the Persons of Reduced Mobility (PRM) legislation deadline



CrossCountry Turbostar in 2020. Contrary to the frozen message, it had just left March with Ely as its next stop.

arrived, an information screen has been mandatory on all trains, but the level of information they are required to show is pretty low. Providing that a hearing-impaired person is made aware when they need to alight (i.e. displaying the name of the station) the train operator has met their legal obligations. The passenger should also be told that they are on the correct train when they board and given a chance to get off, although it’s not unknown for the automated audio announcements to be made after the doors have been closed and locked.

Train operators in many other European countries have seen the information screens as part of the service offer, providing details about the journey, live connections, marketing and entertainment. By 2010 several had ‘second-generation’ pixel-based digital screens and used them to varying degrees. In Britain, we just got a television



These first-generation screens (GN’s Class 387 shown above, which has the same screen type as GA’s Class 379) have one advantage: the messages can *easily and quickly* be altered to take account of circumstances. There are no COVID-19 messages on the new Greater Anglia or Thameslink trains. Greater Anglia has confirmed to Railfuture that they can – if they wish – configure new messages without having to pay the supplier.

screen on Heathrow Express that showed a recorded news bulletin (plane crashes not mentioned) and videos about how to exit the station just prior to arrival.

Eurostar’s new e320 trains went into passenger service in November 2015, with fully-digital multi-lingual screens throughout the train, showing recorded information about the train and the destinations (repeated in a loop) along with details of the next stop (“arriving soon” unhelpfully meant anything up to 35 minutes in advance) but real-time information was limited to – just – the time.

Britain’s loading gauge limitation allows wide but not very high screens to be hung from the ceiling, but there could be larger screens on the wall or vestibule partition.

Hull Trains was the first domestic operator in Britain to provide real-time running and connection information, catching up with a plethora of operators of trains, metros, trams and buses on the European mainland.



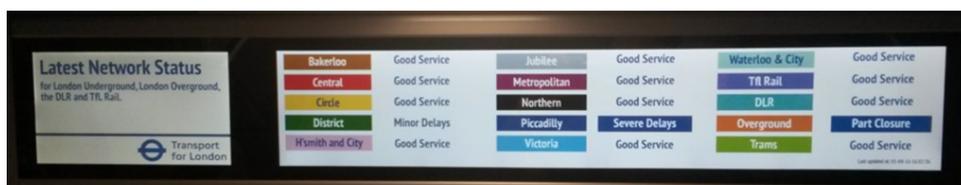
Eurostar video shows where to find the power socket and how to evacuate from the train through a window.

East Anglian travellers can now find second-generation screens on two fleets: Thameslink's Class 700s (introduced on the Thameslink Bedford-Brighton route in 2016 and subsequently to Cambridge and Peterborough) and Greater Anglia's Class 745 and 755 Stadler trains (introduced from 2019), which will be joined in 2021 by Class 720 Bombardier trains. The Class 387s are due to have new screens by 2025, after their much older Class 377 siblings on the Southern routes.

What does second-generation PIS provide, and what could be improved?

The Thameslink Class 700 trains have a wide PIS, which is actually two separate screens. The small one tells you what the large one is showing, with the downside that the small screen is often superfluous. It shows the high-level status of each London Underground line along with the Overground and trams, although it is unclear to what extent this is real-time. Being told that a line is "partly closed" isn't a lot of help, so you still need a smartphone app to check.

Valuable screen time that is taken up showing unnecessary messages prevents the PIS being used to the benefit of passengers. All of the train operators have a legal obligation to tell you how to contact the British Transport Police and how to claim Delay Repay (both are standard messages that could be posters on the train wall). However, is anyone unaware that there is CCTV on the train, and does it need an entire screen to tell you when an icon of a camera is sufficient?



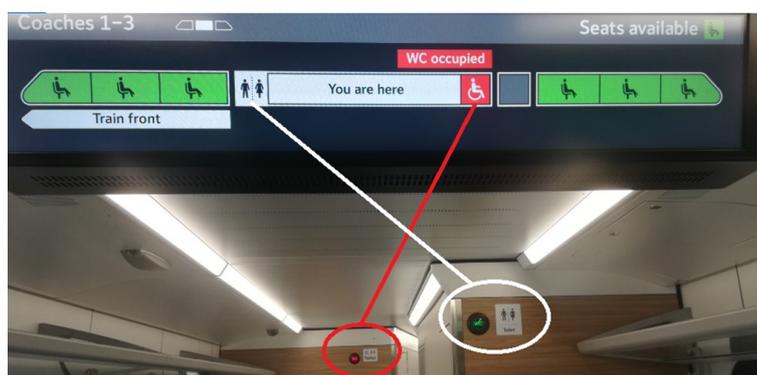
The Underground status screen on the Thameslink Class 700 may offer reassurance that all is well when you travel **towards** London, but is no use when you have already left. It is shown regardless of direction of travel.

A better use of the PIS is to tell you what is happening right now (right, from Thameslink, but pre-defined messages can also be displayed by the Greater Anglia driver or conductor).



One of the downsides of Britain's fragmented railway is that every train operator chooses to do things differently, not just incurring extra design and manufacturing costs, but also making it more difficult for passengers. Whilst navigating ticket vending machines (TVMs) can be a struggle initially, hopefully the PIS information is immediately understandable.

The Thameslink trains show the loading per carriage on a separate 'Storyboard' page to the location of the toilets and whether they are occupied, whereas Greater Anglia, conveniently, shows them on the same page (right).

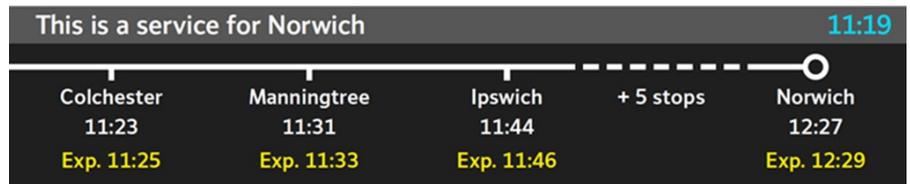


The graphics all change to reflect the number of carriages in the train,

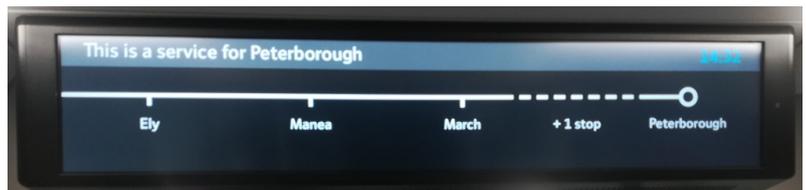
and on GA's Class 745 intercity trains where to find the buffet and first class as well. However, GA assumes that you can see how busy your carriage is, so don't need to be told. The GA screens lack a key to explain that each carriage will show one, two or three green seats, or the word "full", but in these COVID-19 times every carriage shows three green seats because there are always plenty of seats – it hasn't been adjusted to allow for social distancing.

Greater Anglia trains have been in passenger use for 18 months and it has upgrades planned. PIS software version 4.2 has been on trial since September 2020 and will be rolled out to all Stadler units by the December 2020 timetable change. The most noticeable – and useful – enhancement will be the due times for each station stop and the real-time estimated arrival time (ETA), which is taken from the same computer system as the station CIS screens.

Unhelpfully, due and ETA are shown as two separate pages on the 'Storyboard' and would be better on one (see right).



The station calling list exposes quite a significant procurement problem with GA's PIS. Whilst the operator can configure text-based pages on the 'Storyboard', it is locked into the layout of the graphics, and would need (DfT approval) to pay the supplier for changes. Showing the ETA line above would need the station names to be moved higher. The vertical bars between station names are inflexibly programmed to be a precise fixed distance apart, whereas it is the space between the station names (not the bars) that needs to be separated for clarity. This results in some, frankly, quite ludicrous displays, such as showing that one stop has been omitted but not able to say what it is despite there being a huge amount of space between the preceding three short station names (image, right, before update to include station times).



Manea and Whittlesea have short platforms. Currently GA's PIS does not inform passengers if they have to walk to a different carriage (it requires the conductor to remember to do so), although it will do so once the ASDO system (see RAIL EAST 185) is fully integrated. Thameslink trains do, and the image, right, reveals how graphics are shown in certain carriages.



Going back to the issue of wasting screen time, the GA 'Storyboard' seems to have a set of pages in a single cycle that must be shown in all circumstances, regardless of whether a page adds anything to the information presented in the cycle so far. Railfuture has experienced three pages being shown when one would have sufficed. Once you have left the penultimate station it showed a) the train's destination, b) the list of remaining stations (just the destination), and c) a graphic of the line with just the terminus.

GTR appears satisfied with the Thameslink PIS. GA advises that further functionality will be introduced in the future. Clearly all enhancements not yet agreed with suppliers – and any internal resources needed to make use what is already possible, such as showing videos on the PIS screen - will require DfT approval. Let us hope that the DfT doesn't see PIS as merely filling a PRM requirement and use the excuse that the onus is on passengers to get a smartphone if they want anything more. That is certainly not the route taken by train, metro and tram operators on the European mainland, where the PIS is used to improve the passenger experience.

Jerry Alderson wishes to thank Greater Anglia for the assistance provided when researching this article. A full version will be provided on the website at a later date.

GREATER ANGLIA STATION ADOPTION AWARDS — 2020

BY BEN WALSH

Greater Anglia's 2020 awards ceremony for station adopters took place 'virtually' on 16 October. Despite the odd format, it was still fabulous to be able to celebrate the stunning work undertaken by the wonderful volunteers across East Anglia who help to make stations lovely gateways to the communities they serve and ensure the railway plays its full part in local life. The pictures below show examples from the winners at Roydon (left) and Shelford (right) on the West Anglia Mainline.



There were winners, runners up and finalists from right across Greater Anglia's routes in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire (as exemplified by the amazing bee-friendly sculpture at Alresford in Essex, pictured below).



As a key part of the event, the contribution of adopters to enhancing the physical environment of stations took centre stage. Peter Townrow was singled out for a Special Award for the work he and his team of helpers have carried out at Manea station over the last 10 years. Also recognised was Sue Park of Dullingham station on the Ipswich – Cambridge line. Sue is taking the village on a 'green journey' through wildlife friendly schemes at the station and even creating a small pond - believed to be the first at a rail station in Britain.

Sue Cox of Somerleyton station was singled out for the love and care she has bestowed on the Suffolk station for the past 20 years, delighting local people and visitors alike with floral displays, and creating an eco-friendly haven for wildlife along the platforms. Many people were recognised, more than can be listed here, across the region.

Ben Walsh has been involved with station adoption since the Anglia Railways days.

WISE UP AND WIRE UP

BY PHIL SMART

Network Rail's 'Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy' – what does it mean for East Anglia?

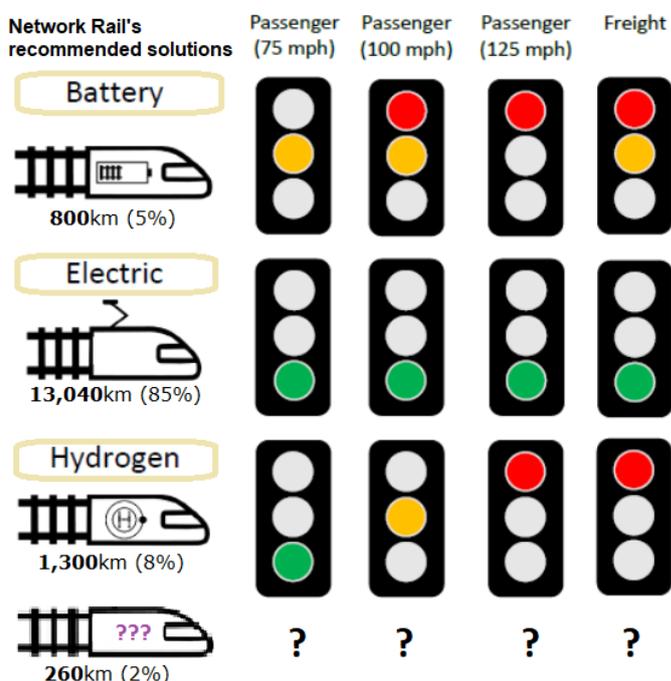
On 31 July 2020, NR completed its Strategy's 'Interim Programme Business Case': <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Traction-Decarbonisation-Network-Strategy-Interim-Programme-Business-Case.pdf>.

It was some while before the media became aware of it, as little was done to publicise what we believe to be one of the most important rail industry policy documents since the 1955 Modernisation Plan. Back then, the aim was to eliminate steam traction from Britain's rail network; today's plan sets out how we are to eliminate diesel engines by 2050, a far more generous timescale but one that presents some significant challenges. Replacing steam with diesel in the 1960s was about swapping one fossil fuel (coal) for another (oil). Both have a high energy density and can be carried on the train in sufficient quantity to cover long distances.

On 30 September, two months after the Network Rail report, Britain's first experimental hydrogen train took to the rails amid much public attention and media hype as the 'fuel of the future'. Hydrogen, however, is not a fuel, but a *vector*. To manufacture hydrogen in the quantities required to power trains requires 3½ times more electricity than that which would power the same train from overhead wires. Hydrogen storage is also challenging and could require up to a quarter of the train's accommodation – not good for already overcrowded routes. What the Decarbonisation Strategy makes clear is that the future role for hydrogen is likely to be marginal, used only in situations where other solutions are impossible.

The report is equally cautious about battery technology. Although taking up less space than hydrogen, the need to recharge at regular intervals limits this technology to short distance services.

The more energy we need to power a train, the stronger the electrification case. We can think of this as the three 'F's. If you want your train to go **F**ast or run **F**requently or want to move **F**reight, then electrification is the only solution as summarised in this diagram, right, from the report (with extra annotations) with the recommended solution for the 15,400km of track not currently electrified.



But what does the report say about East Anglia?

Of the East Anglian routes not yet electrified, solutions are recommended for each.

Felixstowe to Ipswich, Haughley Junction (nr Stowmarket) to Ely and Ely to Peterborough should be electrified. This is a nationally significant route for heavy freight and no other option would work.

Cambridge to Newmarket could use battery or hydrogen but this is such a short section of route connecting with electrified lines at either end that it makes sense to use electric trains, particularly as it will link to East West Rail, also earmarked for electrification.

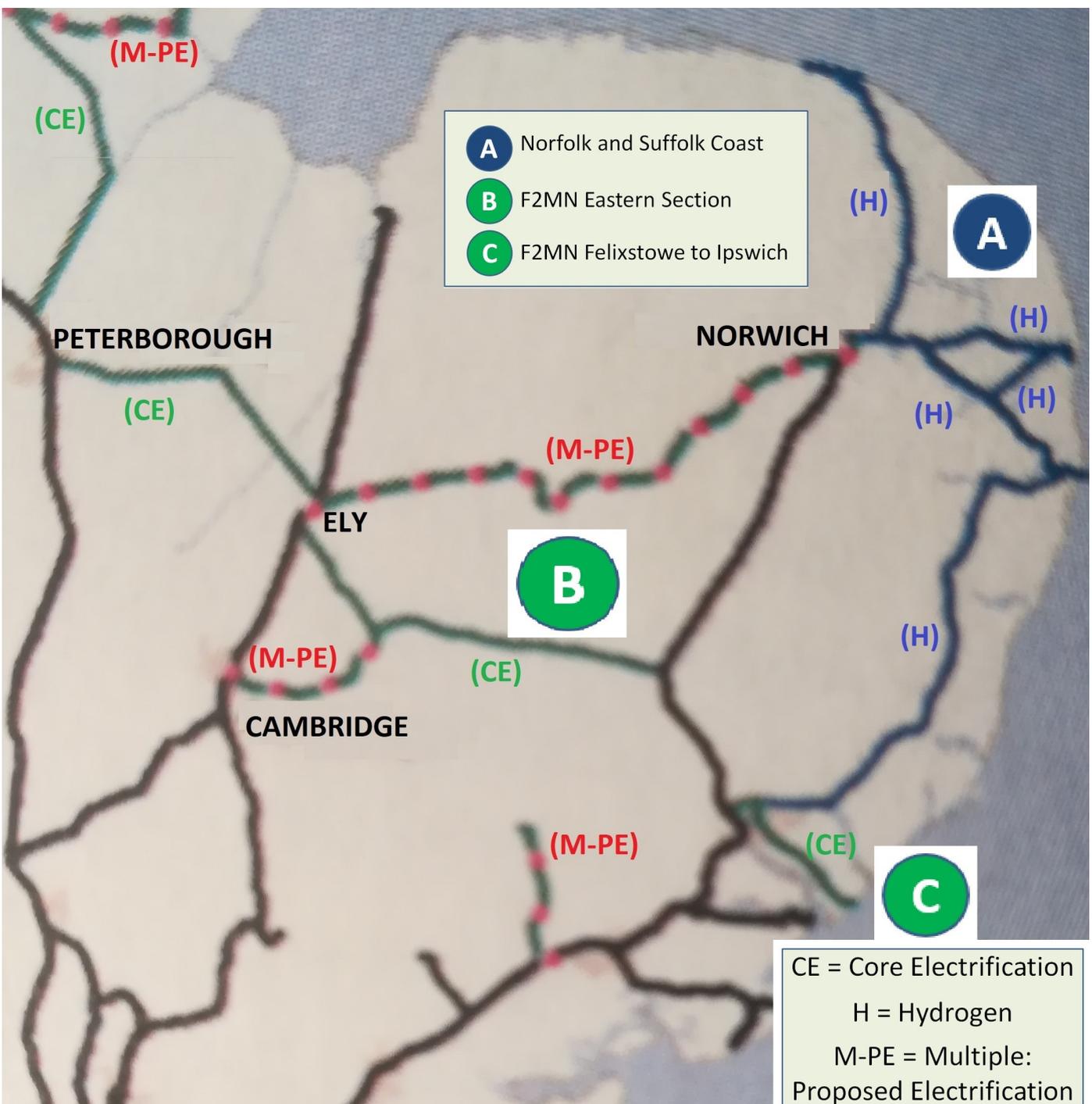
Norwich to Ely could use hydrogen but again, as it will eventually connect with East West Rail and carry services to the Midlands and Stansted Airport, it makes sense to electrify.

East Suffolk Line, Norwich to Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Sheringham lines are suitable for hydrogen. It might be possible to swap in a hydrogen unit for the current diesel unit in the class 755's though even these may be life expired by 2050.

Marks Tey to Sudbury. This is the only line in the region where battery technology was considered, but as this would require having just one or two battery trains in the fleet it is logical to apply the same solution as the Braintree branch and electrify.

What should we be campaigning for?

We need to remember that this report is not just about decarbonising the railway but the role the railway can play in decarbonising the entire UK economy. Our first priority must therefore be the **Felixstowe to Peterborough** route as taking lorries off our roads and putting freight on rail gives us the biggest carbon saving of all.



RAIL DURING COVID-19 – WHAT ABOUT FARE REVENUE? BY TREVOR GARROD

RAIL EAST 187 (September 2020) properly countered the months of government advice that people should avoid travel by train (or other public transport) because it is 'unsafe'. It is good to know that Railfuture has been using its Twitter account to tell people to ignore such advice. Hopefully, this has been a factor in encouraging more to use the trains in our region in recent months.

Similarly, we in the East Suffolk Travel Association (ESTA) issued a statement in May refuting the advice of the Transport Secretary advising everybody to commute by bicycle or on foot, instead urging them to walk to the bus stop or bike to the station, while calling for parking charges to be relaxed for those needing to go to the station by car.

The same government advice has caused dissatisfaction among local bus operators and their customers, some of whom have been refused entry onto vehicles deemed "full" due to social distancing protocols.

East Anglia was, of course, more fortunate than some other regions in that Greater Anglia had introduced a new fleet with greater capacity, allowing more social distancing.

What the articles in RAIL EAST did not mention, however, is the problem of fare evasion. As the leisure industries opened

up in the summer, more people were travelling by train, but how many were having a free ride? Conductors were not checking or issuing tickets, for example. On one early September journey into Norwich I spoke with a conductor who said he had been asked to walk along the train to do a headcount - so at least the managers could obtain an estimate of the size of the problem.

On another occasion I had a free ride because I boarded at an unstaffed station where the ticket vending machine was not working.

Later in September, desks were set up at the barriers at Norwich and Ipswich so that passengers arriving without tickets could pay. I wonder how many of these said they had boarded the train at Brundall Gardens or Westerfield?

[Railfuture's President has expressed similar concerns about ticketless travel (right).]



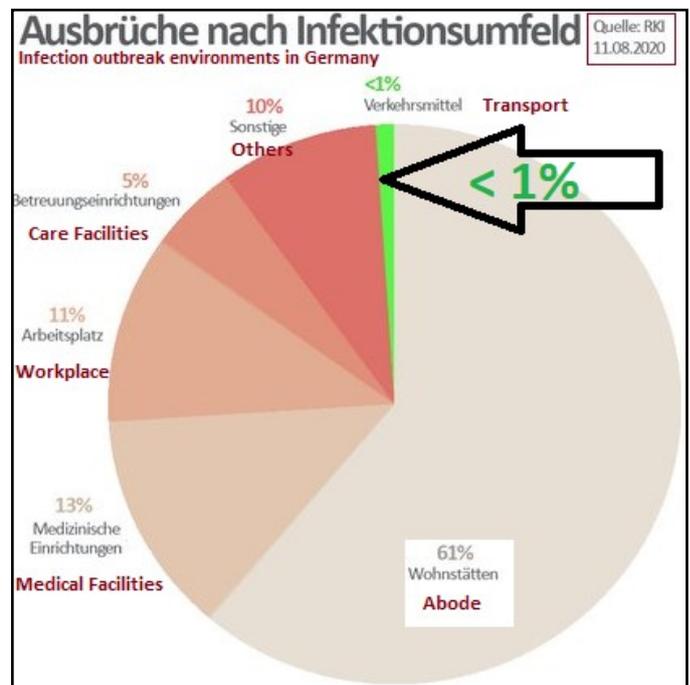
Christian Wolmar @christianwolmar

Basically the railway has become a free service and ppl realise it. There are no on board ticket checks and few at stations. A bunch of kids aged around 12 - 15 have taken over 1st class on this @TLRailUK service 19 55 ex Cambridge Yet in Italy all trains have ticket checks

Let's hope that Greater

Anglia (also GTR and CrossCountry) management and unions will soon reach an agreement on checking tickets (with suitable personal protective equipment), so that this problem is under control.

Trevor Garrod is chair of ESTA but writes here in a personal capacity.



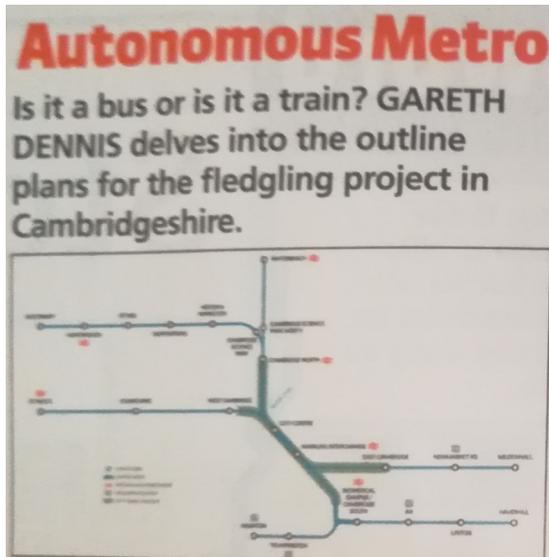
Research was undertaken in Germany on where people caught COVID-19. The Robert Koch Institute found (see pie chart above) that less than 1% of infections occurred on any mode of transport. A similar figure has been reported from UK government analysis - but the railway has not used this reassuring statistic in its publicity.

WILL CAM CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS BE THE RIGHT ONES?

BY JOHN GRANT

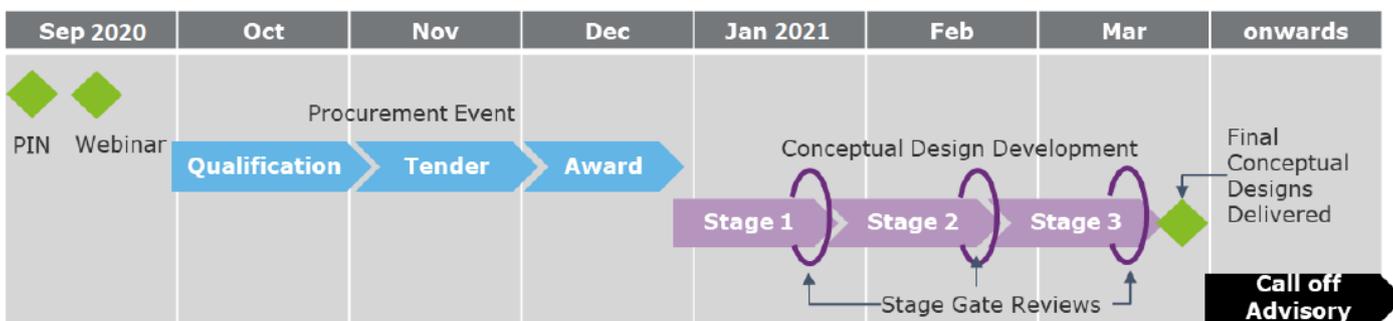
Just before publication of this issue of RAIL EAST, the call for “creative and feasible Conceptual Designs for the ground-breaking Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM)” will have closed. A Special Purpose Vehicle (a standard term, not an intentional pun) has been set up to run the project independently of political bodies, but the design contract will be with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). It seems to bear very little relationship, in either timescale or specification, to the “Sub Strategy” reported in RAIL EAST 186.

A webinar was held in September 2020, beginning with a speech from the Mayor, James Palmer, who said that Cambridge competes with places such as San Francisco and Singapore, which have metro systems, but doesn't have the million-plus population needed to make a traditional metro viable, so we need to be innovative. He did not say anything about rail vs tarmac (or concrete). The specification shows signs of having been written assuming optically guided buses and then widened to allow other options. It envisages that the existing busway “will be converted”; maybe, like Brunel in the early days of the Great Western, they've discovered that longitudinal beams on piles are not a great idea.



RAIL Magazine's 18 November 2020 issue features the CAM and asks “**is it a bus or a train?**” To many people it looks like an ill-considered decision was made a long time ago — a rubber-tired system — but is it inevitable?

At this stage they are looking for ideas rather than ability to construct the system, but they are somewhat hamstrung by the public sector procurement process; they have tried to make the application process as simple as possible, but it still includes a lot of form-filling and box-ticking. They say they are looking for potential rather than prior experience, but applicants must nevertheless list three projects on which they have worked (not necessarily mass transit, though). The only question asking applicants about their ideas for the system is “detail the type of vehicle around which your conceptual design will be based”, covering just one of the five areas in which innovation is sought. The e-mail addresses of people who attended the webinar were shared, but without the opportunity to provide any of the kind of information that would help with consortium-building.

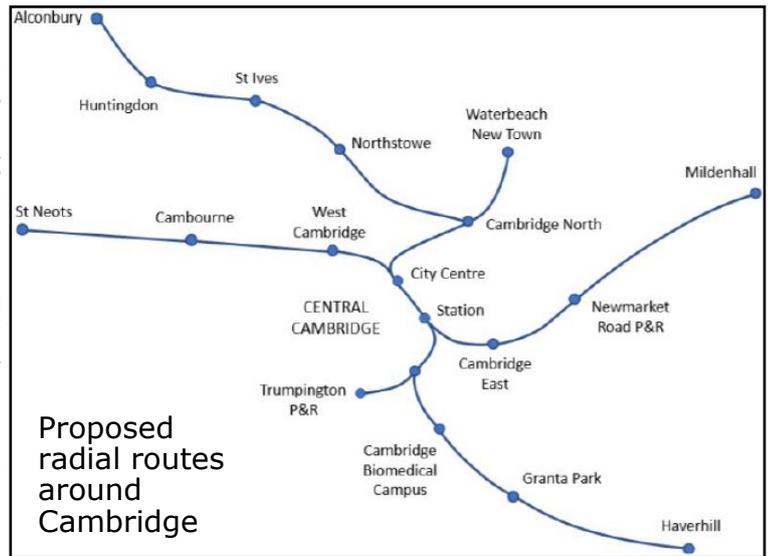


It is not clear to what extent innovation is being invited as regards the connectivity the system will provide. The Mayor said in his presentation that Cambridge is unusual in that employment is mostly in a “necklace” around the edge rather than in the centre; however, the route map (see next page) includes radial routes (four of which are currently the subject of separate public consultations) but no orbital links. In a car you can go directly to the next village, instead of having to go into

the city centre and out again; providing that kind of service with traditional public transport would be expensive, but it ought to be viable with a demand responsive system with comparatively small automated vehicles. Without it, people will still need a car.

The specification says tunnelling is "optional", although the world's foremost expert in tunnelling has been appointed to chair the SPV. It also calls for segregated tracks to enable journey times to be more reliable than by car, and aims to "encourage a modal shift away from cars", but does not say that journey times ought not to be slower than by car.

So it appears the door might have been left open for rail, which would be able to deliver faster journey times. There ought to be plenty of opportunity for innovation in areas where it will have real benefit, such as the way the system operates when not constrained by the need to run to a timetable that is linked to staff rostering – for instance if at off-peak times vehicles can be distributed across the system instead of being stabled in a depot.



John Grant is chair of FLUA, but writes above in a personal capacity.

Railfuture supports good quality public transport to meet the needs to Cambridge city and its surroundings, but believes that the proven technology (and popularity) of a rail-based system is best, as mentioned in previous RAIL EAST issues.

EARLY ACCIDENT COMMEMORATED

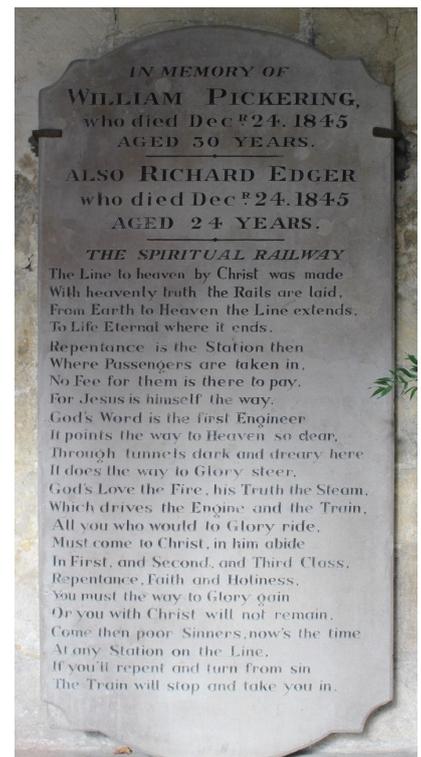
BY PHIL SMART

In RAIL EAST 187 we remembered the opening in July 1845 of the line that made up the route from London to Norwich via Cambridge. This terminated at a temporary station at Trowse until the final section, including a bridge over the river Wensum, was opened on 15 December to link up with the Norwich and Yarmouth line at Thorpe.

It was sadly only nine days later that the line experienced its first fatalities, a tragic accident on Christmas Eve when a train from Norwich came off the rails near Thetford due to over speeding. The driver, Thomas Pickering and fireman, Richard Hedges were both killed, though no passengers were seriously hurt.

The railwaymen's memorial can be found today in the south porch of Ely Cathedral. It is not known why their names were changed by the stonemason. The hymn or poem – sometimes classified as a "broadside ballad" – is of nonconformist origin rather than Anglican. It is even possible it originated in the US. And as far as is known it was written at least a decade after the tragic events of December 1845. The text, which sees train travel as an allegory for the soul's salvation, is transcribed at:

<http://www.victorianweb.org/technology/railways/61.html>.



RAIL EAST QUIZ— WHERE WAS THIS PHOTO TAKEN?



This photo, left, was not taken through the 'round, square or arched window'. It was a Greater Anglia class 755 bi-mode train window shortly after departing the station.

Can you identify where the train was travelling? Just name the previous and next station. Answer in issue 189.

Clue: this photo was taken in daylight, so in the top left -hand corner you might be able to make out a bit of sky. There may even be the top of a tree. In the words of the late Shaw Taylor: "do you recognise it?"

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR RAIL EAST

Please send articles for possible inclusion in RAIL EAST to Peter Feeney, who collates all submissions and prepares them for inclusion. Good quality photos are appreciated and essential in order to make RAIL EAST visually attractive. *Issue 189's publication date will be set once a decision is made about the branch AGM.*

All submissions by **6 February 2021**, please, but articles covering late news will be considered just before sending to the printer two weeks later.

RAIL EAST is formatted by Jerry Alderson.

RECEIVING RAIL EAST BY POST OR ELECTRONICALLY?

Thank you to Railfuture members who have agreed to receive RAIL EAST by email. This helps to keep Railfuture's costs down and so spend funds on rail campaigning.

You can be emailed a copy of RAIL EAST on the same day that it goes to the printer, so you will receive it more than a week before other people. To switch to receiving it by email, please contact Lloyd Butler, who manages our database, at renewals@railfuture.org.uk. Your co-operation will be appreciated.

The latest RAIL EAST is always at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/rail-east/>. All issues since 2017 are at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/rail-east/covers/>.

WE'D LIKE YOU (+ YOUR FRIENDS) TO JOIN RAILFUTURE

Railfuture is funded entirely by the public, who use the railway. This means that it can stand up for their interests; hopefully RAIL EAST proves this, with its justifiable criticism (plus much-deserved praise— Railfuture *promotes* rail travel, after all).

Railfuture works *constructively* with the rail industry, government (national and local), businesses and stakeholders to improve and expand the railway. Its "bigger and better railway" strapline has been copied by Network Rail and no doubt the "better services over a bigger railway" slogan will be plagiarised as well.

A large membership base — across the generations — is needed, so please make an effort to join or persuade someone else to become a Railfuture member. Join online at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/join/> using a credit/debit card or PayPal.

railfuture East Anglia

MEDIA CONTACTS

Chairman: Nick Dibben

24 Bure Close, St Ives PE27 3FE

Tel: 01480 495101

nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk

Vice-Chairman: Chris Burton

Tel: 01223 352327 / 07780 856212

chris.burton@railfuture.org.uk

Vice-Chairman: Peter Wakefield

Tel: 01223 352364 / 07738 085307

peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk

OTHER CONTACTS

Secretary: Paul Hollinghurst

110 Catharine Street, Cambridge CB1 3AR

paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk

Contributions for RAIL EAST: Peter Feeney

raileast@railfuture.org.uk

East Anglia Membership Secretary: Peter Bayless

3 Queens St, Spooner Row, Wymondham NR18 9JU

petlinbay@btinternet.com

Also see <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Contacts>

A flyer for our meetings is always at: www.railfuture.org.uk/east/meetings.
This includes a map of the venue and directions from the station.

MEETING DATES AND VENUES

SATURDAY 5 DEC 2020

Venue in
CANCELLED
COVID-19

SATURDAY—SPRING 2021

Friends Meeting House,
St John's Street

BURY ST EDMUNDS
IP33 1SJ

Depending on COVID-19
rules a 'physical' AGM may
be held, probably in April.
Hopefully normal meetings
from June.

Follow Railfuture East Anglia on Twitter <https://twitter.com/RailfutureEA>

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All other (non-branch) correspondence to 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingsstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND