



THE NEWSLETTER OF RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

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December 2009

Hello, and welcome to the edition which takes us into 2010. Whatever 2009 brought in dark depression for the Treasury, it certainly shone for the railway at the Department for Transport where, at long, long last, a Secretary of State for Transport resides who is not only highly intelligent, but openly enthusiastic for rail transport. What could be rarer or more desirable than this? May the Prime Minister preserve him in-post until the threatened General Election next year. After which, well, who knows!

The recent spate of drivers withdrawing their goodwill and not working Sundays or Rest Days is an issue where the railway seems still reluctant to acknowledge a 21st century fact; that Sunday is far from being the quiet day it was once. Sunday working has be mandatory – travellers, staff, management, shareholders and the government surely know this. Virgin already do so, and after a very encouraging statement in mid November by First Group rail supremo, Mary Grant, it looks as though First Capital Connect(FCC) might be moving this way too. We in RailFuture East Anglia certainly hope so.

Now, before I make way for the real substance of this issue, you will have noticed that, for the first time, illustrations grace the pages. Whether the printing process has done them justice you and I will by now know. More will be used in the future, if technically suitable. So, do send a print or digital JPEG file of anything which might fill out your news story.

In the meantime though, may I, on behalf of your Branch committee, wish you a very Happy Christmas and a 2010 of far more highs than lows. CB

Welcome

And it is something which we hope to convey more often to our new members: so to *Andrew Gee of Felixstowe, Geoffrey Hinchcliffe of Diss, Christine Pringle from March and Timothy Rooke from Meldreth*, the warmest of welcomes to our East Anglia Branch of RailFuture. We truly hope you'll find your membership worthwhile, not least through active participation. PW

East Coast Main Line (ECML) Timetable: Network Rail proposals:

During October Network Rail published the first draft of a revamped timetable

twixt London King's Cross, Yorkshire and Scotland along with the many connection points en route. This is the result of pressure from the Scottish Parliament as well as our own Department for Transport(DfT) and the Office for Rail Regulation(ORR), for faster services and for departures to follow a predictable destination pattern throughout the day. Definitely a move toward the Swiss 'Taktfahrplan' of which much was heard at our AGM last March

Recasting something like this is no minor challenge for a mixed traffic route interfacing with other routes at several major junctions, and having to 'weave' its way through a London suburban service. Our Chairman, Peter Wakefield, has certainly burnt the midnight oil analysing this draft timetable in double quick time. What follows, because of space limitations, is a distillation of his lengthy assessment by way of comparison with the current timetable. My very grateful thanks to him for the hard graft.

The *proposed* basic departure pattern from King's Cross is:

00.00mins	York, Darlington, Newcastle and Scotland (but <i>no longer</i> Glasgow)
00.05	Peterborough,Doncaster,Wakefield and Leeds
00.10	Peterborough,Grantham,Newark,Lincoln(on even hours), or onward to Retford,Doncaster and York
00.30	Peterborough,Newark,Doncaster,York,Darlington and Newcastle (six extended to Edinburgh with varied calling pattern)
00.35	Stevenage, Grantham,Doncaster, Wakefield and Leeds
00.48(slightly variable)	Open Access Operators to Hull, Sunderland or Bradford

Note that services would still run to Aberdeen and Inverness, but *not Glasgow!*

In the *current* timetable up to four Kings Cross mainline departures serve Peterborough and, although there are gaps, the frequency partly compensates for the apparently random spacing of the service. The proposed timetable offers a repeating pattern of three trains per hour which at first sight ought to be very good news. On closer scrutiny,however, two of these three services run within 5-10 minutes of each other, which is disappointing and will hopefully be remedied in the final draft. Let's now look at specific aspects.

East Anglia via Peterborough to the North.

Peterborough is not only a major urban centre, it is also the only gateway railhead to the north out of East Anglia. A fact presumably acknowledged by previous timetable planners who stopped most services there. A current example shows 12 services to Edinburgh and beyond with no less than 15 return trains. The proposed timetable reduces this to 6 each way - a major reduction. So how do the proposed Peterborough departures northwards pan

out compared to the present day? In the accompanying table current departure times are in *italics* with the proposed in **bold**.

Northbound Departure Comparison at Peterborough

<i>Time</i>	<i>Per hour</i>	<i>At mins past hour</i>
05-06h	0/0	-----
06-07h	1/2	43, 51,48
07-08h	3/2	06,07,21,51,51,58
08-09h	4/3	01,17,,21,46,51,59,58
09-10h	4/3	17,21,28,47,51,56,57
10-11h	4/3	17,21,27,45,51,56,58
11-12h	4/3	17,17,23,46,51,56,58
12-13h	3/3	17,21,27,47,51,58
13-14h	4/3	01,17,17,21,46,51,58,58
14-15h	2/3	17,25,51,56,58
15-16h	2/3	16,17,51,57,58
16-17h	3/3	17,17,26,46,51,56,58
17-18h	2/2	17,27,51,52
18-19h	4/4	07,16,18,39,39,53,53,59
19-20h	4/3	12,17,23,46,51,52,58
20-21h	4/2	21,27,28,46,48,53
21-22h	2/2	20,27,48.54
22-23h	2/2	02,23,47,47
23-24h	0/0	-----

Although there isn't room for a similar southbound departure table, suffice to say that the service spacing is much more acceptable. The cross country arrival pattern and proposed ECML connection wait is below.

<i>To EDINBURGH @ XX.17</i>	<i>To LEEDS @ XX.51</i>
From Cambridge 28 minutes	From Cambridge 2 minutes
From Ipswich 39 "	From Ipswich 12 "
From Norwich 57 "	From Norwich 26 "
From Stevenage 11 "	From Stevenage 13 "

<i>To LINCOLN (even hour) OR YORK XX.59</i>
From Cambridge 10 minutes
From Ipswich 20 "
From Norwich 34 "
From Stevenage 21 "

Plus for Grantham the hourly Norwich-Liverpool service. Some of the main connection waiting times are reasonable whilst others are clearly not. The

Cambridge connections, currently one of ECML's major markets, certainly need to be reviewed. Coming south the connecting times for the same four destinations are in the next tables.

<i>From Leeds, Wakefield, Doncaster @ XX.04</i>		<i>From LINCOLN OR YORK @ XX.25</i>	
To Cambridge	13 minutes	To Cambridge	53 minutes
To Ipswich	41 "	To Ipswich	22 "
To Norwich	39 "	To Norwich	19 "
To Stevenage	13 "	To Stevenage	21 "

<i>From Edinburgh and Newcastle @ XX.47</i>	
To Cambridge	31 minutes
To Ipswich	59 "
To Norwich	57 "
To Stevenage	31 "

Hardly impressive 'hanging about' times, we think you'll agree, so, back to the drawing board, chaps!

Talking of waiting times, or should one say 'dwell times'(?), because how long ECML trains dwell at Peterborough is surprisingly varied. Of 42 northbound services 13 are expected to depart within a minute of arrival; 22 exactly one minute later; and 7 two minutes later.

Observation at Peterborough suggests that it averages 20-25 seconds from the signal to close doors to the train actually moving; less than one minute scheduled dwell time then indicates wayward ambition and a potential punctuality issue. And with fewer Anglo-Scottish services calling, presumably many more people will be attempting to join them. This does not augur well for the passenger experience. That said, we do note that King's Cross-Peterborough schedules are to be slackened from 45-46 minutes to 47-50. So perhaps a punctuality issue might be solved by early arrival. Strange way to regulate, though.

Southbound services are more generously timed with no less than 10 enjoying 3 to 5 minutes standing time at Peterborough. Now that's more like it. These are but a few of the points this draft timetable inevitably raises and we may return to the subject in our next issue. Meantime, for the full document go to: www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/ecml-nr-scl2-timetable-161009.pdf As we greatly welcome your own comments, do please send them to Peter Wakefield. In due course we will be formally responding to these draft proposals. PW/CB

**Next Branch Meeting, 5 December, Cambridge CB1 2DL
'The Olympics and the Railway'**

Norwich Meeting: 26 September. A Report.



A good turn out of Branch members heard Steven Ashling, Chairman-elect of the North Norfolk Railway, and also an Operations Manager with Network Rail, East Anglia, give a fascinating talk on his extensive railway career to date, as well as a little insight on some rail developments in our region.

The demise of March marshalling yard and its re-birth as a track maintenance facility was cited by Steven as a prime example of how the railway was constantly changing. Further development at March would create a new recycling facility for railway materials as well as about thirty new jobs.

And talking of track, Steven spoke of the vital upgrade to the level crossing at Croxton, east of Thetford. This was the site of the accident in 2006 where an early morning train hit debris displaced from the crossing by road traffic, a situation made worse by the angle of the road to the railway. The remedy is a new-to-the-UK crossing design from Holland, essentially a solid concrete base with the railway track run in slots. Work is expected to take place in February 2010. So no trains then one suspects.

We were reminded that the re-signalling of the Norwich to Ely route was still under consideration by Network Rail. (It was in a Railtrack business plan many years ago). Enhancements being considered include a new loop at Brandon, signal modifications to allow trains to reverse at Thetford and a new crossover at Wymondham. Some of this work was already under way during the last two weekends of October. A 'modular' signalling system is still being considered not least to save money. A decision is expected in 2010.

Very dear to Steven's heart, and after many years of debate and several potentially expensive schemes, one scheme has finally been agreed upon to re-link the North Norfolk Railway (NNR) with the Network Rail tracks at Sheringham. To avoid expensive signalling, this new connection across the road separating the two stations will operate to tramway rules, with staff having to use red flags to stop the traffic.

Although this will prevent NXEA trains using the NNR station, it *will* allow special trains/locomotives to run between the two stations, indeed, from anywhere on the national system. Special trains will in any case be restricted by platform length at Cromer to five coaches. The scheme is expected to cost

£142,000 rather than the millions quoted for previous ideas, with completion expected by March 2010. Nevertheless, as the NNR still need to raise £30,000 towards the project, Steven implored us to support the scheme generously which the accompanying flyer will let you do. Website <http://www.nnrailway.co.uk/> is another information point. **ND/CB**

News:

Attleborough Station Count

Warmest thanks to the nine members who undertook the latest passenger count carried out by the Branch which was very successful. The location is on the Norwich to Ely line and was an event blessed with a glorious autumnal day. Branch members counted every passenger boarding and alighting each service, from first to last train. The total turned out to be 478 and the detailed breakdown of that figure has been passed onto National



Express East Anglia and local councils. Again, many thanks to those who took part in this valuable exercise. Could you help, next time? ND/CB.

Two into Three does go (Norwich to Cambridge Success):

National Express East Anglia(NXEA) recently announced, with justifiable pride, that their Norwich to Cambridge service just goes from strength to strength, requiring longer trains. Last year a record 800,000 passenger journeys were sold with commuting to Norwich or Cambridge, especially from Wymondham, Attleborough and Thetford, significant. Almost as significant were trips for business and leisure including academics heading to the University of East Anglia or Cambridge University.

As a result of this 70% traffic growth since year one, NEXA want to use *three-coach* Class 170 diesel trains for the service, rather than the present two-coach units. Railfuture agrees with this strategy though not wholly with transferring the units from their current work on the Liverpool Street-Ipswich-Lowestoft/Peterborough service.

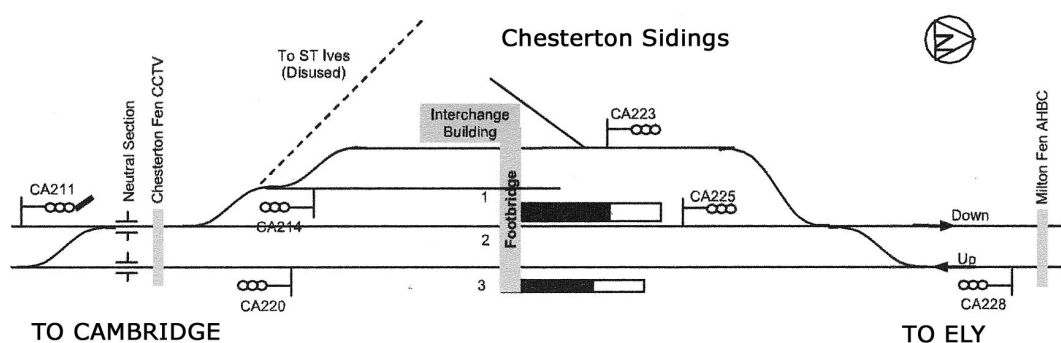
Although we applaud the growth, we certainly want to see travel times cut, ideally with a limited stop second service of, say, Wymondham, Brandon, Ely and Cambridge and in absolutely no more than 65 minutes. Aside from

current track and signalling issues, the route alignment is very well suited to much 90-100mph running. So whilst due congratulations to everybody concerned with the achievement, let us never forget the original Anglia Railways management whose entrepreneurial zeal created the service. 800,000 people appear to be very grateful. Here's to continued growth. CB

Chesterton Station moves forward

A long standing aspiration of the Branch has been a new station at Chesterton to the north of Cambridge. Although our vision of a junction station for the St Ives line has been dashed by the new busway, the station would still serve the adjacent Science Park and would act as a Parkway station being close to the A14. This would provide an alternative for people compelled to cross Cambridge to reach the main station. Definitely a good move.

The scheme has been discussed by Cambridgeshire County Council for many years and was recently linked to plans for a local road congestion charge. The County Council have now decided to bring the scheme forward after the Regional Assembly agreed to support an application for Government funding. A formal submission to Government is expected to be made shortly.



As the plan indicates, the £25m new station would comprise 3 platforms each suitable for 12 coach trains. Two platforms would be built on the existing main line, whilst the third would be a bay platform. Existing pointwork would be used and the other markings on the plan refer to signal locations. A 400 space car park would be provided and the busway would probably be extended to serve the site. The freight facility for stone trains would be maintained along with further sidings installed to park passenger rolling stock. If all goes to plan the station could be open for the December 2013 timetable.

Cambridgeshire County Council have commissioned studies to create a possible timetable for submission to Network Rail. Initial results indicate that it is possible to provide a good train service to Chesterton without affecting stops at Waterbeach. ND

Cambridgeshire CC meets with RailFuture East Anglia Branch:

During November the Branch had another useful meeting with Cambridgeshire County Council. Jeremy Smith, Acting Head of Transport and Strategy, was our contact. After noting the large collection of bus models and samples in the office, a wide ranging discussion on rail issues followed. The County were interested in the re-opening of the Wisbech line and we impressed upon him the need for through services to Cambridge and a station close to the centre of Wisbech, in addition to a A47-linked parkway station. We expressed concern about future train stopping patterns on the East Coast Main Line which could see a reduction in direct trains from Peterborough to Edinburgh and agreed to provide further information about the current consultation process. We discussed a new eastern entrance to Cambridge station linked into the new footbridge being provided as part of the additional platform. It was accepted that this entrance would be for pedestrians and cyclists only to deter car drivers for the surrounding narrow streets.

The County is expected to import household waste from London for processing, by rail. While some may end up at the former Whittlesea brick pits ,which suggests a rail siding adjacent to the Ely-Peterborough line, other waste may be directed to a facility at Waterbeach. This would use sidings at Chesterton, where space is tight given the plan for the station and carriage sidings.

Finally, we asked why the County did not support pupils travelling by train to school in the way they do with buses. This would be useful especially for pupils south of Cambridge travelling into the city. To this issue there appeared to be no simple answer; but we will continue pressure. ND

Hitchin Flyover

Network Rail has submitted a Transport and Works Act Application to build a new flyover across the East Coast Mainline to improve access to the Cambridge line. The Act allows Network Rail to acquire land and build the scheme. The new track will leave the existing mainline north of Hitchin station and rise up onto a viaduct over the existing tracks. The route then swings eastwards to rejoin the Cambridge line close to the Stotfold Road bridge. The route will mean that Cambridge bound trains no longer have to cross 3 tracks of the mainline greatly increasing capacity of the route. The 2.2km long track will cost £62m and the work should start in 2011 and be complete by 2014.

The Branch has written to the Department for Transport in support of the scheme. For further details: <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/5538.aspx>

National Express East Anglia (NEXA) looks to the future:

"There is plenty in prospect for our East Anglia rail network" reports Nick Dibben. This was the clear message from the NXEA Management team when

the Branch representatives joined others from various rail user groups at a stakeholder meeting held at Liverpool Street station in October.

Projects under way include a new carriage washing plant at the Orient Way sidings near Stratford; Clacton depot being returned to use; and additional car parking spaces and modernisation at many stations. Planning permission had been given for the much needed passenger lifts at Ipswich station. Designs are being developed for an additional island platform at Cambridge and for a new passing loop at Beccles Station. At the latter, if funding is agreed, the loop would allow an hourly service to operate on the line between Ipswich and Lowestoft from 2012.

NXEA reported receiving over 400 responses to their timetable consultation over the summer. Most replies were generally supportive, but the company would consider:

- concerns regarding interchange issues at Ipswich and Manningtree;
- the use of existing electric multiple units on London to Norwich services;
- the use of the Stansted Express new trains on some services to Cambridge as well.

These proposed changes have been submitted for approval to the Department for Transport (DfT), a response to which is expected by the end of this year.

The first of the additional Class 321 units has arrived and therefore the December 2009 timetable will see this new resource strengthening 18 peak hour services to and from Liverpool Street.

If the DfT agree the overall package, the December 2010 timetable will see an hourly service between Ipswich and Saxmundham. Other rural services would get additional coaches using the rolling stock from the discontinued through service between London and Lowestoft/Peterborough. Three-car units would probably default to the often overcrowded Norwich-Cambridge service, whilst some two-car units might replace older trains working the Ipswich-Cambridge timetable.

Some off-peak London to Norwich trains will be speeded-up by fewer stops. At the December 2011 timetable change, the new stock for the West Anglia and Stansted Express routes will have arrived allowing longer trains to operate on many of these services.

Looking further ahead, plans to make the route from Tottenham Hale to Cheshunt 4 tracks are being developed for construction between 2014-2019. A sum of £15m has been allocated for station improvement in the region, and NXEA are looking at ways of providing access for the disabled at Manningtree Station. So, yes, a very positive future awaits rail users in our region. ND

A Step-Change at Downham Market?

Clara Zilahi writes, "when, in August, Network Rail announced its plan to build a footbridge over the railway line at Downham Market Station the decision was welcomed by FCC, the Users' Group FLUA and by representatives of the Branch Committee and the media."

"Those of us primarily concerned with disability issues, including the West Norfolk Disability Information Service, are, though, opposed to the scheme as it stands. Both the lift, and the use of the road crossing (closed long in advance of any train) would significantly add to total journey time, especially (proportionately) for the frequently made trips to King's Lynn, where the rail journey itself is barely 15 minutes. A cheaper alternative would be to have a controlled barrow crossing, closed when unsafe. It seems that this is not being considered for "political" (with a small 'p') reasons; i.e. the allocation of responsibility."

However, Robert Stripe of Railfuture and the Fen Line Rail Users Association (FLUA), states: ".....that Network Rail (NR) has withdrawn its planning application for the footbridge and will submit a modified one after further consultation." "I would also point out" he continues, "that FLUA, whilst supporting the idea of a footbridge, does have provisos."

1. "The erection of a footbridge is quite separate from the issue of the [removal?] barrow crossing and would be dealt with under completely different regulations."
2. "The whole project is being spearheaded by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR), NR and First Capital Connect - in that order (to my knowledge, that is)."
3. "Moreover, please note that *if* there were to be an accident on the barrow crossing in the immediate future, NR would remove the crossing forthwith, irrespective of any other means of crossing existing or not.... by order of the ORR. [Let us hope there are no 'accidents'.]"

So, as ever, regulation, cost, and practicality are the arbiters of a problem. Downham Market is not a unique station, as similar issues have occurred before (Thetford) and will again. The Editor would like to express his thanks to Clara Zilahi and Robert Stripe for clarifying the issues at stake. CB/CZ/RS

**Next Branch Meeting, Cambridge: Alex Wood Hall,
Norfolk St. CB1 2DL 14.14 hrs
Guest Speaker: Mike Lamport of Olympic Delivery Authority
'The Olympics and the Railway'**

East Suffolk Matters

Trevor Garrod reports that Bob Blizzard, the MP for Waveney, met with Network Rail resulting in the weeds being cut down on the disused platform at Beccles. As Trevor says, "This action was, of course, of great comfort to the 20 or so of us waiting in the drizzle on October 31st on the other platform for a late-running train to Lowestoft. The basic shelter has no glass in it and the real time information screen did not tell us how late the train would be."

East Suffolk Travellers' Association Chairman, Trevor Garrod, had letters published in two local newspapers asking whether the MP had also made representations to the Secretary of State or other bodies about National Express East Anglia's proposals to withdraw the Lowestoft-London through trains from December 2010. Mr Garrod also suggested that it would be useful to hear the view of the other main political parties and suggested that a cross-party approach could be made on this issue.

"Meanwhile," Trevor Garrod continues, " at a 'Forum' for representatives of local rail users groups, NXEA management said they had received 400 responses to their recent consultation on proposed timetable changes from December 2010, and that they were going ahead with the withdrawal of the Lowestoft-London through trains. It is known that at least three users' groups and many individuals wrote in opposition to the changes. The final decision will be a political one, as it is the Secretary of State who will have to free NXEA from their franchise commitment, which was to run a Lowestoft - London through service." TG

New Intermodal Locomotive in East Anglia:



Lest anyone accuse your Editor of trainspotter tendencies I should add that this picture *is* relevant to we East Anglians: not only is it a design of locomotive absolutely new to these shores, it is also one which we are increasingly likely to see in our region between now and our AGM. Built by General Electric (USA) and ordered by Freightliner, the first of these Class.70 locomotives arrived during November for testing and UK rail certification. CB

Better Stations in East Anglia: a platform for your views!

Network Rail want to know what facilities you and I think are really important at our railway stations. So much so that they have set up a website for us to use at: www.networkrail.co.uk/actionstations. This is all part of a national £3.2bn budget to improve stations, of which 150 in our region have been earmarked for attention. This dovetails nicely with the report commissioned by

Lord Adonis from architect and planner, Sir Peter Hall along with Chris Green, the very successful ex-BR manager, about the nation's stations, recently completed and delivered to him. So, now's time to have your say. CB

Ticket Barriers: the latest

DOR East Coast boss, Elaine Holt, has announced that although automatic ticket barriers *will* be installed at Peterborough, it has been decided that York station is to be spared their presence. Which seems good news for York. CB

All comments and contributions most welcome (but no more than 300 words) to: Editor, Chris Burton, / or Nick Dibben, see details below.
Deadline for next issue is Friday 22 January 2010

Railfuture

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH : OFFICERS

Chairman: Peter Wakefield (PW)
7 Hollymount, St Matthews Street, Cambridge CB1 1QD
01223 352364
petawake@yahoo.com

Vice Chairman: Peter Lawrence (PL)
3 Hellesdon Road, Norwich NR6 5EB
01603 627217
pandwlawrence@waitrose.com

Secretary: Nick Dibben (ND)
24 Bure Close, St Ives PE27 3FE
Tel: 01480495101,
nick.dibben@btinternet.com

Treasurer: Lewis Buckingham
25 Drury Road, Colchester CO2 7UY Tel: 01206 571734

Membership Secretary: Clara Zilahi
31 Wimsbotsham Road, Downham Market PE38 9PE
01366 383954 clara.zilahi2@btinternet.com

RAILEAST Editor: Chris Burton (CB)
2 Stone Terrace,
Cambridge, CB1 2PN
01223 352327
cfb79ten@gmail.com



EAST ANGLIA BRANCH :

Dates for your Diary

BRANCH MEETINGS 2009 / 10

CAMBRIDGE
5 December
Alex Wood Hall, Norfolk St. CB1 2DL
at 14.15hours
Guest Speaker: Mike Lamport of
Olympic Delivery Authority
'The Olympics and the Railway'

BURY St EDMUNDS: 27 February
AGM. Venue: The Library,
Guest Speaker TBA

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