

# raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

ISSUE 161 February 2014

Internet at

[www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)  
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## ***BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING***

*Friends Meeting House,  
St John's Street,  
Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1SJ*



***22 FEBRUARY 2014  
at 14.00 Hours***

*Full details inside and on  
the accompanying Flyer*

***GUEST SPEAKER::***

*Linda McCord  
of  
Passenger Focus*

## Chairman's Annual Report: 2013-14

This year has been a busy year for the Branch and especially the Branch Committee.

First among our activities has been the urgent and ambitious Wisbech Rail Reopening Campaign, which involved setting up a petition website and then volunteers distributing 12000 leaflets to households in Wisbech and the surrounding area including March and Manea. The petition eventually gathered nearly 4000 supporters, with almost 3000 signatures from Cambridgeshire being presented to the County Council in July. Council leader Martin Curtis has since praised us for promoting better transport links to Wisbech and announced that the council has commissioned a feasibility study. Many thanks to the team who trudged around Wisbech and district getting those leaflets out....no mean task. It is very pleasing that this Project continues to gain momentum with Wisbech MP, Steve Barclay, announcing that he is to meet the railway minister to press the case for a Wisbech to Cambridge link to be included in the next franchise.

The East West Rail Link (EWRL) project has again been to the forefront with a concern about the lack of protection for possible EWRL route alignments through Cambridgeshire. So a 10 page "East West Rail Briefing for Cambridgeshire" was produced and distributed by email to local media and all local politicians. This resulted in huge press interest with radio and television interviews for the branch chairman, followed a short while later by the government's announcement that it was pressing ahead with a study to identify routes.

Responses were provided to a number of local transport plan consultations including the South Cambridgeshire Transport Strategy. Several meetings were attended about the Project which is now seen as one of national importance. We are delighted that the DfT has announced that a new railway might well be constructed directly from Bedford to Cambridge.

During the year our three public meetings and the AGM included guest speakers; Geraint Hughes, Partnership Manager Greater Anglia, talking about the developments at Cambridge Station; David Reed, the Managing Director of Track Access Services Limited; and Derek Haynes from the Norfolk Orbital Railway scheme. In addition the Branch has been organising, in conjunction with the railway industry, a memorial to our late member Clara Zilahi at her home station of Downham Market. This last is still on-going, so more information at a later date.

The Branch has continued to support local developments including Manea's new transformed service, and made detailed suggestions during the year for the development of the new Cambridge Science Park Station. The

Cambridgeshire CC welcomed our support for the Project. We made several representations about poor operations on the railway and the Branch continues to publish its 16 page quarterly newsletter 'RailEast', which is well received. Our website has been moved to a new home as part of Railfuture's national website, and includes news, events, campaigns and newsletters all to hand at..... [www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia) , and now has an active presence on Twitter @RailfutureEA.

None of these activities can occur without the wonderful commitment of our volunteers both at committee level and from members. I must emphasise that nothing we do has any meaning unless we have a large membership to represent. So, a growing membership is VERY important to every single one of us. And our Branch *is* growing but "**Please renew your membership ....it is greatly valued. Please recruit a new member during the coming year.**" Yes, every one of us has a role to play in recruitment. Maybe, your partner may wish to join as a family member.....?

***Our AGM is to be held in the Friends Meeting House in Bury St Edmunds on Saturday February 22nd at 14.00 hours. Our speaker will be Linda McCord from Passenger Focus, who will lead a discussion on how we make the railway more user focused...we know it will be a fascinating talk as we have worked closely with Linda this year on several issues...do come along and take part! PW***

## NEWS

### **Network Rail accedes to ORR funding strictures for 2014-19.**

After much consultation and negotiation, Network Rail's expenditure and output for Control Period 5, 2014-19 was agreed with the Office of Rail Regulation(ORR) during the Autumn. The ORR has set new targets for Network Rail's management of its assets, especially requiring a move from a 'find and fix' to a 'predict and provide approach to maintenance'. Network Rail were not entirely happy with the outcome it must be said. The general details are available on-line at <http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/pr13/publications/final-determination.php> .

Peter Wakefield says: Our list of aspirations sent into ORR and copied to the regional MPs included: Ely N Jct.; third track in the Chelmsford area; Bow Jct. We presume: 1.the freight network would continue to be developed both through the region and in the Leicester area; 2. EWRL would be ok as the government had announced its funding; 3. we also wanted the ECML to be four tracked from Huntingdon to Peterborough along with associated upgrade of the

joint line.

Of these I think all are adequately covered in the draft delivery plan except for no mention of a third track in the Chelmsford area ..of course this might well be covered in the commission set up by George Osborne on his recent visit to EA, particularly relating to the 'Norwich in Ninety' project. The enhancements section is the only part where I can stay awake when reading...comments ASAP please.

It's worth noting that one very significant change to Network Rail status occurs on 1 September this year, when it officially becomes an entry in the Government Borrowing Requirement. Put another way, the power of the Office for Rail Regulation stands to be diminished by Treasury control which will no longer be an 'at arm's length' affair. Probably not good news. PW/CB

### **First Capital Connect refurbish trains**

The first of 40 refurbished trains has gone into service on FCC. The Class 365 units used on services between London, Kings Lynn and Peterborough were introduced in 1994 and have received little attention to the interiors since. To



mark the reintroduction of the new train, staff gave out leaflets describing the changes (see page 8 of this issue), although most passengers would have been aware of the vast improvement to the appearance of the train.

However, one comment on the leaflet "at no extra cost to passengers" did not go down so well, coming so soon after the annual fare increases. ND

### **News from the far east!**

GREAT YARMOUTH is the only major town in Norfolk, and probably in Suffolk, which has no public transport link from its rail station to its town centre. Our corporate member the East Norfolk Transport Users' Association instigated a meeting with Greater Anglia and First in October in a bid to rectify this problem. As a result, it is proposed that summer services 3 and 3A be diverted to call at the railway station, providing a link at least once an hour (half hourly in school holidays) to Market Gates, Seashore Holiday Camp and then up to Caister and Hemsby.

At the time of writing it is proposed to run a trial service in the Easter holidays and then in the summer from May to September. We hope to have full details at our Branch AGM and in the next Rail East. TG

LOWESTOFT station again has a shop, after a gap of more than two years. It is open all day Monday - Saturday and on Sundays till 14.00, selling newspapers, hot and cold drinks and snacks and many of the items you would expect in a convenience store. We wish the new business well. TG

STILL FARTHER EAST - Further to the item in our last issue, concerning the Harwich - Hoek van Holland ferry, we learn that the incorporation of the line from Hoek van Holland to Schiedam into the Rotterdam metro network is planned for 2017. Railfuture's International Group appreciates that this is good news for ferry passengers heading to Rotterdam. The issues to be resolved are how easy it will be to book tickets and make journeys to other places in the Netherlands and indeed northern Germany. The link is also important for visitors to our country. Watch this space....TG

### **Looking after the passengers.**

During the Christmas closure of Peterborough Station, passengers having to change from train to a replacement bus at Huntingdon were rather well looked after.

Network Rail erected a large marquee in the station car park fitted out with seating, information displays and toilets to enable passengers to stay dry whilst waiting for their train or bus.

This even prompted a congratulatory letter from one satisfied passenger to the local press. ND (*and photos*)



### **MANEA Station – By request**

Ben Walsh tells us that "On the 10th of January, something special happened. What was it, you may ask? The village of Manea in Cambridgeshire, celebrated its first ever two-hourly (request stop) rail service replacing a peak-hour only service. Certainly a "good" news story. Some of the local primary school children turned up to mark their involvement, through doing a (KSF) Knowledge,Skills Framework project, with the County Council. They had designed posters about railways and these were available for all to see - one pupil won a prize of a framed portrait of their work and Greater Anglia gave them a free family ticket to anywhere on their network - which I think was



rather generous of them.



We then boarded the 1017 train to Ely where the staff laid on drinks and cake for everyone to enjoy and then about 20 minutes later, we re-boarded the train for Manea. Council officials, from both the Parish/District and County Councils were there, so, I think you could say it met with approval from "on high!"

I think this marks one of those "Feel Good" stories where Manea, already with a station, now has a better service than ever before. Railfuture

played its part by leafleting all 800 dwellings with a survey during the summer of 2013. The result was presented to Greater Anglia, and the Authorities, showing real evidence of need for the new service. And it has come to pass. BW (Including photograph) BW

## Wisbech Rail Reopening Campaign



### Steve Barclay, MP for N E Cambridgeshire recently stated:

"I am very pleased to report that Cambridgeshire County Council has decided to commission a Wider Economic benefits study of how many passengers would stand to benefit from a new Railway Line to Wisbech.

The major step in the campaign for a rail service to Wisbech follows a meeting in November between myself, the leader of the Council Martin Curtis, top transport official Graham Hughes and Atkins consultancy representative Sunil Gogna held in my local constituency office.

This announcement comes just a week before I am scheduled to meet in parliament with the Secretary of State for transport Patrick McGloughlin. I will be presenting the wide-ranging case for passenger convenience and the economic benefits of investment in a new train line to Wisbech." *For remaining content of statement go to: <http://stevebarclay.net/hailing-major-step-forward-in-campaign-for-new-wisbech-rail-station/> As you can see, Steve Barclay is not just supportive but active too, which all helps to sustain momentum in this campaign of ours to appreciably improve the future for Wisbech in terms of rail network connection.*

**Major Changes at Cambridge Station: December Branch Meeting**

## **report:**

Major changes to Cambridge station, particularly its heavily congested concourse, were illustrated and detailed at our 7 December Branch meeting. The excellent talk came from Greater Anglia's Partnership Manager, Geraint Hughes. For most present this was the first time the detail of the proposals had been revealed, which was greatly appreciated.

Essentially the project, at a cost of £4.25m, has been funded by Brookgate, the company developing CB1 Scheme around the station. It's part of a land purchase through a Section 106 agreement from Network Rail and the City Council. Top of the list is greatly easing the station concourse congestion, which too often over a week is utterly intolerable. Unsurprising in a station never remotely designed for the passage of around nine million customers annually.

An artist's impression of the this modernised Booking Hall concourse shows the following: No.1. Platform exits only; No.2. Ticket Office (with queues in front) and beyond, platform entry; No.3. Advance Booking/Enquiries; No.4. Ticket Machines; and No.5. Forecourt Entry/Exit. And impressive it is too, given the severe constraints imposed by heritage status.



The entire project has to be delivered without interruption to rail services, cope with the interests of ten on-site tenants, and cater for around 150 staff. The project includes a new pub, restaurant and relocated lavatories.

The Ticket Office changes are expected to be completed in late summer this year and the full scheme, internal and external, late 2015. It can't be soon enough. CB

## **New trains which aren't!**

Of late there's been a welcome outbreak of refurbishing old trains for a renewed life. Last month we featured the Class 321 prototype from Eversholt leasing company doing the rounds of users primarily in Essex. Now attention turns to the Angel Leasing Class 317, the 1981 design seen largely on West Anglia services, and the Class 365, the mainstay of outer suburban services from King's Cross since 1995.

First, the CI.365: which is No.365517, with a unique livery, well, until the second one appears. This contract embraces the whole fleet, unlike the other two which are speculative one-offs.



As you can see, a definite improvement turning the already light spacious ambience of a Class 365 into an even smarter one. Note predominate colour; Cambridge Blue.

Changes include:

- Two wheelchair bays installed.....
- A new wheelchair-accessible toilet in each 4-carriage unit.
- A new fully automated passenger information system with audio and visual announcements.
- Full exterior refurbishment including new livery and a full interior refresh including new upholstery and flooring.
- Call-for-aid installed at wheelchair and toilet areas.

Sadly the refurb' did not include air-conditioning which in truth would have been the most lauded improvement. But don't forget, these trains will be displaced quite soon by brand new Siemens Thameslink rolling stock which *will* have 'Air-Con'. The Cambridge 'Fasts' might even receive a touch of overkill in the form of the Hitachi Intercity Express train (IEP), destined for the East Coast mainline. Fuller details of the CI.365 with further pictures at: <http://www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/about-us/media-centre/news/2014/new-look-train-enters-service-great-northern-route/>

All this work was carried out at Ilford depot to which your Chairman and Editor were invited at 08.30 hrs on the darkest and drabest of November mornings to see another refurbishment. Like the CI.321, a speculative one, courtesy of



Angel Trains the leasing company supplying Class 317's to Greater Anglia. And impressive it was too although only two coaches of this four coach unit have been refurbished, at least allowing direct old with new comparison.

They call it 'Metro layout' as the intention is to "provide wide-open door vestibule areas" for easier, quicker access and more standing passengers. Certainly neither Peter nor I felt we would relish travelling to Norwich on the rather 'firm' seats. We also felt they were too close together, making it all too easy to elbow somebody's coffee, or whatever, straight on to the floor (or them!). But again, Angel can provide (but haven't, as yet), an outer suburban version too as well as 3,4 or 5 car units. The accompanying picture shows what the passenger will be asked to comment upon.



Unlike the Class 365, this Metro refurbishment has been taken much further than just new seats, lights, windows and disability provision: underneath, the traction motors are absolutely new, working off Alternating Current (AC) rather than prevailing DC.

Result: significant reduction of running /

maintenance costs. The enhanced acceleration combining with more efficient braking produces a projected five minute gain on a London to Cambridge run. Some compromises persist to allow compatibility with its sister units, at least until the DfT takes up Angel Trains proposition for all '317s to be converted. Either way, hats off to Angel (and Eversholt) for enterprise. CB

**\*\*RAILFUTURE SUMMER CONFERENCE :CAMBRIDGE\*\***  
**Saturday 21 June 2014**

### **Sunshine Coast Line: Passenger Headcount at Frinton-on-Sea**

Tony Baxter reports that: "Ontrack Rail Users Association, assisted by local District and County councillors and members of other community stakeholder organisations, carried out a headcount of passengers boarding and alighting from all trains at Frinton-on-Sea station on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2013. On that day, it was found that 345 passengers boarded and 355 alighted from trains, a total footfall of 700 passengers. Subsequent analysis suggests that



this could give an annual footfall of around 200,000 to 220,000 for the station, some 15% to 25% higher than the official figure from the Office of Rail Regulation.”

“Extrapolating results is difficult for Frinton as, besides the usual variation over the week, there is party travel for schools during school terms and for exchange students from the continent in May/June and September; in both cases this results in travel to

Colchester Town or beyond. By its very nature, this traffic tends to occur randomly.”

“Furthermore, Frinton (and Walton-on-the Naze) receive a significant number of summer visitors, many coming for a day out on the beach. Last summer, the Association carried out a survey of the most popular services bringing day trippers to the coast which suggests that over July and August they contributed around 17,000 to the footfall at Frinton station (with a slightly higher number for Walton). Charter trains have also run from Stratford to Frinton over many recent summers, bringing larger parties from north and east London for a day out by the sea.”

“The Association is very grateful to all those who assisted in this headcount which lasted from 05.30 until midnight in order to include the first and last trains of the day. Further work is necessary to improve the accuracy of these observations and also to extend the work to other stations on the Sunshine Coast Line. AB”

### **Ipswich Chord:**

Phil Smart reports that Christmas period work led something of a charmed life: use of the cranes would not have been possible in the high winds which struck on the night of 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> with service disruption on Christmas Eve. But the wind dropped in time for the engineering possession to begin on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> and the old bridge 404 to be removed in the early hours of Christmas Day. That day and Boxing Day were fine and dry and the new bridge slid into place around 16:00 hours before the bad weather came again the following night.

These photographs show, left, the new River Gipping bridge whilst, right hand, shows the new line sweeping around from the east (right) to the north. The train is heading for Felixstowe and the rest of the embankment appears ballasted throughout with track being laid. The target for completion by the end of March looks like being met.



Some infrastructure trains, as I understand it, were also working on the Felixstowe branch during the blockade period. PS/CB

### **Meldreth Station Access for Disabled Children**

The Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group had an excellent turnout on the morning of January 8<sup>th</sup> about access at Meldreth Station, reports Susan Vanderven. While the village is home to a Scope School for disabled children, the station is fundamentally inaccessible due to two different sets of stairs and the RUG has been working since its inception to address this. We know it will take time but need to make sure this is on the rail industry radar for the relaunch of its campaign to improve. SV

### **Alan Mayes updates on Cambridge Science Park Railway Station**

The planning application for the new station, car and cycle parking and access roads was approved on 18 December 2013 by the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee, the joint planning committee of Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council for planning applications on the borders of Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire (the site of the new station is partly in Cambridge City and partly in South Cambridgeshire). This enables Cambridgeshire County Council to start building the new station and the associated access roads and car and cycle parking. Men in orange suits are currently surveying the site and construction is scheduled to begin this summer.

The new station between Cambridge and Waterbeach on the line from Cambridge to Ely will serve the North Cambridge area including Milton and the Science and Business Parks and will be directly accessible along the busway from St Ives, Swavesey, Longstanton (site of Northstowe) and Histon. The new station is scheduled to open late next year (2015) and will enable people to travel and commute by train to the Cambridge Science and Business Parks from locations up and down the railway lines from Kings Cross, Liverpool Street and Stansted Airport to the South and from Norwich, Kings Lynn, Peterborough and, we hope, Wisbech to the North. Greater Anglia and Thameslink/First Capital Connect train services from London to Cambridge and Cambridge to

Norwich which include the Cambridge to Ely route will stop at the new station and services from London which currently end at Cambridge are expected to be extended to serve the new station. It is also hoped that the Cross Country service Birmingham-Leicester-Peterborough-Cambridge-Stansted Airport will stop at the new station. For services such as Ipswich to Cambridge which end at Cambridge, Cambridge Science Park will be just a further four minutes away by a connecting train instead of a long ride on a bus which gets stuck in traffic during the rush hour. AM

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### **Our Chairman 'test-runs' Cambridge to Audley End and Saffron Walden by Train and Bus.**

On Friday November 29th I made a test run on the new dedicated rail /bus link at Audley End for Saffron Walden. This new link has been set up by Greater Anglia as a part of their franchise commitment.

The plan: leave Cambridge on the 11.04 semi fast service to Audley End. Buying the ticket: I arrived in good time for the train as it was Friday. Just as well as there was already a lengthy queue at the windows ....5 out of 6 windows open plus an itinerant ticket seller at the head of the queue. Fairly good progress to the front. I showed my Senior Card as usual asking for a day return to Saffron Walden via Audley End. This was met by polite incomprehension and then the comment that I would have to buy a ticket to Audley End then "make my own way" forward.

I explained that there was now a dedicated bus link with through ticketing from Cambridge to Saffron Walden...set up by Greater Anglia. The young man was very interested, saying that it was a really good idea "and about time", though he had not heard of the facility. He delved further into his machine and soon found Saffron Walden bus...and fare of £10.90 day return. But...his machine came up with blank when my senior card was keyed in. So, to enable my test run to be accurate I went for the full fare. (You are quite correct, I could have got a discounted ticket to Audley End and used my bus pass thereon. But, read on.

The train left on time at 11.04...a warm,clean, well loaded Cl.317 unit calling only at Whittlesford en route to Audley End, arriving punctually at 11.20. I walked immediately to the bus stand in front of the main building for the bus departure at 11.29. It had a good shelter if chilly on this December day, with an electronic display of several 'next buses', including the 301 due at 11.29. (The station does have a warm ticket hall, waiting facilities, toilets and a very good shop/café.) At 11.29 the bus had not appeared and reference to it dropped from the screen. It arrived 10 minutes later en route from Stansted

Airport via Bishops Stortford, a journey of 55 minutes so said the very clear Essex County Council poster in the shelter. With fourteen passengers already on board, all clearly eligible for the 'free pass'. I made it fifteen. The driver was clearly puzzled by my Cambridge to 'Saffron Walden bus' ticket...studying it most carefully before handing it back. We arrived 10 minutes later in the High Street just 2 miles from the station, at about 11.49. So 45 minutes in all. Note 1: it should have taken 35 minutes; 2. that I could have taken the following 11.10 from Cambridge non-stop to Audley End, reducing overall time to a very creditable 29 minutes.

The return journey was at 12.54 from the High Street stop, which has no shelter hence the ten or so passengers boarding straggling along the street sheltering in shop doorways from the chill and drizzle. The scruffy bus was punctual but the driver even more suspicious of my ticket and reluctant to hand it back. But he did and we rattled our noisy way to the station to arrive at 13.03, where two of us alighted for Cambridge. The next train to Cambridge was the 13.28, already shown as expected at 13.32. Eventually this was accurately modified to 13.37. The drizzle was by this time a light insistent rain but the good, brightly painted waiting room had an efficient heater. Again a class 317 arrived ..well loaded, calling at all stations to Cambridge arriving at 13.59. Overall journey time...Hmm...a not so good 65 minutes. Should have been 57 minutes but the train timetable is heavily padded due to lack of platform space at Cambridge. (*What, after two new platforms? Ed*) For comparison: the Cambridge to Saffron Walden hourly bus takes 75 minutes. Stagecoach Mega Rider £6 return. To look up these services SFF is the Saffron Walden code on the railway websites.

Conclusion:

A good start?...the outward journey shows the possibilities in overall timings. The return journey timing is poor. Hopefully the bus company can be persuaded to rotate its timings to fit better with the 3 trains per hour on the route. Fares: these need sorting out so rail cards can be used, including the Group 3 and 4 offers. Thirty minutes should be the target overall time plus a better quality bus. So, a good start, yes, but much work remains before the product truly tempts those currently using a car to Audley End station. PW

### **East-West Rail Campaign Oxford – Cambridge Campaign News Feb 2014**

In early December, local media from Oxford to Suffolk had the same story: 'Government backs moves to reopen link to Cambridge'; 'Reopening line between Cambridge and Oxford wins government backing'; and, in a wonderful mangling of language: 'Missing jigsaw in Cambridge to Bedford line a step closer'.

The headlines were based on a Department for Transport brochure called Tech Connected. ( *DfT spokesman Jon Rhodes said: "The department is working closely with local authorities to identify a potential route for the Bedford to*



*Cambridge railway line, which would allow trains to run direct between Oxford and Cambridge and potentially to other destinations further east. This work should be completed by the spring after which we will consider how it could be financed. Ed)"*

It shows the network of future regional railways across the south-east, including the full Oxford to Cambridge line and mentions a new railway from Bedford to Cambridge with an interchange on the East Coast Main Line. So it now seems to be government policy, or at least their aspiration. But local authorities will have a say and we continue to press for them to identify and protect the potential routes.

Over in the west, construction has already started on the Oxford to Bicester section. There are actually two projects here: 1. Evergreen 3, the rebuilding of the Oxford to Bicester line with the existing line due to close soon until Summer 2015 (bus replacement?); 2. the expansion of Oxford station, where the planning application is being developed and options are already publicised.

We are rather concerned about the next section, Bicester to Bletchley, for which there appears to be no detailed plan yet, at least in public. We should be able to learn more once Network Rail's Delivery Plan for 2014-2019 appears at the end of March.

The Bletchley to Bedford line featured in Episode 7 of BBC 2's Great British Railway Journeys with Michael Portillo visiting Bletchley Park, Fenny Stratford, Wolverton, Stony Stratford, and Olney. How he actually got to the last two, which don't have stations, was a bit mysterious. He mentioned 'The Varsity Line' but didn't speculate on its future. Next time, perhaps he will be carrying a copy of TechConnected instead of Bradshaws. JH

### **Peterborough Remodelled: First Impressions:**

Two Branch members visited Peterborough station on the morning of Saturday 28th December 2013, just hours after the new island platform for east-west trains had been opened, following a three-day closure for commissioning of new signalling for the £42m project.

Although open much work was still in progress and not expected to be completed until March, Initial impressions were that whilst the changes are considerable, they still fall well short of being friendly to passengers.

Platforms 6 and 7 toilets were not open, but that was the least of the issues. The canopies for example, are quite narrow, stopping a long way short of the platform edges, only stretch a short way along the platform from the main footbridge (with the stairs and lift) and do not reach as far as the second footbridge (the one with the ramp), with no protection from the rain once you reach the platform. In fact they protrude less than a foot from the edge of the waiting room with negligible rain cover.



In fact they protrude less than a foot from the edge of the waiting room with negligible rain cover. *Railfuture* asks, how come Cambridge got effective canopies on its new platforms 7 & 8 but Peterborough doesn't?

The passenger has not been put first, and just who else is a station for?

There was a lack of standardisation with announcement speakers where on platforms 6 and 7 directed along the platform but on the new platform 3 of a completely different type and directed out onto the track. The lifts, as at Cambridge station, are too small to take a full-sized bicycle yet unlike Cambridge, at least the former parcels bridge may be used, albeit a much further walk to the train door.

Probably the greatest passenger dis-benefit, and known about since Network Rail first revealed its plans, is the loss of the cross-platform interchange between trains from Ely/March onto inter-city trains heading north. It now requires use of the footbridge.

*Railfuture* was very surprised to find a ticket machine on the new platform 1 i.e. on the platform side of the barriers. This appears to be unprecedented at barriered stations and an open invitation to buy a ticket to get through the barriers without facing a penalty charge.

The new island platform only takes 8-car trains, which is perfectly adequate for normal service trains (given that it is unconnected to London tracks), but is too short for (admittedly) occasional charter trains to be fully platformed. The Cambridge route is being increasingly used as a diversionary route and will be more often if Ely-Peterborough is electrified. Given the minimal cost of making the basic platform longer the decision seems short-sighted. Still, it's a properly built brick and concrete structure, constructed away from operational tracks over several months. Extending platform four needed the work to be done faster and a cost-effectively. It was, by use of a pre-fabricated platform extension added over the slope of the existing platform, thus avoiding the cost of demolishing the slope. A similar technique was used at Milton Keynes station.

It is presumed that Network Rail intends to fill in the track beside the defunct platform 1, which is currently fenced off along with some temporary lighting. The old lights between what was half way between platforms 1 and 2 have been cut down to about a metre prior to being removed later.

It is a credit to Network Rail that the new platforms actually opened on time, as promised in January 2012. Still, one outstanding disappointment is the footbridge not extending to the far side of the station permitting a western entrance. Unfortunately neither the city council, Network Rail, TOCs or a developer claimed to have the money to finesse the station facilities. We can only hope in time they will. JA / ND

### LATE NEWS

**THAMESLINK rolling stock preview at a station near you. Go to:**  
**[www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/about-us/discover-new-trains/discover-your-new-thameslink-train/](http://www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/about-us/discover-new-trains/discover-your-new-thameslink-train/)**

### ***DEADLINE FOR ISSUE 162: Monday 26 May 2014***

*Do get all your contributions to the Editor as soon as you can with, wherever possible, photographs, preferably in the form of JPEG or TIFF files. Publication can never be guaranteed, of course, but the choice is immensely helpful. CB*

## **Railfuture**

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## **Railfuture**

### **EAST ANGLIA BRANCH :**

***AGM at 14.00 hrs***

***22 February 2014,***

***Friends Meeting House***

***Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1SJ***

***Guest Speaker: Linda***

***McCord of Passenger Focus***

14 June 2014

Branch Meeting

Colchester

21 June

Railfuture

Summer Conference

Cambridge

### ***RailFuture is the public face of the Railway Development Society Ltd***

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